



## MEDIA RELEASE

### School Trustees Pleased Education Remains a B.C. Budget Priority

**[Victoria, B.C. – February 20, 2020]** Once again, today’s provincial budget has delivered another year of stable and predictable funding for B.C.’s 60 public school districts. The British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) is pleased to see continued funding for growing student enrollment as well as for additional classroom space in the 2020/2021 school year. We support the priority this government places on K-12 public education as a wise investment on behalf of both families and taxpayers within the important context of a balanced provincial budget.

“Stable, predictable budgets, which allow school boards to maintain current educational programs and services for students, are critically important to the K-12 education system,” said BCSTA President Stephanie Higginson. “This budget is a positive move toward continuing the funding necessary for school districts to maintain world-class educational programming during a time of increasing student enrollment.”

Higginson added, “With a stable provincial education base-budget in place for the next school year, trustees will continue to look for three key items:

1. A commitment to full funding of increasing student enrollment beyond this budget;
2. A long-range plan to connect new provincial initiatives around childcare, mental health, reconciliation and poverty reduction directly with the K-12 education sector;
3. Full funding of new collective agreements once implemented.”

Although B.C.’s school districts have seen budgets and staffing levels rise significantly over the last three years, there has been little opportunity for school boards to direct this additional money to implement new local initiatives. BCSTA believes increased flexibility on how education budgets may be spent is key to the future success of B.C.’s students.

“BCSTA looks forward to working with a variety of government ministries as well as our public education partners to implement this budget, along with the policy changes needed to ensure every dollar provided is directed to improving educational outcomes. Students must remain our priority in determining how this budget is spent,” said Higginson.

We note that the Minister of Finance has included a structural ‘surplus’ as well as planned reserves in this year’s provincial budget. BCSTA understands the importance of maintaining planned fiscal reserves by both the provincial government and school districts. BC school trustees look forward to co-constructing with the Ministry of Education any new accountabilities or guidelines for school districts in regard to financial decision making and fiscal reserves.

Provincial initiatives in such areas as quality childcare, early learning, youth mental health services, poverty reduction, reconciliation and integrated health services will provide opportunities for shared initiatives and new embedded programs in our schools. Supporting children and youth ultimately serves our schools and communities well. BCSTA looks forward to working with government to implement these initiatives in B.C.’s public schools.

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*For additional information and to arrange an interview with Stephanie Higginson, please contact:*

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BCSTA's media kit can be downloaded [here](#).

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The British Columbia School Trustees Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting boards of education in their work. Boards of education locally represent the interests of their communities in the public education system in British Columbia. For more information about our association and work, visit [www.bcsta.org](http://www.bcsta.org).