



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

February 18, 2022

The Honourable Mike Farnworth

*Minister of Public Safety and
Solicitor General*
PO Box 9010 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside

Minister of Education
PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Farnworth and Minister Whiteside,

Subject: Follow-up on Provincial Funding to Improve Access to Educational Programming in Correctional Facilities

We write to you in follow up to our earlier communications regarding our interest in improving educational programs in correctional facilities.

As a reminder, at the October 24, 2020 meeting of the BCSTA Provincial Council, representing all 60 boards of education in our province, our members passed the following motion:

“That BCSTA request that the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General allocate special-purpose funding to school districts that have correctional facilities in their districts to provide year-round educational services in provincial correctional facilities based on the level of service required in each community.”

In your reply to our initial letter, which we received on May 26, 2021 (File no. 617309), you acknowledged that the current course-based funding model presents difficulties in responding to the needs outlined in the motion. Your reply outlined that the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General were collaborating to review the funding model, and we were pleased to know that the educational needs of students in correctional facilities were being prioritized.

What was once a potential solution has not materialized as the provincial government has decided not to implement changes to the funding model within these areas. Progress for providing these vulnerable learners with life-altering educational opportunities has now stagnated.

School districts that provide education programs in correctional facilities continue to face additional cost pressures and staffing concerns as they deliver these much-needed services. The province has maintained a holding pattern that is currently failing those in need with the existing levels of adult education funding, and districts are overextending themselves to fill these gaps in our communities. This work is critical, and districts warrant additional, dedicated funding that will allow them to deliver consistent staffing to enable these programs.



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

We once again call on the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the Ministry of Education to address the gap in funding in light of your government's pause on the implementation of changes to the funding model.

Additionally, as part of our movement towards a solution, we also invite you to meet with both BCSTA's leadership and representatives from School District 42 (Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows), who sponsored this motion. Flavia Coughlan, School District 42's secretary-treasurer and president of the BC Association of School Business Officials, has been invited to partake in these meetings to provide your ministries with clear examples that illustrate why these changes are so urgently needed.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Higginson", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Stephanie Higginson
President
British Columbia School Trustees Association

Motion: P120209.5

CC: Deputy Minister of Education Christina Zacharuk
BCSTA member boards of education
Flavia Coughlan, President, BC Association of School Business Officials