



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

May 18, 2022

The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside

Minister of Education and Child Care

PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E2

educ.minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Whiteside,

Subject: Minimum Standards for Ventilation

At the British Columbia School Trustees Association's most recent annual general meeting, our membership, representing all 60 boards of education in B.C., passed the following resolution:

"That BCSTA request that the Ministry of Education and Child Care provide minimum indoor air quality specifications for existing buildings, addressing issues of ventilation, temperature regulation, and safety in response to recent natural disasters and the COVID 19 pandemic and that funding be provided for districts to implement the standards."

The strain that B.C.'s existing schools are under to provide safe levels of indoor ventilation is regularly increasing. Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become increasingly clear that proper ventilation is essential to reducing the spread of the virus when indoors. The reality is that many schools are not well equipped to mitigate risk with current systems and that updates are required.

Unfortunately, the conversation is not limited to responding to COVID-19. Another crisis impacts this ask, as the most recent heatwave of 2021 illustrated how ill-equipped many facilities are when it comes to cooling and providing safe, comfortable learning environments. In a similar vein, many schools face issues in dealing with wildfire smoke with increasing frequency. With general guidance suggesting that individuals stay indoors when smoke levels are high, proper filtration and cooling systems in schools are critical.

It is a tragic reality that these extreme weather patterns will become more regular, and we must plan ahead to ensure that schools remain safe places to learn and grow. Just as we seek to combat the climate crisis with proactive measures, we must also take steps to adapt to a changing world.



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

As representatives of boards of education from throughout the province, BCSTA calls on the Ministry of Education and Child Care to establish minimum standards for indoor air quality and that funding be supplied to meet these standards in all schools. I thank you for considering this ask and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Broady". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carolyn Broady

President

British Columbia School Trustees Association

Motion: A202213

Enclosure: Original motion rationale

CC: Christina Zacharuk, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Child Care
Chris Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Child Care
BCSTA member boards of education
Suzanne Hoffman, CEO, BCSTA
BCSTA Board of Directors