



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

May 31, 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: Universal Food Programs

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 requests that the Ministry of Education and Child Care provide new funding to support universal food programs at all BC Public Schools."

Throughout our response to COVID-19, we have focused on keeping schools open, not only for learning but for support systems relied on by students and families. Over this time, it has become increasingly apparent that school food programs are heavily relied on, and the ability of school districts to respond to local needs varies across the province. This is not a need that COVID-19 created but an existing one amplified by it.

Many districts exhaust their CommunityLINK funding before fully responding to these meal program needs of the public, and inequity exists across districts in their ability to match local needs. In many cases, staff provide services leveraging their own time and money to support their community. Local charities are also doing what they can to fill these gaps but relying on these groups is not sustainable or equitable. While noble, we should not ask so much of our staff, schools and communities. Instead, we should equip them properly for the task.

Our membership is seeking a universal food program that concentrates on equitable CommunityLINK funding for all school districts, with additional funding aimed at improving staff and administrative support required for the growth of this program.

Removing barriers, such as access to food, is vital as we seek to provide learners with the best chance to reach their full potential as members of our society. This is especially important when considering the most disadvantaged members of our communities who are at risk of being left behind due to limited access to basic needs.



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Thank you for taking the time to consider this request from our membership. I look forward to exploring what a program like this would look like with you in future conversations.

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: A20227

Enclosure: Original motion rationale

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

7. Universal Food Programs

Category: Students

Motion #:	7 : A20227	Sponsor:	Northern Interior Branch
Meeting:	AGM 2022	Action:	<i>not specified</i>
Category:		Outcome:	Letter to be drafted (April 28)
Disposition:	Carried		

Motion as Adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That BCSTA requests that the Ministry of Education and Child Care provide new funding to support universal food programs at all BC Public Schools.

Motion as Presented:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That BCSTA requests that the Ministry of Education and Child Care provide new funding to support universal food programs at all BC Public Schools.

Rationale:

- The COVID context has highlighted the importance of school food programs and highlighted the inequities that exist across BC schools in delivering quality food programs.
- The majority of school districts far outspend their Community Link funding allocations in order to provide schools with their needed meal programs.
- School Districts and the BC Ministry of Education have made improving educational outcomes and life chances for vulnerable and Indigenous learners a priority and a focus area. These communities are disproportionately, economically disadvantaged members of our society who have continued to benefit from food programs in our schools. Without a universal food program, a renewed focus on equitable Community Links funding will help ensure food is not an obstacle in engaging learners.
- Additionally, the capacity, staffing (including nutritionists) and administration costs need to be covered when providing funding to expand the program.
- Staff are currently providing these program services on their own time and with their own money.
- These inequities have been growing over time and are not strictly related to the COVID pandemic.

Reference(s):

[Why Canada Needs a Universal School Food Program - Nutrition Connections](#)

This is an action motion and does not change or contradict any existing Foundational or Policy Statement.

This motion relates to Foundational Statement 4.3FS (Child Poverty and Learning).