



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

June 14, 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: Gender Inclusive Washrooms

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 support universal washrooms and change rooms in public schools by providing new funding to retrofit existing facilities."

In alignment with your ministry's mission to support marginalized students, we ask that you reinforce the views of our members and factor universal washrooms and change rooms into plans for upcoming new and seismically upgraded schools. We also request that you provide supplemental funding to update current buildings to meet that standard.

This is an essential issue of concern for 2SLGBTQ+ students and their advocates. As we consider bullying and stress inducers in our schools, a review of traditional gender-based washrooms and change rooms notes that they have the potential to be places that produce anxiety and emotional trauma.

Not providing basic privacy for students leaves them open to attacks in the form of both verbal and physical harassment. It also limits options for those who may wish to participate in activities that require the use of change rooms but are too uncomfortable to utilize traditional spaces. As noted in the rationale, an American survey of transgender individuals found that "59% of respondents sometimes refrain from using a bathroom outside of their home in the previous year." We cannot allow basic human needs and desires to be coupled with a sense of dread.

These changes would also serve other community members who utilize school facilities for different events or otherwise use school property. Parents with young children, caregivers for the elderly and those with diverse needs would be provided safe, accessible restrooms that do not bar caretakers based on gender.



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On behalf of our membership, I thank you for considering this request and look forward to discussing the details on how we can take action on this matter.

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: A202214

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

14. Gender Inclusive Washrooms

Category: School Premises, Facilities, Services

Motion #:	14 : A202214	Sponsor:	Northern Interior Branch
Meeting:	AGM 2022	Action:	<i>not specified</i>
Category:		Outcome:	Letter to be drafted (April 28)
Disposition:	Carried as amended		

Motion as Adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That BCSTA request that the Ministry of Education and Child Care support universal washrooms and change rooms in public schools by providing new funding to retrofit existing facilities.

Motion as Presented:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That BCSTA request that the Ministry of Education and Child Care support gender inclusive washrooms in public schools by providing new funding to retrofit existing facilities.

Rationale:

- As noted in the Minister's mandate letter, government has a moral and ethical responsibility to address the barriers that marginalized people. In an effort to address systemic discrimination, decisions are to be reviewed through a Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens.
- For LGBTQ2+ students, using a gender-based washroom can be a great source of anxiety and emotional trauma. Many students are subjected to offensive comments, verbal harassment, and physical violence, when attempting to access a public washroom.
- Schools serve as hubs within their communities as they provide a variety of programs and services to meet an educational, recreation and social need. Those utilizing School District facilities also benefit from gender inclusive washrooms, in particular parents with young children, caregivers for the elderly and persons with diverse needs, whose gender differs from their own.
- School Districts are faced with the challenge of creating safe spaces for marginalized students to access the most basic of human needs, but in order to do so, require the additional funding to support and facilitate the necessary infrastructure upgrades.
- According to the largest survey of the experiences of trans people in the USA to date, "59% of respondents sometimes refrain from using a bathroom outside of their home in the previous year".

Reference(s):

[The gender-neutral bathroom: a new frame and some nudges | Behavioural Public Policy | Cambridge Core](#)

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



This motion relates to Policy Statement 4.2.6 (SOGI).