

JUNE 2022

# REPORT to CSBA

Report to the Canadian School Boards Association

## Local elections resources

BCSTA's elections engagement committee released a guide for [trustee candidates](#) in preparation for the October elections. The guide, available in French and English, outlines how to run in the upcoming elections and promotes the important role locally elected trustees have in improving student outcomes. BCSTA hosts [additional resources](#) on the role of trustees and boards on our website.

## Standardized testing data

On February 9, BCSTA [wrote](#) to the Ministry of Education and Child Care supporting a letter from the First Nations Leadership Council regarding the importance of the Foundation Skills Assessment data as a tool for equity in education.

## B.C. budget update

B.C.'s provincial budget, released in February, continues to fund enrollment growth in the K-12 sector but falls short of covering increased education costs for districts. View our [response](#). Public consultations on the next provincial budget took place in June, and BCSTA advocated to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services on behalf of B.C.'s boards of education regarding their needs for the upcoming school year.

## Ministry changes

B.C.'s Ministry of Education is now the Ministry of Education and Child Care. [Learn](#) how this change will benefit students, families and communities.

## Member resources

BCSTA continues to provide learning materials for its members. We are updating our members-only *Learning Guide*, with the [first module](#) (governance) ready for download. We also continue to share and promote the critical work of our [Indigenous Education Committee](#).

## Declaration Act action plan

B.C.'s government has established a five-year action plan focused on advancing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. BCSTA is working with the Ministry of Education and Child Care and boards of education to develop an engagement strategy that will outline the implications for districts. [Download the plan](#).

## Indigenous course requirement survey

The province launched a public engagement for the new Indigenous-focused graduation [requirement](#). BCSTA provided a written response to the ministry regarding the new graduation requirements from the perspective of boards of education. Every student in B.C. must complete a four-credit indigenous-focused course as part of their graduation requirement. A [report](#) on what the government heard was released in June.

## Understanding signed with FNEESC

BCSTA proudly signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) with the First Nations Education Steering Committee at our recent AGM.

## Events summary

BCSTA hosted its first in-person AGM since 2019 in Vancouver this past April. The event was a major success and featured an entire day devoted to Indigenous learning, as well as a session prior to the opening keynote called Q'ushin'tul - (Walking Alongside)/ Going Home. This special session focused on honouring the children found on residential school sites and provided attendees with an opportunity to learn and heal with Indigenous Elders. Read our [report of proceedings](#) for more details. Our business session also saw our membership support several important resolutions and our advocacy work is underway

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and several letters can be read on our [website](#).

Prior to our AGM, BCSTA held several events virtually throughout the pandemic with great success. In December, the association provided an opportunity for our first large-scale in-person gathering through our Trustee Academy, with excellent feedback from the membership. The association is exploring the option for future events to utilize a hybrid model. Some future events may take advantage of lessons we have learned in hosting virtual events effectively.

## COVID-19 response

The government and boards of education remain committed to providing safe in-person education and preserving the important supports students rely on, such as meal programs and mental-health resources. B.C. has lifted many restrictions, including mask mandates (in most situations) and the use of vaccine cards. Schools recently returned to 100% capacity for events, which means that important gatherings, such as graduation banquets and commencements, can take place in traditional formats.

In October of 2021, the provincial government informed public service employees that they must be fully vaccinated by November 22, 2021. This action modelled an example based on messaging from the provincial health officer that vaccination requirements are the employer's responsibility. The BC Public School Employers' Association had provided boards of education and districts with templates and guidance should they propose a mandate, including proof of vaccination, letters of agreement, procedure and support materials.

## Association leadership

BCSTA CEO Mike Roberts retired at the start of the school year. His successor, Suzanne Hoffman, who most recently served as superintendent of the Vancouver School Board, joined the association in October. Before joining the VSB, Suzanne was the chief educator and superintendent of learning transformation at the Ministry of Education and Child Care. She previously held the position of superintendent with the Langley School District. Read more in our [media release](#).

BCSTA's [new board](#) of directors was elected at our AGM, where Carolyn Broady was acclaimed president. Tim Bennett was acclaimed vice-president.

## Provincial bargaining

Bargaining for the public sector in B.C. continues with cost of living adjustments (COLA) at the forefront. The BC General Employees' Union, representing thousands of union members, reached an impasse with the province over the gap in wage proposals. They are currently discussing and preparing for potential job action. The results of a strike vote for public sector workers are to be released soon.

Bargaining for a provincial framework agreement for support staff in the K-12 sector is paused. While there have been nine respectful bargaining sessions, the parties have been unable to reach an agreement, primarily due to wages and COLA. In the interim, local school districts are beginning their local collective bargaining for provisions that are not tied to any increased costs.

Provincial bargaining for teachers between the BC Public School Employers' Association and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation commenced on March 15, 2022, and they have exchanged most of their proposals. The table continues to meet several times each week. All K-12 collective agreements expire on June 30, 2022.

For additional information, please review the following news bulletins from the [BC General Employees' Union](#) and the [Canadian Union of Public Employees B.C.](#) ■



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