



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

March 31, 2023

The Honourable Rachna Singh
Minister of Education and Child Care
PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E2
ecc.minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Singh,

Subject: Continue Funding the Student and Family Affordability Fund

At the February 2023 British Columbia School Trustees Association Provincial Council meeting, our members, representing all 60 boards of education in B.C., passed the following motion:

“That BCSTA request the Ministry of Education and Child Care continue the Student and Family Affordability Fund as an annual targeted fund, provided to school districts beyond June 30, 2023;

AND that the permitted uses of this Fund be made less restrictive, to better be able to serve students and families in need, including the possibility of providing or subsidizing transportation;

AND that a portion of this Fund be permitted to be used to cover the costs of administering the Fund.

AND that the funds be made available to School Districts prior to the start of the school year.”

As you know, the Student and Family Affordability Fund is set to expire on June 30 of this year. While the fund generally achieved its goal of supporting families that would otherwise struggle with the rising costs of sending children back to school, this one-time allocation does little to stem the tide of future global inflation concerns, which continue to grow.

Our membership has flagged that districts across B.C. require continued affordability funding to support parents, students and communities in the foreseeable future. This ask includes using this funding to enhance school meal programs and support access to activities, including field trips, which are vital to development. Removing additional restrictions would also allow boards of education, which are best equipped to manage and interpret the needs of their communities, to support their student populations as effectively as possible. For example, and as noted above in the motion, costs related to transportation are a considerable financial concern that could be supported by this fund, especially in rural and remote communities. To further improve their use, our membership also requests that potential future funding be made available to districts at the start of the school year and that a small amount of the fund be utilized to cover costs related to its administration.



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We are grateful that the provincial government has recognized these concerns and trust that you will agree that there is a need to continue supporting the Student and Family Affordability Fund in response to the rising financial strain parents, guardians and caregivers in B.C. face.

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: P2202311.1

Enclosure: Original motion rationale

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