

April 2024

REPORT to CSBA

Report to the Canadian School Boards Association

B.C.'s 2024 Budget

Announced on February 22, 2024, British Columbia's 2024 budget delivered some positive news but overlooked many pressing needs. As noted in the association's [media release](#), "Funding to ease enrolment pressures and escalating costs facing families are welcome news, but this budget missed addressing key issues facing schools, including ageing infrastructure, inflation-driven operating costs and recruitment and retention pressures."

In a follow-up to attending the budget, BCSTA President Carolyn Broady [wrote of her experience](#) at the budget lock-up in a blog post on BCSTA's website to give member boards of education added insight while also providing the general public with an increased understanding of BCSTA's role in provincial politics.

BCSTA's input is included in the [consultation report](#), and details on Budget 2024 are [viewable online](#).

2024 Annual General Meeting

Boards of Education from across B.C. congregated in Vancouver from April 18-21 to dream big and lead strong! Aimed at bolstering strategies to ensure boards pursue future-ready governance strategies, the association's 2024 annual general meeting provided attendees with a variety of learning experiences.

Keynote speaker and Human Connection Expert Riaz Meghji explored the power of human connections in relation to the work of trustees and boards. Ramona Pringle, a creative innovation consultant, technology columnist and professor, shared on the topic of preparing students for a changing world in the context of A.I. bots and code. Concurrent sessions focused on governance strategies, Indigenous education and more, while a plenary focused on student voice gave Indigenous students an opportunity to connect directly with boards of education.

With B.C.'s provincial election on October 19, 2024, BCSTA's advocacy plan to support boards and prioritize public education as an election issue for voters and politicians continues to gain momentum. The AGM featured an Education Matters: MLA Forum with the following MLAs.

- Minister of Education and Child Care Rachna Singh
- Opposition Critic Mental Health, Addiction, Recovery and Education MLA Elenore Sturko
- Green Party Leader MLA Sonia Furstenau

The forum provided space for responding to top advocacy related priorities submitted by association members, and a recording will be shared on BCSTA's social media channels.

The AGM also featured the debate of 34 motions submitted before the deadline, and a formal disposition of motions will be distributed in the 2024 Report of Proceedings in May.

Agenda details are still on BCSTA's [website](#), and CSBA's members may contact BCSTA's [Director of Education Services](#) should they have inquiries about the content explored at the AGM. Photos will be shared on [Flickr](#).

National Food Program Advocacy

In February, BCSTA President Carolyn Broady contacted Member of Parliament [Taleeb Noormohamed](#) and Minister of Finance & Deputy Prime Minister [Chrystia Freeland](#) to support a national school food program.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's April announcement of a \$1 billion investment is a welcome response to BCSTA's joint advocacy efforts alongside CSBA's member associations, and BCSTA [shared news](#) of this work online for both association members and the public to review.

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Access Zones at Schools

In late 2023, [BCSTA advocated](#) to the government through a meeting and formal letter regarding protests and disruptions at or near school sites, including board of education meetings.

On April 10, B.C.'s government introduced [proposed legislation](#) to protect students and staff by establishing 20-metre access zones around school grounds.

Restricting the Use of Personal Devices at School

Effective July 1, 2024, B.C.'s [Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order](#) has been amended to require that all boards of education "include one or more statements in their codes of conduct about restricting the use of personal digital devices at school."

The objective is to create focused learning environments and improve online safety. A [support guide](#) has also been shared with superintendents to support this work leading up to the 2024/25 school year.

Improving Literacy

B.C.'s government is [providing additional support](#) for evidence-based early literacy screening and interventions for all kindergarten through grade 3 students to aid students with dyslexia and similar learning difficulties.

The \$30 million, provided over three years, will expand provincial outreach programs and teams while also supporting professional development and training related to literacy.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care will consult with First Nations, Indigenous organizations and English Language Learning experts to create culturally appropriate literacy screening and intervention resources to support both Indigenous students and English-language learners.

CSBA members may contact CEO [Suzanne Hoffman](#) for access to materials mentioned in this report.



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