



April 10, 2017

Ref: 193378

Kristin Schnider, Chair
Burnaby District Parent Advisory Council
School District No. 41 (Burnaby)
Email: chair@burnabydpac.com

Dear Ms. Schnider:

Thank you for your letter of March 2, 2017, addressed to the Honourable Mike de Jong, Minister of Finance and me, regarding your support for the recommendations on K–12 Education as found in the November 2016 report of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.

The Burnaby school district is estimated to receive over \$200 million in operating funding for the first time in 2017/18. Total District funding is estimated at \$204.6 million, as government carries through with its commitments to fully fund labour settlements with teachers and support staff, as well as enrolment growth. This is an increase of \$64 million, or 45 percent since 2000/01, while enrolment only increased by 2 percent in that time.

As you are likely aware, the Province and the BC Teachers' Federation recently negotiated an agreement regarding class size and composition. As part of the agreement, government is committing funds to reducing class sizes and providing for non-enrolling teachers, such as special education teachers, counsellors and teacher-librarians. Additional funding for this agreement will be provided to districts shortly.

This funding is in addition to the \$26.3 million the Burnaby Board of Education is estimated to receive in 2017/18 as part of its operating grants under the Supplement for Unique Student Needs, which is intended to support the educational needs of special needs, English Language Learning, Aboriginal and vulnerable students.

In regards to predictable, sustainable and adequate funding, with government's pledge to a balanced budget, the Ministry of Education was provided with a funding increase in Budget 2017, which delivered an additional \$221 million for public schools alone over the next three fiscal years.

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Overall, 2017/18 operating grant funding is up an estimated \$74 million compared to the previous year and the Ministry is investing a record of \$5.2 billion in public education this year. Annual education funding is \$1.3 billion higher than it was in 2000/01, and the average per student funding for public schools has increased by 45 percent over this same period.

It is important to recognize, Budget 2017 provides funding for the teacher and support staff labour settlements, including the economic stability dividend.

The Ministry is again providing an additional \$25 million for the 2017/18 school year, which will benefit districts through decreased operating charges, for things like internet and insurance costs. This will support funds for boards of education in British Columbia to be used in any area the district chooses. For the Burnaby School District in particular, this means an additional \$1 million is available to invest in local priorities in 2017/18. Importantly, government has made a commitment this \$25 million will be ongoing for the education sector.

In regards to adequate funding to meet capacity needs, this year's budget delivered an historic increase to education funding. British Columbia's education system will benefit from an additional \$2 billion in funding over the next three years. In the last two years, the Ministry has made major investments in new schools, additions, and in seismic mitigations. Across the province, tremendous progress has been made with upgrading and replacing seismic high-risk schools to improve student safety.

Since 2014, work has been completed or underway to create almost 11,000 new student spaces in the construction of 14 new schools and 7 additions, 404 School Enhancement Program projects to extend the life of facilities throughout the province and 68 Seismic Mitigation Program projects.

Work is also currently underway to create more student spaces in the Burnaby Mountain area at University Highlands Elementary, seismically mitigate Alpha Secondary and create more than 4,800 new student seats in Langley, Surrey and Coquitlam through the construction of new schools and classroom additions.

I can assure you, the Ministry of Education and school district staff are working together to ensure capital projects are approved and completed as expeditiously as possible.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact George Farkas, Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Management and Corporate Services Division, by phone at (250) 356-1883 or by email at George.Farkas@gov.bc.ca.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Mike Bernier
Minister

pc: Honourable Mike de Jong, Minister of Finance
Richard Lee, MLA, Burnaby North