



ITEM 10

To: **Board of Education**

From: Trustee
Kim Dumore

Re: **TRUSTEE MOTION: FUNDING FOR
STRONGSTART BC PROGRAMS**

Date: January 17, 2024
(Public Board Meeting)

Decision

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

School Districts across the province have consistently demonstrated unwavering support for Early Learning initiatives with StrongStart Centres serving as models for early learning best practices. These programs play a pivotal role in providing invaluable support to young families, offering play-based learning experiences for children aged birth to five¹. Moreover, they create opportunities for facilitators to engage in positive and supportive conversations with parents and caregivers. These interactions address the importance and value of play-based early learning activities, social-emotional wellness, and child development and connect families with valuable community resources.

Since the Province began expanding StrongStart BC programs in BC in 2006/07², StrongStart has proven to be a cornerstone in fostering the growth of our youngest learners. Regrettably, the program's funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care has remained stagnant since 2012/13. For School District No. 42 this represents \$256,000 of funding for the operation of eight programs.

This outdated funding model is woefully insufficient to cover the increasing operational expenses incurred by StrongStart Centres impacted by inflation on salaries, benefits, and supplies. While the funding has remained stagnant, the 12-month average consumer price index for BC has increased more than 26% from June 2013 to June 2023³. Without a corresponding increase in funding, school districts have needed to subsidize these Special Purpose Fund programs from Operating Fund budgets; however, this is unfair and not sustainable.

In light of the invaluable contributions these programs make to the overall well-being and development of our community's youngest members, immediate action is necessary to address the funding shortfall and ensure the sustained success of StrongStart programs throughout British Columbia.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board approve the following motion for submission to the 2024 B.C. School Trustees Association Annual General Meeting:

"THAT BCSTA urge the Minister of Education and Child Care to address the critical funding shortfalls experienced by School Districts in operating StrongStart BC centres by fully funding the StrongStart programs."

¹ [StrongStart BC - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www.gov.bc.ca/strongstart/)

² [New StrongStart BC Centre opens doors to young learners | BC Gov News](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/news/education_2023-24/20230927-strongstart-centre-opens-doors-to-young-learners)

³ [Consumer Price Index \(CPI\) - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/news/economy/20230627-consumer-price-index-cpi)

21. Funding for StrongStart BC Programs

Category: Education Finance

Motion #:	21 : A202421	Sponsor:	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows <i>and</i> Pacific Rim <i>and</i> Vancouver Island Branch
Meeting:	AGM 2024	Action:	<i>not specified</i>
Category:		Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May 2024: Met with Ministry staff re: motion
Disposition:	Carried as amended		

Motion as Adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the BCSTA request that the Minister of Education and Child Care fully fund StrongStart BC programs including Franc départ to address the critical funding shortfalls experienced by school districts in operating these early learning opportunities.

Motion as Presented:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the BCSTA request that the Minister of Education and Child Care fully fund StrongStart BC programs to address the critical funding shortfalls experienced by school districts in operating these early learning opportunities.

Rationale:

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

School Districts across the province continue to support early learning initiatives with StrongStart Centres serving as models for early learning best practices. These programs play a pivotal role in providing invaluable support to young families, offering play-based learning experiences for children aged birth to five^[1]. Moreover, they create opportunities for facilitators to engage in positive and supportive conversations with parents and caregivers. These interactions address the importance and value of play-based early learning activities, social-emotional wellness, and child development and connect families with valuable community resources.

Since the Province began expanding StrongStart BC programs in BC in 2006/07^[2], StrongStart has proven to be a cornerstone in fostering the growth of our youngest learners. Regrettably, the program's funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care has remained stagnant since 2012/13.

This outdated funding model is insufficient to cover the increasing operational expenses incurred by StrongStart Centres impacted by inflation on salaries, benefits, and supplies. While the funding has remained stagnant, the 12-month average consumer price index for BC has increased more than 26% from June 2013 to June 2023^[3]. Without a corresponding increase in funding, school districts have needed to subsidize these Special Purpose Fund programs from Operating Fund budgets; however, this is unfair and not sustainable.

In light of the invaluable contributions these programs make to the overall well-being and development of our community's youngest members, immediate action is necessary to address the funding shortfall and ensure the sustained success of StrongStart programs throughout British Columbia.

Reference(s):

[1] [StrongStart BC - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

[2] [New StrongStart BC Centre opens doors to young learners | BC Gov News](#)

[3] [Consumer Price Index \(CPI\) - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

August 6, 2024

The Honourable David Eby

Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria B.C. V8W 9E1
premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Eby,

Subject: Committing to Funding for StrongStart BC Programs

On behalf of the membership of the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA), I am asking for your party's commitment to fully fund StrongStart BC programs, including Franc départ, as part of your platform ahead of the 2024 provincial election.

B.C.'s 60 boards of education have identified the urgent need to address these funding shortfalls, which hinder the operation of these critical early learning initiatives. Immediately following our annual general meeting, we met with Ministry of Education and Child Care staff in May to discuss the need for increased funding to ensure some of the youngest students who need additional support are provided with the early learning opportunities they need to succeed.

Since 2006/07, StrongStart has been a cornerstone of early childhood education in B.C., but funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care has not increased substantially since 2012/13 despite rising operational costs. School districts subsidize these programs from their operating funds, which is unsustainable. These programs contribute significantly to young children's safety, mental health and overall well-being by providing safe and supportive learning environments. Due to a lack of federal funding, they also play a crucial role in meeting the needs of newcomer families as part of the settlement process. In short, they are vital to setting a foundation for success with learners and families across B.C.



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

As the election approaches in October, emphasizing the importance of StrongStart BC programs and the need for appropriate funding in your campaign will resonate with voters across B.C. by signaling the value you place in public education and early learning initiatives.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

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: A202421

CC: BCSTA member boards of education
Suzanne Hoffman, CEO, BCSTA
BCSTA Board of Directors



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

August 6, 2024

Kevin Falcon

Leader

BC United

Room 201, Parliament Buildings

Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

kevin.falcon.mla@leg.bc.ca

Dear Kevin Falcon,

Subject: Committing to Funding for StrongStart BC Programs

On behalf of the membership of the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA), I am asking for your party's commitment to fully fund StrongStart BC programs, including Franc départment, as part of your platform ahead of the 2024 provincial election.

B.C.'s 60 boards of education have identified the urgent need to address these funding shortfalls, which hinder the operation of these critical early learning initiatives. Immediately following our annual general meeting, we met with Ministry of Education and Child Care staff in May to discuss the need for increased funding to ensure some of the youngest students who need additional support are provided with the early learning opportunities they need to succeed.

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Motion: A202421

CC: BCSTA member boards of education
Suzanne Hoffman, CEO, BCSTA
BCSTA Board of Directors



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

August 6, 2024

Sonia Furstenau

Leader

BC Green Party

Room 101, Parliament Buildings

Victoria B.C. V8V 1X4

sonia.furstenau.mla@leg.bc.ca

Dear Sonia Furstenau,

Subject: Committing to Funding for StrongStart BC Programs

On behalf of the membership of the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA), I am asking for your party's commitment to fully fund StrongStart BC programs, including Franc départment, as part of your platform ahead of the 2024 provincial election.

B.C.'s 60 boards of education have identified the urgent need to address these funding shortfalls, which hinder the operation of these critical early learning initiatives. Immediately following our annual general meeting, we met with Ministry of Education and Child Care staff in May to discuss the need for increased funding to ensure some of the youngest students who need additional support are provided with the early learning opportunities they need to succeed.

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CC: BCSTA member boards of education
Suzanne Hoffman, CEO, BCSTA
BCSTA Board of Directors



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

August 6, 2024

John Rustad

Leader

Conservative Party of British Columbia
327 - 1434 Ironwood Street
Campbell River, B.C. V9W 5T5
john.rustad@conservativebc.ca

Dear John Rustad,

Subject: Committing to Funding for StrongStart BC Programs

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