



April 25, 2024

Bob D'Eith, MLA  
Maple Ridge-Mission  
Email: [Bob.DEith.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Bob.DEith.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

Lisa Beare, MLA  
Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows  
Email: [Lisa.Beare.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Lisa.Beare.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

Dear MLAs D'Eith and Beare,

I am writing to you on behalf of the board of education with a formal request regarding a pressing issue that has been impacting our school district profoundly. As you have been hearing informally, our board is deeply concerned about the inequitable CommunityLINK and Equity of Opportunity funding for school districts, particularly as it pertains to supporting vulnerable families within our communities.

I have attached a chart (**Attachment A**) showing just how significant the disparity in funding is. This gross inequity is exacerbating the fiscal challenges faced by our district. We struggle to fund positions to provide supports to vulnerable students and families. This imbalance not only undermines our ability to provide quality education but also hampers our capacity to address urgent needs within our district effectively.

Our feeding futures program capitalizes on the money we do receive, but as you can see by the attached chart, our district receives the absolute lowest amount of funding per capita to support our vulnerable families.

This lack of funding has a system-wide effect. Of immediate concern is the impending budget proposal to close one of our eight under resourced StrongStart locations. The special purpose funding of this program has been frozen since 2012/13 despite 26% inflationary pressures since that time and with lack of equitable family support funding, we can no longer pull funds from our general operating budgets to fund these programs.

A cut to StrongStart programming would have severe repercussions for the vulnerable families and children who rely on this essential service. Furthermore, our district is struggling to adequately support other critical areas such as our under-resourced grounds crew and insufficient support for maintenance staff.

Your own Minister of Education and Child Care, the Honourable Rachna Singh acknowledged the need to address this gross inequity in her October 5, 2023 letter to you (**Attachment B**).

A particularly glaring example of this disparity is the comparison between our district and the New Westminster school district, where despite having less than half the student population, they receive double the funding. This stark contrast is not only unfair but also hinders our ability to provide equitable opportunities for all students in our care.



Given the urgency of this matter and its significant implications for our students and community, we kindly request your assistance in understanding what actions the Ministry of Education and Child Care is undertaking to rectify this funding disparity. We seek clarity on the timeline for addressing this issue and implementing measures to ensure fair and equitable distribution of resources across all school districts.

Addressing this funding disparity is not only a matter of fairness but also a crucial step towards fulfilling our mandate of providing equitable opportunities for all learners.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to pursuing this further in our meeting on May 3, 2024.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elaine Yamamoto", is written over a light blue background.

Elaine Yamamoto, Chairperson  
Board of Education

Cc: The Board of Education, School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)  
Teresa Downs, Superintendent of Schools  
Richard Rennie, Secretary Treasurer

Attachments



October 5, 2023

Ref: 292255

Bob D'Eith, MLA  
Maple Ridge-Mission  
**Email: Bob.DEith.MLA@leg.bc.ca**

Lisa Beare, MLA  
Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows  
**Email: Lisa.Beare.MLA@leg.bc.ca**

Dear MLAs D'Eith and Beare,

Thank you for your letter of June 28, 2023, regarding the concerns raised by School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows) (the District) with respect to the standards used for school design, the school expansion and replacement process, and the food programs and CommunityLINK funding.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care (the Ministry) is committed to advancing Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples across British Columbia. The Ministry recognizes the importance of providing Indigenous students with a learning experience that enables both equity of opportunity and equity of outcome.

The Ministry's Area Standards establishes a consistent base standard for districts to ensure that the new space being created adequately meets the needs of the proposed student population. Various mechanisms exist within the Area Standards that allow districts the flexibility to decide the usage of new space within the allotted space parameters. This flexibility allows for the construction of Indigenous elements, space to support foods programming, and other uses.

As you may know, the Ministry provides funding for Neighbourhood Learning Centre (NLC) space to be built concurrently with expansion projects. The funding allowance is provided based on community needs, which are determined through a community consultation process whereby districts consult with relevant community stakeholders. The Ministry has supported many districts to use NLC space funding to construct dedicated Indigenous space and child care, and would encourage any school district to explore this option should they have the same need.

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Regarding funding for food programs spaces in existing schools, the Ministry was delighted to announce the School Food Infrastructure Program (FIP), which is an annual allocation of \$5 million to support school districts with creating, improving, or expanding infrastructure to feed students across all communities in British Columbia. The FIP is directly tied to government's broader *Feeding Futures* program, which is a commitment to ensure students are properly fed for learning to enhance positive academic and healthy outcomes for students. Following the first intake of school district priorities in June 2023, the Ministry is currently working to formally announce these approvals and provide school districts with the associated funding. FIP is a funding opportunity that the District can leverage to further expand food infrastructure in existing schools.

With respect to space in schools to support vocational foods training, Ministry staff are currently working with the District to determine the usage of space in the proposed Pitt Meadows Secondary School replacement, including area allocation for foods programs and a teaching kitchen.

Since 2017, the government has approved the investment of over \$63 million (including \$8.2 million in School District 42 contributions) to support the delivery of a replacement school, two seismic upgrades and the acquisition of a new school site in the District. These investments will create over 2,300 safe seats, over 200 new student spaces, and will set aside land for a new school in a growing area of the District.

Through *Budget 2023*, the District was also supported to develop business cases for the full replacement of Pitt Meadows Secondary as well as the seismic upgrade and expansion of Harry Hooge Elementary, both of which reflect government's commitment to investing in new and modernized schools for students. Looking forward, the Ministry is in the process of reviewing the District's 2024/25 5-year Capital Plan submission and will consider these requests alongside other requests for capital funding from British Columbia's other 59 school districts, with the outcome becoming known following the release of *Budget 2024*.

Lastly, we agree that the funding allocations under CommunityLINK require revision as they are based on outdated socio-economic data and a historical grant application process, and therefore no longer address current inequities across the province. Internal discussions are taking place on how to address these inequities.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Rachna Singh  
Minister

# ATTACHMENT B

School District	Summary		Table 4c	Table 1b	Per Student		
	Community-LINK	Equity of Opportunity Supplement Total	Enrolment 2024/25 Full-Year	Total of CommunityLINK & Equity of Opportunity	Community-LINK	Equity of Opportunity Supplement	CommunityLINK & Equity of Opportunity
42 Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	632,170	499,444	16,706.2500	1,131,614	38	30	68
93 Conseil scolaire francophone	139,727	290,990	6,196.0000	430,717	23	47	70
37 Delta	665,164	540,473	16,146.2500	1,205,637	41	33	75
45 West Vancouver	322,493	278,023	7,403.1900	600,516	44	38	81
43 Coquitlam	1,720,935	1,097,748	34,235.0000	2,818,683	50	32	82
23 Central Okanagan	1,293,116	923,843	25,277.8750	2,216,959	51	37	88
36 Surrey	4,362,041	2,803,508	81,680.3996	7,165,549	53	34	88
38 Richmond	862,931	1,175,452	23,163.6250	2,038,383	37	51	88
62 Sooke	797,821	450,986	13,633.5000	1,248,807	59	33	92
71 Comox Valley	626,643	435,454	10,930.8750	1,062,097	57	40	97
83 North Okanagan-Shuswap	366,197	290,676	6,698.1054	656,873	55	43	98
44 North Vancouver	1,293,469	466,069	16,710.6250	1,759,538	77	28	105
34 Abbotsford	1,320,021	861,910	20,612.6250	2,181,931	64	42	106
48 Sea to Sky	341,085	238,222	5,069.0675	579,307	67	47	114
33 Chilliwack	771,423	1,028,855	15,560.2800	1,800,278	50	66	116
35 Langley	2,345,214	710,512	25,735.0572	3,055,726	91	28	119
63 Saanich	481,653	455,522	7,710.7500	937,175	62	59	122
75 Mission	456,462	377,192	6,777.0000	833,654	67	56	123
5 Southeast Kootenay	419,328	331,664	5,967.0000	750,992	70	56	126
41 Burnaby	2,693,837	985,477	28,289.9375	3,679,314	95	35	130
22 Vernon	648,872	554,688	8,989.4375	1,203,560	72	62	134
67 Okanagan Skaha	402,015	383,461	5,847.5300	785,476	69	66	134
47 Powell River	228,750	215,477	3,162.0000	444,227	72	68	140
79 Cowichan Valley	761,512	471,657	8,721.7930	1,233,169	87	54	141
<b>Provincial Total</b>	<b>59,980,898</b>	<b>27,500,000</b>	<b>601,530.3175</b>	<b>87,480,898</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>145</b>
69 Qualicum	438,392	212,839	4,417.0000	651,231	99	48	147
19 Revelstoke	117,117	50,079	1,122.0000	167,196	104	45	149
60 Peace River North	642,426	292,673	6,146.0000	935,099	105	48	152
73 Kamloops-Thompson	1,691,176	913,905	15,994.6500	2,605,081	106	57	163
72 Campbell River	598,769	359,061	5,829.5000	957,830	103	62	164
53 Okanagan Similkameen	253,277	139,942	2,379.7500	393,219	106	59	165
6 Rocky Mountain	441,470	152,639	3,468.8900	594,109	127	44	171
64 Gulf Islands	164,095	84,083	1,445.0000	248,178	114	58	172
59 Peace River South	413,832	247,971	3,793.2490	661,803	109	65	174
51 Boundary	171,033	73,828	1,306.0000	244,861	131	57	187
54 Bulkley Valley	262,678	107,344	1,943.0000	370,022	135	55	190
8 Kootenay Lake	750,517	254,823	4,753.0000	1,005,340	158	54	212
46 Sunshine Coast	555,080	201,734	3,500.1250	756,814	159	58	216
58 Nicola-Similkameen	320,941	156,898	2,144.3744	477,839	150	73	223
20 Kootenay-Columbia	763,792	180,386	4,176.8390	944,178	183	43	226
68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith	2,609,510	902,296	15,421.1750	3,511,806	169	59	228
27 Cariboo-Chilcotin	733,079	380,845	4,592.0000	1,113,924	160	83	243
91 Nechako Lakes	578,577	346,496	3,813.0000	925,073	152	91	243
39 Vancouver	10,563,442	2,428,958	52,648.6875	12,992,400	201	46	247
82 Coast Mountains	652,960	367,921	4,134.0000	1,020,881	158	89	247
57 Prince George	2,417,153	884,013	13,171.2500	3,301,166	184	67	251
61 Greater Victoria	4,255,751	1,098,477	20,604.7980	5,354,228	207	53	260
40 New Westminster	1,725,662	377,387	7,958.0000	2,103,049	217	47	264
28 Quesnel	563,346	238,744	2,969.6250	802,090	190	80	270
10 Arrow Lakes	107,223	34,315	503.0000	141,538	213	68	281
81 Fort Nelson	153,794	38,923	622.9000	192,717	247	62	309
78 Fraser-Cascade	390,086	170,967	1,751.9375	561,053	223	98	320
50 Haida Gwaii	122,812	41,350	491.0000	164,162	250	84	334
70 Pacific Rim	1,014,040	364,548	3,998.0000	1,378,588	254	91	345
85 Vancouver Island North	368,249	130,672	1,223.0000	498,921	301	107	408
52 Prince Rupert	578,582	192,357	1,837.0000	770,939	315	105	420
74 Gold Trail	422,227	101,982	1,048.0000	524,209	403	97	500
92 Nisga'a	156,883	39,124	380.0000	196,007	413	103	516
84 Vancouver Island West	147,044	34,304	317.0000	181,348	464	108	572
49 Central Coast	279,375	17,441	212.3944	296,816	1,315	82	1,397
87 Stikine	603,629	13,372	190.0000	617,001	3,177	70	3,247