



BC Confederation of
Parent Advisory Councils

BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC)

Presentation to

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Public Hearing

Friday June 21, 2019

Surrey, British Columbia

Submitted by

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Introduction

The [BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils](#) (BCCPAC) is once again pleased to have the opportunity to submit its recommendations on public education priorities to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for the 2020 provincial budget.

BCCPAC, a non-partisan registered non-profit charity in operation since 1922, represents the parents/guardians of over 565,000 children attending provincial public schools. Recognized by the provincial government and education partners, BCCPAC is the collective voice of parents on educational issues within the public system. We strive to foster a culture of acceptance, diversity and inclusion in our public schools and advocate for systemic changes and individual parent advocacy. BCCPAC is governed by a volunteer board of nine directors elected annually by the membership; our District Parent Advisory Councils (DPAC) membership represents 96% of parents in public education and Parent Advisory Councils (PAC) from all 60 school districts across the province.

Every child has the right to a free, high-quality public education and the provincial government has the responsibility to ensure this right. The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) both affirm the responsibility of governments to ensure that all children—irrespective of race, religion, gender, ability or economic situation—have equal right to access an education directed to the development of their full human potential, respecting cultural, national and Aboriginal identities and for the perpetuation and furtherance of human freedom, equality, tolerance and environmental sustainability for all.

The BC government's [Policy on Diversity](#) clearly articulates that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that "differences among learners do not impede their participation in school, their mastery of learning outcomes, or their ability to become contributing members of society".

The [2017 Report](#) from the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services "emphasized the importance of equity and fairness within the K-12 system in order to ensure that the diverse needs of communities across the province are met, and that all students, including those with special needs, receive a high-quality public education".

During the fall of 2018, [education was the fifth most common theme](#) in response to the first question in the online survey by this Committee.

"Many submissions and presentations highlighted the importance of investing in K-12 education, and shared challenges with respect to capital funding, operational funding, recruitment and retention, and the new curriculum. The needs of Indigenous learners and students with special needs was particularly highlighted."



This [Select Standing Committee for Finance and Government Services](#) has repeatedly affirmed since 2014 that public education is not adequately supported by public funds. This Committee has [recommended](#) “the need to ensure that every child, including children with special needs and vulnerable students, can benefit from the education system”. They further agreed on the “need to establish clear standards of support for students with special needs in both the public and independent school systems”. The Committee recognized the challenges faced by the education system, including “acknowledging the need for more capital funding to address issues, such as deferred maintenance, seismic safety and capacity”. BCCPAC and its members fully support the K-12 funding recommendations made in the previous five reports of this Committee.

The preamble of [BC School Act](#) sets out the purpose of the provincial education system to “enable all learners—regardless of race, gender, ability or economic means—to become literate, to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy”. Additionally, the [BC Statement of Education Policy Order](#) (Mandate for the School System) affirms the purpose and mission of education: “The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy”.

We are pleased the Ministry of Education is “[committed to fostering a flexible, personalized and sustainable education system, which is focused on strong outcomes and equitable access to educational opportunities for all students.](#)” Our education system plays a crucial role in preparing students for the future, and must be reflective of our society. We again strongly commend the Ministry for undertaking the long-overdue and significant task of a revision of the K-12 funding model.

As the provincially mandated voice of parents uniquely representing student interests, our comments and recommendations reflect our own Mission Statement and Vision Statement and the great many member resolutions that have been passed advocating for changes to address local district and larger provincial concerns.

We have identified **five key recommendations** that are critical for every child to have equitable access to public education with the supports and services they need to succeed.

Recommendation 1—Provide Stable, Predictable and Adequate Funding

That the provincial government act now on the recommendations from the past five years of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services that have called for adequate, stable, and predictable funding for the K-12 public education system to ensure the provision of education programs, resources, wrap-around services, and personnel meets the actual needs of all students. There must be equity of funding across all 60 school districts to ensure equal opportunity for all students across BC.



Recommendation 2—Increase Capital Funding

That the Treasury increase capital funding for the Ministry of Education to develop a plan and timelines to replace old schools where existing schools are close to or exceeding their life expectancy and to address the soaring deferred maintenance costs.

That the Treasury increase capital funding for the Ministry of Education to continue to accelerate the Seismic Mitigation Program (SMP) to meet the provincial government commitment of having all public school building upgrades and replacements complete by 2025/2030.

That the Treasury fund portables, where necessary, for temporary accommodation during seismic upgrades and create special bridge-funding to cover the cost of portables until the reliance is eliminated.

That the Treasury double capital funding to the Ministry of Education for the Playground Equipment Program which attempts to address the continued pressure on parents to fundraise for accessible playground equipment and recognizes one of the many inequities within the public education system. The current \$5M annual capital expenditure only helps to alleviate some of the inequities in parent fundraising.

That the Ministry of Education revise the current Ministry Area Standards as it is the basis for all upgrades and new school builds and develop a strategy to proactively fund new school construction in areas of current/anticipated population growth based on census data and municipal plans.

Recommendation 3—Increase Operational Funding

That the provincial government increase K-12 public education operational funding in Budget 2020 to provide sustainable, predictable funding through a student-centered model that allows school districts to cover the costs of delivering education, reflects the actual fixed operating costs of operating school facilities and covers all the downloaded costs to school districts, as well as any inflationary costs including:

- Immediate increased funding and resources to address the backlog of students waiting for formal psycho-educational assessment.
- Immediately address the shortage of school psychologists and clinical psychologists in BC including increasing post-secondary positions and recruitment and help facilitate the cross jurisdictional international transfer of qualifications for professionals.
- Increase funding for students with special needs, including establishing clear standards and funding for early identification, and the provision of appropriate supports, and the training and recruitment of specialized staff.



- Provide funding to ensure that the necessary resources and technology are available across all school districts to effectively implement the revised curriculum and graduation requirements.
- Fund the provision of an age-appropriate sexual health curriculum for all grades that includes matters of consent and online safety, with the assistance of qualified sexual health educators.

Recommendation 4—Support a New Student-Centered Funding Model

That the provincial government with the Ministry of Education continue the process of the Funding Model Review in developing a new student-needs-based, equitable, transparent and accountable funding model for the K-12 public system for Budget 2020.

Recommendation 5—Support Investment in Protected Childcare Spaces at Schools

That the provincial government provide additional investments to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of State for Child Care to facilitate their working together to create more protected child care (before/after school care) spaces in schools across the province for Budget 2020.



Recommendation 1—Provide Stable, Predictable and Adequate Funding

That the provincial government act now on the recommendations from the past five years of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services that have called for adequate, stable, and predictable funding for the K-12 public education system to ensure the provision of education programs, resources, wrap-around services, and personnel that meets the actual needs of all students. There must be equity of funding across all 60 school districts to ensure equal opportunity for all students across BC.

In 2002 the provincial government [introduced measures](#) that altered the funding for public education from a school and needs-based formula to [per-pupil based formula](#). While the total annual funding dollars going towards education has increased annually, the allocation for public education has not kept pace with inflation, increases in contract agreements, rising operational and maintenance expenses or the increased numbers of students identified, or suspected, high and low incidence special needs.

BC lags behind the rest of Canada in terms of spending per student. In the five-year period [2008-2009 to 2012-2013](#), the average expenditure per student in Canada increased 14.1%; in BC, it only increased by 6.5%. For 2012-13, the average expenditure per student nationally was \$12,377 while BC remained at \$12,113. Had BC matched this average national expenditure, it would have added an additional \$143 million in funding for the province's 565,000 students.

The current funding model and the total amount of money for public education does not adequately meet the needs of our students. The principle that every student in the province should have an equal opportunity to be educated per the School Act is not the reality across BC. Economic and social realities differ across the province with the consequence being that school communities even within a district have vastly differing capacities for fundraising (e.g., through charity, student fees, and/or parental fundraising). Schools dependent on the ability of their communities to address inadequate funding results in unequal learning opportunities.

Adequately funding public education is not about whether or not we have the public funds; it is a choice in priorities and spending made by the government. Unpredictable funding and unfunded cost increases (all downloaded to school districts, with many of these costs outpacing inflation) require school districts to spend time and resources on balancing budgets each year instead of strategically planning the most effective use of funding to support student success.

Successful implementation of the revised curriculum requires sufficient funding to support in-service, collaboration time and learning resources. Public education and our children need funding that meets the true need and cost of delivering public education across the province, allowing for rural and urban uniqueness.



Recommendation 2—Increase Capital Funding

We support Recommendation 61 from the Select Standing Committee on Government and Financial Services' [Report on Budget 2019](#), that the Treasury increase “capital funding to school districts to build new schools, maintain and upgrade existing facilities, conduct seismic upgrades, and add classroom space and accessible/inclusive playgrounds”.

Seismic and New Builds

In 2008, the [BC Auditor General](#) reported “Southwestern BC is an earthquake environment similar to that of the coasts of Japan, Alaska, and Central and South America.” The [Great BC Shakeout](#) will again take place on October 17, 2019 in schools across the province. Although activities like this are important, such preparations will not save children and staff in seismically vulnerable buildings when the inevitable earthquake event does occur.

The provincial government initiated its [Seismic Mitigation Plan](#) (SMP) in 2004 and identified 347 High Risk schools across the province. Buildings that are designated “High Risk” are likely to suffer structural failure (collapse) during even a moderate earthquake and be unusable afterwards. In 2005, the government promised British Columbians that “all at-risk schools in BC would be seismically upgraded by 2020.”

In 2005, the provincial government stipulated as part of the SMP that replacement schools should be built instead of upgrading existing structures, if the cost of seismically upgrading was more than 70% of the cost of building a new school. While retrofitting or upgrading an existing school building such that it can hopefully withstand an earthquake and allow students and staff to exit and survive is often the lowest-cost choice (as opposed to replacing it with a new building) retrofitted buildings are designed only to meet the standard of ensuring occupants exit safely—unlikely to be achievable in a major earthquake—they are not designed to be usable afterwards. Alternatively replacement/new buildings are designed to be usable the next day. It is short-sighted to save a small amount of money and risk countless lives by doing retrofits when it will be much more expensive later when we need to rebuild these schools after an earthquake. Community and neighbourhood schools are the heart of the community and will be required as emergency shelters and to help families return to normalcy.

Replacing an old school will also eliminate millions in deferred maintenance costs—Vancouver alone has over \$800 million in deferred maintenance. These are buildings that, in addition to being seismically unsafe, contain lead pipes, lead paint, and asbestos, are not full accessible and/or lack appropriate or sufficient facilities like washrooms, and aren't designed to enable 21st-century learning and the redesigned curriculum. These issues are not necessarily addressed during a seismic retrofit.



In 2013, the provincial government stated it would be up to school districts to “confirm the scope, schedule, budget and risks” associated with individual seismic projects before they will receive approval to move to the design and construction phase. In 2015, delays were caused by disagreements over the scope of the projects. The initial 2020 completion date for 347 upgrades was pushed back to 2025, and for Vancouver as late as 2030.

While the 2019 Budget included \$791M to accelerate the SMP over three years, the latest [SMP report in May 2019](#) indicates there remain 130 schools which have not truly even begun the seismic approval process. With the government’s commitment date of 2025/2030 fast approaching, there needs to be strengthened financial commitment to help expedite the SMP to ensure all children across the province are learning in safe buildings.

Portables within Capital Budget

The Ministry of Education’s capital funding has not historically paid for students to be accommodated in portables while their schools were being upgraded. This cost has been downloaded to school districts to address within their operational budgets which results in less operating funds to deliver educational programming to students. Between the actual physical portable, to moving it, placing it, wiring it, and the carbon tax associated, funding portables is a significant drain on the district operational budget and a negative impact to funds available for student needs. This lessens, by millions of dollars per year, funding that was intended for student resources. Students should not be deprived of resources because the government is inadequately funding school capital infrastructure.

Many schools, particularly in rapidly-growing districts, are overcrowded, and as a result a reliance on portables continues. Understanding the challenges of districts who currently fund the cost of portables out of their operating budgets, this Select Standing Committee has already heard how special bridge funding might be used to cover the cost of this expense until the reliance on portables is eliminated. There is also a need to develop a strategy for new school construction that proactively addresses needs in order to avoid the complex issues that arise from overcrowding. Where there is large-scale development with increasing numbers of families and children, school infrastructure capacity is needed and it must be a consideration from the beginning of development planning, not an afterthought at the end.

The government needs to increase funding for ongoing maintenance and upgrades to address the needs of aging school facilities (until they are rebuilt) and should employ industry maintenance standards as a guide. Funding for school building maintenance is only 25% of industry standards (Building Owner and Managers Association) and within most school districts aging school buildings are at risk of accelerated deterioration due to insufficient maintenance levels.



Playground Equipment Program

The creation of the new annual Playground Equipment Program (PEP) in 2018 finally recognized the ongoing and significant pressure on parents to fundraise for school playgrounds. While the current \$5 million annual capital expenditure within PEP does help to alleviate some of the inequities in parent fundraising and enable Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) to strengthen their advisory and advocacy roles, it doesn't go far enough. Parents believe that safe, inclusive and accessible playgrounds should not be dependent on a school community's ability or inability to raise some or all the funds required.

BCCPAC members were pleased to learn in April 2019, that the Ministry of Education had updated the [Capital Plan Instructions](#) to school districts ensuring that only universally accessible Playground Equipment requests will be accepted. Universally accessible playground equipment serves the same purpose as standard playground equipment, but is designed to be accessible by all elementary-aged students, including children with disabilities or developmental challenges who need to interact with playgrounds in a specialized manner, including wheelchair use.

Given there are over 1100 elementary schools across the province, at the current rate of about 50 playgrounds each year with the existing funding, and the higher costs associated with accessible playground structures, there are children in elementary schools who will age out (i.e. leave the school) before a playground is built for their use. Currently there are a number of schools without any playground facility for their students.

Ministry Area Standards

BC is a world leader in innovative curriculum design for 21st century learning. However, the [Ministry Area Standards](#), the official blueprint that sets the physical parameters for educational spaces and learning environments, is based on an outdated model of educational delivery. The current Area Standards document is centred on the classroom as a self-contained unit for whole-group, teacher-driven content delivery. By contrast, 21st century learning requires a range of flexible spaces in and beyond the classroom to support personalized learning, collaboration and experiential, hands-on learning.

The government created the [Ministry Area Standards](#) in 2004. Under this provision, [new schools are on average 30% smaller](#) than those built for previous generations and serving equivalent (or larger) population sizes. Outside the square footage maximums allocated for classrooms, office, resource and gym space, the extra 'design space' allocation based on population size is taken up in hallways and washrooms and sometimes a single multipurpose room used for before/after school care and as a lunch room. There are no specific space allocations in Area Standards for non-enrolling classrooms, specialty rooms for the changing needs of the redesigned curriculum including core subjects like music and art within elementary schools.



The current [Area Standards](#) does not allow sufficient space for school facilities that reflect best educational practices or the aspired educational goals of the revised curriculum. Investments in new schools should reflect best practices in education research and support the BC curriculum; there should be guidelines for optimal sizes for student populations that prevent the creation of mega schools in urban centres for purely cost ‘efficiencies’. It is imperative that priority be given to revising this guiding document as it informs the baseline for all upgrades and new school builds.

Recommendation 3—Increase Operational Funding

Over the last two decades, [parent leaders have repeatedly voiced concerns](#) that funds allocated by the Ministry of Education do not fully meet the needs of BC students and through BCCPAC have collectively called for more funding to be directed towards public education. Parents from across the province have [voiced the need for long term and stable financial support](#) for public schools with increased levels of funding to meet the actual costs of delivering necessary services to our students.

Parent across the province ask that downloaded cost pressures, such as provincially negotiated wage settlements and collective agreements and, energy rate increases be fully funded annually as additional increases to operating funding and that each year’s public education funding amount be adjusted for inflation.

Address Assessment Wait Times and Delays

There is an acknowledged gap in resources and supports for special needs and other vulnerable students, including early identification, designation and programming for these learners. Exacerbating the current inadequate levels of special needs supports is the long wait time for formal assessments of students who have been identified as having a learning difference. According to BCCPAC members, wait lists of three and four years are sadly common and a number of parents are told their child will never be assessed. As a result, many frustrated parents opt to have their children assessed privately in order to more successfully advocate for their child’s access to supports and intervention. This has created an inequity in the public education system, as costs of psycho-educational assessments are borne by parents who are financially able, and other students wait years for intervention and assessment. All students—regardless of their family economic situation—deserve timely early intervention and assessment.

Immediate [increased funding and resources](#) must be provided to address the backlog of students waiting for assessment. Additionally, ongoing funding must be increased to school districts, to support the early identification and assessment required to obtain "designations" needed for intervention and support for students' academic, physical, behavioural, social and/or emotional challenges.



Per Recommendation 4 in the 2017 [Room for Improvement Report](#) from the Representative for Children and Youth, “that the Ministry of Education, school districts and Ministry of Children and Family work together to create positions dedicated to information-sharing, coordination and advocacy in support of education outcomes of children and youth in care.

A process by which a child could be supported from birth to age 20, with wrap-around services and resources would be transformative. Building connections between the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Children & Family Development so they work more seamlessly together would facilitate a holistic approach and help limit or remove many barriers. Improving the communication and interaction and the sharing of information between these Ministries would improve the experiences of students and their families as they enter the school system, experience their educational years, and transition into adulthood.

Staff from School District 57 in Prince George recently [presented to the Standing Committee for Children and Youth](#) and their comments clearly illustrate one of the many issues faced by parents of neuro-diverse special needs children in the public education system including a province-wide shortage of school psychologists:

“The majority of children with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities are identified at school by school psychologists. This poses a challenge for schools and families, because we’re seeing a trend toward later initial diagnosis in our district of children with intellectual disabilities, due to chronic short-staffing and the prioritization of conducting repeat assessment of 16-year-olds with intellectual disabilities. We’re also having difficulty making space in our caseloads to assess and diagnose children with specific learning disorders in reading, mathematics and writing.”

Increase Special Needs Funding

[Parents have strongly reiterated](#) the need to increase provincial funding to cover the true cost of meeting the requirements of designated and un-designated students with special needs in accordance with Ministry of Education guidelines for special education and inclusion.

Prior to 2005, students with low-incidence special needs received targeted supplemental funding. In 2005 that changed and districts distributed their pooled supplemental funding to meet their district priorities. The current level of funding for Level 1, 2 & 3 special needs funding is inadequate to meet the resources and supports of our most vulnerable learners. For example, Level 2 funding is inadequate for the average necessary supports and services for a student with autism or visual impairment. Our students deserve better.

Every student, regardless of their race, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or level of ability has the right to a full, publicly funded education in BC. Yet BCCPAC has heard from hundreds of parents across the province whose children with special needs are



not receiving the accommodations required and necessary to be able to equitably access public education and attend school full time.

In November 2017, [BCCPAC surveyed families](#) to see how widespread the problem was across BC public schools. Over 800 parents of special needs children, representing 51 of the 60 school districts across the province, responded to the 2017 survey. Of the 372 parents who reported that their child was regularly scheduled for less than a full day of school in the 2016-17 school year, a shocking 132 students were scheduled for less than a half-day on a regular basis. Parents of 336 special needs students reported that their children were sent home the prior year due to staff shortages, with 104 students sent home more than 10 times.

It was and remains unacceptable that 12% of survey participants reported that their children missed the equivalent of two weeks of school due to staff shortages in that school year. Additionally, 348 parents reported that their child was sent home unexpectedly during the course of the school day, which the majority of parents find difficult to coordinate with their work schedule. In over 100 cases, the children were sent home more than ten times during the school year.

According to the current [BC K-12 Funding Special Needs Policy](#) statement:

"Students with special needs may require additional support and accommodations to enable them to access and participate in educational programs. The Basic Allocation, a standard amount of money provided per school age student enrolled in a school district, includes funds to support the learning needs of students who are identified as having learning disabilities, mild intellectual disabilities, students requiring moderate behaviour supports and students who are gifted."

Parents of children with special needs have made it clear that their children are being left behind and are not able to achieve their potential.

Adequately Fund Curriculum Changes

The Premier's [mandate letter to the Minister of Education](#) specifically states, "Provide additional annual funding to ensure students have the school supplies they need to succeed" and "implement BC's new school curriculum and provide new technology, lab equipment, learning materials". Parents and families across the province continue to be obligated to pay individually for items which should be supplied by the school district and continue to fundraise for items that the [courts have ruled](#) parents should not have to supply.

The provincial government needs to provide funding to ensure that the necessary resources and technology are available across all school districts to effectively implement the revised curriculum and graduation requirements for all students. Too long has the cost and provision of technology been the burden of PACs and parents.

For too many years, public schools around the province have been making do with broken equipment, incomplete sets of books for language arts classes, out-dated textbooks, and



antiquated equipment in shops and lab classes. Parents should not be fundraising for new resources and equipment. Major investment in school resources is long overdue.

Recommendation 61 from the Select Standing Committee on Government and Financial Services' [Report on Budget 2019](#), states that the Treasury “fund the provision of an age-appropriate sexual health curriculum for all grades that includes matters of consent and online safety, with the assistance of qualified sexual health educators”. Both BCCPAC and the BC School Trustee Association passed member resolutions at their respective Annual General Meetings asking for the same.

Despite having been recently revised, the current curriculum does not contain mandatory sexual health education for grade 11 and 12 students; all such curricular content ends in grade 10. Additionally, the word "consent" doesn't appear in the curriculum. While there are references to healthy relationships, there is no specific content or consistent reference to or inclusion of consent or the interplay between sexual health and technology. Given the rise in the access to and use of online pornography, [students engaging in sexting](#) and, of course, cyberbullying and that type of abuse, there is an opportunity to revise the curriculum and add content to address these areas.

Recommendation 4—Support a New Student-Centered Funding Model

That the provincial government with the Ministry of Education continue the process of the [Funding Model Review](#) in developing a new student-needs-based, equitable, transparent and accountable funding model for the K-12 public system for Budget 2020.

The [Report of the Funding Model Review Panel](#) and their 22 Recommendations will “require changes by government, Boards of Education and school district staff” and that “the accountability for educational outcomes in the K-12 public education system is not clear to the public or stakeholders, and is not reported in a clear and transparent manner”.

Changes to the funding formula must be student-centric, be consistent with changes to the Special Education Policy, reflect the diverse challenges of individual school districts, be equitable across the regions, provide the supports and resources needed to meet the diversity of all students’ educational needs and meet the real costs of delivering public education across the province while also clearly demonstrating transparency and accountability by all districts to all the stakeholders, specifically parents.

We are highly supportive of the equity, transparency and financial management and accountability woven throughout the Recommendations and believe the K-12 public education system requires this more consistently across the province.



Recommendation 5—Support Investment in Protected Childcare Spaces at Schools

That the provincial government provide additional investments to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of State for Child Care to work together to create more protected child care (before/after school care) spaces in schools across the province for Budget 2020.

A [survey of British Columbians](#) conducted earlier this year by Research Co. on behalf of \$10aDay showed “that child care is nowhere near as easy for families as it once may have been. In the survey, 70% of parents with a child enrolled in child care say their return to work was delayed because of lack of access to a space, and 76% acknowledged the cost of child care has put a financial strain on their families”. In the same survey, 64% of parents state that the government investments in child care are having a positive impact on their situations. Additionally 66% of British Columbians who do not currently have a need for child care believe the provincial government should continue to make public funding for child care a priority in order to make it more affordable and available for families. And lastly, 76% want the provincial government to move more quickly to achieve the goal of quality, affordable child care.

However, the child care issue for parents and families and the corresponding long wait times they face continues well past age 5 and into Kindergarten as there are insufficient before/after school care spaces in most elementary schools. Additionally, the School Act allows for such child care spaces—essentially a landlord and tenant situation at the school district level—yet they are not protected within the school site and [are often removed or shut down](#) due to the need for classroom space. Even the Ministry of Education’s own Strong Start programs are at risk as classroom space is needed as the space for childcare and other services are not purpose-built or dedicated. There is an opportunity for balance and coordination and looking at schools as more than just building but as community hubs.

We appreciate the recognition of the overlap of mental health and the view of the whole student. Health, mental health, children and families and education Ministries should be working together for the benefit of the child. This is an unprecedented opportunity to look to and work with other Ministries to fund costs that the Ministry of Education currently bears. Many schools perform services that may fall under the purviews of the ministries of MCFD, RCYBC, Health, Mental Health and Addictions and Child Care. By looking for opportunities to use schools as hubs for “wraparound services,” communities will be better served and costs could be borne across ministries.

A process by which a child could be supported from birth to age 20, with wrap-around services and resources would be transformative. Building connections between the related ministries so they work more seamlessly together would facilitate a holistic approach and help limit or remove many barriers. Improving the communication and interaction and the sharing of information between these Ministries would improve the experiences of students and their families as they enter the school system, experience their educational years, and transition into adulthood.



Conclusion and Recommendations

The 2017 [Room for Improvement Report](#) from the Representative for Children and Youth clearly stated: “Certainly most would agree with the vision that public education, at its essence, should help to level the playing field for children and youth—to provide all young people, no matter their family circumstances or life challenges, with the basic knowledge and tools necessary to thrive”.

By increasing its investment in K-12 education, the provincial government can continue its work towards creating a public education system in which each child receives the supports and services they need to thrive and succeed. Parents strongly believe that public education must remain at the forefront of government’s list of priorities.

The BCCPAC Vision Statement echoes this sentiment and the views of parents across the province: “Each learner in public education in our province has the opportunity and support to thrive, and reach their full potential, in a diverse learning community of inclusion and equity”.

We ask this Committee to consider BCCPAC’s five key recommendations which address the need for equitable access to education for every learner:

- 1. Provide Stable, Predictable and Adequate Funding**
- 2. Increase Capital Funding**
- 3. Increase Operational Funding**
- 4. Support a New Student-Centered Funding Model**
- 5. Support Investment in Protected Childcare Spaces at Schools**