

June 1, 2022

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045, Station Provincial Government
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
Via email Minister.educ@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Whiteside,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Education to request that a) capital funding for new schools and additions be consistently and proactively provided based on a five-year projection for enrollment rather than on current enrollment numbers, and b) that the Ministry of Education update the Capital Policy Framework, which was last updated in 2012, when the province was experiencing significant declining enrolment.

The current funding model of waiting for schools to be over-capacity before approving new schools and expansions does not serve students or communities. Many new schools are over capacity by the time they are completed and require portables at brand new buildings. Further, in the years before a school is complete, large numbers of portables are required to serve students. Ecole Mission Senior Secondary has 11 portables, Albert McMahon Elementary has 1 portable and another on order, Hillside Elementary has 3 portables, Edwin S. Richards Elementary has 1 portable and Windebank Elementary has 1 portable on order, and we are still looking to add more.

Mission is a rapidly growing city, (Development plans/applications will double the population) and most of our school sites currently exceed Ministry Operating Capacity numbers. We anticipate an increase of at least one thousand students within the next fifteen years. For our community, this means two to four new elementary schools, plus a middle school and high school. Based on the current approval and funding model we will be housing hundreds of students in portables until new schools are complete. At the current cost of portables, the Mission School District will need to take millions of dollars out of our operating funds.

We wish to again address the issue of the costs of business cases for new schools not being reimbursed until the project gets approved. We estimate the cost of creating business cases to be between \$150,000 - \$200,000 for each build. We do not have the local capital funds to proceed with creating these business plans, which could range from \$600,000 - \$1,000,000 for four new schools. Carrying these costs are a burden on the school district, potentially for years.

While we appreciate the need to balance enrolment projections with actual enrolment numbers, being pro-active in the City of Mission to build in the construction of new schools is prudent and in the best interest of student achievement.

Sincerely,



Tracy Loffler
On behalf of the Board of Education
CC:

Trustees: R. Cairns, S. Carter, J. Renkema, R. McKamey
MLA Pam Alexis
MLA Bob D'eith
Treasury Board

Mission DPAC
BCSTA
Mission City Mayor and Council