



August 7, 2024

Ref: 300239

Dr. Steve Cardwell, Chair
Institute for Public Education
Email: info@publicedbc.ca

Dear Dr. Steve Cardwell:

Thank you for your letter of June 25, 2024, addressed to the Honourable David Eby, Premier regarding government efforts and the level of funding for public education compared to other jurisdictions in Canada. As your letter falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Child Care, I am pleased to respond on behalf of Premier Eby.

The [Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program \(PCEIP\)](#) is the primary source for inter-provincial/territorial comparisons of Canadian education statistics and is based largely on the [Elementary-Secondary Education Survey \(ESES\)](#) collected through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) and Statistics Canada. The most recent data available are up to 2020/21 with the next update occurring in October 2024.

The PCEIP outlines several [limitations](#) to the data, including:

- Any historical analysis of financial data should be carried out with caution. Though institutions are provided with guidelines for survey respondents, comparisons may still be limited due to differences in the institution's own accounting principles. In addition, inherent institutional differences such as size, budgets and physical environment may further limit comparison, and;
- When making inter-jurisdictional comparisons, the following should be taken into account: variations in sources of funding; differences in fiscal year-end dates, which can vary from March 31 to June 30, and variations in provincial policies and provincial funding responsibilities.

In response to your concerns raised about funding, specifically 'British Columbia rapidly falling behind other provinces in its financial support for public education', the Ministry of Education and Child Care (the Ministry) feels that funding alone is not the only indicator of a quality education system. Educational outcomes are an important comparison factor.

.../2

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2022 – Competency Scores and Ranking by Province compared to Canada average indicates that BC is among the top three provinces in each of [Math](#), [Science](#) and [Reading](#) in the 2022 PISA. British Columbia is also at or exceeding the Canadian average for each competency.

The Ministry has heard from several school districts, particularly those with low or flat enrolment, that inflationary costs are a concern. I can confirm that the Ministry has been working to gather information on inflationary pressures in the K–12 sector. Discussions are ongoing as to the extent of the impact on operations and possible ways to address the situation. According to school district financial statements, approximately 90 percent of operating costs are salaries, benefits and wage increases for teachers, support staff and exempt staff that have been funded by government.

As you may know, the [K-12 Public Education Funding Review](#) was completed in 2018. In 2019, the Ministry established four working groups who reviewed the recommendations and the potential implementation challenges. The recommendations provide a general road map for the sector to help improve the K-12 public education funding system.

School districts and boards of education experienced significant challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and government decided it was not an appropriate time to introduce any changes to the way schools are funded. Government has paused the implementation of the remaining recommendations from the Funding Model Review and will revisit the path forward at an appropriate time in the future. I want to reassure you that the Ministry would engage with stakeholders before moving ahead.

If you have any follow up questions, please contact Caroline Ponsford, Executive Director, Funding and Financial Accountability Branch by email at caroline.ponsford@gov.bc.ca or by phone at (250) 216-6347.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Christina Zacharuk
Deputy Minister

cc: Carolyn Broady, President, BCSTA
Honourable David Eby, Premier
Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of State for Child Care
Honourable Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care
Ray Velestuk, President, BCASBO
Rohan Arul-Pragasam, President, BCSSA
Caroline Ponsford, Executive Director, Funding and Financial Accountability Branch
Ministry of Education and Child Care