



August 29, 2022

Ref: 283291

**To: All Board Chairs, Superintendents and Secretary-Treasurers**

Dear Colleagues:

Families across British Columbia are facing unprecedented global inflation challenges. I see and appreciate the remarkable work boards of education and school district and front line staff have done to support their communities navigate these pressures. To further assist with these efforts, I am pleased to announce our government's \$60 million dollar Student and Family Affordability Fund for BC public schools.

We have heard you regarding the challenges and pressures families and your communities are experiencing. And we know we need to help as you collectively seek innovative ways to feed more children, help those needing school supplies and give families that extra help they need. The Student and Family Affordability Fund is designed to do just that. There is nothing more important than assuring students are supported in their learning journey in these challenging times.

School districts and local schools know their student and family communities best. The Student and Family Affordability Fund is to be used to expand and enhance school meals and food programs, and support the provision of school supplies to students, directly offsetting costs to parents, guardians, and students. Districts may also use the fund to offset fees related to the learning experience, such as the cost of field trips, to ensure that all students can participate in such opportunities. Existing mechanisms. Such as school district hardship policies, should be utilized when allocating the funding.

Meaningful engagement with your First Nation partners and Indigenous groups will be critical to the success of this program. Please also ensure you connect with your local DPAC. Barrier-free access to this program in a stigma free manner is key to ensuring students and families get the support they need, and I thank-you in advance for your work in this regard. More details are already available from the Ministry team members to explain the details around the Student and Family Affordability Fund and more will follow this week.

.../2

Thank you for the hard work you and your teams have done over the summer to prepare schools for the upcoming year, and I want to assure you I have always kept your needs top of mind as together we navigate the important work of providing students and their families the necessities they need to thrive and succeed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Whiteside". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Whiteside".

Jennifer Whiteside  
Minister

pc: Christina Zacharuk, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Child Care  
Chris Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Management