



January 30, 2023

Honourable Rachna Singh, Minister
Ministry of Education and Child Care
Educ.minister@gov.bc.ca

Via email

Dear Minister Singh,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Education of School District 22 (Vernon) to request that the Ministry of Education and Child Care cease a practice rooted in inequity and allocate the existing \$50 million pay equity grant to School Districts in an equitable manner.

In 1995, School Districts implemented a pay grade classification model for hourly paid support staff. The intent of this was to ensure fair and equitable pay, removing wage disparities linked with gender prevalence in roles.

Consequently, many School Districts experienced a significant increase in payroll costs as wages for roles primarily occupied by women increased.

In 1995/96, the Provincial Government introduced a pay equity grant to offset the increase in payroll costs triggered by this mandated change. This grant amounts to a total of \$50 million every year. The allocation to School Districts remains in proportion to the increase in pay costs triggered in 1995.

School Districts with past discriminatory practices benefited by receiving substantially more than those who had already established equitable practices.

Some School Districts, like School District 22, already had equitable pay practices prior to 1995. They were already paying more equitable, higher pay rates. Those districts did not see a significant change in payroll, and so received substantially less pay equity grant funding.

This continuing funding practice favours Districts that had discriminatory payroll structures. The payroll structures are now fair, but the funding inequity continues nearly thirty years later.

If the Province allocated \$50 million dollars equitably (for example, in proportion to student enrolment like most of our funding) School District 22 would receive \$700,000 more every year in funding. In practical terms, that equates to about seven specialist teacher positions who could

support our vulnerable students. Cumulatively, School District 22 has been deprived of nearly \$19 million dollars since the funding commenced.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter further.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Gen Acton', written in a cursive style.

Gen Acton
Board Chair

cc. Christina Zacharuk, Deputy Minister of Education and Child Care
Chris Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Financial Officer, Resource Management
Division