

BCSTA RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

MOTIONS

1. Funding for Exempt Staff:

The BCSTA requests that the Provincial Government satisfies its commitment to fully fund the total costs of compensation to exempt staff based on actual labour costs per the Exempt Salary Increases Report submitted to BCPSEA, including increases that have already been committed to in previous budgets, and moving forward.

Rationale:

- The Provincial Government had committed to covering salary increases that were negotiated for employees, however shortfalls have not been addressed or covered.
- Increases in benefit costs, the health employers tax, and increases to CCP and EI contributions have caused additional increases in salary costs and have been left to the districts to cover the shortages not covered through funding for management increases.

2. Free Transit for Teens:

Be it resolved that the Thompson Okanagan Branch ask the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) to advocate on behalf of students for the BC Government and Ministry of Education and Child Care to expand the Get on Board! program to include free transit for all students aged 13 to 18, And be it further resolved that this advocacy be based on the benefits of ensuring greater access to affordable, sustainable transit options, which will encourage students to become lifelong users of public transit and contribute to a more sustainable, equitable future for all.

Rationale:

- Access to affordable, safe, and reliable public transit is essential for students' education, wellbeing, and long-term environmental sustainability,
- The BC Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of safe and accessible transit for people of all ages through initiatives like the Get on Board! program, which provides free public transit for children 12 years and younger,
- The Get on Board! program has helped to make transit more affordable for families and encourages the next generation of British Columbians to adopt public transit as a preferred travel option,
- Public transit is a key factor in developing lifelong transit habits and reducing future reliance on single-occupancy vehicles,
- Some regions, such as the City of Victoria, have successfully implemented youth transit programs, such as the Transit Youth U-PASS, offering free transit for youth aged 18 and under,
- Youth aged 13 to 18 continue to face significant barriers to accessing affordable transit, especially in rural and smaller communities
- UBCM 100% agreement on this issue

Note: Oct 13, 2023 an advocacy letter was sent from BCSTA to Minister Rob Fleming making a similar request

2023 AGM – motion was submitted that was similar and an advocacy letter was sent to the Premier on July 12, 2023

3. Continuing Funding for Feeding Futures Program:

That BCSTA requests that the Ministry of Education and Child Care continue to provide funding to support the Feeding Futures School Food Program and treat it as an ongoing program past its current 3 year mandate. The current funding agreement expires in June 2025.

Rationale:

- The COVID context has highlighted the importance of school food programs and the inequities that exist across BC schools in delivering quality food programs. This problem is ongoing, as is the need for continued funding.
- School Districts and the BC Ministry of Education have made improving educational outcomes and life chances for vulnerable and Indigenous learners a priority and a focus area. These communities are disproportionately economically disadvantaged members of our society who have continued to benefit from food programs in our schools.
- The capacity for schools to provide food programs, including staffing and administration costs, need to be covered when providing funding to expand the program.
- Staff are frequently providing these program services on their own time and with their own money.
- These inequities have been growing over time and are not strictly related to the COVID pandemic.
- Schools in rural districts also face added food transportation and delivery costs, due to their remote locations throughout the province. Funding for these costs are coming out of operational budgets that are already stretched thin.

4. Fund Custodial Costs for Childcare: Advocating for Adequate Funding for Custodial Costs in Childcare Facilities to Prevent Financial Strain on the K-12 Education Sector

BE IT RESOLVED that Boards of Education formally requests that the Ministry of Education and Child Care provide dedicated funding to fully cover custodial costs for childcare facilities, so that these expenses are not absorbed by the K-12 education system;

And that the Ministry of Education and Child Care ensure that childcare facilities can meet necessary custodial standards for health, safety, and cleanliness, without financial burden to the K-12 system, thus maintaining the integrity and quality of both sectors;

And that the Ministry of Education and Child Care work with childcare providers, school boards, and other relevant stakeholders to develop a sustainable and fair funding model for custodial services in childcare settings, ensuring that both the K-12 and childcare sectors are appropriately funded and supported.

Rationale:

- The K-12 education sector currently covers custodial costs for childcare facilities, including cleaning and maintenance services, in addition to its own custodial needs for schools and educational spaces;
- The responsibility of covering custodial costs for childcare facilities has placed an increasing financial strain on the resources of the K-12 education sector, which already faces significant funding challenges to meet the needs of students and staff;
- The K-12 education sector should not be expected to bear the full custodial costs for childcare programs, as these costs fall outside the intended scope and funding structure for the education system;
- It is crucial for childcare facilities to be maintained to the highest custodial standards to ensure safe, clean, and functional environments for children, directly supporting the quality of care and early childhood education;
- Maintaining a clear separation of funding responsibilities between the K-12 education sector and the childcare sector is necessary to ensure that both systems are adequately supported without one diverting resources from the other.

5. Increased Costs to Information Technology Security:

That BCSTA requests the Minister of Finance to provide new funding to School Districts to cover the increasing costs associated with Information Technology Security

Rationale:

- Cyber-attacks on schools in BC are a growing issue. These attacks are disruptive to the business of education and put district data, and therefore the safety and privacy of staff and students, at risk.
- Data breaches create a significant financial burden on impacted school districts, and currently districts must manage the cost of preventing and dealing with them without specific funding from the Ministry.
- To ensure a safe digital learning environment, proactive prevention programs, secure management of systems, strong cybersecurity practices, and protection insurance are critical, however the costs associated with them can be prohibitive.
- This is a critical concern, and not one that is likely to dissipate in the future. The Ministry should consider the importance of cybersecurity related funding to ensure the safety and security of those within its purview.

6. Teaching Critical Thinking in K-12

The BCSTA calls on the Ministry of Education and Child Care to include explicit instruction in critical thinking principles at all levels of the K-12 curriculum and to provide adequate resources and training for educators.

Rationale:

- Today's students are faced with digital information overload, AI-driven propaganda and misinformation, and manipulation through social media. As a result, their need for critical thinking competency is greater than it has been for previous generations.
- Students need to understand what a rational argument is (not necessarily in those terms) and what makes an argument a good or bad one. Critical thinking skills include a) analyzing arguments, claims, or evidence; b) making inferences using inductive or deductive reasoning; c) judging or evaluating; and d) making decisions or solving problems. Critical thinking disposition is the willingness to put in the effort to use those skills when they are called for.
- Critical and Reflective Thinking is a core competency of the new curriculum. However, there is little guidance for teachers on defining critical thinking, how it can be taught effectively, and how it is assessed using performance-based language. Informal consultation with teachers suggests they vary widely in their concept of critical thinking. This is shown by fundamental differences in definition, content and assessment expectations, and basic knowledge of critical thinking terminology. Relatively recent large studies of the acquisition of critical thinking competencies have shown that: - Learning critical thinking skills indirectly through "immersion" (in other subjects) does not work. Explicit instruction in general critical thinking principles should be taught along with examples of its use in specific subjects. It does not need to be a separate "course". - Long-term exposure to critical thinking skills is far more effective, so this should be incorporated throughout the K-12 curriculum.
- The 2017 (revised 2018) paper Overview of Critical Thinking in the BC K-12 Curriculum Revisions: Implications for Teaching and Learning by Nicolas Fillion (SFU professor) and Dale Martelli (now President of the BC Social Studies Teachers' Association) has the following recommendations: - Make Philosophy 12 an eligible major for entry into teaching certification programs. - Develop an accessible online support community for teachers, providing substantive guidance on integrating critical thinking in the classroom. - Explore new classroom technologies and partnerships that enhance critical thinking skill acquisition within available resources. - Develop teaching resources suitable for teaching critical thinking at all levels and subjects within the K-12 education system.