

FEED THEIR MINDS. FUND THEIR SCHOOLS.



*MORE ONE-ON-ONE TIME
MORE SPECIALIST TEACHERS
SMALLER CLASSES*



**It's time
for BC
to invest
in public
education.**

fundBCschools.ca



BCTF100
Celebrating a century

Funding public education in BC

Challenges and Solutions

More students coming

Challenge: BC Stats projects 28,200 more school-age students in BC classrooms within six years.

Solution: Invest in our classrooms again, so BC kids can get the attention they deserve in smaller classes.

More classes with greater needs

All teachers work with a wide range of students, each with unique skills, challenges, and needs.

Challenge: In BC, more than 16,000 classes have four or more students with special needs. That's a quarter of all classes. Nearly 4,000 classes had seven or more students with special needs! Classroom diversity is great but without adequate supports, students lose out.

Challenge: BC has lost nearly one-quarter of our specialist teachers over the past 15 years:

- 22% of our ELL (formerly ESL) teachers
- 24% of our special education teachers
- 37% of our teacher-librarians.

Solution: It's time to hire more specialist teachers and ensure that they have the resources they need. Everyone's learning benefits when every child gets the support their unique strengths and challenges require and deserve.



Funding cuts imposed on school districts

Challenge: BC's school districts were forced to find "administrative savings" of \$54 million in their 2015–16 and 2016–17 budgets. The effect of these cuts is an operating grant *decrease* of 0.3%.

These cuts affect students directly through increased class sizes, program closures, fewer hours for education assistants, and diminished library and other support services. Lower school supply budgets mean students must use outdated books, as well as substandard science, fine arts, and sports equipment.

Parents feel pressured yet again to undertake fundraising to cover these shortfalls in school funding.

Solution: BC needs to increase education spending by 2.7% per year to maintain per student funding adjusted for inflation and enrolment. The government can afford to increase funding for public services, given a budget surplus and a reserve of at least \$1 billion.

School closures and other cuts

Challenge: Boards of education all over BC continue to be forced to close more schools, on top of the 240 schools already closed in the last 15 years.

Boards have also been forced to reduce or eliminate school buses, add new transportation fees, reduce school cleaning and maintenance, and defer or cancel technology upgrades.

Solution: It's time for the government to recognize the importance of schools to communities, and to find ways to keep them open, particularly now that provincial enrolment is increasing. Schools are the heart of our communities. Closing them puts a strain on families and hurts local economies.

How can we work together to help restore proper funding to our public schools?

Talk to others in our communities about issues that will affect our children's futures, such as:

- inadequate support for the learning needs of diverse student populations.
- health and safety issues like seismic upgrades, air, and water quality.
- permanent school closures that force students to travel long distances and that hurt communities.
- negative effects of inadequate supplies, resources, and maintenance budgets in schools.

Find out:

- from teachers and other school staff how underfunding has affected their jobs and the support they can offer their students.
- how fundraising demands on parents have grown, and how this money is increasingly used to fill the gaps caused by underfunding.
- how your local school trustees and MLAs are advocating for fair funding of public education.
- if there are groups in your community already working to bring more funding for schools, or if others might join you in starting a new group.

Write, phone, and use social media to:

- raise awareness of the real issues and why our schools need more funding.
- insist that government truly put children's needs first, and keep our public education system strong.



A message from the BC Teachers' Federation

For detailed information on underfunding in BC public schools, please visit bctf.ca and FundBCSchools.ca