



September 3, 2024

Dear Educators, School Staff, District Leaders and Trustees:

As the new school year begins, I would like to extend a warm welcome back and express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to our school communities with such dedication and hard work. I am deeply grateful to every school staff member, educator, district leader and trustee who has played a role ensuring every student feels, safe, included and supported to succeed. I would like to highlight some of the progress we have made together and I hope you take pride in reflecting on your achievements.

More students than ever now have access to healthy meals and snacks at school through the Feeding Futures initiative. Last school year, almost 90 percent of BC schools reported having school food programs. We have added \$20 million to the Student and Family Affordability Fund to help schools provide support directly to students and families who need it most so that every child can fully participate in school life.

We are continuing to ensure schools remain safe places for students and staff. We have activated protected zones around school grounds to prevent disruptive behaviour, including aggressive protests and harassment. Additionally, our new cell phone policy aims to provide clarity for reducing distractions in the classroom, allowing students to focus on their education. While technology is a crucial part of our lives, fostering digital literacy and healthy tech habits is crucial for keeping our kids safe.

We have more than doubled funding for inclusive supports and services across school districts since 2017. To better support students with disabilities and diverse abilities, we have launched two Provincial School Outreach Teams that provide specialized assistance to communities where access can be limited. Additionally, this year we will start to expand K-12 literacy screening and learning supports to help all students, particularly those with dyslexia and other learning disabilities, achieve their best in school and beyond.

Schools across British Columbia continue to face unprecedented enrolment growth, and our commitment to building and upgrading schools remains unwavering. Over the past seven years, we have invested more than \$5 billion to construct, expand, and modernize schools to meet the needs of our growing communities. Every student in BC deserves access to a safe and modern learning environment.

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With the highest enrolment growth in 35 years, the demand for teachers is greater than ever. We are working with education partners to build a robust K-12 workforce that families can rely on now and in the future. Targeted recruitment and retention initiatives, particularly in rural and remote communities, have already strengthened our hiring efforts. We are also collaborating with universities to modernize teacher training through innovative online programs, ensuring a steady supply of qualified teachers in the coming years.

All of this progress would not have been possible without the strong partnerships we have with school districts and your tireless efforts to keep BC's education system thriving.

As the Minister of Education and Child Care, it has been a true privilege to witness the remarkable growth in our school communities. We have accomplished a great deal, but I recognize there is still more work to be done.

As we embark on an exciting new school year, I hope you take pride in the milestones we have achieved together. Once again, I want to express my deep gratitude for your hard work. I look forward to seeing even more progress. Wishing you a fantastic school year ahead!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Singh', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Rachna Singh  
Minister