

# Healthy, resilient schools:

## Cornerstones of community and COVID-19 recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended life across our province for students, teachers and everyone connected to our public schools. The crisis has also exposed the fragilities of our economy in meeting the basic needs of all and highlighted the importance of the public sector, of community, and of care work. Schools are key public spaces of community and care. Budget 2021 must ensure they are protected and made more resilient both during and coming out of this public health crisis.

This year, we offer two types of recommendations: those aimed at underlying, long-term issues in the public education system, and those arising from the intertwined public health and economic crises we now face, labelled (COVID-19). A single aim unites them: to give our students the education system they deserve, one healthy and resilient in every sense.

In these challenging times, British Columbia has an opportunity to make the necessary and pressing improvements to public education that will re-orient funding to fully reflect the needs of students, classrooms, and schools as community hubs. We must act boldly and for the long-term. Good will on the part of everyone in the system will, we are sure, allow for a new equilibrium, where schools and students across the province have what they need to flourish and thrive.



**Summary of recommendations**  
Education Funding Brief 2021  
BC Teachers' Federation

[bctf.ca/BriefsAndPositionPapers.aspx](https://bctf.ca/BriefsAndPositionPapers.aspx)

# Summary of issues and recommendations

## Adequate funding for a resilient system

### **Recommendation 1**

That the Ministry of Education provide stable, predictable, and adequate funding to enable school districts to fulfill their responsibility to deliver quality public education to all students in British Columbia.

### **Recommendation 2**

That the Ministry of Education terminate the consideration of a prevalence-based model for special education funding and align special education funding with special education needs.

### **Recommendation 3 (COVID-19)**

That the Ministry of Education immediately move ahead with significant enhancements to operational funding for K–12, beyond the funding increases associated with enrolment growth, to enable increased health and safety measures and to support schools as hubs of community.

### **Recommendation 4 (COVID-19)**

That all new provincial initiatives or costs, in particular those arising from measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, be reflected in provincial funding grants, eliminating the practice of downloading costs onto school districts.

### **Recommendation 5 (COVID-19)**

That the Ministry of Education fund any school district shortfalls in international student tuition revenue relative to 2019–20 for the coming school year and commit to reforming the international student program for an equitable distribution of students and tuition revenues among districts for the following school year.

## Supporting health and safety in challenging times

### **Recommendation 6 (COVID-19)**

That the Ministry of Education ensure sufficient and targeted funding to enable districts to expand teaching and support staff to accommodate smaller class sizes necessary for physical distancing as needed.

### **Recommendation 7 (COVID-19)**

That the Ministry of Education ensure sufficient and targeted funding for increased use of sick leave and other accommodations by teachers, additional custodial staff to maintain the necessary higher levels of cleanliness as well as adequate stocks of personal protective equipment for staff and students who need or request it.

### **Recommendation 8 (COVID-19)**

That the Ministry of Education reform the school building standards to ensure that new schools are better suited to handle physical distancing measures and other restrictions on physical space necessitated by future pandemics.

### **Recommendation 9 (COVID-19)**

That the Ministry of Education provide targeted funding to support a trauma-informed approach to mental health for students, staff, and district administration, including more counsellors and professional learning for teachers on trauma-informed practice.

## Successful inclusion strengthens resilient school communities

### **Recommendation 10**

That the Ministry of Education provide targeted funding to support the early identification and designation of students with special needs, particularly in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

### **Recommendation 11**

That the Ministry of Education introduce per-student funding amounts for high-incidence designations, including children with learning disabilities and those requiring moderate behaviour support, into the funding formula.

## A strong foundation: funding for resources and teacher recruitment and retention

### **Recommendation 12**

That the Ministry of Education provide substantial new funding for classroom resources in line with the updated provincial curriculum as well as infrastructure and support for new technology, resources, and in-service to enable teaching under pandemic conditions.

### **Recommendation 13**

That the Ministry of Education provide dedicated funding for teacher recruitment and retention initiatives across all school districts.

## Enabling schools to be hubs of community

### **Recommendation 14**

That the Ministry of Education provide grants to school districts for school meal programs.

### **Recommendation 15 (COVID-19)**

That the Ministry of Education provide grants to school districts for creating or expanding school gardens and other community spaces.

## Adult education makes for a more resilient society

### **Recommendation 16**

That the Ministry of Education increase the number of funded courses in adult education to reflect a broad range of educational needs and interests that help create an educationally enriched society as well as improved employment opportunities for individuals.

### **Recommendation 17**

That the Ministry of Education fund adult students on an equivalent basis to school-age students.

## Investments in schools and communities

### **Recommendation 18**

That the Ministry of Education accelerate capital funding for seismic upgrades to meet its target of having all upgrades complete by 2025.

### **Recommendation 19 (COVID-19)**

That the provincial government accelerate its planned investment in a universal, \$10-a-day childcare system in BC, which should include a build-out of public childcare facilities and the provision of before- and after-school care.

### **Recommendation 20 (COVID-19)**

That the provincial government move rapidly towards a universal, public, \$10 per month broadband service.

**Recommendation 21 (COVID-19)**

That the provincial government lobby the federal government for increased transfers to provinces and continued support for provincial borrowing by both the federal government and the Bank of Canada, making it easier for it to make the necessary investments in stronger, healthier, more resilient public services that will be a cornerstone of post-pandemic reconstruction.