



NANAIMO LADYSMITH
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Letter from the Board of Education
May 18, 2021

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside - Minister of Education
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Government of B.C.
Victoria BC V8W9E2

Dear Minister Whiteside,

RE: Request to Maintain COVID-19 School District Funding

On behalf of the Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools' Board of Education, we ask that you consider the continuation of COVID-19 special purpose funding for the 2021-22 school year, which begins July 1, 2021. This will ensure the school district will be able to maintain the current enhanced health and safety measures which has supported the healthy learning and working environment of over two thousand staff and 15,000 students in the district.

The district will soon approve its annual budget for the next school year and has not included the additional \$1,068,252 in Provincial and \$5,535,410 in Federal funding it received this past school year. While the infection rates are seeing a downward trend, we don't anticipate that we will return to pre-pandemic practice by September. This funding is integral in maintaining the safe and healthy schools we have today.

The Province's *Safe Return to School* and Federal's *Safe Return to Class* funding allowed the district to hire 16 cleaning staff, 32 classroom staff and 8 other support staff positions to ensure we adhere to the many COVID-19 health and safety guidelines imposed on our schools. Once again, we hope to maintain these levels for the next school year.

While the Board acknowledges the temporary nature of the funding and that some of the extraordinary measures may not be required next school year, our community expects the current enhanced cleaning and health and safety protocols are maintained. Not only does this have positive health impacts, it also instills public confidence. Ensuring our students' safe return to school is imperative for their educational success and mental health.

I am more than happy to discuss our funding options. Please have your office connect with Karen Matthews via email at kmatthews@sd68.bc.ca or by phone (250) 741-5231.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Charlene McKay
Board Chair