



From the Office of the Board of  
Education

December 3, 2020

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To the Honourable Jennifer Whiteside:

The Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools' Board of Education wants to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Minister of Education. Along with this introductory letter, the Board would like to share its intent to foster a lasting partnership with the provincial government. The Board is thankful that you are taking on this significant role during a critical time in public education in British Columbia.

The Education portfolio is one of the largest and the most important, in terms of investing in the future. The Board invites you to visit sometime in the near future, when it is safe to do so, where you will witness the many great initiatives happening across the district.

We would also like to share with you a document from the B.C. School Trustees Association that outlines how Trustees and MLAs can work together for the benefit of students across the province.

The Board is committed to working with you and our three local MLA's: Doug Routley (Nanaimo-North Cowichan), Honourable Sheila Malcomson (Nanaimo) and Adam Walker (Parksville-Qualicum), in the spirit of co-governance to support this government in realizing their goals for public education in BC.

Once again, congratulations!

Warmest Regards,

Charlene McKay  
Board Chair

# Public Education First

A Brief for MLAs



**BCSTA**

British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

# We value public education

There is no greater determinant of the long term well-being of our province than the quality of its public education system. When students succeed, British Columbia succeeds. As co-governors of B.C.'s public education system, we ask you to join us in committing to the following core values:

- Co-governance
- Improved funding
- Success for all learners



# Co-governance

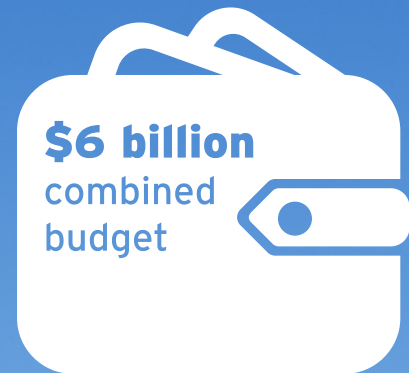
Embedded in the *Protocol of Recognition* between the Government of British Columbia and the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) is the principle that public education governance is shared between boards of education and the provincial government and that the interests of citizens are best served through collaboration and consultation.

BCSTA seeks a commitment to the continuance and strengthening of our co-governance relationship. We ask that government work more closely with us on the development of policy, legislation, and initiatives affecting public education and student achievement.



# Boards of education

Boards of education improve student outcomes across the province and help advance many social and economic initiatives. With a combined budget of over six billion dollars, and a work force of nearly 100,000, school districts play an important role in every community. Locally elected trustees, and the boards of education on which they serve, are a key component of what makes B.C.'s public education system one of the best in the world.



# Improving education

## Student achievement

Local boards of education make a difference in student achievement outcomes. Studies in Canada and across North America have confirmed that well-governed boards of education have a significant positive effect on student achievement.

## Local values

Schools embody the values we hold for our communities. Local boards of education reflect these same values. Board members know their constituents, understand their needs and are responsive to their concerns.

## Accountability

Boards of education offer direct accountability to the community, allowing the public to influence decisions from a local perspective and question trustees about their work and direction. This helps ensure community focused decision-making and accountability

## Local context

Students in small rural communities have different needs than those in large urban centres. Boards of education hear the distinct voices in their community and can shape local schools to best meet local needs and aspirations.





# Improved funding

Publicly elected school trustees are immensely proud of the success of British Columbia's public education system, but we have increasing concerns about the impact of funding pressures on the system. While we understand the realities of the current global and provincial economies. We also know that our students' futures cannot wait. We ask that government commit to predictable and stable funding, which includes the annual addition of dollars to address costs for negotiated salary increases, increasing infrastructure expenses, and provincial program implementation.

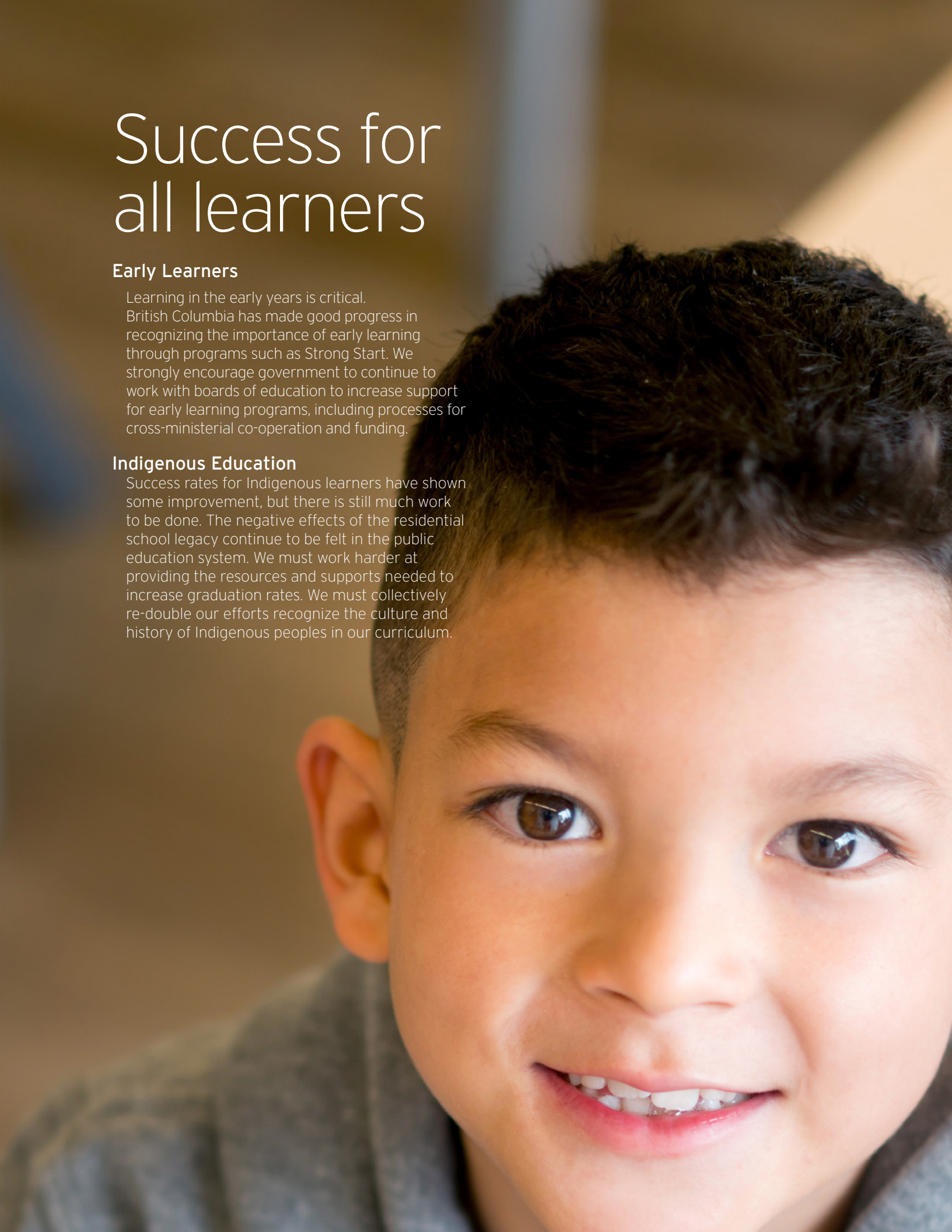
# Success for all learners

## **Early Learners**

Learning in the early years is critical. British Columbia has made good progress in recognizing the importance of early learning through programs such as Strong Start. We strongly encourage government to continue to work with boards of education to increase support for early learning programs, including processes for cross-ministerial co-operation and funding.

## **Indigenous Education**

Success rates for Indigenous learners have shown some improvement, but there is still much work to be done. The negative effects of the residential school legacy continue to be felt in the public education system. We must work harder at providing the resources and supports needed to increase graduation rates. We must collectively re-double our efforts recognize the culture and history of Indigenous peoples in our curriculum.





# Stay in Touch

We hope you will work to ensure a bright future for all students in British Columbia through a strengthened public education system. Your local board of education will stay in touch to update you on emerging issues in B.C.'s K-12 sector, and to reaffirm your commitment to a strong, public co-governed education.





British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

[bcsta.org](http://bcsta.org)