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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Ministry of Education and Child Care

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### **New funding helps make back-to-school more affordable for families that need it most**

VICTORIA – The Province is helping make back-to-school more affordable for students and their families who are struggling with rising costs of living due to global inflation.

Through the Student and Family Affordability Fund, \$60 million will help school districts make sure students are fed and have the school supplies they need to be successful this year.

“Many families in B.C. are feeling the effects of global inflation on daily costs, including groceries, school supplies and other school expenses,” said Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education and Child Care. “We’re taking action by providing more funding that school districts will use to help meet the needs of families and students.”

The one-time funding will be provided directly to school districts to help them expand school meal programs, make sure students have the school supplies they need and cover any additional fees so that students in need can take part in activities, such as field trips.

Districts will work with parent advisory councils and school communities, as well as local First Nations and other Indigenous organizations, regarding local priorities that will best meet the needs of diverse student populations.

In addition to the \$60 million for school districts, \$3.8 million will be provided through the Federation of Independent School Associations (FISA) to support families struggling with increasing costs and that access education through independent school authorities.

The funding is the first step in government’s commitment to make sure students are properly fed for learning and to work with school districts to support the expansion of food and meal programs. It builds on \$55 million in annual funding provided to districts through the Ministry of Education and Child Care’s CommunityLINK initiative, which funds breakfast, lunch and snack programs, academic supports, counselling, youth workers and after-school programs.

This announcement is part of a number of measures that the Minister of Finance will announce next week to help those hardest hit during this time of high global inflation.

#### **Quotes:**

#### **Chris Schultz-Lorentzen, president, BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils –**

“Parent advisory councils across the province know all too well that the increasing costs of school supplies, healthy food, and school activity charges are just some of the items that make the return to school a financial hardship for some parents. The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils strongly supports this government initiative, which will allow individual

schools and school districts to provide some financial relief to assist the families who need it most.”

**Teresa Downs, superintendent, Gold Trail School District (SD 74) –**

“Gold Trail will use these funds to support students and their families who are struggling financially at this time by providing them with school supplies, enhancing our universal lunch program by offering snacks and ensuring that students will be able to participate in after-school opportunities without concern of fees or costs.”

**Carolyn Broady, president, BC School Trustees Association –**

“This is wonderful news for families struggling with the increased cost of living. Local school districts and boards of education, who know their communities best, will use these funds to support families in need through their existing programs and initiatives.”

**Quick Facts:**

- Government is investing \$7.4 billion in K-12 education in 2022-23, which is \$1.8 billion more than in 2016-17.
- Budget 2022 provides \$250 million more funding for public schools than Budget 2021, and with the one-time \$60 million provided through the Student and Family Affordability Fund, this increases to \$310 million for public schools.
- Through the Student and Family Affordability Fund, every school district will receive a minimum of \$250,000.

**Learn More:**

For the funding allocation per school district,  
visit: [https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/SFAF\\_Allocations.pdf](https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/SFAF_Allocations.pdf)

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