



May 30, 2023

The Honourable Rachna Singh
Minister of Education and Child Care
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Re: Funding for Counsellors to Support Students and Families

Dear Minister Singh,

The Langley Board of Education writes to you regarding a motion that was carried unanimously at the Board's Regular Meeting on May 16, 2023:

"That the Board of Education write a letter to the Minister of Education and Child Care to request additional targeted funding to hire more counsellors to address the increased needs of students and families that districts are facing due to the unprecedented mental health crises we are currently experiencing."

The Langley Board of Education prioritizes meeting the educational needs and health, safety, and well-being needs of our students. We care deeply about our students and through our staff at all levels, we continue to create positive learning environments, support all our learners, and truly demonstrate through our actions that *Every Child Matters*. This is very difficult to achieve with the current mental health state of our students and the funding provided to school districts. As a Board, we are advocating for more funding specifically to hire more counsellors and help alleviate the mental health crises experienced by our children and youth in schools.

We recently heard from a strong contingent of counsellors in our District. They shared with us the important and complex role they have in supporting our students and their well-being. They expressed they are still coping with the increase of mental health issues from the pandemic. They conveyed the challenges many counsellors have in supporting more than one school, which results in high caseloads, and an unsustainable number of students they are required to work with. We are aware that the current provincial ratio is one counsellor for every 589 students. Given the current mental health landscape in our community, this ratio is no longer sustainable.

Our district leadership team is working closely with our employee partner groups and counsellors to create and implement new local strategies to help improve the delivery of mental health support throughout our system. We are doing our part to continue this work. We hope the Ministry can work alongside us and act on this request to address the mental health of our students. Thank you for your consideration and your ongoing commitment to supporting mental health in schools.

Sincerely,

Candy Ashdown
Chairperson of the Board of Education