



June 30, 2022

Ref: 281828

Janet Fraser, Chair  
Board of Education  
School District No. 39 (Vancouver)  
**Email: [janet.fraser@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:janet.fraser@vsb.bc.ca)**

Dear Janet Fraser:

Thank you for your letter of June 14, 2022, to the Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education, regarding the funding of specific teacher and counsellor positions. As Deputy Minister, I am pleased to respond on behalf of Minister Whiteside.

The Ministry recognizes the value of all the work that boards of education do to balance the many needs of the district and to consult with rightsholders and partners during the budget process.

Since 2002, the Ministry of Education and Child Care funds boards of education primarily on a per student FTE basis using enrolment data reported to the Ministry. As you know the Ministry does not fund specific staff staffing levels, boards of education are responsible for allocating their funding to address local needs and priorities. In general, there has been an increase in per student funding, for example the basic student allocation in 2019/20 was \$7,468, in 2021/22 it was \$7,885 a 5.6 percent increase.

With respect to operating grants to your school district, from 2019/20 to 2021/22 school years School District No. 39 (Vancouver) has experienced 3 percent decrease in student FTE, over the same period operating grants increased by 4.4 percent.

Boards of education typically budget conservatively with discussions and decisions during the budget and amended annual budget development invariably presenting a much more conservative view of their finances. Boards of education are unique in the public sector, as they can keep unused operating funding from one year to use in future years. This allows them to plan for projects that take more than one year and to balance budgets when actual student enrolment is unknown.

.../2

Every year since July 1, 2017, School District No. 39 (Vancouver) has increased its accumulated surplus from \$9.95 million as at June 30, 2017 to \$40.66 million as at June 30, 2021; an increase of more than \$30 million in four years. Based on Vancouver School Board's financial statements no surplus from previous years has been required to balance the budget at the end of the school year. In fact, the School District is not spending all the operating funding it receives.

I appreciate the efforts boards of education and senior staff are making to achieve balanced budgets in these unique times.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C.A. Zacharuk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Christina Zacharuk  
Deputy Minister