



August 29, 2019

VIA E-MAIL
Ref: 244402

Janet Fraser
Board Chair
Vancouver Board of Education
School District No. 39
E-mail: c/o msphillips@vsb.bc.ca

Dear Janet Fraser:

Thank you for your letter addressed to the Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Education, regarding your support of the United Way's School's Out program expanding beyond the Lower Mainland and increasing support within the Lower Mainland. As Minister of State for Child Care, I am pleased to respond.

It is encouraging to hear of the collaborative work taking place between Vancouver School District staff and the School's Out program to provide children aged 6-12 with structured after-school activities. As you mentioned, these activities fill a significant need for children and their parents seeking after-school care during the critical hours between 3-6 pm.

I recently had the opportunity to tour the School's Out program at Cameron Elementary, operated by Burnaby Neighbourhood House, and was able to see the importance of the program and understand fully its significant benefit to the community.

I was impressed by the program's aim to provide educational and emotional support to families, especially those who would otherwise be unable to access after-school activities. The Province recognizes the valuable work the United Way Lower Mainland is doing to remove barriers to these programs and to improve accessibility for vulnerable families.

The Province is investing \$1.3 billion over three years into child care – the biggest investment in British Columbia history – to help lay the foundation for a high-quality, universal, affordable and accessible child care system that will benefit all British Columbians. More information can be found in the [Childcare BC](#) plan. The transition to a universal system will take time, but we are committed to delivering child care that meets the needs of all families in British Columbia, including care for school-age children.

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This means creating child care in locations that work for families, such as schools. The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is working closely with the Ministry of Education to promote child care space creation initiatives on school grounds. Through school expansions and seismic projects approved since September 2017, the Ministry of Education has funded 17 new Neighbourhood Learning Centres that will bring an estimated 1,000 additional child care spaces to communities throughout British Columbia. I am appreciative of the work of school districts and the expertise they are lending to the creation of quality child care spaces in locations that work for children and families. As we continue building a universal child care system in British Columbia, we look forward to further building these relationships.

To further improve access to before and after school child care, MCFD provides funding to the public, non-profit and for-profit sectors through programs such as the [Childcare BC New Spaces Fund](#) to create new licensed child care spaces. The City of Vancouver recently partnered with the Province through this program, receiving \$33 million to create new licensed child care spaces in collaboration with other public sector bodies, including the Vancouver School Board. I look forward to the results of this collective work creating 2,300 new child care spaces in Vancouver, including spaces for school-age children.

As the Province continues to execute our Childcare BC plan, we recognize that the provision of high quality before and after-school programs serve an important need for families. Government understands the support these programs provide to parents and the important role they play in improving the physical, social and emotional well-being of children in the middle years. We are currently considering how to effectively support before and after-school care programs to meet the needs of all families and deliver quality care for children in British Columbia.

Thank you again for taking the time to write, and for the valuable collaborative work undertaken by the Vancouver School District and the United Way Lower Mainland to provide high quality after-school programming for children in your community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katrina', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Katrina Chen
Minister

pc: Honourable Rob Fleming