

June 4, 2025

Select Standing Committee on Finance and
Government Services
c/o Parliamentary Committees Office
Room 224, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Richmond Board of Education's key priorities for the upcoming provincial budget. This submission reflects the united voice of the Board and our education partners in the Richmond community, including Richmond Teachers' Association, CUPE Local 716, Richmond District Parents Association, Richmond Association of School Administrators, and Richmond Management and Professional Staff. Together, we remain steadfast in our shared commitment to the success of every student in the Richmond School District.

Our priorities for Budget 2026 focus on three critical areas that require immediate and sustained attention:

1. Capital Funding for a New School in Richmond City Centre

The Richmond Board of Education has been consistently advocating for the construction of two new elementary schools in the city centre to address rapid population growth. This area continues to experience sustained development, driven by high density housing and a significant influx of young families.

After several years of sustained effort, the board continues to work diligently toward securing a school site in the high growth area. This work reflects our strong commitment to addressing the urgent need for expanded public education infrastructure in Richmond. However, it is important to note that enrolment growth continues to outpace infrastructure.

To adequately serve the ongoing and projected student population, a second new school remains necessary to ensure students in the city centre have access to neighbourhood schools and appropriate learning environments.

We look forward to ongoing collaboration with the province to ensure capital investments align with community needs and provide the foundation for long-term student success.

2. Continued Investment in the Seismic Mitigation Program

The Richmond School District faces an acute need for capital funding to complete the seismic mitigation program. Currently, 22 schools in our district, 18 elementary and four secondary schools, have been identified with high seismic risk rating. This translates to over 10,000 student seats requiring seismic mitigation measures.

The health, safety and well-being of our students and staff must remain a top priority. Timely investment in seismic upgrades is critical to maintaining safe learning environments and fulfilling the government's commitment to public safety and infrastructure resilience.

3. Stable and Sustainable Education Funding

We respectfully call on the province to commit to stable and sustainable funding for public education, an essential pillar of our democratic society. Reliable funding is fundamental not only for supporting student success, but also for implementing Ministry initiatives, including Early Learning and Childcare programs.

School districts continue to face significant structural and unfunded cost pressures. The current funding model does not account for increases in employee benefit costs or salary grid increments, placing strain on operating budgets. These pressures are further exacerbated by inflation and cost escalation caused by global economic volatility.

While the district continues to exercise fiscal responsibility through prudent budgeting, strategic procurement and long-term planning, these measures alone are insufficient to maintain service levels without predictable and adequate funding. Sustainable funding is essential to preserve the quality, accessibility and inclusivity of public education in British Columbia.

Conclusion

As we look ahead to Budget 2026, the Richmond Board of Education reaffirms its commitment to working in partnership with our partners and the provincial government. We believe that through collaboration, targeted investment, and shared responsibility, we can ensure that every student in Richmond has access to strong, inclusive, and equitable public education.

We thank you for your attention to these priorities and look forward to continuing this important dialogue.

Sincerely,

Ken Hamaguchi, Chairperson
On behalf of the Board of Education (Richmond)

cc: Minister of Education and Child Care
Minister of Infrastructure
Trustees, School District No. 38 Richmond
Superintendent of Schools, School District No. 38 Richmond
Secretary Treasurer, School District No. 38 Richmond