



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

August 30, 2017

The Honourable Ahmed D. Hussen

Minister of Education, Refugees and Citizenship
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1L1, Canada

Dear Minister Hussen,

RE: Federal Funding for Support Services for Immigrant Families

During the BC School Trustees Association's spring 2017 Annual General Meeting, our member Boards of Education passed a significant resolution calling for federal funding for support services for immigrant families.

The motions passed by our membership follows:

That BCSTA urge the B.C. Ministry of Education and the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) to request the federal government provide increased, predictable and stable funding to enable boards of education to provide essential support services for immigrant families settling in communities

Providing immigrant families with as much stability as possible is paramount to creating a smooth transition into a new society. Public education resides as an undeniable cornerstone to a successful democratic society, and we request that the federal government consider providing new Canadians with the best tools for success accordingly.

It is our responsibility to assist immigrant families as best as we can when it comes to settling in our communities, and budgets in the areas of Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) continue to decrease in the face of rising immigrant counts.

By securing stable, reliable funding for boards of education we will be able to provide the services needed to ensure that the children of immigrant families get the strongest start possible in their new home.

As included in the rationale supporting the motion (attached) at the time of its submission, by not meeting the settlement needs of immigrant families, Canadians run the risk of alienating new families and, rather than including them in society, they become culturally isolated and disenfranchised and unable to realize their full potential.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to hearing from you regarding any possibilities or proposals that you may have surrounding this important concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G B Swan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the initials "G B" being prominent and followed by the surname "Swan".

Gordon Swan

President

BC School Trustees Association

Enclosure

cc: BCSTA Member Boards of Education

8. FEDERAL FUNDING FOR SUPPORT SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

SUBMITTED BY: SD 41 (Burnaby)

BE IT RESOLVED:

That BCSTA urge the B.C. Ministry of Education and the Canadian School Boards Association (“CSBA”) to request the federal government provide increased, predictable and stable funding to enable boards of education to provide essential support services for immigrant families settling in communities.

RATIONALE:

This motion is needed because budgets in the areas of Settlement Workers in Schools (“SWIS”) and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (“LINC”) continue to decrease despite the rising number of immigrants and despite the record influx of Syrian Refugees.

We have a responsibility to properly settle immigrant families in our communities. This has a direct impact on student learning both in the K-12 sector and adult language learning. Inadequate settlement services negatively impact parents and families who are dealing with multiple barriers in finding employment and housing, managing health issues (including trauma), learning a new language and trying to adapt to a new country.

Multiple year reductions in budgets and uncertainty in funding timelines in the areas of SWIS and LINC programs force school districts to cut essential positions and programs that are vital to the successful settlement of students and families in schools and the community. SWIS workers hold unique positions of trust by families and school personnel because they have both a cultural awareness of the challenges faced by newcomers and knowledge of the Canadian school system. Language acquisition for adult newcomers, through LINC classes is equally important for successful integration of families in the community.

Without meeting the settlement needs of immigrant families, Canadians run the risk of alienating new families and, rather than including them in society, they become culturally isolated and disenfranchised and unable to realize their full potential.