



The Honourable Bowinn Ma, MLA
Minister of Infrastructure
Email: INF.Minister@gov.bc.ca

February 3, 2026

Re: Request for Capital Funding in Chilliwack

Dear Minister Ma:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Education for School District No. 33 (Chilliwack) to express the hope of our community that local capital priorities in public education will be reflected in the forthcoming provincial budget. Chilliwack has rapidly evolved into one of Canada's fastest-growing communities, and while capital investment has been of great benefit to the Chilliwack School District, we continue to see a rate of growth that places great strain on district operations.

Part of the challenge is not just the funding for capital investment but successfully identifying and securing suitable school sites within the neighbourhoods where they are needed. This is not a factor unique to Chilliwack; however, it is one significantly compounded by local context, including our rate of growth and the fact that two-thirds of the community's land mass is within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

At a Special Meeting of the Board held on November 13, 2025, the Board was presented with a unique opportunity to secure land where it is most needed. At that meeting, the Board approved three significant steps to support our capital plan and future direction. Those steps were:

- Approving Capital Bylaw amendments to include a site acquisition in the fast-growing Promontory neighbourhood.
- Approving a Financing Resolution to approve the borrowing of \$6.5 million for capital costs above those covered by our School Site Acquisition Funds.
- Approving a board bylaw for the acquisition of a new elementary school site.

These steps were taken to secure a 6.8-acre site for the development of a future elementary school to support 500+ elementary aged learners. Each step was informed by conversations with respective ministries of government and with the express permission of the respective ministers, in accordance with all statutory requirements. The risk of taking each step was measured against the benefit of supporting students in the Chilliwack School District, and with the hope that the cost of servicing this debt would be minimized by the province supporting the principal as an investment in the next budget.

On behalf of the Chilliwack Board of Education, I am asking that this capital investment be a priority in the forthcoming budget. The investment ensures the next public school proposed for Chilliwack is located within one of our fastest-growing neighbourhoods. It also ensures that operational funds are directed to the classroom, rather than servicing a debt and paying down principal arising from necessary capital costs. The Board appreciates the financial pressures on government and does not make this request lightly; funding this purchase ensures that operational dollars are prioritized in the classroom to benefit the learning and well-being of all district students.

In closing, we ask that you recognize the urgency of this matter by supporting decisive action in the provincial budget. This step secures a future school site while ensuring that every available operational dollar is invested in the day-to-day operations to support students in future district budgets. Thank you for your time, your consideration, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss this request in greater detail to support the well-being of public education in Chilliwack.

Sincerely,



Board Chair
School District No. 33 (Chilliwack)

cc:

Premier of BC

Minister of Finance

Minister of Education and Child Care

A'aliya Warbus, MLA Chilliwack-Cultus Lake

BC School Trustees Association