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Honourable Peter Fassbender, Minister of Education  
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Honourable Michael de Jong, Minister of Finance  
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January 29, 2015

Dear Ms. Clark, Mr. Fassbender, and Mr. de Jong,

**Re: Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services Report on the Budget 2015 Consultations, November 2014**

I write to you as a parent with a child in B.C.'s K-12 public education system. On February 17, your government will announce the 2015 Budget, which has been created after a process of public consultation. According to the Legislative Committee's report on the consultations, a well-funded public education system is a top priority for British Columbians:

Submissions on K-12 and post-secondary education constituted a large portion of the public input on Budget 2015. Furthermore, the most popular response to the online survey question, "What program and spending areas are most important to you?" was K-12 and post-secondary education. (p. 19, *Report on the Budget 2015 Consultations* [RB2015C])

Despite the high priority placed on public education by the citizens of British Columbia, the Committee noted that it was presented with evidence that current funding levels are not sufficient to meet rising operating and capital costs; that districts are struggling to meet the growing demands for support for students with special needs and those with minimal English language skills; and that additional resources are required to support new initiatives. In B.C., we have the second worst per-student operational funding in Canada<sup>1</sup>, with spending lagging \$988 per student behind the national average.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-595-m/81-595-m2013099-eng.pdf>; Summary Elementary and Secondary School Indicators for Canada, the Provinces and Territories, 2006/2007 to 2010/2011, Table 21, p. 25.

Recognizing the need for increased education funding, the Committee made the following specific recommendations to the government:

- Provide stable, predictable, and adequate funding to enable school districts to fulfill their responsibility to provide continued equitable access to quality public education, and to meet required repair and maintenance needs. (p. 24, RB2015C)
- Provide adequate capital funding to school districts for facility improvements, seismic upgrades, and additional schools in rapidly growing communities. (p. 24, RB2015C)
- Provide support for proposed new K-12 initiatives such as personalized learning and enhanced trades and technology training. (p. 25, RB2015C)
- Provide resources to identify and address the growing number of students with special needs and those with minimal English language skills. (p. 25, RB2015C)

The urgent concerns of British Columbians are reflected in these recommendations and should be addressed now, at a time when the B.C. government is proudly reporting a budget surplus. We cannot afford to continue to erode public education through underspending. Education is the bedrock on which we build our economy, our democracy, our social structures, and community values. The more that public education is undermined, the greater the inequities in our society will become. I call upon you and your government to implement the Committee’s recommendations for increased public education funding, for the good of our children and all British Columbians.

Sincerely,

Name	Signature	Address	Email

<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Email</b>

<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Email</b>