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January 6, 2022

The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside,  
Minister of Education  
Fisheries  
P.O. Box 9045 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

The Honourable Lana Popham  
Minister of Agriculture, Food and  
P.O. Box 9409 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9V1

The Honourable Karina Gould  
Minister of Families, Children and  
Social Development  
by email [karina.gould@parl.gc.ca](mailto:karina.gould@parl.gc.ca)

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau  
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food  
1341 Baseline Road  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0C5

Dear Ministers Whiteside, Popham, Gould and Bibeau,

Re: Universal School Food Program

Our Board is writing in support of a universal, cost-shared healthy school food program in Canada. As a first step in this support, we have endorsed the Coalition for Healthy School Food.

School District No. 52 (Prince Rupert) acknowledges the support we currently receive for school meals. Community Link funding through the Ministry of Education in BC is used for lunches. Funding for breakfast programs is spearheaded by the Breakfast Club of Canada and includes donations from a number of local companies. With the funds available, the district does its best to provide about 20% of students with meals that are compliant with the Canada Food Guide.

There is, however, so much more that could be done with additional funding. Many more students would benefit from school meals if the funding was provided. Hot meals could be provided for lunches (students currently receive sandwiches most days). A choice of meals would reduce waste, as students could pick the meal they want to eat.

One of our real challenges is the program costs beyond the food itself. Infrastructure improvements and increased staffing costs need to be funded if the meal program is to expand.



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The availability of fresh food is also a challenge. Prince Rupert is not an agricultural community, and we are a remote community a considerable distance from larger urban centres. This means that food costs in our community are higher per student than costs in those larger centres.

I understand that each of you, in your mandate letters, is tasked with implementing a universal school meals program. This is very encouraging news for our Board, and we look forward to participating in this program as it is developed.

Yours sincerely,  
School District No. 52 (Prince Rupert)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kate Toye", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Ms. Kate Toye  
Chair

cc: MLA Jennifer Rice  
BCSTA  
Ecotrust Canada