



# News Release

April 19, 2011

## **Surrey Board of Education demands provincial government ante-up for Surrey's vulnerable students**

The Surrey Board of Education is calling on the provincial government to stop paying lip-service to Surrey's vulnerable students and cover the shortfall caused by the province's flawed CommunityLINK funding formula.

"The government should be ashamed that the most vulnerable children and families in our district have been treated like second-class citizens for more than a decade due to an unfair funding formula this government has so far refused to change," says Surrey Board of Education chair Laurae McNally.

Despite assurances from five consecutive Liberal education ministers who have acknowledged the inequity of the CommunityLINK funding formula and committed to remedy it, [2011-12 funding](#) levels are unchanged. The current inaction continues even after the board's plea to Education Minister George Abbott at a meeting with the board in Surrey on April 12.

The Surrey School District is B.C.'s largest with more than 12 per cent of the province's total public school enrolment. However, on a per student basis, Surrey receives a fraction of the CommunityLINK funding provided many other districts; for example, Surrey gets roughly half the allocation for Langley, a third of the funding provided Vancouver and a quarter of the funds given to Greater Victoria.

Surrey's funding shortfall for CommunityLINK-supported initiatives such as the district's successful [Community-Schools Partnership](#) program is approximately \$2 million, including a \$600,000 deficit for the school meal program alone.

"We believe it is fair and reasonable to ask the provincial government to provide our district a one-time grant of \$2 million to put families first and ensure our students will not have to bear the brunt of yet another year of CommunityLINK funding inequity," says McNally. "This one-time grant assumes the government will act to address the inequity in time for the following school year."

[CommunityLINK](#) (Learning Includes Nutrition and Knowledge) provides funding to all boards of education to support vulnerable students in academic achievement and social functioning. The funding helps school districts provide services such as breakfast and lunch programs, inner-city and community school programs, school-based support workers, and counselling for at-risk children and youth. CommunityLINK defines "vulnerable students" as those students who may be at risk in terms of academic achievement and social functioning. These students primarily come from less affluent socio-economic backgrounds.

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