

BC Independent Schools Affordability Grant

October 28, 2022

The purpose of this grant is to make life more affordable for BC families who are temporarily facing financial challenges and short-term assistance with the current costs of school supplies, education-related fees, and dealing with food insecurity that impact children's learning.

Government recognizes that British Columbians may be struggling with rising food costs, and costs for a range of goods and services. Independent schools have been allotted \$3.8 million to establish or expand programs to assist needy families within their communities.

Here is a non-exhaustive, broad list of where this funding can be targeted to families in need:

Food Security

- Improve access to nutritional food for students and families during and after school.
- Provide struggling families with grocery store gift certificates.
- Partner with local Food Banks, First Nations groups, or other community agencies to improve food security.

School Associated Fees

- Purchase school supplies for this school year that would normally be purchased by parents (this could include ink cartridges and paper for online students).
- Cover curricular course material fees (Band, Shop, Textiles, Foods...).
- Cover extra-curricular participation fees (Band instruments, team fees, travel and accommodations, sports/band uniforms...).
- Assist with transportation (School bus fees, transit passes, in some cases gas cards for school specific travels).
- Purchase student clothing and footwear (this may include student uniform items).

Grant funds are not to be used for:

- School supplies intended for use next school year (this is under MECC reconsideration)
- Student Support Service fees (Speech Language, Occupational Therapy....)
- Counselling Services (Psychologists, Psych Ed assessments...)
- Tutoring Services (in-school or private)
- Technology purchases
- School tuition fees
- Staff costs to administer this grant

The School Affordability Grant is intended to be a one-time funding and schools will be required to report broadly on the areas where they have supported families. The Ministry recognizes that school personnel are best to determine the families that are in need. Schools are expected to consult with stakeholder groups when determining how best to use the funds (Indigenous Rightsholders, Parent Support Groups...). Schools must establish procedures that ensure assistance is provided in an appropriate and dignified manner with proper oversight as to who receives support.