



Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1L1

August 8, 2007

Ms. Penny Tees
President
British Columbia School Trustees Association
4th Floor, 1580 West Broadway
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6J 5K9

Dear Ms. Tees:

Thank you for your letter of July 18, 2007 to the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), in which you raise issues around the settlement needs of school-aged newcomers and their families in British Columbia. The Minister has asked me to respond on her behalf.

The Association's resolution and your letter draw attention to the instrumental role that official language proficiency plays in newcomers' abilities to settle and integrate. CIC, cognisant of the importance of increasing official language proficiency amongst newcomers, devotes significant resources to the development and delivery of language training programs and supports the work of provincial and territorial governments in meeting the needs of newcomers in their jurisdictions.

The Governments of Canada and British Columbia (BC) have an immigrant settlement services agreement entitled the *Agreement for Canada-British Columbia Cooperation*. Under this agreement, British Columbia receives funding through an alternative funding arrangement and the province is responsible for the design and delivery of immigrant settlement programs and services. By participating in the Joint Federal Provincial Advisory Council for British Columbia, CIC works with the province to contribute to the development of policies, programs and research in the areas of immigrant selection, integration, refugee protection and citizenship acquisition.

The funding of settlement services to newcomers represents one of CIC's most important ongoing activities. Budgets 2006 and 2007, allocated a total amount of \$1.3 billion over five years (from 2006-07 to 2010-11) for all provinces and territories outside of Quebec. This funding will assist in providing newcomers with access to programs and services that can enable their success in communities across this country.

You may wish to contact the Provincial government's Settlement and Multiculturalism Division to obtain further information on programs and services offered to newcomers and inform them of your members' concerns. Officials can be reached at the following address:

British Columbia Ministry of Attorney General
Settlement and Multiculturalism Division
5th Floor, 605 Robson Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3
Phone: 604 660-2203
Fax: 604 775-0670
E-mail: ag.sam@gov.bc.ca

Thank you taking the time to write to apprise the Department of your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Signed for Rose Kattackal".

Rose Kattackal
Director General
Integration Branch