

February 22, 2019

The Honourable Ahmed D. Hussen, MP
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Ahmed.Hussen@parl.gc.ca

Via email

Dear Minister Hussen,

Re: Expansion Request for Eligibility of Settlement Services

At its February 5, 2019 Board Meeting of the Board of Education of School District 37 (Delta), has passed the following motion:

***That**, the Delta Board of Education write to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, requesting that clients (students and families) "ineligible" for settlement services be included in the "eligible" list and that funding be increased proportionally to accommodate this change.*

At the November 28, 2018 meeting of the ELL Consortium, Trustees first became aware that there are two different categories of newcomers to Canada: those deemed eligible for settlement services and those deemed ineligible for settlement services.

Clients ineligible for settlement services include naturalized Canadian citizens, unsponsored refugee claimants, temporary residents, children and families of post-secondary study permit holders, live-in caregivers and children born in Canada to immigrant parents.

As Canada welcomes newcomers to our country, it is difficult to understand why funding to help newcomers with settlement challenges are provided only for "eligible" clients. Those deemed to be "ineligible" are downloaded on to other levels of government without the funding to support programs needed to help newcomers settle in Canada.

In our public school system in British Columbia, we support all students and families who walk through our doors. Our goal is to help families settle in to our communities so their children will succeed. Newcomers come to Canada to make a better life for their families. They want to be productive, contributing members to Canadian society and they depend upon settlement services to help realize their full potential which is of benefit to all Canadians.

Over the years, the numbers of newcomers, both eligible and ineligible, have increased, however, the funding has not kept up with the rising numbers. The numbers of ineligible clients (students and families) has risen the most and yet they are not recognized for funding purposes, therefore, it is urgent that we rectify this funding shortfall. We are doing the best to provide settlement services to all newcomers but we are often forced to give less to the "ineligible" clients. Larger school districts that receive the bulk of the newcomers are paying the greatest price. In Vancouver, for example, "ineligible" students and families represent around 50% of the caseload for staff.

The investment into a good start for newcomers to Canada will only help ensure their ability to contribute to our nation's future; it is incumbent on the Federal Government to ensure equitable access to settlement services.

We respectfully request that consideration be given to make settlement services available to all newcomers to Canada, those deemed eligible and those currently deemed ineligible as well as a proportional increase in funding.

Sincerely,



Laura Dixon
Chairperson, Delta Board of Education

cc: Board of Education of SD37 (Delta)
Val Windsor, ELL Consortium Chair
The Honourable Carla Qualtrough – Delta MP
Ravi Kahlon – MLA Delta North
Ian Paton – MLA Delta South
BCSTA – For circulation to All Boards

EXEMPLAIRE