Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I am a resident of your riding and am writing you to express my concern over the negotiations between the BCTF and BCPSEA. While I am not a teacher, I have been following the negotiations because I believe in the importance of public education and was hopeful that teachers and students would finally be able to get a fair deal under an NDP government.

Currently, my child is receiving somewhere near $1,900 per year less than most children across Canada, just because our family lives in BC, one of the provinces with the highest cost of living. For sixteen years, under a Liberal government, the funding to public education has fallen far behind other provinces. As a percentage of GDP, the Liberals reduced the funding to public education from 3.7% down to 2.7%. If the NDP don’t change this trend, then it appears you don’t actually believe in public education as a important pillar of democracy. The rest of Canadian provinces spend approximately 3.3 % of their GDPs on education.

In the not so distant past, teachers had their contract illegally stripped leading to 15 years of layoffs, cuts to specialist teachers, increased class sizes, and fewer supports for students with special needs. This has resulted in an inability to recruit and retain teachers in BC. We know that there is more money that could be placed at the table for public education.

Currently the BC government funds private, independent and faith based schools anywhere from 35-50% of the amount that goes to public schools, an amount that was reported to be $358 million dollars in 2016. This is an unacceptable use of public money that could be going to properly funding public schools across the province.

Not too long ago many of you stood beside teachers and parents as they walked the picket line protesting cuts to education, and you were also beside them celebrating the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision that the 2002 stripping of their contract under the BC Liberals was illegal. It is time you take a stand and show all of BC how much you truly value public education, our teachers, and ultimately our children.

Sincerely,