



November 29, 2024

Ref: 303157

Dear Board Chairs:

Governments around the world, including the Government of BC, are facing a growing number of cybersecurity threats. Actors such as foreign governments, organized cyber-crime groups, activists, and terrorists are increasingly using a variety of techniques to steal or destroy government-held information, interrupt critical public services, or target physical infrastructure to achieve financial, geopolitical, or ideological objectives.

Since March 2024, four BC school districts have been the target of cyber incidents, three of which were ransomware attacks. These attacks disrupt the business of education, put district data at risk, and create significant financial burden on impacted school districts. More importantly, these attacks are putting the safety, security and privacy of students, families and staff at risk. Evidence suggests that these bad actors will continue to target school districts in BC and exploit system vulnerabilities to gain access.

School districts are provided with resources and training to maintain an appropriate security posture to ensure a safe digital learning environment. Boards of education have the responsibility and legal accountability for the implementation and management of their district's security policies and standards. Because of the serious nature of these threats, it is critically important that school districts follow industry standards, adhere to recommended cybersecurity practices, and take measures to secure their district's networks. I encourage you to communicate the urgency of these security practices with your district leadership.

The Ministry is here to support districts and has developed a suite of cybersecurity services to assist in proactively increasing network and security posture across the sector, for information about the support and services provided please visit: <https://focusedresources.ca/en/privacy-technology/cybersecurity>.

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If you require additional information, please contact Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Information Officer Jennifer Wray via email at Jennifer.Wray@gov.bc.ca. Thank you, in advance, for making cybersecurity a priority in your district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Beare', written in a cursive style.

Lisa Beare
Minister

cc: Kaye Krishna, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Child Care
Jennifer Wray, ADM/CIO, Ministry of Education and Child Care
Carolyn Broady, President, British Columbia School Trustees Association
Suzanne Hoffman, CEO, British Columbia School Trustees Association