Mission Public Schools

School District #75 (Mission)
Special Committee of the Whole Meeting
Agenda

October 29, 2019, 3:30 pm
District Education Office, 33046 4th Avenue, Mission, BC

Pages

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

    The Board Chair will acknowledge that this meeting is being held on Traditional Territory.

2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

ITEM 3.1   **Information**

TO: Committee of the Whole
FROM: T. Loffler, Board Chair
SUBJECT: Funding Model Review – Working Group Reports

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Summary:

In February, 2018, the Minister of Education appointed an Independent Review Panel that met with all 60 school districts and heard from over 350 education stakeholders.

The Independent Funding Model Review panel presented a final report on December 18, 2018, with 22 recommendations along three themes: equity, accountability, and financial management.

Four Working Groups were established to assess the implications of the Panel's recommendations with the goal of identifying any challenges and providing suggestions. The Working Groups included representation from teachers, parents, inclusive education advocacy groups, First Nations, school administrators, support staff, and all education partner organizations. They met between March and August 2019 to engage further on the key areas and themes identified in the Panel report. The Working Groups shared a Progress Report in the summer, 2019 (PDF, 3.1MB) and presented final reports to the Minister of Education in October, 2019.

Attachments:
1. Financial Management Working Group Report
2. Adult and Continuing Education Working Group Report
3. Inclusive Education Working Group Report
4. Online Learning Working Group Report

FUNDING MODEL IMPLEMENTATION

Financial Management

WORKING GROUP REPORT

Background

The Financial Management Working Group (FMWG) was responsible for reviewing and discussing recommendations 18, 19 and 20 of the Independent Review Panel's (the Panel) report and considering how this work aligns with the recommendations identified by the Panel under the Accountability theme. As such, the FMWG approached this work with the following agreed-upon parameters:

1. The FMWG respected the co-governance relationship between the Ministry of Education and boards of education and their respective roles and responsibilities.

2. The FMWG focused on how best to ensure transparency and accountability for the overall funding provided for public education (quantum) and the spending of the funding provided to each district.

3. The provincial government is solely responsible for establishing the annual quantum to be invested in public education. The sector wants an opportunity to inform and influence provincial decisions and better understand the quantum that is approved and provided through the provincial budget, including what costs are covered and any service expectations. As Provincial funding reflects between 57 and 99 percent of school district operating revenues, the service expectation should be clear to all partners in education.

4. The FMWG focused on how to simply and transparently explain local spending decisions and services that can be expected by staff, students, and parents as well as how resources are allocated to support students in improving their learning outcomes (goals in school district strategic plans).

5. The FMWG will look at better ways to understand how operating and capital reserves are funded and managed over time. Recognizing that capacity for administrative planning and reporting requirements differs among school districts, the FMWG noted the need to explore opportunities for support at the provincial level.

The FMWG's advice is based on a financial accountability framework that includes the following components:

1. The goals and objectives of the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning are clarified and should form the basis for planning and financial accountability for the sector.

2. The Ministry of Education establishes goals in its strategic plan which will align with service expectations established in consultation with the sector and inform the total amount of operating funding made available to boards of education. The description of the quantum of funding will provide transparency and clarity for all parties to understand the components of the approved amount.

3. School districts will establish strategic plans with key goals and objectives that support student learning and achievement, with action plans that specify how services will be resourced in support of the plans.

4. Funding will be allocated to districts in a manner that recognizes the differences in costs to provide an equitable level of service to students across the province.

5. School districts will budget with transparent reporting on key decisions and how resources are used to address the needs of students and classrooms, in alignment with the goals and objectives that support student learning (outlined in #3 above).

6. There will be regular monitoring of expenditures against budgets throughout the year. Year-end financial statements and reports will provide clarity for local parties on how funding was spent and what was accomplished, relative to the goals and action plans established at the start of the year.

7. Evaluation at both the provincial and local level will inform future strategic and budget plans.

A more detailed overview of these components and timelines is depicted in Appendix B.

Recommendations:

The FMWG agrees with this recommendation and provides the following advice for implementation.

The FMWG acknowledges that Government retains responsibility for establishing the quantum through the annual provincial budgeting process, however FMWG advises that there be greater transparency in the process to determine the final amount and accountability for the services funded.

The FMWG suggests that sector partners be given oportunities to provide information to Government prior to decisions being made as input into the annual provincial budget process. Annually, the sector will provide input to Government in advance of the annual provincial budget process and include the cost of sustaining services, the cost of implementing known new initiatives, and any cost reductions or savings that may be realized by the sector.

The costing work will be coordinated through the BC Association of School Business Officials (BCASBO) who will report this information to Government by October 31 each year for the following three school years (see potential example of an Information Document for Government in Appendix C).

The Ministry will supplement this information by clearly identifying any changes in provincial and local trends as identified by the data used to calculate components of the funding distribution model. Specifically, the Ministry will ensure that any changes to data that have cost implications, such as increasing numbers of students with health and mental health needs, children and youth in care and children acquiring language skills are considered. As well, geographic data, such as school size and capacity or weather conditions, is also communicated annually to Government for consideration when establishing the amount of funds to be invested in K-12 education.

Individual school districts, partner associations, and other stakeholders can also provide input into funding and services for public education through established channels such as association submissions, ongoing liaison with the Ministry, meeting with local Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)s, and presentations to the Select Standing Committee on the Finance and Government Services.

Once the provincial budget is approved, Ministry staff will translate it into school year components and be transparent with all sector partners on the funding included in the quantum. The Ministry should ensure a consistent process and format annually for sharing this information

This implementation advice is supported by research and partner submissions:

- Forecasts and projections of future resource needs can be used by different entities across the budgeting process to ensure the education system's long-term fiscal sustainability and develop clear implementation paths for educational reforms (OECD Research on The Funding of School Education – Connecting Resources and Learning).

- The effective planning of education funding strategies and reform initiatives requires not only the identification of future resource needs, but also the systematic mobilization of knowledge generated through research, programme evaluations, monitoring and audit activities (Fazekas and Burns, 2012).

- Strategic thinking and long-term planning are central to the successful governance of complex education systems (Burns, Köster and Fuster, 2016).

Recommendation 19 – *To support multi-year financial planning:*

- *Government should issue three-year operating funding to boards of education, based on available funding and projected student enrolment; and*

- *School districts should be required to develop three-year financial plans*

The FMWG agrees with this recommendation and provides the following advice for implementation.

Although the FMWG supports multi-year planning, the group notes the importance of clarifying and disclosing assumptions and risks involved in making financial projections over multiple years. The longer the planning horizon, the less accurate the projections. The FMWG envisions a three-year rolling cycle updated for the current and future two years.

To improve planning, Government should clearly announce what factors will be addressed in determining the annual quantum, such as regular enrolment, enrolment in higher cost programs, provincially approved labour settlements, and government-imposed costs. The tool to estimate funding at a district level should be retained to assist in more accurate planning.

Three-year planning components should include simple schedules and background descriptions for regular operating costs, accumulated operating reserves and local capital (see Appendix D).

To support broader transparency, in addition to budget information currently provided, districts would be required to publicly provide a simple one to two-page budget summary document for the annual budget which would outline key spending decisions and assumptions made for multi-year planning, as well as relevant risks to the plan (e.g., sensitivity analysis, see Appendix E).

The preparation of multi-year education budgets will assist districts in making informed and sustainable budgeting choices.

Recommendation 20 – *The Ministry should establish clear provincial policies on reserves to ensure consistent and transparent reporting while maintaining school districts' ability to establish reserves. Specifically, the Ministry should:*

- *Set clear provincial policies on what school districts may save for, directly related to their strategic plans;*

- *Establish acceptable provincial range for unrestricted reserves, encompassing accumulated operating surpluses and local capital, which should be monitored and reported on (if required);*

- *Ensure that school districts have specific plans attached to each item or initiative when setting reserves, and provide clear reporting on how the funds were spent; and*

- *Work with school districts to transfer any overages beyond the approved threshold into a fund at the school district level, to be accessed only with Ministry approval.*

The ability to accumulate operating surpluses over time allows districts to more effectively spend their grants without the risk of losing unspent annual funding at fiscal year end and allows districts to address unplanned expenditures and longer-term needs and costs. Local capital reserves provide funding that facilitates longer-term planning for costs without a dedicated funding source, such as technology and equipment.

Historically, local capital reserves fund the purchase of capital items (e.g., vehicles) and other local capital requirements not included in the capital plan, such as administrative facilities. Currently, local capital reserves often cover capital purchases to accommodate enrolment growth purchases (e.g. portable classrooms) and can contribute to major capital projects. The local capital reserve accounts for capitalized asset purchases, even if funded from operating grants, have accounting rules that require districts to transfer operating funding to local capital and record these items as purchased from local capital.

The FMWG agrees that greater transparency is needed around operating reserves. Transparency is especially needed to understand the restricted portion, including why funds are being restricted, how these restricted funds are intended to be spent, and how they are actually utilized (must be updated annually as part of the district budget process to capture new additions or adjusted plans to fully spend over time). Improved transparency will better inform discussions about the amount of funding required for capital and operating budgets to meet strategic plans and deliver services for students.

To drive consistency, the FMWG supports a provincial reserve policy in which the Ministry specifies the factors to include and provides a standard reporting template aligned to a three-year planning cycle to be provided as part of the annual budget instructions (see Appendix C). The policy must provide clarity and consistency across districts on restricted items. The policy must also ensure reporting on the spending from reserves and prioritize spending on the goals outlined in strategic plans for improving student achievement. Enhanced reporting will improve transparency on how the reserve was accumulated, the initial spending plan and whether the plan was met.

Once consistent restriction categories and simplified reporting is established, the unrestricted portion of the accumulated reserve – as reported in the audited financial statements – is expected to range from one to four percent. School districts whose unrestricted balances surpass four percent should provide the Ministry with a detailed plan to use the excess funds within the three-year planning window and a quarterly report on how actual spending compares to their plan. This will ensure that all districts strive to be within the expected range and there is Ministry monitoring as recommended by the Panel. This process would have similar expectations to the Ministry monitoring of districts in deficit. Districts should also have a plan to maintain an unrestricted reserve balance should it fall below one percent.

Local Capital transfers from operating for the purchase of capitalized assets must be clearly identified in the three-year plan.

With good financial planning and monitoring, districts can be more accountable for effectively spending their operating grants, avoiding a deficit position and planning for any reserves. There is an expectation of sustainable services for students over the planning period. Greater transparency in the planned use of reserves will also assist the sector in more appropriately identifying whether any operating funding is available for funding major capital projects.

The FMWG discussed recommendation 22 and agrees that operating funding should be used for operating and minor capital items and government should fully fund capital plan program expenditures.

This implementation advice is supported by the OECD results of their study, The Funding of School Education – Connecting Resources and Learning:

- More flexibility in the budget planning and execution process can serve to increase its responsiveness to unforeseen circumstances and changing priorities as well as provide incentives for the more efficient use of school funding at the planning stage.

- The planning of education budgets should also be flexible enough to respond to new priorities and unforeseen circumstances, as well as provide incentives for efficiency, for example through the transparent regulation of carry-over rights for unspent resources.

- Relaxing central input controls and increasing budget flexibility has been a common strategy to enable education authorities to pursue their objectives more efficiently and effectively.

Accountability Recommendations of the Panel:

The FMWG reviewed the Independent Review Panel's accountability recommendations and noted the need for strong alignment with the recommendations on financial management.

Accountability mechanisms will be driven by the Ministry's *Framework for Enhancing Student Learning*, which requires boards of education to develop multi-year strategic plans for school districts and individual schools. Strategic plans will focus on improving educational outcomes for all students, as well as promoting equity for Indigenous students, children in care and students with diverse abilities or disabilities. Flowing from strategic plans, boards of education will develop complementary service and financial plans to resource and operationalize key goals and objectives.

To support strategic planning, the FMWG determined that the sector will benefit from a guidebook that provides resources, advice and best practices on financial planning and reporting. A comprehensive and accessible single-source resource document will improve consistency across districts; transparent reporting for parents, staff and community; and ensure government understands the financial plans and fiscal position of school districts. The Ministry will need to engage a knowledgeable group of individuals from the sector to assist in developing the guidebook.

The guidebook would need to be supplemental to the technical Operating Fund Account Descriptions, Budget Instructions, Financial Statement instructions, Capital Planning Instructions and Operating Funding Manual as an additional technical resource for Secretary-Treasurers and their staff that are supporting boards of education around the stewardship of public resources. The guidebook should accompany clear policy direction from the Ministry on provincial reporting and local policy requirements for boards of education and should not be overly prescriptive but provide helpful advice to boards of education and senior staff to ensure good financial practices and procedures.

While considering the accountability recommendations, the FMWG concluded that there needs to be a balance between increasing administrative burden on school district staff and implementing the accountability framework and improving transparency. The FMWG noted that not all school districts have the same level of planning and reporting capacity. It is important that the Ministry streamlines or reduces existing reporting requirements when adding new requirements in response to the Panel's recommendations.

Accountability recommendations 14 and 16 are also supported by the FMWG. The group commented that providing an annual report may not be possible along with financial statements due to availability of student data at that point in time, and so may need to come slightly later in the year. The implementation of this advice should be accompanied by professional development for the sector to build capacity of school district staff on an ongoing basis.

Conclusion:

The FMWG appreciated the opportunity to review the Panel's financial accountability recommendations for public education. Implementation advice is intended to support accountability and transparency while considering capacity and workload expectations for school districts. There should be common understanding of the spending decisions of boards of education and a framework to align strategic goals for improving student outcomes with local spending decisions. This report seeks to provide a framework with clear roles and responsibilities and more transparent reporting of the financial decisions made by the Province and local boards of education. As well, district staff should be supported with a guidebook to help build capacity and support consistent planning and reporting efforts across the province.

Indicators of success will include the following:

- More clarity for funding of operating and capital expenses both at the provincial and local level
- More local engagement on finances and financial information
- Planning and financial decisions that are aligned and focused on student achievement
- Enhanced understanding of school district reserves
- Better understanding of variance between forecast to actual spending

The FMWG is available to answer any questions on this report and is hopeful that the Minister of Education will consider this advice for improving financial accountability.

Appendix A: Working Group Membership and Meeting Dates

Membership:

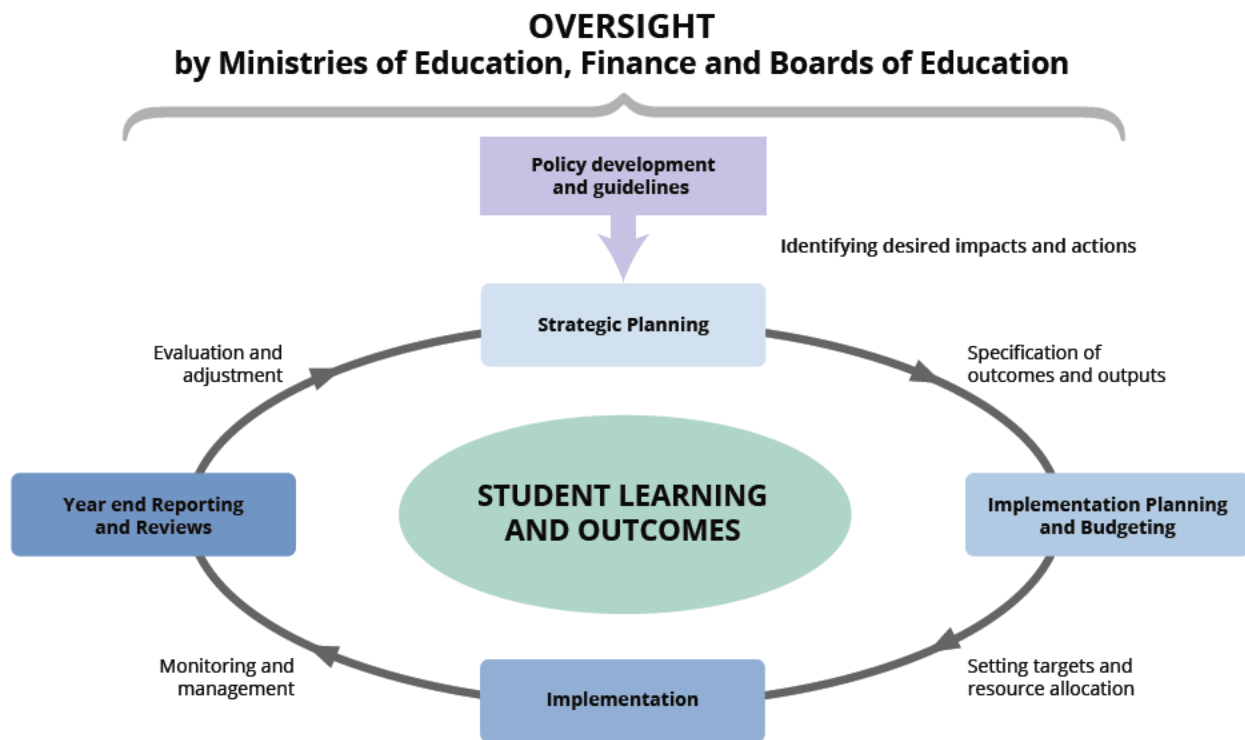| Name	Organization
Kim Horn (co-chair)	Ministry of Education
Joan Axford (co-chair)	Implementation Coordination Committee
Greg Frank	BC Association of School Business Officials
Jan Haugen	First Nations Education Steering Committee
Archie Johnston	Independent Advisor
Paul Lewkowich	Office of the Auditor General
Cam McIntyre	BC Association of School Business Officials
Keith Miller	First Nations Education Steering Committee
Mike Murray	BC School Trustees Association
Christine Perkins	BC School Superintendents Association
Michal Rozworski	BC Teachers' Federation
Scott Sieben	BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association
Andrea Sinclair	BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
Lawrence Tarasoff	Rural Education Advisory Committee
Rob Zver	Canadian Union of Public Employees - BC
Ian Aaron	Ministry of Education

FMI Secretariat Support:

Alisha Olson	Ministry of Education

Meetings:

- March 5, 2019 – Victoria
- April 2, 2019 – Victoria
- April 30, 2019 – Victoria
- May 28, 2019 – Victoria
- June 25, 2019 – Victoria

Appendix B: The Financial Accountability Components and Timelines

The proposed framework for financial accountability can be depicted as:

OVERSIGHT
by Ministries of Education, Finance and Boards of Education

Policy development and guidelines

Identifying desired impacts and actions

Strategic Planning

Evaluation and adjustment

Specification of outcomes and outputs

STUDENT LEARNING AND OUTCOMES

Year end Reporting and Reviews

Implementation Planning and Budgeting

Monitoring and management

Setting targets and resource allocation

Implementation

Timelines

- Fall – BCASBO provides cost and enrolment information to the province
  - Ministry of Education updates its strategic plan goals and objectives in consultation with the sector and shares with school districts
  - Ministry prepares any budget documents for the Ministry of Finance and Treasury Board
  - Ministry reviews their policy documents for funding and financial budgeting and reporting and amends if required
- December – Amended funding for the current school year provides updated information to the province on the funding required
- February – Provincial budget announced along with an information sheet on school year funding and commitments for the three-year plan (enrolment and compensation changes will be funded, etc.)
- March – Funding allocations to school districts for the following school year and budget instructions
- April - July – School districts set their budget objectives in alignment with their strategic plan, approve and submit budgets. School district financial audits take place
- September – School district financial statements that summarize school district financial health and progress to achieving their goals and objectives
- Review and evaluation at all levels to inform updated strategic plans and future budgets which may involve an annual report, similar to a corporate report, that addresses student outcomes and includes financial information.

Appendix C: Example of Template for Tracking Sector Costs

LIST OF ESTIMATED COST PRESSURES					
Block Operating Grants required to cover Cost Pressures					
	2017/2018	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**Comments**
Cost of Enrolment Increases					
Cost Pressures Common to All School Districts					
Support staff wage increase					
Teacher Staff and TTOC wage increases					
Exempt Staff Increases					
Economic Dividend					
Labour Settlement Costs	-	-			
Upgraded New Generation Network Operating Cost					
Utilities					
Employee Benefits					
Liability Insurance					
New Programs					
General inflation -1.6%; 1.9% and 2% per year					
Other Cost Pressures	-	-			
Reductions in Costs					
New Procurement Entity, Insurance and Other					
Teachers Pension Plan Contributions					
Total Reductions					
TOTAL Cost Pressures	-	-			

Appendix D: Sample Reporting Templates for Three-Year Planning, Operating Reserves and Local Capital

Figure 1. Three-Year Operating Plan

Sample Three Year Operating Plan
(Million $)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Assumptions	Level of Risk (Conservative or Optimistic), Increasing or Decreasing over the Period
Instruction	$ 75.00	$ 78.80	$ 82.78	Enrolment is constant, inflation recognized	conservative -low risk as funding will increase with enrolment growth
District Administration	$ 3.10	$ 3.16	$ 3.23	Compensation increases within	conservative - low risk
Operations and Maintenance	$ 14.10	$ 14.67	$ 15.26	Inflation recognzed	conservative - low risk
Transportation	$ 1.88	$ 1.94	$ 1.99	Upgrade to add GPS to buses and cost	conservative - low risk
Total	$ 94.08	$ 98.57	$103.27		
Salaries and Benefits	$ 79.97	$ 83.78	$ 87.78	Salaries within mandate, benefits as projected by provider	low risk on compensation, high risk on cost of benefits
Supplies and Services	$ 14.11	$ 14.78	$ 15.49	Increased by inflation	conservative low risk
Total	$ 94.08	$ 98.57	$103.27		
Percent Change over Previous Year		4.77%	4.77%		
Revenue Projected	$ 95.00	$ 99.00	$102.00		High risk that government will increase funding as projected and international students will continue to enrol and pay
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	$ 0.92	$ 0.43	($ 1.27)	District will draw on reserves in year 3 from the surplus in year 1 and 2	

Figure 2. Three-Year Plan for Accumulated Operating Surplus

Schedule of Operating Surplus Reserve	Opening Balance July 1	Planned Utilization Current School Year	Utilization Current School Year	Additions	Closing Balance June 30	Planned Next Year	Planned Year 2	Planned Year 3	Expected Balance	Comments
Internally Restricted due to Contractual Requirements										
School Generated Funds										
Contracts with outside entities										
Contracts with Employees for Compensation and Benefits										
Internally Restricted by Board of Education due to Policy and Practice										
School Based Budget										
Department Based Budget										
Capital Plan										
Techology Plan										
Next Year's Operating Budget-included in Annual Budget to Balance										
Purchase Order and Contract Commitments										
Strategic Plan Goals (provide details of expected Use and Timeframe)										
Detail										
Detail										
Detail										
Total Fund Balance that is Restricted										
Unrestricted Operating Surplus										
Percentage Unrestricted is of the Operating Budget										

Figure 3. Three-Year Plan for Local Capital

Local Capital	Current Year	Planned for Year 1	Planned for Year 2	Planned for Year 3
Opening Balance				
Sale of Property-Board's Share				
Detail				
Detail				
Detail				
Total Sale of Property				
Net Expenses				
Transfer from Operating				
Assets Purchased				
Detail				
Detail				
Detail				
Total Assets Purchased				
Interest earned				
Closing Balance				

Appendix E: Potential Sections of a School District Budget Highlight Document

    Budget Summary
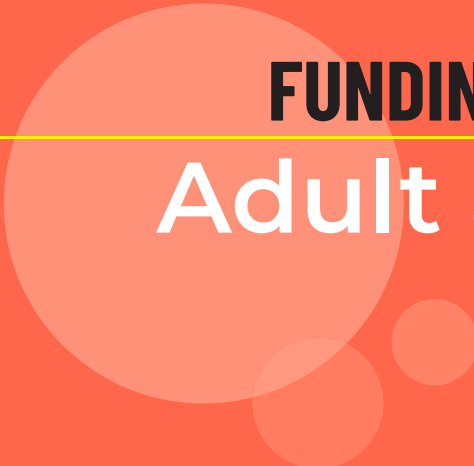
    Key Decisions Made in the Budget

    Strategic Plan Goals Addressed in this Budget

    Use of Reserves

    Comparison with Previous Year by Function

    Three Year Plan by Function and Key Assumptions and Risks

FUNDING MODEL IMPLEMENTATION
Adult and Continuing Education

WORKING GROUP REPORT

Background

The Adult and Continuing Education Implementation Working Group was tasked with assisting the Ministry of Education in determining the best approach to implementing Recommendation 11 of the Independent Review Panel's report:

Recommendation #11 – Notwithstanding Recommendation 9, funding for the following programs should remain course-based:

- *Graduated adults*
- *Non-graduated adults*
- *Continuing education (adult and school-age learners)*
- *Distributed learning (for adult learners only)*

While the Panel's original report included summer school as part of Recommendation 11, it is not related to Adult and Continuing Education and was therefore out of scope for the Working Group.

The Working Group agreed that there is a need for adult education programs in the K-12 sector. There are many reasons why some students do not complete and obtain their Dogwood in the regular timeframe, are unable to learn in the regular classroom setting, or make life choices that require flexible scheduling of education. It is vital that the sector continue to provide adult education programs that ensure students are given the best opportunities so that they become or continue to be successful. This includes continuing to offer courses to adults through distributed learning.

The Working Group thoroughly discussed thoroughly the need for adult programs, the delivery of those programs, and how to better support students. The work included:

- Defining challenges and opportunities of existing program structures for Adult and Continuing Education;
- Revising the vision statement for adult education, as a foundation for program and funding policy;
- Reviewing relevant data, such as demographics of adult students and their educational outcomes, to articulate/provide stronger evidence on the current successes and challenges;
- Developing student profiles to better understand the range of learners in Adult Education programs, their learning needs, and their goals;
- Providing advice on key policy questions related to Adult Education, from system, district and school perspectives;
- Defining positive and negative implications for different funding approaches (i.e. course-based funding, program-based considerations and a combination/hybrid consideration);
- Suggesting mitigations for potential issues arising from different funding approaches; and
- Identifying possible indicators of success for adult programs and students, including completion and transition rates.

Meetings and Membership

The Working Group met four times between March and June 2019. The Working Group had 13 external members representing key partners in the BC K-12 education system and six members from the Ministry of Education, both from the Funding Model Implementation Team and the Adult Education program area. Emilie Hillier (Ministry of Education) and Debbie Jeffrey (First Nations Education Steering Committee) co-chaired the Working Group. The Working Group's membership and meeting dates are listed in Appendix A.

Summary of Discussion Themes

Successes of current course-based funding model for adult and continuing education

- Non-graduated adults, including those who have struggled previously and other vulnerable adult students, have had success with current adult education programs.
- The Adult Dogwood provides a flexible pathway to graduation, employment and post-secondary studies for vulnerable students who are not able to complete the regular Dogwood and older adult learners who need a timely graduation credential.
- Elimination of tuition in 2017 for foundational and academic upgrading courses pursued by graduated adults has improved access to adult education.
- The current system provides the flexibility for adult students to enrol in the courses they need and when they need them (i.e. continuous entries throughout the year via distributed learning and Continuing Education centres).
- Course-based funding and multiple funding counts also enable districts to respond to increases in demand in adult education programs and at Continuing Education centres (adult and school-aged students).
- The current funding model is understood by current partners and stakeholders.

Diverse needs of adult learners

- Adult learners are diverse, and many are vulnerable students who have complex and unique learning needs.
- Some non-graduated adult students were not successful in achieving graduation as school-aged students and may face multiple barriers to education.
- In larger urban districts, many adult students are newcomers to Canada with language learning needs; some need additional supports (such as those from refugee backgrounds).
- While tuition may be free, many adult students face costs to attend school such as transportation, child care, or foregone income.
- During their studies, some adults need a wide range of supports to be successful, such as counselling, learning support services, or services for Indigenous students or English language learners. Under the current model, districts do not have access to supplemental funding for adults that re-enter the system.
- While it may cost less to educate adult students, the current funding differential between adult students and school-aged students and the lack of supplemental funding for adult students does not reflect all adult students' needs for supports.

Over-representation of Indigenous and young learners in adult education
- Indigenous learners, especially younger adults, are over-represented in adult education programs enrolment and in Adult Dogwood graduates.
- 18-year-olds also make up a significant proportion of adult learners and Adult Dogwood graduates.
- School-aged students should not be prematurely encouraged to pursue the Adult Graduation Program.
- If students are contemplating the Adult Dogwood, the student (and their parent/caregiver) should be fully informed of the implications, including how the credential differs from the regular Dogwood and the prerequisites needed for post-secondary study.

Continuing Education centres
- While many students at Continuing Education (CE) centres are adults, students aged 16 and up can also be enrolled in CE centres.
- Some school districts draw on the flexibility of CE centres to enrol school-aged students throughout the year to support career and trades programs that do not fit traditional school-year timelines.
- The current course-based funding model allows for innovative programming for school-aged students funded through CE centres, generating additional funding above the headcount funding.
- These programs are funded primarily in the second and third counts so should be considered in connection with the panel's Recommendation #9.

Other challenges and limitations of current funding model
- For some unique programs (e.g. in corrections centres or in rural/remote communities), course-based funding may not provide enough stability or consistency for a school district to offer adult education courses. In these circumstances, program-based funding could improve access to adult education.
- The 50/50 funding model for graduated adults poses financial planning challenges for school districts and may act as a disincentive for some districts to offer adult education courses.
- Students cross-enrolled in different districts are not eligible for funding in both locations, limiting the ability to take courses in neighbouring districts (e.g., adults at an Alternate Education school or school-aged students at a high school in one district are not funded for courses taken concurrently at a Continuing Education centre in another district).
- The restriction that students must be at least 16 to be funded through CE centres can limit access to career programs for younger students.
- The restriction that students claimed for funding at an Alternate Education School cannot be also claimed for funding at a CE centre limits vulnerable students' access to career programs in some districts.
- The differential in funding between courses for adults and school-aged students can limit the depth and complexity of the course design and delivery.

Proposed Performance Measures
- Completion rates for courses
- Time taken to complete courses
- At what levels courses are completed (e.g. what percent of students achieve C+ average or higher)
- Rates of transition from Foundations courses to high school completion courses
- Rates of transition from adult education programs to post-secondary institutions
- Positive feedback from post-secondary institutions, employers, local First Nations
- Feedback from students
- Fewer Indigenous students in the adult graduation programs
- Availability and variety of adult education programs throughout the province

Considerations

Funding model

- The group concurs with the Panel Recommendation to retain course-based funding for adult and continuing education and suggests maintaining multiple enrolment-count dates for funding.

Additional funding

- The group suggests that the Ministry consider adult students when deciding future directions for supplemental funding (e.g. for Indigenous learners, learners with special needs and English Language learners), as the course-based model does not include specific funding for support services.
- The group suggests addressing the funding differential between adults and school-aged students.

Other considerations

- The group suggests that accountability mechanisms be improved to focus on educational programming and student success.
- The group suggests that consideration be given to a process similar to the Quality Review process used previously for adult education programs.
- The group suggests that consideration be given for program-based funding for unique adult education programs (e.g. correctional facilities).

Related policy implications

- The group suggests that the needs of adult learners and continuing education programs be considered when examining the Independent Review Panel's Recommendations 4, 6, 9, 15, and 18 (see Appendix B for the full text of these recommendations).
- The group suggests that other issues raised through this process be further examined, with the potential to update relevant policies, including:
  - The premature shift of school-aged students and Indigenous students to the Adult Dogwood program;
- Potential for the elimination of the 50/50 funding mechanism for tuition-free courses; and
- Basing continuing education on course grade level instead of age.
- The group suggests that a final review of changes to the funding model be conducted in partnership between the Ministry data collection experts, partners and district leaders to examine unintended consequences.

Conclusion

Adult and continuing education play a critical role in BC's education system. It is vital to maintain adult education programs as options for learners. The decision to strike a full working group to examine Recommendation 11 speaks to the importance of adult and continuing education.

The Working Group appreciated the opportunity to thoroughly examine this recommendation with a wide group of partners, beyond the usual stakeholders. Given the significant changes proposed as part of the funding model review, Working Group members appreciated the Ministry's approach of taking more time to consult and to establish multiple points of contact with partners. The Working Group felt that this was a useful model for future efforts to manage large-scale change to BC's education system.

Proposed approach	Implications of proposed approach	Mitigation strategies
Course-based Funding Model		
Course-based funding for all adult learners	**Positive** • Allows districts flexibility to respond to increases in demand • Allows adult learners flexibility to take classes they need, when they want • Allows adult learners flexibility to take courses in school or through distributed learning • Understood by current partners and stakeholders • Recognizes that most adults do not take a full course load (i.e. 8 courses concurrently **Challenges** • May not provide enough support for unique or small programs (e.g. programs in correctional centres and rural/remote locations) • May not fully address the diverse needs of all adult learners	• Investigate possible increase to per-course funding for adults to assist in addressing the diverse needs of adult learners • Consider adults in the prevalence calculation for inclusive education • Consider addition of targeted funds for Indigenous adult learners • Investigate possible program-based funding for adult education programs in correctional centres, and potentially also programs in rural/remote locations

| Course-based funding at Continuing Education centres | **Positive**
• Provides adults with another location for taking courses
• Continues multiple counts of students allows school-age students on the standard graduation program to take additional courses at non-traditional times (e.g., career courses that do not start and end in line with the school calendar and timetable)
• Allows school-age students to take additional courses not offered/available at their local school (e.g., career pathway courses and dual credit programs offered in partnership with local college)
• Enables districts in funding protection to respond to the needs/requirements of their respective students (i.e., students wanting specific and new career-oriented programs which would be offered/operated through a Continuing Education centre)
Challenges
• Conflicts with Recommendation 9 for headcount funding for school-age students.
• Without reconciliation with Recommendation 9, districts may report school-age students for funding through Continuing Education centres, resulting in a cost pressure to overall public education funding | • Investigate potential restrictions on the type of courses school-age students could take through a Continuing Education centre (e.g. only career pathway courses and dual credit programs)
• Investigate potential restrictions on the number of courses school-age students could take through a Continuing Education centre (e.g. only _X_ per school year)
• Ensure school-aged students at Continuing Education centres are there to supplement their learning (and not have it as their primary location for school)
• Establish clear policies on dual credit and career programs |

Appendix A: Working Group Membership and Meeting Dates

Membership:

Name	Organization
Emilie Hillier (co-chair)	Ministry of Education
Deborah Jeffrey (co-chair)	Implementation Coordination Committee
Val Adrian	BC School Trustees Association
Barbara Binczyk	Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training
Thane Bonar	First Nations Education Steering Committee
Kevin Brandt	BC School Superintendents Association
John Gaiptman	BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
Lynn Hauptman	Rural Education Advisory Committee
Steve Hopkins	BC Association of School Business Officials
Larry Mattin	BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association
Mike McGlenen	BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association
Geoffery McKay	BC School District Continuing Education Directors Association
Michal Rozworski	BC Teachers' Federation
Loree Wilcox	Canadian Union of Public Employees - BC
Sasha Gronsdahl	Ministry of Education
Janine Hannis	Ministry of Education
Brent Munro	Ministry of Education

FMI Secretariat Support:

Name	Organization
Tammy Blair	Ministry of Education
Neal Dobinson	Ministry of Education

Meetings:

- March 7, 2019 – Victoria
- April 16, 2019 – Richmond
- May 15, 2019 – Richmond
- June 20, 2019 – Victoria

Appendix B: Additional Independent Review Panel Recommendations

Recommendation 4:

The Ministry should consolidate and simplify existing geographic funding supplements, the Supplement for Salary Differential and relevant special grants outside the block into a single supplement, with the following two components:

Component 1: 'Unique School District' characteristics should reflect some of the operational challenges of school districts compared to the norm by considering:

- The enrolment of a school district compared to the provincial median school district enrolment;
- The distance from communities containing schools to geographic centres containing basic services;
- The climate of a school district, characterized by the cost of providing heat and cooling for school; and the fuel utilized, and the amount and duration of snowfall in a school district;
- The distribution of students and schools across a school district, as characterized by:
- The density of the student population in a school district, compared to the highest density school district in the province;
- The average distance from each school to the school board office, including the effect of geographic features; and
- A modification of the current salary differential funding approach to be based on total compensation and expanded to include all school district employees.

Component 2: 'Unique School' characteristics, not addressed in the first component, should recognize the operational challenges of some schools by considering:

- The number of small schools within a school district, with different weightings and sizes used for elementary and secondary schools, and provide an increased contribution where a school is the only one in the community and is persistently under capacity; and
- The persistent over-capacity of schools at the school district level.

Recommendation 6:

The Ministry should create a single Inclusive Education Supplement that incorporates all of the following:

- Supplemental Special Needs Funding;
- English/French Language Learning;
- Supplement for Vulnerable Students;
- CommunityLINK;
- Ready Set Learn;
- Supplemental Student Location Factor; and
- Funding currently in the Basic Allocation that was previously allocated to high incidence categories of special needs.

This single Inclusive Education Supplement should allocate funding through the following two components:

Component 1: Students requiring high-cost supports should be funded, and school districts should continue to report and claim these students to the Ministry for funding. More specifically:

- Funding eligibility criteria and the annual funding rate for students requiring high-cost supports should be developed and communicated by the Ministry, focusing on those students that are physically dependent and/or have needs that significantly impact the students' learning; and
- All funding claims in this category should be based on a medical diagnosis and should be subject to compliance audits to verify that eligibility criteria have been met.

Component 2: the remaining inclusive education funds should be allocated to school districts through a prevalence-based model, using a comprehensive range of third-party medical and socio-economic population data. Categories of data and weightings should be as follows:

- Health factors (50%)
- Children in care (20%)
- Income and Earnings (20%)
- English/French Language development (10%)

Recommendation 9:

The Ministry should base funding allocations for school-age educational programming on the number of students, rather than on the number of courses being taken. The Ministry should phase out the current course-based funding model by the 2020/21 school year.

Recommendation 15:

Consistent with the shift to supporting student improvement and learning, the Ministry should:

- Shift the focus of the Compliance Audit Program from purely financial to have a quality assurance emphasis that incorporates best practices-based recommendations regarding student outcomes, structure of programs and services, and overall management of school district operations.
- Defer the recovery of funding for one year, to allow school districts time to adopt compliance team recommendations. This one-year deferral would not be available if it is determined that there has been deliberate contravention of funding eligibility policies.

Recommendation 18:

The Ministry should identify net cost pressures and new program expenditures and, as part of the provincial budgeting process, bring them forward to Treasury Board for consideration when the total quantum of public education funding is being set.

FUNDING MODEL IMPLEMENTATION
Inclusive Education

Overview

In early 2018, an Independent Panel (the "Panel") performed a review of BC's K-12 Public Education Funding Model with an emphasis on creating a system that is responsive, equitable, stable and predictable, flexible, transparent and accountable. The K-12 public education funding formula and allocation has not changed since 2002 and many stakeholders expressed the view that the system is not funded adequately.

While the current system meets the needs of the vast majority of students, the Panel found that there are a number of student populations, such as children and youth in care, Indigenous learners and students with unique learning needs whose educational needs could be better served. Service to these groups of students was found to be inconsistent and inequitable across the province and the Panel heard that the inability for school districts and communities to provide services was often linked to the funding model. Teachers and support staff expressed concerns about the level of resources and supports available and indicated that it is difficult to advocate for more help in classrooms. Parents/stakeholders identified that they were unsure of what to do or where to go if there were concerns about services.

The intent of the Panel's recommendations was to provide a framework to strengthen equity of educational opportunity for a broader range of students by reducing service disparities across the province. The Panel wanted to maintain a student-focused approach that allows Boards to focus on the timely provision of supports and services to students. The Panel's goal was to ensure greater transparency on how funding is used and to improve the financial management and efficient utilization of funding. In addition, the Panel wanted to ensure funding was easier to access and that funding and funding rules are not a barrier, either real or perceived, to service provision.

After the report's release in December 2018, four working groups were established with key education partners and stakeholders to assist the Ministry of Education in establishing implementation options. The Inclusive Education Working Group (the "Working Group") was established to assist the Ministry of Education with determining the best approach for implementing Recommendation 6:

Recommendation 6:

The Ministry should create a single Inclusive Education Supplement that incorporates all of the following:

- *Supplemental Special Needs Funding;*
- *English/French Language Learning;*
- *Supplement for Vulnerable Students;*
- *CommunityLINK;*
- *Ready Set Learn;*
- *Supplemental Student Location Factor; and*
- *Funding currently in the Basic Allocation that was previously allocated to high incidence categories of special needs*

This single Inclusive Education Supplement should allocate funding through two components:

Component 1: *students requiring high-cost supports should be funded and school districts should continue to report and claim these students to the Ministry for funding. Specifically:*

- Funding eligibility criteria and the annual funding rate for students requiring high-cost supports should be developed and communicated by the Ministry, focusing on those students that are physically dependent and/or have needs that significantly impact the students' learning; and
- All funding claims in this category should be based on a medical diagnosis and should be subject to compliance audits to verify that eligibility criteria have been met.

Component 2: *the remaining inclusive education funds should be allocated to school districts through a prevalence-based model, using a comprehensive range of third-party medical and socio-economic population data. Categories of data and weightings should be as follows:*

- Health factors (50%)
- Children/youth in care (20%)
- Income and Earnings (20%)
- English/French Language development (10%)

While it was not the main recommendation of focus, the Working Group was also asked to ensure Recommendation 1 was considered from a global perspective; as it has implications for the entire funding model.

Recommendation 1 stipulates that the Ministry should initially allocate funds to address students requiring additional supports and for unique school district characteristics as these areas represent the primary cost-drivers for school districts. All remaining funds would then be distributed per student.

Areas out of Scope but Important Considerations for Implementation of Recommendation 6:

Over the course of the seven meetings, several important topics emerged that were deemed as out of scope for the Working Group. These should be considered when the funding system is finalized and are as follows:

Quantum: This particular topic was raised multiple times and comprised a significant portion of the dialogue. The Working Group was assured that the implementation of Recommendation 6 is not intended to reduce resources currently provided under the inclusive education supplement. The Working Group started from the premise that funding under a new model would support the same or improved services and if not, the Working Group's advice on implications would likely be different. The Working Group expressed significant concerns that funding in the current system is not meeting the needs of students and that any new model must contain sufficient funding as a baseline and the ability to increase over time if/when needs change. Members of the group reflected that many school districts currently spend more than their Special Education allocation provided due to the quantum and that the majority of school district annual budgets are allocated to staffing and benefits, which limits the flexibility to allocate additional funding to supports and services. The Working Group also assumed that if future costs to support student needs increase, the quantum would also increase.

Other panel recommendations: Although the Working Group did receive presentations from the leads of the Financial Management Working Group and the Advisory Committee for Enhancing Student Learning for context, some of the information and discussion was limited due to confidentiality concerns. In addition, the Group was asked not to consider or assess any of the recommendations beyond those it was tasked with.

Collective bargaining: The Working Group agreed to leave bargaining topics at the bargaining table and did not engage in a conversation or analysis of how a future funding model may impact collective bargaining conversations or future Collective Agreements. The Working Group does acknowledge and recognize that any changes in a funding model will likely impact future Collective Agreement negotiations.

Other Ministries: There are clear linkages in Inclusive Education to other Ministries and Crown Corporations (e.g. Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training, Community Living BC) and the Ministry is aware that these Ministries will be impacted and will continue to work with them through the changes, however the Working Group agreed that discussing other Ministry programs and services were out of scope. The Working Group did however highlight that it is crucial in any implementation to ensure that other Ministries currently using Ministry of Education designations or school district completed assessments are aware of any future changes so that students do not lose services or access to programs and that there is a shared understanding of the value of student assessments to support learner success. The Working Group also acknowledged that the Ministry of Education will need to engage with other Ministries to ensure inter-ministerial protocols are updated as necessary.

Other Considerations:

Economic Modelling:
Similarly, to quantum, this particular topic was raised several times over the course of the seven meetings. Due to complexities and timing, the Working Group was not able to see modelling of a potential Inclusive Education supplement. The Working Group felt it would have benefitted from either a hypothetical model of a school district or an example comparing current funding and the proposed new funding. The Working Group understands that this work is still underway and that the Inclusive Education supplement must be modelled and considered within the framework of all the other funding pieces whilst ensuring improved service to diverse learners. However, the Working Group felt this impacted their ability to fully assess implementation implications. The Working Group expects their respective organizations to have an opportunity to be reconvened or to provide further feedback once the modelling is complete.

Future Policy Work:
Although the Working Group was able to consider multiple implications and provide opportunities to address them, there are some outstanding pieces related to policy and program implementation. The organizations represented in the Working Group would like to be involved as the Ministry moves the policy work forward (e.g. to be able to review and have input into the final Complex Needs/High-Cost category). Many in the Working Group also asked for an ongoing Committee on Inclusive Education to continue to build on the relationships established and to continue to have input into the Ministry's work in this area.

First Nations Consultation:
The Ministry of Education recognizes its unique consultation obligations to First Nations as rights holders separate and outside of this process. The Ministry will ensure that bilateral discussions, as committed to under the BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA), take place as part of commitments to support improved educational outcomes for First Nations students.

Background

The Working Group met seven times between March and August 2019. The Group was comprised of 20 external members representing key partners in the BC K-12 education system and four Ministry of Education staff from the Inclusive Education Branch (Learning Division) and Funding and Financial Accountability Branch (Resource Management Division). Co-chairs of the Working Group were Cloe Nicholls, Executive Director of Learning Supports from the Ministry of Education and Piet Langstraat, retired Superintendent/CEO of the Greater Victoria School District. Names and affiliations of Working Group members are appended to this report (Appendix A). This report reflects what was discussed by the Working Group and is a Ministry document that is not endorsed by any of the organizations represented in the Working Group. Over its seven meetings, the Working Group spent considerable time talking about and understanding the current funding model and delineating the difference between a funding model and a spending model. Through further meetings, the Working Group identified and explored many implications and potential opportunities to address them.

Considerations for Potential Implementation:

1. Accountability & Transparency

Implications related to accountability and transparency are relevant under a future hybrid model but would also create improvements if addressed under the current model.

Implication: Given that Recommendation 6 proposes that funding identified for specific purposes (e.g. Ready Set Learn, English Language Learners (ELL), CommunityLINK) be rolled up into a broader Inclusive Education supplement and for districts to continue to have full discretion of how to spend the funding across their district, the Working Group agrees that accountability is the fundamental underpinning of all the Funding Model work. The Working Group believes that for Recommendation 6 to be successfully implemented, a robust, transparent accountability structure is required. This accountability structure must be focused on more than just financial accountability and must include clear actions the Ministry will take to ensure equitable outcomes for all learners. The Ministry as well as Boards of Education have a shared responsibility to ensure financial and system accountability; various levels and forms of support are required to ensure accountability. However, many in the Working Group also articulated that accountability is fundamentally important in the current system as well, and that efforts to better demonstrate how Boards assess students, allocate funding and provide services and supports would be expected in either model.

Opportunity: Ensure that any shifts in Inclusive Education funding are aligned and implemented in concert with the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning and the recommendations from the Financial Management Working Group. It must be clear to the public which factors are considered for funding, what can be considered as appropriate service expectations and how districts will budget to provide those services. The Ministry should ensure Boards create a public, transparent process outlining how students will be assessed (e.g. diverse abilities, children/youth in care, ELL); the types of services and supports that are expected to be in place; the process that will be followed to ensure supports are in place; the funds budgeted for those supports and what recourse is available for parents, caregivers and students if the process is not followed, if they require more information or if they disagree with a Board decision. There also needs to be a way for school districts to consult with the Ministry to ensure accuracy of the prevalence model data, thereby ensuring checks and balances for the amount of funding provided.

2. High Cost Component – Policy & Eligibility

Implication: A new complex needs/high-cost category will need to be developed. Confirmation is needed that full funding for the "high cost" category will be regularly monitored and adjusted based on actual costs of services and supports.

Although the Panel's report refers to a "high-cost" category, the Working Group agreed that a more inclusive and appropriate term would be "complex needs and high-cost supports". This recognizes the complexity of student needs without suggesting those students are "expensive" or a burden. This report will use the term "complex needs/high-cost supports" for clarity.

Opportunity: The Working Group discussed options for a new category and came to the following options:

A. Create a new category that includes the current criteria for Category A (Deafblind) and B (Physically Dependent) and also expands the physically dependent criteria (currently feeding, dressing, toileting, mobility, personal hygiene) to include additional functional domains (social/emotional regulation and safety, self-determination and independent living, communication/language processing and cognitive). Students would need to have complex needs in multiple functional domains in order to qualify for this category.

B. Keep Category A and B and add a third category that includes complex social/emotional behavioural needs. This third category would also need to meet the criteria as described in Category A.

Further assessment of options and related discussions for this category is attached in Appendix B. The Working Group did reach consensus that the current Level 1 category is not meeting the needs of all students, particularly those with complex socio-emotional or behavioural challenges and that it should be expanded slightly to ensure additional supports can be provided. This expansion should also be done thoughtfully and with clear criteria to ensure transparency for parents and school districts as well as to ensure that the category can be funded appropriately. The Working Group recognizes there is a possibility that this category could grow in a way that is ultimately unsustainable unless there are clear criteria and a review process in place.

Further work is required to finalize the criteria for this category, create system-wide understanding and look at options to address cost escalation as well as monitor/evaluate designations of students in these categories, with attention to the proportional designation of specific populations of students. Many of the organizations represented in the Working Group would like to take part in that future work.

3. Prevalence Component – Data & Modelling

Implication: Prior to the prevalence model being implemented, it will be essential to know the degree to which funding levels may change in school districts and share this information publicly; as this may have staffing and resourcing implications. As stated above, the Working Group had a strong desire to see this modelling and provide input as a part of the process.

Opportunity: Ministry staff will begin work in Summer 2019 to create models and metrics for sample districts comparing the current system to a system based on prevalence. This modeling will provide greater understanding and certainty as well as transparency to school districts and will help to inform the Ministry of short-term transitional funding needs and any required funding policy adjustments. The Working Group emphasized the need for ongoing refinement of the formula to ensure the model continues to meet the needs of the students it is meant to support.

Funding for all seven areas of funding outlined in Recommendation 6 are collapsed into one and there needs to be examples through modeling and discussions with school districts.

Implication: The weighting assigned to each sub-component as recommended by the Funding Model Review Panel of the prevalence data calculation in Component 2 requires modeling to be evaluated.

Opportunity: The weighting of the prevalence data calculation as recommended by the Funding Model Review Panel; Health Factors (50%), Children/Youth in care (20%), Income and Earnings (20%) and English / French Language Development (10%); will need to be reviewed and recalibrated as the process of modeling continues.

Implication: Under a potential prevalence model, the current 12 special needs designations will no longer be used to categorize students or to trigger supplemental funding and disaggregated data by designation may no longer be reported. Data on levels of support and outcomes for students with diverse needs and from diverse circumstances must continue to be collected and published to support student success. Individual confidentiality and masked data will need to continue to be respected.

Opportunity: The Ministry needs to establish a rigorous data collection method with a quality assurance component to ensure that school districts continue to track and report on students with diverse needs. Data by designation will continue to be available from the Ministry of Health and used as a part of establishing the prevalence formula; the Ministry should report out on all data used in the model as permitted by the Ministry of Health. Individual confidentiality and masked data will need to continue to be respected.

The Ministry has started an internal Data Quality Strategy team to generate options for data transitions. The Ministry would like to ensure that students who are currently designated in a specific category will not be lost and that there will be a transition with the current data. The Working Group supports this idea and many members in the Group are interested in being engaged in that work moving forward.

Implication: Census and some other data will not be current enough to recognize emerging needs, particularly in the case of data for English Language Learning (ELL) students and income and earnings. Census data may also lack accuracy in serving as a proxy for instructional need as questions related to language spoken in the home do not correlate with an established need for ELL services and supports. Census data may also lack relevance for quantifying the complexity of language diversity in school districts as Census boundaries differ from school district boundaries.

Opportunity: The Working Group believes the Ministry should consider accessing additional data sources that may provide more recent evidence of emerging needs. The Working Group understands that the best available third-party data is the Census, however other reliable and available data sources across the whole province should also be considered.

For example, school districts collect data through the 1701 process that could be used to create a new robust data source as this data includes information on primary home language for each registered student. This information is provided by parents on school registration forms and no additional 'incentive' is required to encourage school districts to collect the data.

Some working group members suggested data for Income and Earnings may come from the Ministry of Social Development or be determined through similar formulas used with the vulnerable student supplement (as a component of CommunityLINK).

Implication: Widely divergent levels of access to and utilization of local medical and other support services for children may impact the accuracy of the medical data used for prevalence. The Working Group specifically discussed the implications of access for rural/remote and First Nations communities and indicated that there will need to be a specific strategy to ensure that these populations as well as others who may not have access to or utilize supports and services are represented.

Opportunity: The Ministry will need to work with parent groups and other ministries to help increase awareness of the proposed new model and its purpose. This should include ensuring that there is an understanding that this is not a move to a medical model and that privacy will be protected. As the model is a prevalence model (not an incidence model), not every student needs to be captured; there is an ability to scale up the data the Ministry does have and apply it to the whole school district. This ensures that students who do not have access to or do not utilize services for a range of different reasons are still represented in the model. The Ministry will also ensure a specific focus on rural/remote and First Nations communities in reviewing the prevalence data.

4. Supports & Services

Implications related to supports and services are relevant under a future hybrid model but would also create improvements if addressed under the current model.

Implication: Services and supports for students in the current system are not solely dependent on funding, for example students with designated Learning Disabilities are provided with supports through block funding. Continuing to assess students' needs in order to ascertain the services that best fit the needs of the learner is key in any funding system for Inclusive Education. The elimination of a requirement to assess, categorize and designate students to receive supplementary funding for the prevalence component of a hybrid model could result in decreased focus and effort to complete student assessments, as the money will already have been provided to the school district. The Working Group agrees that there needs to be a way to ensure assessments to inform instruction, supports and services will continue with the proposed new model. The Working Group also believes quality Individual Education Plans (IEP) need to continue to be a part of planning and support for students with diverse abilities and disabilities.

Opportunity: Ministerial Orders and the Inclusive Education Policy and Guidebook will need to be updated to ensure schools and districts are aware of their continued responsibilities to assess student needs and provide supports and services. Such assessments must be commonly understood and transferrable so that students moving from one school or district to another, or outside the BC public school system, will be accompanied by a copy of the assessment (with parent permission) and supporting documentation to support their learning needs.

Implication: With some Inclusive Education funding no longer tied directly to assessments, Ministry designations and ELL service, parents will require assurances that their child's educational needs will be identified and met along with their child's human rights and that their parental rights and responsibilities as advocates for their children are not being lost with the implementation of a new model.

Opportunity: A *Parent Guide* will be developed collaboratively with parents and caregivers to describe the proposed new funding allocation system, the rights of parents and students and the responsibility of school districts to accommodate students with diverse abilities or disabilities and diverse language backgrounds. The Working Group also agrees (as above) that Boards should be required to publicly outline how they plan to provide services to students within their budget, including how they will continue to assess student learning needs. The Working Group feels this strategy is relevant in any funding
model moving forward and would also benefit the current model.

5. Transitions/Timing

Implication: Shifting to a new funding model is a complex and iterative process. There may be factors (such as student shifts in ELL student demographics) unique to school districts that are not accounted for within the initial prevalence model and weighting.

Opportunity: The Ministry should work with school districts to articulate a process whereby concerns or additional unique school sistrict factors that impact student needs can be shared with the Ministry for funding consideration. For example, arrivals of significant numbers of refugees within a school year or increased diverse learners with complex needs and high-cost supports. A strong model may capture transient student populations in school districts as a variable and consider that some larger school districts may be able to absorb this variability while smaller school districts may experience a more significant impact.

Implication: The proposed new funding model will require local and provincial procedural changes to Ministry policy and a clearly communicated understanding of the factors considered in the prevalence funding calculation for each school district.

Opportunity: The Ministry will need to provide support through resources and tools for practitioners, particularly in the transition phase, to enhance understanding and to build operational capacity. This is also necessary to ensure that a similar level of support can be expected when a student transfers from one school district to another. School districts will need to be provided with clear information to understand the new funding model and how it strives to represent the diversity and complexity of the needs of students in their district and reflect the current practices in Inclusive Education. School districts will also need to understand what their options are to seek additional funding (if any) if they feel there are unmet needs.

Implication: The significant changes in funding model and implications related to service delivery are not yet well understood. There is a high degree of uncertainty and even fear of the unknown. Current Ministry Policy, Ministerial Orders and the Special Education Policy Manual will require updating and there will also be impacts on inter-ministerial agreements.

Opportunity: Ministry staff has and will continue to activate a comprehensive engagement and communication strategy to support the successful implementation of the new Inclusive Education funding model. Key elements will include:

- Clarity on how the new model allocates appropriate funding and helps to fulfill a commitment to prioritizing support for individuals and communities with the highest needs;

- Confirmation of the amount of funding that will be allocated to each school district, the rationale and formula used to determine the funding amount and clear processes that will be followed within each school district to spend the funding equitably on student services and supports;

- Explanation of how individual student and family confidentiality will be protected in the data gathering process;

- Confirmation that government will have a transparent process to provide adequate, sustainable and equitable funding for students with intensive supports including equipment and full-time support staff;

- Development of a *Parent Guide* and an *Inclusive Education Guidebook* to ensure a shared understanding of the operation of the new model and service delivery expectations;

- Engagement in comprehensive work with stakeholders (many already represented on the Working Group) to develop and pilot the details of the implementation strategies;

- Training for staff in the education sector to implement the new model and accompanying accountability mechanisms;

- A managed implementation to support the transition to the new model;

- Any shifts in Ministerial Orders, Policy or Guidebooks to be in place prior to implementation;

- Conducting a review of the new model one year after its full implementation and conducting ongoing and regular reviews of the model thereafter;

- Assurance to parents and Student Services staff that an individual student's diagnosis or designation – or absence of either – will not impact the provision of services;

- Assurance that individual school district assessments will not affect the prevalence model and that not being recognized in the prevalence model will not impact services and supports in the system;

- Potential to engage with post-secondary institutions to update certification and degree program components to become more inclusive.

Ministry staff recently engaged in an intensive consultation and collaboration with education stakeholders and rights holders to update the Special Education Policy Manual. Further updates to the policy and related Ministerial Orders will need to be completed to align the final policy with the potential shifts in funding allocation. This work should involve members from this Working Group as well as Ministry partners.

6. Building Capacity

Implication: Senior leadership staff in the education sector will require ongoing new learning to implement the new model and its accompanying accountability mechanisms.

Opportunity: Increased and improved understanding of the model will support senior leadership staff to implement the model.

7. Audit & Compliance

Implications related to audit and compliance are relevant under a future hybrid model but would also create improvements if addressed under the current model.

Implication: The existing financial audit program will need to be changed so that it aligns with a new funding model.

Opportunity: New audit requirements should be developed and field tested. Such an initiative will allow for an additional emphasis on qualitative elements rather than audits confined to procedural compliance ("yes or no" evidence that services have been provided). Any new audit program will need to take into account the hybrid funding model for inclusive education and the potential to have different approaches between Component 1 (complex needs/high-cost supports) and Component 2 (prevalence).

The Working Group felt the current audit process in place would also benefit from an additional emphasis on qualitative elements and student outcomes, rather than a narrow focus on fiscal compliance. The Working Group also discussed the benefits of increasing program/policy compliance regardless of which funding model is in place (e.g. adherence to Special Education Policy Manual; quality of IEPs; monitoring of student well-being and outcomes) in addition to ensuring fiscal compliance remains in place.

8. Ongoing Monitoring of the Implementation

Implication: Monitoring success of the proposed new model and adjusting accordingly must take place to ensure adequate funding for direct service to children.

Opportunity: The Framework for Enhancing Student Learning is a tool that can be leveraged for accountability and will include requirements for school districts to share student results related to specific learner cohorts. Collecting this data, as well as other data, will allow for ongoing adjustments to the model and will establish accountabilities for appropriate use of resources to provide the necessary services and supports to ensure the success of all students. These outcomes should be reported on annually so that any necessary adaptations and improvements can be made in a timely manner. See Appendix B for summary notes related to various themes that were discussed by the Working Group.

Conclusion

- The Working Group agrees that this is an incredibly complex topic resulting in a range of viewpoints within the Working Group and beyond.
- A full analysis can be performed, or starting change management within respective organizations can begin and concerns about quantum can be addressed when modelling becomes available.
- There is a general agreement that the current Inclusive Education system is not providing adequate supports to students, families, school staff and communities due to a range of complex factors.
- There is also a general agreement that this new model is an opportunity to leverage to improve the Inclusive Education system.
- Increased and improved training for staff in the education sector will be needed for successful implementation of the new model.
- The Working Group supports the opportunities identified in this report but believes the Ministry should ensure there is on-going involvement with the education sector to inform and advise the policy and program implications, the operation of the new model and future assessments and evaluations of the funding system.
- The Working Group would like the Ministry to provide specific timelines for funding implementation moving forward, including stakeholder communication and engagement.

Attachments

Appendix A – Working Group Membership and Meeting Dates

Appendix B – Themes from Working Group sessions

Appendix A: Working Group Membership and Meeting Dates

Membership:

Name	Organization
Cloe Nicholls (co-chair)	Ministry of Education
Piet Langstraat (co-chair)	Implementation Coordination Committee
Deena Buckley	BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association
Satnam Chahal	English Language Learning Consortium
Angela Clancy	Family Support Institute of BC
Kim Currie	BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
Karen DeLong	Inclusion BC
Teresa Downs	BC School Superintendents Association
Dr. Bob Esliger	BC Council of Administrators of Special Education
Lisa Gunderson	BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
Stephanie Higginson	BC School Trustees Association
Tracy Humphreys	BCEdAccess
Clint Johnston	BC Teachers' Federation
Barbara Kavanagh	First Nations Education Steering Committee
Tracey Mathieson	Canadian Union of Public Employees - BC
Blair Mitchell	Representative for Children and Youth
Darleen Patterson	BC Association of School Business Officials
Donna Sargent	BC School Trustees Association
Terry Taylor	Rural Education Advisory Committee
Warren Williams	Canadian Union of Public Employees - BC
Patricia Kovacs	Ministry of Education

FMI Secretariat Support:

Sofie Grahn	Ministry of Education
Cara Williams	Ministry of Education

Meetings:

- March 8, 2019 - Victoria
- April 15, 2019 - Victoria
- May 9, 2019 – Victoria
- June 6 and 7, 2019 - Victoria
- July 4, 2019 - Victoria
- August 7, 2019 - Victoria

Appendix B: Themes Generated from Inclusive Education Funding Model Working Group

This document summarizes themes that were generated during an Inclusive Education Working Group meeting held on June 6, 2019. This document was created by Ministry of Education staff but is not considered a Ministry document outlining Ministry perspectives. The document is a summary of a discussion that took place during the Working Group meeting.

These themes were generated following a group brainstorm on the following questions:
1. Given what has been presented on how a possible prevalence funding model would work, what would the implications be?
2. What elements need to be in place to make the "spending plan" (supports and services) successful?
3. What most concerns you/your members about this situation?
4. What is unclear/needs more information?

Themes	Description of Implications – We will need to...	Mitigations – How could we address this?

Assessment	Establish a process to ensure continuation of assessments for supporting student learning.	• Require that school districts establish a process to assess the needs of students and ensure the assessment process is transparent and publicly available. Factors that should be a part of the process include:
		  ○ Consultation with parents
		  ○ Continuation of meaningful IEPs. Make it a plan to meet the needs of the child, not a driver of funding.
		  ○ Map out the diverse ways that student needs can be determined, that may lead to various kinds of assessments.
		• If we are changing g criteria for how we assess kids, we need to ensure cross-ministerial involvement (ministries of Children and Family Development, Health, Mental Health and Addictions, etc.).

	Provide clarity about the types, purposes, accessibility and timing of assessments to accurately assess student needs.	• Identify best practice in a policy or handbook to ensure assessments are student focussed not spending focussed. • Provide information on the different types of assessments available within the school district. • Expand the notion of what an assessment is beyond psych-ed (i.e. behavioural, classroom teacher, parent, showing how assessments are flexible and responsive to student needs). • Ensure there is clarity here on when/why we engage with level A, B, C assessment including language proficiency assessments. • Ensure transfer of information from early childhood (CDCs, etc). • Address regional concerns as they relate to assessment (especially Level C). This has implications for resourcing, training and timely accessibility.

FUNDING MODEL IMPLEMENTATION : Inclusive Education

Provision of Supports and Services	Identify the types of supports and services that can reasonably be expected to be in place, based on student needs and/or diagnosis.
	• Develop provincial guidelines that outline supports and services aligned to student needs. The guidelines should: ○ Be broad enough to consider context ○ Include examples that can be accessed and used to shape practice ○ Align supports and services with other ministries (e.g. Health, Children and Family Development) ○ Consider access based on geography ○ Describe how to provide highly-qualified support staff to support kids, not one person assigned to one student • Ensure there are clearly defined contacts/information on Ministry website. • Include relevant provisions, decided between district and local First Nations.
	Improve families/caregivers support.
	• Develop a provincial handbook for parents/guardians as a resource to navigate the system. The handbook should include: ○ A clear process for parents/guardians to access services ○ Clear communication of supports/services available ○ Language that is accessible to families • Family advocate that follows up with families that works alongside the school district.
	Implement school-based teams or cohorts of supports for students and or a Community of Practice Paradigm.
	• Describe processes for establishing school-based teams or cohorts. • Ensure all members of the team know what they are doing to support the student. • Ensure there is co-teaching and co-planning time imbedded into the school schedule.
	• Address Children and Youth in Care (CYIC) needs.
	• Create a province-wide contact log for the school district CYIC contacts. • Identify the additional supports and services that should be provided to CYIC.
Accountability	• Develop a structure from the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning to ensure accountability.
	• Ensure the structure is informed by strong planning; linked to strategic plan. • Include qualitative data and not only data from the warehouse. • Require incident data reported out to Ministry/school districts. • Strengthen the appeal/complaint process in place. Include a level of appeal beyond the district and board of trustees. Provide an advocate/representative. • Ensure auditors have a background in special education and have recent field experience.

Appendix B: Themes Generated from Inclusive Education Funding Model Working Group

Category	Theme	Details
Accountability (Continued)	Ensure funding is allocated equitability within school districts and that prevalence funding is being directed appropriately to support student learning needs.	• Determine how to select students for audit purposes. • Include audits for a selection of IEPs to review for quality. • Compare district audit results to determine impact of the prevalence funding model. • Minimize school district paperwork. • Require public reporting that provides confidence for <u>all</u> stakeholders that is easy to access and understand (e.g. funds received and allocated for complex needs; funds received and allocated via prevalence model). • Require districts to report out on accountabilities. • Develop guidelines for how school districts are accountable to the students in the previous funding model.
	Monitor student outcomes/achievement/goals in IEPs and ensure regular progress reporting.	• Establish a process for ensuring IEPs are put in place including reporting requirements. • Align IEP accountability and reporting processes with school district reporting timelines. • Monitor beyond report cards to include student and parent surveys disaggregating responses (e.g. CYIC, Indigenous, ELL). • Require schools to look beyond just ensuring students are meeting expectations to providing comments that show how students are progressing. • Include target setting in administrative procedures for school districts. • Ensure supports are clearly identified for all students including those that can't meet grade level expectations.
	Ensure inclusive education supports are a part of the Local Education Agreement (LEA) between school districts and First Nations.	• Use the deliverables that are a part of BCTEA to ensure inclusive education supports are a part of LEA.
SD Capacity	Ensure capacity to implement the model equitably.	• Ensure leaders within the system support and understand the new model. • Ensure recruitment/retention of staff with proper training, across the province. • Build internal school district capacity by working with pre-service and in-service providers to ensure educators are supported to increase their capacities. • Provide guidelines on how teachers can effectively work with support workers to ensure collaboration. • Ensure unique geographic factors are considered when determining costs. • Ensure training resources are available for educators to support them to teach all students. • Provide more spaces for EA training and standards for EA training across the province.

Appendix B: Themes Generated from Inclusive Education Funding Model Working Group

	Address different requirements for IT supports.	• Access to technology, including supports and services in rural/remote areas. • Online access to education programs (e.g. Yorkeville and Athabasca)
	Promote diversity.	• Ensure diversity and culture are lenses through which support is provided, communication is messaged and how resources are developed.
Transitions	Address obstacles for student transitions.	• Require school districts to use MyEducationBC and enable the system to hold all student information. • Align supports under the existing model with the new model.
	Ensure transitions between First Nations and Provincial school systems include all relevant student information.	• Require school districts to use MyEducationBC and enable the system to hold all student information. • Use BCTEA to formalize a process for school district and First Nation schools to work together to develop strong relationships.

FUNDING MODEL IMPLEMENTATION
Online Learning

WORKING GROUP REPORT

Background

The Online Learning Implementation Working Group (the Working Group) was tasked with assisting the Ministry of Education in determining the best approach to implementing Recommendation 10 of the Independent Review Panel's report:

With the shift to a per-student-based funding model, the Ministry should develop a new policy and program delivery model for Distributed Learning to ensure consistent access to quality programming for all students in the province.

The Working Group agreed that Distributed Learning (DL) has long supported the province's commitment to serve every student and to provide access to education despite the challenges of geography or circumstance. The Working Group also agreed that the current DL model needs improvement to ensure that issues of quality, equity, accountability and access are addressed, regardless of any new funding model.

The Working Group suggested that term DL was not well understood, and the current legislative definition was outdated and restrictive. They offered a few alternatives, including e-Learning or online learning. Either term supports their view that DL be considered an integrated part of the continuum of learning, not necessarily a separate "program". For the purpose of this report, we will use the term "e-Learning".

The Working Group discussed thoroughly the need for e-Learning, its integration across the education system and its potential to better support students. The work included:

- Workshopping the 22 recommendations from the Independent Review Panel for a common understanding and identification of the connections with recommendation 10, and to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the recommendations;

- Defining challenges and opportunities that exist within the current model;

- Revising the vision statement for e-Learning, as a foundation for program and funding policy;

- Reviewing research, including a summary of current literature and promising practices in other jurisdictions;

- Collecting and reviewing samples of DL data from current DL program providers. This was compared to overall provincial data on course completion to articulate/provide evidence on the current successes and challenges;

- Developing student profiles (holograms) and the document "Student Journey" to better understand the range of learners served by DL, their learning needs and their goals;

- Analyzing and evaluating three potential service models for e-Learning, leading to the development of the proposed model;

- Identifying challenges and proposing mitigation strategies for the proposed model, including funding; and

- Providing advice on key policy questions from the perspectives of stakeholders.

Meetings and Membership

The Working Group met four times between March and July 2019. The Working Group has ten external members representing key partners in the BC K-12 education system and four members from the Ministry of Education, both from the Funding Model Implementation Team and the Distributed Learning program area. Eleanor Liddy (Ministry of Education) and Mike McKay (Superintendent and CEO of Surrey Schools, retired) co-chaired the Working Group. The Working Group's membership and meeting dates are listed in Appendix A.

The Working Group also established an online "classroom" in MOODLE, one of the common learning management systems in use by K-12. This classroom was used for group discussion, posting questions and providing documents.

Summary of Discussion Themes

The Current funding model and how it works

- Discussion of the current model included 1) the challenges associated with different funding for online vs. bricks and mortar learning, 2) the level of flexibility and choice inherent in both types of learning, and 3) the challenges of cross-enrollment for funding.

The Jurisdictional scan

- An overview of research on e-Learning and an international scan of best practices was completed.

Governance, quality assurance, capacity, and looking to the future

- Both online and "traditional bricks and mortar" learning should focus on the student.

- Any new model must address the "competition" for students (i.e. funding) among various e-Learning providers (e.g. public, independent).

- Quality assurance reviews of programs should be rigorous and lead to improvement or change in practices if needed.

- Better data and information are needed to make informed decisions about student outcomes and effective programs.

- Blended learning (a combination of e-Learning and face to face delivery) is already being used in schools now and should be supported.

Accountability and funding

- There should be equitable funding regardless of how learning is delivered.

- There was considerable discussion about head-count vs course-based funding. Members of the Working Group raised some concerns about elements of both methods of funding. For example, the current model provides school districts with funding for each course and is seen as supporting students who take more than a traditional full load of eight. A move to the headcount model would potentially reduce that additional support, and limit choice for students.

- How can the Ministry address the loss of revenue due to students attending classes outside of their home districts?

- School districts should be accountable for their students, no matter where those students take some of their program choices.

- Audit and compliance requirements should be the same for all program delivery, regardless of online or bricks & mortar. This process could be linked to the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning and should emphasize program quality rather than only funding compliance.

Equity and Access

- E-Learning must improve learning for students with diverse and unique needs, students in remote or rural regions (keeping in mind that not all school districts offer e-Learning), and those students who cannot access a course at their school.

- Equity cannot simply be determined by a dollar value.

- Any new model must maintain or improve flexibility and choice for students/families while focussing on improving student outcomes.

- All teachers will have access to a similar set of e-Learning tools and resources.

Independent e-Learning

- Independent e-Learning must align with changes in public e-Learning in order to ensure program quality for all learners.

Indicators of Success

There was also considerable discussion on how best to measure student success and outcomes in the e-Learning environment. The Working Group pointed out that the traditional metric of course completion within the school year painted an inaccurate picture, due to the continuous entry model.

Other metrics suggested were:

- Completion rates and timelines for courses (within 6, 10, 12 months from the active start date);

- A range of student achievement metrics beyond course completion rates;

- Learning Analytics to better inform student engagement, pulled from the Learning Management System (LMS);

- Rates of transition from Foundations courses to high school completion courses;

- Rates of transition to post-secondary institutions;

- Feedback from post-secondary institutions, employers, local First Nations;

- Feedback from students and parents;

- Availability and quality of e-Learning programs throughout the province;

- An accountability framework adhered to by all partners;

- Regular assessment for quality assurance.

Considerations

Funding model

- The Working Group strongly endorsed the principle that all learning be funded equally irrespective of delivery model. They also noted that currently e-Learning courses are funded less than courses offered in brick & mortar schools.
- The service delivery model for e-Learning recommended by the Working Group could be adapted to align with a funding model that is either course-based or student-based (headcount). Risks and benefits were identified for adapting to both funding models.

Other considerations

- The Working Group recommended that accountability mechanisms be improved to focus on course quality in order to identify and share promising practices and intervene where evidence of quality is lacking.
- The Working Group recommended that all students should have a home school district before enrolling for courses outside of their home district. That home district will continue to hold primary responsibility for the student's learning journey.
- There is a need for a transition period to allow students to complete their courses, for school districts to adapt to the new model, and for the Ministry to establish the infrastructure required.
- A change in the funding approach for students with diverse needs or for all supplemental funding could result in some specialized e-Learning schools closing. This could potentially limit student and family choice.

Related policy implications

- The Working Group recommended a single policy be created for e-Learning that recognizes:
  - Continuous entry;
  - The rise of blended learning to be supported by the new service-delivery model;
  - The need to address the new limits to cross-enrollments and access to the proposed provincial infrastructure for e-Learning; and
- The Working Group recommended that a final review of changes to both the funding and service delivery models be conducted with the Ministry of Education data analysts, subject matter experts including practicing teachers and school district leaders to consider potential unintended consequences and to recommend mitigation strategies beyond those identified by the Working Group.

Conclusion

A high quality 21st century e-Learning option is essential because all students must be able to access the courses they want and need, regardless of where they are located and their personal circumstances. For all students, urban and rural, their current and future realities will require skill and sophistication in navigating e-Learning environments to learn, exchange information and connect with the wider community for study, work and social engagement. A robust e-Learning environment will help learners develop those skills.

Quality e-Learning, supported by a skilled and engaging teacher, helps BC to achieve its commitment to equity. It means that students are able to access foundational and elective courses whether they live in a rural or urban area, whether they are working through health or social challenges and regardless of their particular learning needs or styles.

The Ministry's decision to create a Working Group to examine Recommendation 10 speaks to the importance of the service provided today and that which is needed for the future.

The Working Group appreciated the opportunity to thoroughly examine this recommendation with a wide group of partners. Given the significant changes proposed as part of the funding model review, the Working Group members valued the Ministry's commitment to allow for the necessary time to consult and to thoroughly investigate the original Recommendation 10, its potential application and the challenges and mitigations related to the various models that were explored. The Working Group felt that this was a useful approach for future efforts to manage large-scale change to BC's education system

Proposed approach	Implications of proposed approach	Mitigation strategies
Universal Access Model		
Provincially supported and funded infrastructure (LMS, Course Resource Repository and Capacity Building)	**Positive** • Provides a platform for consistency across the system (quality, student centred, student choice, inclusivity, accessibility) • Allows for cost efficiencies • Provides user equity • Access to infrastructure to be provided to all teachers • Provides access to entire education system • Provides IT support system-wide (financial accountability, inclusivity, accessibility, future oriented, quality) • Ensures tools and infrastructure provide a secure FOIPPA compliant environment **Challenges** • Ensuring equitable oversight between provincial and local systems • Perception of "lost autonomy" by school districts • School district and educator capacity to utilize new infrastructure • Funding implications	• Allow the ability to localize and personalize course content • Review and reporting requirements linked to the District Accountability Framework • Establish an on-going governance body including school district representatives to select and oversee the function of the LMS, assure course quality content and provide direction and advice • Develop a transition plan to include funding and support for capacity building

Development of a Master Agreement to support the transition to the new model	**Positive** • Will ensure quality assurance as service providers will be viewed as the centre for expertise • Will allow for consistency e.g. onboarding, delivery, experience • Maintains choice for students where the local school district cannot fully meet their needs **Challenge** • Creation of a predictable funding flow to support the e-Learning service delivery • May not fully address the diverse needs of all students	• Administer a provincial RFP allowing for the selection of more than one provider to support the diverse needs and requirements of students • Develop the new funding model
Approved Provincial e-Learning Service Providers	**Positive** • Improved quality and accountability • Reduction of "grade shopping" by students • Clarifies school district responsibility for students **Challenges** • May be perceived as a loss of choice for students due to no "district-to-district" or "public-to-independent" cross-enrollment	• School Act will need to be revised to clarify cross-enrollment and what entity is responsible for the student • Alignment between public and independent e-Learning
Equitable Funding	**Positive** • Improved quality and accountability • Reduction of "grade shopping" by students • Clarifies school district responsibility for students **Challenges** • May be perceived as a loss of choice for students due to no "district-to-district" or "public-to-independent" cross-enrollment	• Providing a provincial infrastructure • Recommending a three-year implementation plan

Appendix A: Working Group Membership and Meeting Dates

Membership:

Name	Organization
Eleanor Liddy (co-chair)	Ministry of Education
Mike McKay (co-chair)	Implementation Coordination Committee
Carolyn Broady	BC School Trustees Association
Jo Chrona	First Nations Education Steering Committee
Karen Flello	BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association
Andrew Holland	BC School Superintendents Association
Larry Kuehn	BC Teachers' Federation
Manu Madhok	Rural Education Advisory Committee
Sterling Olson	BC Association of School Business Officials
Rob Peregoodoff	BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
David Truss	BC Distributed Learning Administrator's Association
Tracey Mathieson	Canadian Union of Public Employees - BC
Mario Miniaci	Ministry of Education
Teresa McClintick	Ministry of Education

FMI Secretariat Support :
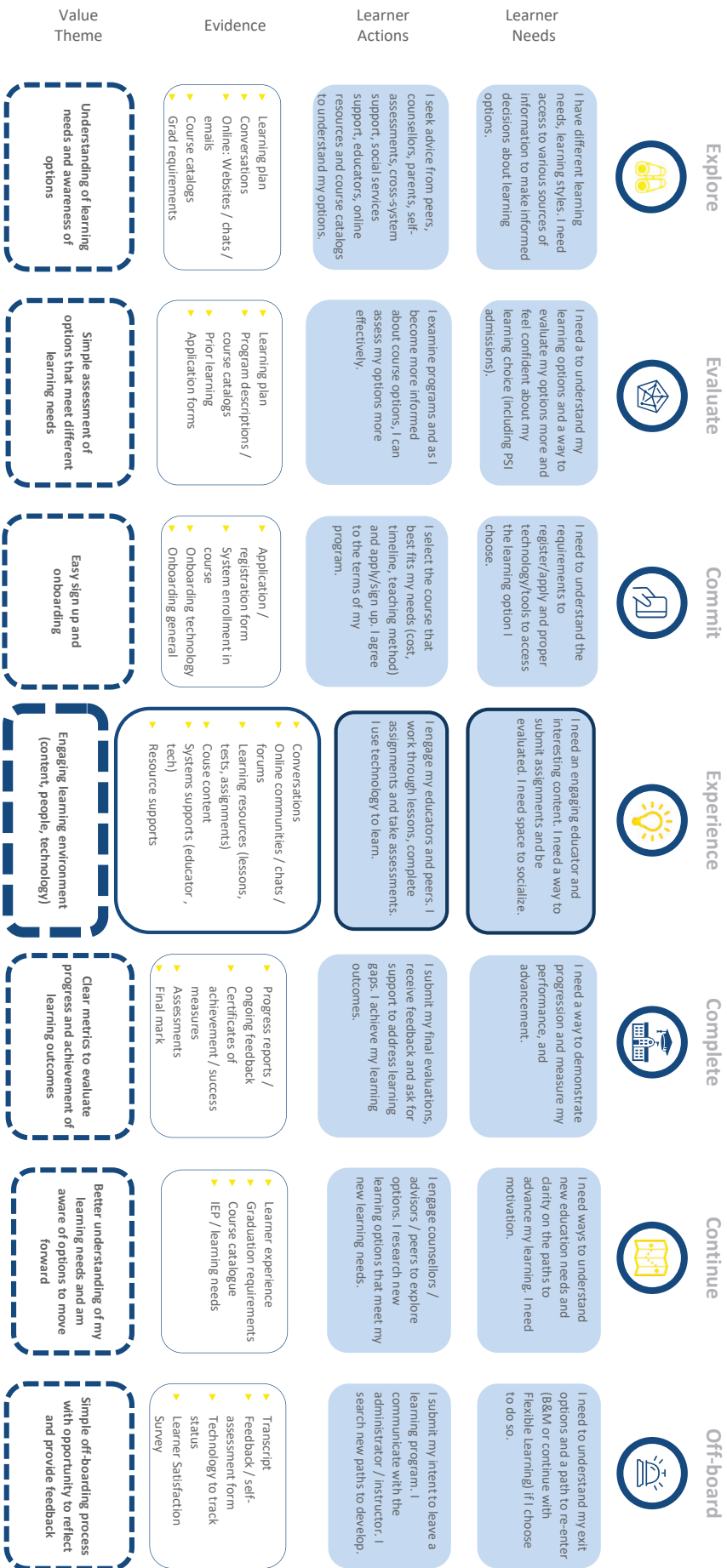
Jonathan Foweraker	Ministry of Education
Delaney Chester	Ministry of Education

Meetings:

- March 8, 2019 – Victoria
- April 29, 2019 – Victoria
- May 27, 2019 – Victoria
- July 3, 2019 – Victoria

Future state learner journey

	Explore	Evaluate	Commit	Experience	Complete	Continue	Off-board
Learner Needs	I have different learning needs, learning styles. I need access to various sources of information to make informed decisions about learning options.	I need a to understand my learning options and a way to evaluate my options more and feel confident about my learning choice (including PSI admissions).	I need to understand the requirements to register/apply and proper technology/tools to access the learning option I choose.	I need an engaging educator and interesting content. I need a way to submit assignments and be evaluated. I need space to socialize.	I need a way to demonstrate progression and measure my performance, and advancement.	I need ways to understand new education needs and clarity on the paths to advance my learning. I need motivation.	I need to understand my exit options and a path to re-enter (B&M or continue with Flexible Learning) if I choose to do so.
Learner Actions	I seek advice from peers, counsellors, parents, self-assessments, cross-system support, social services support, educators, online resources and course catalogs to understand my options.	I examine programs and as I become more informed about course options, I can assess my options more effectively.	I select the course that best fits my needs (cost, timeline, teaching method) and apply/sign up. I agree to the terms of my program.	I engage my educators and peers. I work through lessons, complete assignments and take assessments. I use technology to learn.	I submit my final evaluations, receive feedback and ask for support to address learning gaps. I achieve my learning outcomes.	I engage counsellors / advisors / peers to explore options. I research new learning options that meet my new learning needs.	I submit my intent to leave a learning program. I communicate with the administrator / instructor. I search new paths to develop.
Evidence	▼ Learning plan ▼ Conversations ▼ Online: Websites / chats / emails ▼ Course catalogs ▼ Grad requirements	▼ Learning plan ▼ Program descriptions / course catalogs ▼ Prior learning ▼ Application forms	▼ Application / registration form ▼ System enrollment in course ▼ Onboarding technology ▼ Onboarding general	▼ Conversations ▼ Online communities / chats / forums ▼ Learning resources (lessons, tests, assignments) ▼ Couse content ▼ Systems supports (educator, tech) ▼ Resource supports	▼ Progress reports / ongoing feedback ▼ Certificates of achievement / success measures ▼ Assessments ▼ Final mark	▼ Learner experience ▼ Graduation requirements ▼ Course catalogue ▼ IEP / learning needs	▼ Transcript ▼ Feedback / self-assessment form ▼ Technology to track status ▼ Learner Satisfaction Survey
Value Theme	Understanding of learning needs and awareness of options	Simple assessment of options that meet different learning needs	Easy sign up and onboarding	Engaging learning environment (content, people, technology)	Clear metrics to evaluate progress and achievement of learning outcomes	Better understanding of my learning needs and am aware of options to move forward	Simple off-boarding process with opportunity to reflect and provide feedback

Line of interaction

The value theme refers to what the learner should feel as they progress through their learning experience

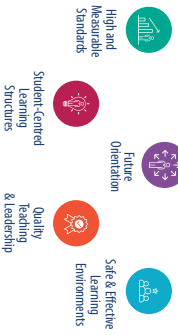# THE Educated Citizen

WHY WE DO
Student Success
Focus all talents, efforts and resources on improving student success.

WHAT WE DO

WHAT WE ARE AIMING TO ACHIEVE
Educated Citizen
Intellectual · Human/Social · Career Development

HOW WE DO IT
- High and Measurable Standards
- Student-Centred Learning Structures
- Future Orientation
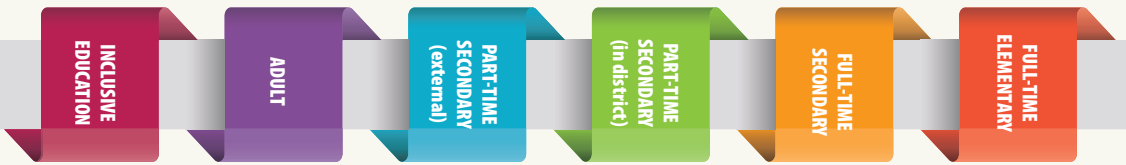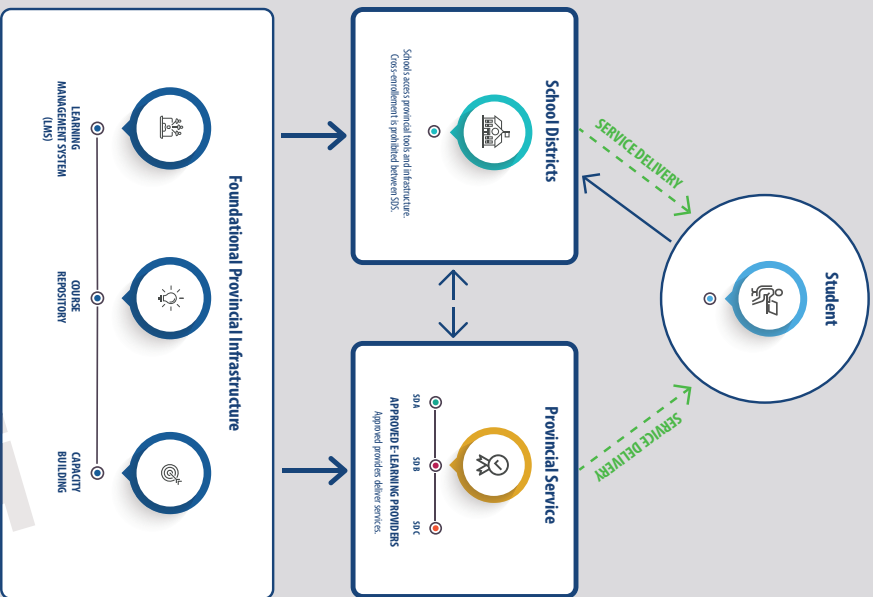- Quality Teaching & Leadership
- Safe & Effective Learning Environments

Distributed Learning
Distributed learning (online, blended) will be recognized as a part of the overall continuum of ways for all students to learn and achieve success.

STUDENTS SERVED
- FULL-TIME ELEMENTARY
- FULL-TIME SECONDARY
- PART-TIME SECONDARY (in district)
- PART-TIME SECONDARY (external)
- ADULT
- INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Student

Foundational Provincial Infrastructure
- LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)
- COURSE REPOSITORY
- CAPACITY BUILDING

School Districts — Schools access provincial tools and infrastructure. Cross-enrollment is prohibited between SDs.

Provincial Service — APPROVED E-LEARNING PROVIDERS — Approved providers deliver services. SDA SDB SDC

SERVICE DELIVERY

MEASURES
- Course Completion
- Enhanced Accountability Process
- Assessment
- Student Engagement via Learning Analytics
- Parent Satisfaction

IMPACTS
- Increased Course Completion
- Increased Student Graduation
- Increased Transition to Post-Secondary and Employment
- Improved equity, access and course quality

DL Concept 2019
BRITISH COLUMBIA | Ministry of Education

DRAFT

ITEM 3.2   **Action**

TO: Committee of the Whole
FROM: T. Loffler, Board Chair
SUBJECT: School Site Acquisition – BCSTA Discussion Paper

_____

Summary:

One of the directions established in the BCSTA strategic plan is to establish several working groups to pursue changes in policy, legislation and regulations based on resolutions adopted by members at past annual general meetings. One of those is the Capital Working Group (CWP). The CWP Committee has prepared a discussion paper (attached) for consideration by member boards and the BC Association of School Business Officials. The intent is to capture our collective thoughts on the issues boards experience related to school site acquisitions and to propose solutions to government.

Attachments:

1. BCSTA Discussion Paper – July 2019

British Columbia School Trustees Association
Discussion Paper – July 2019

School Site Land Acquisition Issues and Solutions

Context

The BCSTA formed a Capital Working Group (CWG) in September of 2018 to review various BCSTA resolutions adopted by the membership regarding government policy related to capital work in the sector. The review resulted in a recommendation to the BCSTA board to pursue various policy changes within government. That recommendation was subsequently adopted. This brief paper is intended to provide some background and recommendations on one of the issues discussed by the CWG: school site acquisition.

Recommendations to government

1. **That the required legislative and regulatory changes be introduced eliminating the current cap on School Site Acquisition Charges (SSACs) and requiring school districts to set SSACs at the same level as municipal parkland Development Cost Charges (DCCs) set by the municipal government serving the same geographic area as the school district, (or the equivalent of a standard DCC parkland calculation if the municipality does not have a parkland DCC), adjusted to reflect the comparative land area required for new school sites designated in the local area Official Community Plan.**

2. **That the required legislative and regulatory changes be introduced requiring municipal governments to include the cost of off-site servicing of new schools in their municipal development cost charges.**

3. **That legislative changes be introduced to reinforce the requirement that municipal governments collect SSACs set by a school district.**

4. **That SSACs be updated to reflect current land values on the same cycle that park land development cost charges are adjusted by municipal governments.**

5. **That over the next ten years the percentage of provincial funding provided (in addition to SSACs) to facilitate school site acquisitions noted in the current regulations be gradually reduced from 65% of the total cost to as little as possible of the total cost, recognizing the proposed increases in SSAC payments anticipated in recommendation one will take time to be collected.**

6. **That school site acquisitions continue to be approved by the provincial government even if the locally collected SSACs do not add up to 65% of the cost to acquire, given the urgent need to proceed with new school construction in growing areas.**

7. **That school site acquisitions be authorized and encouraged to take place within five years of an Official Community Plan being adopted which identifies designated school sites or, at the earliest reasonable opportunity, upon request of a property owner, first utilizing available SSACs and additional funding as required from the Ministry of Education .**

8. **That developers continue to be provided with the option of dedicating designated school sites to the school district in return for the payment of SSACs being forgiven.**

9. **That municipal governments and school districts be encouraged (and possibly required) to enter into a purchase agreement wherein the local government front ends the acquisition of a school site designated in an Official Community Plan (OCP) utilizing available SSACs and additional funding from the local government which is to be paid back with interest through a combination of the collection of future SSACs and provincial government payments once approved in the school district's capital plan.**

Background / issues to be resolved

Official Community Plans

Municipal governments are given the authority to adopt Official Community Plans (OCPs). The relevant legislation is found in the *Local Government Act* (Part 14, Division 4). OCPs identify acceptable land uses (among other policy matters) and the relationship between various land uses (residential, commercial, industrial, transportation and utility corridors, public amenities including parks and schools, etc.). Land use designations are also influenced by Agricultural Land Reserve boundaries, by defined environmentally sensitive areas and by environmental protection policies (i.e. stream setbacks etc.). Land use decision making is fine-tuned at the point of development applications being considered through more detailed planning. However, once privately owned lands are designated for a particular use within an OCP there can be a reasonable expectation that it will eventually be used for that purpose subject only to the detailed planning mentioned above.

Municipalities are required to consult with school districts on the requirements for school sites within an OCP based on residential growth anticipated in the plan. The purpose of designating school sites at this point is to ensure the land being set aside for this purpose is suitable for its intended use. If municipal governments do not designate school sites at the point of adopting their OCPs there is a significant risk that appropriate sites will either not be available when needed or will be less desirable (i.e. hillside land which is more difficult and expensive to develop).

Timing of school site acquisitions

In order to secure the sites required to accommodate the school facilities needed to respond to anticipated residential growth, they need to be acquired in a reasonable period of time following their designation within an OCP. Once land is designated as a school site in the OCP the owners are precluded from using it for another purpose (other than what it's current zoning permits) unless the OCP and zoning are amended. It has been suggested that government should require municipalities to rezone school sites for school purposes once an OCP is amended to ensure development under current zoning does not further frustrate the use of the land for school purposes.

This does lead to the private owners of designated school sites asking school districts to either purchase the designated site at fair market value, based on highest and best use, or give it up so they can develop it for other uses (often residential development). There is legal precedent established to suggest governments must demonstrate their intent to purchase sites designated in an OCP for a public purpose within a reasonable time period following such designation or give up the site (Hall vs Maple Ridge 1993). In the past, school site acquisitions have been delayed until a decision to move ahead with school construction is imminent, resulting in residential development encroaching on designated school sites which have still not been authorized for purchase in capital plans.

There are some circumstances where the scope of a single development is so large (i.e. a few thousand residential units) that the developer can be required to dedicate the school and park sites needed to serve the neighbourhood they are developing as a condition of that development. This is usually part of a servicing agreement in which DCCs and SSACs are forgiven equivalent in value to the value of the land being dedicated. Although this has happened in communities like Coquitlam, it is actually quite rare that a single development proposal is so large that it can accommodate that type of school site and park dedication.

Rationale for delays in purchasing

Delays in purchasing school sites have been justified in the past by suggesting that a new school may or may not be required in the area in the future and that the cost to the province to proceed with the purchase is significant if insufficient SSACs are available. With this rationale school site acquisitions are not authorized to proceed until the school district and Ministry of Education are relatively close to deciding to build a new school. The problem with this approach is:

- Pressure from land-owners of designated sites who want to sell their land often begins far in advance of government being prepared to acquire the property and build a school.

- Courts can order removal of the OCP designation if requested to do so by the land-owners if governments are not prepared to follow through with acquisitions.

- The price of the land to be acquired can increase exponentially over time and could be subject to lengthy and costly expropriation proceedings.

Inadequacy of current SSACs

Part of the delay in moving ahead with acquisitions has at least in part to do with the inadequacy of funding for the purchase. SSACs have not kept up with increasing land values having been capped at no more than $1,000 per single family residential unit when they were first introduced in 2000 (BC REG 17/00). That amount, and the capped amounts for other residential types, have not changed since that time and do not reflect varying land values in different geographical areas of the province. The inadequacy of SSACs has lead to more and more capital funding needing to be provided by the provincial government which has contributed to even more justification for the delay in acquiring needed lands. In fact, the ratio between the amount of funding being provided by SSACs and direct provincial funding is heavily weighted to the provincial funding side of the equation. Although it can vary depending on specific circumstances, the current formula embedded in the regulation addressing this subject suggests 65% of the cost will be covered by government while SSACs collected for that purpose account for the remaining 35%. In fact, the ratio over the last year has meant provincial funding of over 90% of the total cost.

In our view development should be covering close to if not 100% of the cost of land acquisition for the public services needed to support that development through much increased SSACs which are more frequently reviewed and adjusted to reflect current land values. We do not believe merely increasing the cap on SSACs in the current regulations will address the long-term problem.

The cost of off-site servicing required by municipal governments is another cost that should be a simple cost of development. We are suggesting that such servicing be required to be provided by municipal governments and funded through their own development cost charges.

Some would suggest additional contributions should be made for school building development as well, similar to municipal government amenity charges which are used to build fire halls and recreation centres. We are not suggesting the introduction of school amenity charges at this point but increasing the amount that development pays toward school site acquisition and off-site servicing makes sense. Tying SSACs to how park land acquisition DCCs are calculated (or a similar calculation) is one way to ensure regular reviews of the charges so they reflect current local land values. Taking this approach would increase the percentage of school site acquisition costs being covered by development. We believe that, eventually, the additional funding this would add to the system would allow for earlier, more sensible, acquisition timing and the redirection of money currently being spent on land acquisition to other areas of need within the public school system.

Inflation / increased land values

More recently, over the last decade or so, another downside to delaying the purchase of school sites has become apparent. Inflationary and speculative pressures tied to rapid growth have increased land values significantly. Delays in purchasing land which will eventually be needed have resulted in millions of dollars of increased costs, some sites more than doubling in value in under two or three years. We know the pace and scope of the increases reflected in this recent trend will likely not continue, but some significant cost increases are still likely over the long-term. There are limits to the developable land area in the south coast area in particular, which boasts the most desirable climate in the country. The case for purchasing land for school sites is at least a good investment, even if they are eventually not needed for schools. We are not suggesting land acquisition as an investment policy, but we are suggesting that land acquisitions are a relatively low-risk long-term investment for government, especially in rapidly developing areas of the province.

All of this suggests the need to acquire designated school sites in a timelier fashion and to generate sufficiently increased revenue through increased SSACs to make that possible.

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What about the increased cost of housing?

One of the arguments against this change which may be advanced by those in the development community is that any increase in charges like SSACs will result in increased housing costs at a time when governments are trying to keep the cost of housing down. In our view, it is the competitive market that dictates pricing and the relatively small increase to the overall price that would be represented by increasing SSACs would be minimal, albeit reflected in the bottom line of the development community.

It does seem to us to be inconsistent that the bulk of the cost of some public amenities and services required to support development are being passed along by municipal governments in the form of DCCs and amenity charges but not by the provincial government with respect to schools in the form of appropriate SSACs.

Transition

The implementation of increased SSACs will not have an immediate impact on land acquisitions which need to be addressed in the near term. However, making the changes now will have a longer-term impact. Government fronting of current costs could possibly be tied to some kind of reimbursement to the province for up front acquisition costs from increased SSACs collected at a later date to a pre-determined threshold. We've suggested government change the percentage to be covered by SSACs ultimately to 100%. It could be a greater or lesser amount at government's discretion (per BC REG 17/00).

We are aware of some local governments willing to address the delay in the acquisition of designated school sites by fronting acquisitions if school districts and the provincial government do not currently have the resources to move ahead. This would require the municipality to enter into a purchase agreement with the school district which identifies repayment with interest over time, as SSACs and additional provincial funding become available. Naturally, this would require ministerial approval but should not be precluded if it makes sense. Moreover, the ministry may wish to make such agreements a requirement of school districts and municipal governments to absolutely avoid the issues noted above.

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Savings

A further argument for increasing SSACs to better reflect actual land values is reducing the amount needed to be funded by the provincial government. The amount of money spent by the province as its share of land acquisitions over the past year was $42.1M. Interestingly, the total added to that amount from SSACs was only $1.6 million, meaning the 65/35 formula was not followed due to the specific circumstances encountered and the urgent need for the land in order to proceed with new school construction. In that instance provincial funding actually covered 96% of the cost.

If SSACs had been collected over the years in the fashion we are suggesting sufficient to cover even 65% of the total cost of land acquisition the savings in provincial funding for the last year would have been in the order of $26.8 million. Of course, funding of 100% through SSACs would mean a saving of the entire $42.1 million. Although it will take some time to make the change and collect higher SSACs we are recommending the savings which are achieved through this change be redirected to address other capital needs, like the growing level of deferred maintenance in our public schools. That does not mean additional funding is not also required to adequately address deferred maintenance needs, but acknowledges any savings achieved as suggested could be part of the solution.

Conclusion

We understand government is currently considering changes to school site acquisition charges and possibly increasing the current cap on the amount that can be collected. While BCSTA views that as a positive step, we believe a longer-term solution is required that passes the largest part of school site acquisition costs and 100% of off-site servicing along as an appropriate cost of land subdivision, development and housing densification. The alternative is to continue paying what amounts to 65% (according to the regulation) or over 90% (in reality) of the cost of land acquisitions, plus the cost of off-site servicing, to accommodate growth in certain areas by using provincial tax revenues provided by all taxpayers of the province. In the current system, taxpayers are considerably subsidizing development. As noted above, there are other capital needs in the public school system which could be addressed if savings from an appropriate change in the formula for school site land acquisitions and off-site servicing can be achieved.

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