



Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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March 28, 2019

Via email: k12fundingreview@gov.bc.ca

and educ.minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Rob Fleming
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045 Stn. Prov. Gov't
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Fleming:

Re: Funding Model Themes & Recommendations

We wish to thank the Ministry for the opportunity to provide further input on the report, and acknowledge the work of the committee in developing the recommendations and considering input from around the province.

In response to your letter requesting feedback on the recommendations listed in the report of the Funding Model Review Panel, "*Improving Equity and Accountability*", I can offer preliminary feedback as the Board Chair guided by the District's most recent submission, October 2018, to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services:

We note that the Panel's review is on the allocation of funding, and not the overall amount of funding. We enclose a response by our Chair, guided by the District's most recent submission to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services:

- **THAT the Provincial Government ensures that the Ministry of Education's funding formula review for school districts results in stable, predictable and adequate funding to enable districts to fulfill their responsibility to assist all students to achieve their potential.**

Recommendation 1: The Ministry should allocate funding for specific needs first, and then allocate the remainder of funding based on a per-student amount.

Board of School Trustees:

Janet Fraser – Chairperson

Allan Wong - Vice-Chair

Fraser Ballantyne Lois Chan-Pedley Carmen Cho

Estrellita Gonzalez Oliver Hanson

Barb Parrott Jennifer Reddy

Recommendation 1 appears to be moving away from the security of a base per-student funding amount, but without confidence that either specific needs or per-student services would be adequately funded. Without a base per-student amount, changes in special needs funding or other factors may reduce the remaining funding intended for the majority of student enrolment, resulting in funding that is less stable and less predictable.

In addition to stable and predictable funding, we also need to ensure adequate funding. We have concerns that in moving from an individual student assessment model to a prevalence-based model, those students funded under the prevalence-based funding model will not be adequately resourced. If various different special needs services end up in competition with each other for the same pool of funding, there could be some services or students that are underfunded and thereby undermine the goal of educational equity.

While we appreciate that there are examples of this funding model in other provinces, we would like to see it modeled before it is implemented so we can better understand how the prevalence-based model will change the delivery of education services to some of our most vulnerable students.

Recommendation 19 would support more predictable funding.

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 amount of funding could still fluctuate (and thus, may not be stable, due to Recommendation 1 above), but Recommendation 19 would assist in the predictability of funding.

- **THAT the Provincial Government provides the necessary funding to fully implement the Memorandum of Agreement resulting from the Supreme Court Ruling.**

Recommendation 8: The Ministry should eliminate the Classroom Enhancement Fund and allocate this funding as part of school district operating grants. This will require negotiated changes to collective agreement provisions.

Recommendation 8 would assist in simplifying the funding formula, and reduce administrative burden that could in turn be better deployed in service to students. Challenges in this recommendation are in the changes that it would entail for collective agreements, and how those changes could be equitably implemented in a system with diverse collective agreement language that differs significantly from district to district.

THAT the Provincial Government fully funds cost pressures to sustain current services to students, including past and new unfunded cost pressures.

Recommendation 18: The Ministry should identify net cost pressures and new program expenditures and, as part of the annual provincial budgeting process, bring them forward to Treasury Board for consideration when the total quantum of public education funding is being set.

Recommendation 18 addresses this issue directly. If new funding was identified and added to the formula to provide for new cost pressures, that would enhance the desired 'responsive' aspect of funding for districts.

- **THAT the Provincial Government reviews and increases supplemental funding grants for students with special needs and students struggling with mental health issues.**

Recommendation 6 speaks to reviewing, but not explicitly increasing, supplemental funding grants for students with special needs.

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.*

Mental health is not one of the listed areas of funding for the Inclusive Education Supplement. We submit that this is an important and growing aspect of education that needs to be considered. We suggest that mental health be added as one of the listed considerations in Recommendation 6. Please also note the concerns previously mentioned in pooling funding for special needs students.

- **THAT the Provincial Government increases funding to school districts to support Indigenous Learners.**

Recommendation 1: The Ministry should retain targeted funding for self-identified Indigenous learners and maintain a minimum level of spending.

This recommendation supports this need, in principle. We recognize, however, that Vancouver's six-year completion rates for Indigenous students are still significantly lower than the provincial rate, and so we would ask that the 'minimum level of spending' be increased, in order to support improving these completion rates.

How best to assess the need, and the quantum, is addressed in Recommendation 3, with the addition of the **bold** text:

*Recommendation 3: The Ministry should work with the First Nations Education Steering Committee to support the continuous improvement of outcomes for Indigenous learners, particularly determining whether changes are needed to **the amounts dedicated to the funding envelope**, or to the policies that govern the use of the Indigenous student targeted funding envelope.*

Other recommendations that were not addressed in the District's submission to the Select Standing Committee but are addressed in the *Improving Equity and Accountability* report that I feel are of importance to District are as follows:

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 2020/21 school year.

The majority of our district's Grade 10-12 students take more than 1.0 FTE of course load. Course choice directly drives teacher staffing. We are concerned this recommendation will result in 1) reduced choice for students, and/or 2) reduced funding to staff our grades 10 to 12 for the District .

Recommendation 10: 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.

Vancouver has a large Distributed Learning enrolment, serving students both in-district and from other districts. While we support consistent access to quality programming, we feel we need to understand more about the parameters of the new program delivery model, given it may have a large impact on the students the District serves.

In conclusion, the VSB would like to thank the Ministry for the opportunity to provide input and feedback.

We look forward to more discussion with the Ministry and further work and consideration in updating the funding formula. Our collective goal is to arrive at a funding formula that results in stable, predictable and adequate funding, to enable districts to fulfill their responsibility to assist all students to achieve their potential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet Fraser". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name and title.

Janet Fraser, Chair
School District No. 39 (Vancouver)

From: K-12 Funding Review EDUC:EX <K12fundingreview@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Monday, April 1, 2019 7:46 AM
To: Shamirah Khan <skhan@vsb.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Letter from VSB Board Chair re: Funding Model

Thank you for your submission and contributing to the K-12 Funding Model Implementation process; the submission will be considered in the transformation to a new funding model.

We encourage you to periodically check our Funding Model Implementation [website](#) for updates on the process.

Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

Regards,
Cara

Cara Williams

A/Funding Policy Analyst | Strategic Policy and Planning
Funding and Financial Accountability Branch | Ministry of Education
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she/her/hers