



CO-GOVERNANCE RELATIONSHIP MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING



The British Columbia Ministry of Education
and
The British Columbia School Trustees Association

PURPOSE:

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is intended to define the working relationship between the Ministry of Education and the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) as the representative voice of its member Boards of Education. This MOU is considered an aspirational guiding document reflecting the shared commitment of both parties to realizing the full value and potential of a co-governed public education system for the benefit of British Columbia students.

WHEREAS:

- A. The well-being of British Columbia's economy, culture and society is a function of its education system and is of mutual concern and importance to all citizens;
- B. The future of British Columbia and the welfare and life chances of our children are of material concern to all;
- C. All British Columbians, individually and collectively through their governments, share responsibility for improving and sustaining an effective public school system that meets the needs of current and future British Columbians;
- D. Effective cooperation between the Province and Boards of Education promotes certainty, stability and predictability of cost-effective, efficient governance, sound planning and performance in the public education system such that student achievement is always improving; and
- E. The citizens of British Columbia are best served when the relationship between the Province and Boards of Education is harmonious, cooperative, collaborative and coordinated.

THEREFORE:

- 1. The Province recognizes and acknowledges that Boards of Education are democratically elected by their constituents to represent the public interest in education by governing school districts in accordance with legislation and in response to local and provincial values and priorities;
- 2. The Province recognizes that BCSTA as the representative voice for its member Boards of Education is a key partner in developing and maintaining an effective education system;
- 3. Boards of Education and the Province acknowledge their individual and shared accountabilities to effectively and efficiently manage public resources in a fiscally sustainable manner to support a strong and successful public education system;
- 4. The BCSTA and Boards of Education recognize the Province's statutory and constitutional right to determine public education policy for the province;
- 5. The principles established in this MOU shall form the basis for the relationship between the Province and BCSTA as the representative voice of its member Boards.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Public Confidence

The Province and BCSTA will seek shared opportunities to publicly demonstrate and communicate the achievements, strengths and potential opportunities for improvement in K-12 education with the goal of maintaining and improving public trust and confidence in the public education system across the province. Both parties recognize this is best achieved through a shared focus on improved learning outcomes for students and a demonstrated commitment to respect, integrity, public service, accountability and the responsible management of public resources.

2. Commitment to Action

In the interests of all British Columbians, the parties are committed to discharge their responsibilities within their respective areas of jurisdiction while understanding and respecting the jurisdiction of the other party.

3. Partnership

The parties recognize each other's strengths and capabilities. To maximize efficiency and effectiveness, the parties are committed to cooperate in the spirit of partnership particularly in the development of policies, programs, projects and funding options.

The parties commit to clear division of responsibilities so that the Province and local Boards of Education can effectively perform their roles. The Province and BCSTA will also cooperate in the development and distribution of information required for effective discharge of this agreement.

4. Consultation and Notification

Any party proposing a change in policies or programs that will affect the other party will consult and collaborate with the other party to the fullest extent possible given the specific circumstances and any respective legislative and confidentiality obligations. This commitment includes, but is not limited to, timely notification of the proposed change.

The parties recognize that there may be extraordinary circumstances that limit the timeliness of consultation and notification. In such circumstances the other party will be provided with the rationale for the unusual limitations to consultation.

New responsibilities will not be assigned to Boards of Education until resourcing implications have been discussed between the parties.

5. Flexibility

Policies or programs will be developed with consideration to the varying needs and circumstances of local Boards of Education in different areas of the province where appropriate and where it is not to the detriment of the education system as a whole.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The parties will cooperate in implementing this agreement through subsidiary protocol agreements consistent with the above principles. These protocol agreements will address specific priorities of one or both parties, such as shared service delivery, learning transformation or other priorities identified during the term of the agreement.

The parties will take a leadership role with education sector organizations to establish an annual Education Calendar of significant dates, deadlines and opportunities for purposeful, regular in-person meetings among education partners. The calendar is intended to support timely, effective and efficient communication, consultation, collaboration and decision making. As a specific priority and in support of district leadership and strong connections between school districts and the Ministry, the parties commit to jointly organizing annual liaison meetings with the BC Superintendents' Association (BCSSA) and BC Association of School Business Officials (BCASBO).

REVIEW OF THE MOU

This MOU is a living document and as such, shall remain in effect for four years from the date of its signing, to be reviewed by both parties annually or as circumstances require.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE MOU

The lead contacts for administering this MOU are the Minister of Education and the President of BCSTA.

Signed in Vancouver, British Columbia, this 5th day of December in the year 2014.

On Behalf of the:
British Columbia School Trustees Association:

TERESA REZANSOFF
President

On Behalf of the:
British Columbia Ministry of Education:

THE HONOURABLE PETER FASSBENDER
Minister of Education