



May 22, 2018

Mr. Chris Trumpy

Chair – Funding Model Review Committee
c/o B.C. Ministry of Education

Dear Mr. Trumpy,

The BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA) Board of Directors would like to extend our thanks to you and the fellow members of the Funding Model Review (FMR) panel for our productive meeting last week. We believe the exchange of information, perspectives and questions was helpful in advancing both an understanding of the current input and the need for more work to identify specific recommendations regarding some individual components of the current funding model.

Although we provided a verbal summary at the end of our meeting, I wanted to provide the following overview as a follow-up. BCSTA would like to emphasize that:

1. We support the need for the current funding model to be reviewed toward identifying and implementing a more modern alternative reflective of the current provincial context.
2. The implementation of any new funding model should be phased in over time and in such a way as to 'do no harm' to any school district. While we recognize any change has to have an impact, every effort should be made to minimize the short-term consequences on individual school districts.
3. Any new funding model must remain flexible over time in order to address changing circumstances or added external factors. For example, scheduled bargaining in 2019 with both support staff and teacher unions will likely impact school districts financially. A new funding model should remain open to change to address the impact of changes to current collective agreements.
4. Wherever possible, the new funding model should increase flexibility for boards of education to determine local spending priorities. While we recognize that many of the current constraints of local decision making (in support of improving student outcomes) lie outside of the current funding model, any changes to improve flexibility would be beneficial.
5. The current funding model review process should be viewed as an opportunity to look at the various components through fresh eyes, and to consider different approaches to current practice. For example, the way in which we fund special education and rural schools have both been identified as concerns by many boards. We support the establishment of special committees or working groups to make special recommendations on options in these areas and other significant components of the current funding model.



6. Discussions at the FMR regional and partner group meetings have raised a number of external issues related to the funding model, but outside of the mandate of the committee. BCSTA supports the assignment or creation of working groups to address such issues as appropriate accountabilities, appropriate school district financial reserves, bargaining objectives, etc. In many cases, there are management existing working groups that could be utilized to address these issues in a timely fashion (e.g. the MoE Financial Health Working Group, the BCPSEA Board of Directors, BCCASE, etc.).
7. We support the need for our association, as well as boards of education, to be part of the solution to current concerns and the implementation of future changes. As co-governors of the K-12 public education system, we have an ongoing responsibility to do more than just identify concerns.
8. We are sympathetic to the enormity of the challenge your committee faces and appreciative of your work to date. Thank you for your contributions, both individually and as a group, to the FMR process.

As noted during our presentation, BCSTA member boards passed two motions related to the current funding formula review process at our recent Annual General Meeting. The first of these motions was:

That BCSTA request that the Education Minister require the Independent Panel of the Funding Model Review hold additional consultation for boards of education, parents, and students, and that education partners be given an opportunity to consider the impact of the proposed new funding model and provide further feedback before the model goes into effect.

The intent of the motion is to emphasize that boards of education and other partner groups should have an opportunity to reflect on and respond to any new funding formula model before it is finalized and implemented.

The second motion passed was:

That BCSTA urge the Minister of Finance that any change to the Education Funding Model be considered no earlier than March 2020.

The intent of this motion is to urge government to implement a new funding model for K-12 education only after all 'pieces of the puzzle' have been adequately addressed. Two examples that immediately come to mind are the implications of sector bargaining in 2019, and the identification and structuring of a potential new funding model for special education.



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

Our members also passed a motion requesting the Ministry of Education not proceed with compliance audits without ensuring Compliance Program policy is fully aligned with both the current curriculum transformation process and the implementation of a new funding model. Although not directly related to your role in making recommendations, I mention it here as part of the larger picture the Ministry of Education should consider in moving through this process.

In addition, please find attached a copy of the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BCSTA and the Ministry of Education regarding our co-governance relationship for your review. We believe the MOU helps to define the roles and responsibilities of both parties in working together to address issues such as the funding model review. I would ask that the document be considered when making any recommendations regarding how the final version of any new funding model might be determined and implemented.

Once again, thank you for a productive meeting last week. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time should you want further information or input regarding the large number of issues and options that we discussed. BCSTA remains committed to being 'part of the solution' regarding the determination and implementation of any new funding model for school districts.

We hope that you and the Ministry of Education will look for further opportunities for BCSTA and our member's boards to be directly involved in the process of determining and implementing a final product.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'G B Swan'.

Gordon Swan
President
BC School Trustees Association

cc FMR panel members
Boards of Education
Scott McDonald,
Deputy Minister of Education

Attachment:
BCSTA – Ministry of Education
Memorandum of Understanding on co-governance