



June 22, 2018

The Honourable Bruce Ralston
Minister of Jobs, Trade and Technology
Room 137 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

SUBJECT: Request to ensure internet connectivity in all BC communities

Dear Minister Ralston,

At the most recent Annual General Meeting of the BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA), our membership passed the following resolution regarding increasing opportunities for teacher training at the local community level across B.C.:

That BCSTA request the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Jobs, Trades and Technology ensure that all communities are effectively connected to the internet regardless of where they are situated in the province of BC.

Access to the internet is rapidly becoming a service requirement for individuals and communities across B.C. and the rest of Canada. Just as we would consider a lack of electricity, running water or telephone access unacceptable in all but our most remote locations, there must be a shift to include internet connectivity in the same way. Community access to the internet is rapidly becoming essential to educational, business and personal opportunities for success.

Over the past number of years, the Ministry of Education has worked with BC school districts to greatly improve internet access within our schools. Outside of the school building and hours of instruction, many students and staff still face a defining lack of community internet service.

We appreciate that the recently announced BCTECH strategy, including grants to improve community internet access, as a definite step in the right direction. On behalf of BC's school districts and the students we serve, we encourage you to expand and accelerate this initiative toward ensuring equity for communities and families across the province. You would be supporting expanded educational opportunities for children and youth, as well as the viability of our remote and rural communities – both of which are laudable goals.

Thank you for considering our request and we look forward to any future dialogue on this important issue that you might consider. This is an opportunity for our organizations to work together toward a common goal and a solution that addresses the unique needs of both students and rural/remote communities across the province.

Yours truly,

Gordon Swan
President

British Columbia School Trustees Association

Cc: Hon. Rob Fleming, BC Minister of Education
First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)



39. Internet Connectivity

Submitted by: *Aboriginal Education Committee*

BE IT RESOLVED:

that BCSTA request the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Jobs, Trades and Technology ensure that all communities are effectively connected to the internet regardless of where they are situated in the province of BC.

Rationale:

This motion is needed because there are many communities that are not connected to the Internet. Technology in communities would support learning in communities by providing:

- experiential activities for students;
- opportunities for students to continue learning after school at home through internet assistance; and,
- students with the ability to do online coursework and/or distance learning.

This is an action motion and does not change or contradict any existing Foundational or Policy Statement.