

CSBA REPORT

New Curriculum Implementation

A new curriculum for Grade 10 students, focused on getting our young people prepared for post-secondary schooling and the workforce, along with a stronger focus on Indigenous content, has been implemented this school-year in British Columbia. This was preceded by last year's introduction of an updated K-9 curriculum. A central goal to this initiative is to provide additional flexibility for both teachers and students in the pursuit of improved learning outcomes.

In a press release, BC's government indicated several examples of the program at work, including students participating in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) programs, dance fitness programs to fulfill physical and health education requires, and geology classes that will see students spending a week in the field in a hands-on setting, learning from experts.

This is to be followed by new Grades 11 and 12 curricula in September 2019 as part of the government's overall policy for student success. This policy is guided by three goals: intellectual development, human and social development, and career development.

The current plan also emphasizes the importance of measurable standards, student-centred learning, orientation towards the future, quality teaching and leadership and safe and effective learning environments.

Bargaining 2019 Update

Provincial bargaining is slated for March of 2019. In BCSTA's last report, it was stated that BCSTA initiated the development of key provincial bargaining objectives in cooperation with member boards, the Ministry of Education and the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA).

It is BCSTA's intention to constructively support BCPSEA's work during bargaining with the BC Teachers Federation (BCTF) while still representing the views and needs of boards of education. To that end, BCSTA's objective through this process is to:

- focus on communicating with boards,
- create opportunities for boards,
- create media initiatives that emphasize and explain boards' views
- provide boards with information and considerations,
- support the need for input from individual boards of education,
- provide ongoing input to the BCPSEA board,
- provide ongoing input to government and local boards on policy objectives in bargaining,
- work as an informal (and possibly formal) sounding board, and
- support boards of education through the implementation process.

General Local Elections October 20

BC will be holding general local elections on October 20, 2018, with the nomination period closing September 14, 2018. This will understandably have a significant impact on boards of education, especially in the case of newly elected trustees. BCSTA's informal polling shows that the new increase in term length will see a fair number of trustees decline to run for re-election and it is anticipated that there will be a significant number of new trustees emerging, with our current estimate being as high as 40%.

BCSTA's Local Elections Engagement Committee, whose mandate is to help districts attract high-quality individuals to run and to emphasize to the public the importance of voting for school trustees, has recently wrapped up its planning period, with a focus on running a social media campaign throughout the elections process. This includes a guide for prospective school trustee candidates, informative bulletins, and general information to educate the public on the role of trustees. This is also accompanied by the #ProudToBeASchoolTrustee social media campaign, with the intention of showcasing reasons why individuals decided to run as a trustee, the work trustees are most proud to be involved in, and the impact of their work has had in their communities

BCSTA will be facilitating its annual Academy event at the end of November, providing orientation materials for new trustees with updated resources, materials, and guides. In follow up to this event, January of 2019 will also see a Joint BCSTA-BCPSEA Academy take place, geared specifically to new trustees, but also featuring valuable content for seasons trustees, with the goal of bringing all of BC's to the same level of familiarity with BCSTA's resources, such as the new Learning Guide and its supporting works.

Funding Model Review Update and Last Year's Surpluses

BCSTA has worked diligently to ensure the Ministry of Education is aware of the need for sustainable, predictable funding as we transition to this new model. We are committed to continued efforts to make this a primary focus this year.

As stated on the government of BC's website, "The panel is now considering all stakeholder feedback and will be presenting a final report with recommendations for the Minister of Education this summer. The new funding model is anticipated to be in place for the 2019/2020 school year, with information provided to Boards of Education early enough to support their 2019/20 budget process." BCSTA is anticipating the release of more information shortly.

Regarding last year's spending, last year saw a \$351 million surplus for K-12, and by extension, BC's boards of education. This is the second highest of all broader public sector entities. While this is slightly less than the predicted \$400 million anticipated, it is still a significant surplus. Additional details are still developing. ■