

CSBA REPORT

Advocacy: Minister of Education Rob Fleming to Boards RE: Long-Range Facilities Plans

All of British Columbia's boards of education were recently copied on an April 12 letter from the Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Education, in which he outlined updates to Long-Range Facilities Plans. This is a change that BCSTA has strongly advocated for. The letter stated that Minister Fleming is "pleased to bring your attention to the Ministry of Education's new approach to long-term capital planning for boards of education. The Ministry's guidelines for the development of Long-Range Facilities Plans (LRFP) for school districts have undergone a significant revision from the initial version that was produced in March 2017 under the previous administration."

The letter specifically outlined that the Ministry has "already removed the old government's 95% utilization requirement, and now I'm pleased to announce we are making even more changes to give school boards more flexibility and autonomy. Going forward, the Ministry will no longer need to approve a school district's LRFP. We will no longer expect LRFPs to be evidentiary documents that are needed to justify individual project funding requests."

[You can access the full letter on the advocacy section of BCSTA's website.](#)

President's Update: Funding Model Review

BCSTA President Gordon Swan recently provided members an update on the funding model review via the Associations Weekly newsletter. A synopsis of the story follows:

The Ministry of Education's working groups for the Funding Model Review began meeting on Tuesday March 5 in Victoria BC. Future meetings of all the working groups are slated to continue through to the middle of July. During the first meetings of all the working groups the terms of reference for each group were reviewed and agreed to and each working group consists of many educational stakeholders, some more familiar with the current funding model than others. At these initial meetings the current formula was reviewed to give all the stakeholders at each table an equal understanding of the current formula.

If you would like more detailed information regarding the working groups, including the agendas, terms of reference and meeting minutes, they can be accessed on the BCSTA HUB from the main page under the "Quick Access" section of the home page. We will continue to update this space as content is made available, so please check back regularly for updates as not all working groups items are available at the time of this update.

We look forward to the upcoming meetings and will supply members with additional information as it becomes available. Remember to check the HUB's Funding Model Review page for updates as we continue to add documents as they become available to us, and to copy BCSTA on your submissions to the Ministry of Education.

BC to Launch Catch-Up Immunization Program to Protect Against Measles

As shared with BCSTA via the Ministry of Education "The Province is launching a measles immunization catch-up program to help B.C. families ensure their children are protected from measles. The program will run from April through June 2019. 'With outbreaks of measles occurring globally and here in B.C., we know we will see threats of further outbreaks and can be doing more to raise immunization rates,' said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. 'That is why we are launching a catch-up program to immunize children from kindergarten to Grade 12 who have not previously been immunized against measles and to provide a dose for those who may not have received both doses.'"

Additional Information Regarding Free Menstrual Products for Students

The Minister of Education issued a Ministerial Order to amend the Support Services for Schools Order to require school districts to provide free menstrual products to students in school washrooms in a manner that protects student privacy. The Ministerial Order requires boards to establish policies and procedures related to the provision of free menstrual products to students. Below please find the relevant section of the Order:

Provision of Menstrual Products:

7(a) Each board must establish, maintain and make publicly available a policy and procedures for the provision of menstrual products to all students who may require them.

(b) The policy and procedures must:

- i.** Ensure menstrual products are provided to students of all gender identities or expressions in a manner that protects student privacy;
- ii.** Provide for barrier free, easily accessible menstrual products at no cost to students;
- iii.** Provide for consistent availability and supply of menstrual products in school washrooms; and
- iv.** Incorporate student feedback with respect to the provision of menstrual products.

BCSTA will prepare a resource to help Boards develop the policies and procedures required under the Ministerial Order. The Order is available online here.

The New Westminster Board's advocacy on this issue played an important role in bringing this matter to the attention of government and securing government funding for this initiative.

Budget 2019 Overview

On February 19, 2019, Minister of Finance Carol James tabled Budget 2019. Under the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act, (BTAA), the government is required to table a budget on the third week of February. The BTAA also outlines the contents of the budget, which includes among other things, the Province's economic outlook, three-year revenue, expenditure and debt forecasts, and anticipated spending in all public sector organizations including line ministries, school districts, post-secondary institutions and crown corporations. [Full details of BC Budget 2019 can be found here.](#)

What do we think this means for K-12 Education? The Ministry of Education's total operating budget will be \$6.569 billion in 2019/20 and will be receiving a \$552 million in additional operating funding over the next three years.

The budget is up slightly from the \$409 million three-year increase set in Budget 2018. Investments in K-12 education, include:

- \$325 million for enrollment growth.
- \$58 million under the Classroom Enhancement Fund.
- \$73 million for the impact of the Employer Health Tax.
- \$31 million in independent school funding.
- \$2 million for the Economic Stability Dividend and Sustainable Services Negotiating Mandate.
- \$9 million for an initial investment in new early learning initiatives to support Government's Child Care BC initiative.
- \$2 million for the Teachers Act Special Account.
- \$33 million one-time reduction in 2020/21 as a result of re-profiling the timing of grants to other partners.

Provincial borrowing for capital spending will total \$2.432 billion over the next three years (compared to \$1.757 billion three-year total in last year's budget). This funding includes:

- \$1.12 billion for expansion and replacement projects.
- \$791 million to accelerate the Seismic Mitigation Program.
- \$502 million to invest in asset rehabilitation and maintenance.
- \$15 million for the annual \$5 million Playground Equipment Program.

The carbon tax that school districts are required to pay will also increase by \$5 per ton effective April 1, 2019 to \$40 and by \$5 per ton each year to 2021 to \$50.00 per ton.

While Budget 2019 included a \$9-million-per-year increase to deal with increasing demand for existing child care programs, Budget 2019 did not address the campaign promise of \$10 a day daycare, or any role that school districts may have in providing these services in school facilities moving forward. ■