



British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

June 20, 2018

**The Honourable Melanie Mark**

*Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training*

PO Box 9080, Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

**SUBJECT:** Request to create more locally-based teacher education programs

Dear Minister Mark,

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 BC:

*That BCSTA request the Ministry of Advanced Education create more local teacher training programs in order to enhance recruitment and to encourage more Indigenous teachers to work in rural and remote communities.*

Currently, there is a shortage of certified teachers willing to work in BC's rural and remote communities. Compounding this difficult situation is a significant under representation of teachers with an Indigenous heritage. This combination of an overall teacher shortage and an under representation of community demographics puts significant stress on remote and rural schools to meet the needs of their students, who are often Indigenous themselves.

Although we have already had productive discussions with the Ministry of Education on how best to meet the needs of both remote and rural communities, as well as Indigenous students, neither of us has the mandate to address the supply issue through BC teacher education programs. I would like to call on you to consider creating opportunities to expand and reframe the province's post-secondary teacher education programs to include additional opportunities based in local communities.

There are already some positive examples of such programs. The West Kootenay Rural Teacher Education Program and the proposed Nicola Valley Institute of Technology Program are examples of bringing teacher education out of the big cities and into local communities. We encourage you and your staff to consider the expansion of such opportunities so as to attract more candidates from rural communities and of Indigenous heritage.

Our goal is to ensure every school and school district across the province is staffed with qualified teachers representative of both the needs and the demographics of their local communities. We believe the creation of additional post-secondary teacher training opportunities based in more rural locations can be part of the solution. Having your ministry's support and active involvement in making this happen is critical to any future success.

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 three parties 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G B Swan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Gordon Swan**

*President*

British Columbia School Trustees Association

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

**30. Local Teacher Education Programs**

**Submitted by:** *Aboriginal Education Committee*

**BE IT RESOLVED:**

That BCSTA request the Ministry of Advanced Education create more local teacher training programs in order to enhance recruitment and to encourage more Indigenous teachers to work in rural and remote communities.

**Rationale:**

Many communities across BC are having difficulties with recruitment and retention of teachers – especially Indigenous teachers.

Local teacher training programs will allow for a locally-developed approach to “growing our own” educators.

**References:**

- [Alaska Highway Consortium on Teacher Education](#)
- [Northern Lights College, Alaska Highway Consortium on Teacher Education](#)

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

**This motion relates to Foundational Statement 5.3FS (Aboriginal Education).**