



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

August 22, 2019

The Honourable Rob Fleming

Minister of Education
PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

The Honourable Melanie Mark
*Minister of Advanced Education, Skills &
Training*
PO Box 9080 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

President Arjun Singh
Union of BC Municipalities
525 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8V 0A8

Dear Minister Rob Fleming, Minister Melanie Mark and Arjun Singh,

Subject: Recruitment and Retention Strategy

At the most recent Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA), our membership passed the following resolution requesting the establishment of an employment recruitment and retention strategy:

That BCSTA work with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Advanced Education and the Union of BC Municipalities to create a strategy for recruitment and retention of those interested in working in the educational field; and that the strategy could include such things as loan forgiveness, housing, travel allowance and other measures to encourage people to stay within the community.

The resolution notes several potential ideas for incentives that may press those working in rural communities to stay long-term, as well as attract quality talent. Many of our member boards, specifically those in remote and rural areas of the provinces, have indicated that keeping talented educators within their school district is a difficult task. Competing with urban markets is difficult, and while directly competing with urban districts is simply not an option for more rural communities, incentives can serve to bridge the gap.

We acknowledge that the Ministry of Education has begun work in this area and support your efforts to date. Perhaps there is an opportunity for BCSTA to support this initiative.

Providing incentives to take a position, and ultimately stay in a local community, such as those outlined above, would do much to maintain staff. The costs involved with changing staff are obvious, but of equal importance are the relationships these people have with students. Retaining staff can do much to improve student outcomes by allowing learners to create relationships with teachers and support staff that have long-term benefits.



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Thank you for considering the request outlined above. We look forward to any future dialogue on this important issue that you might consider, including other suggestions you may have for attracting and retaining staff in rural communities. Your support in bringing the various provincial government ministries together in support of this important initiative is critical to any future success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Higginson", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Stephanie Higginson
President
British Columbia School Trustees Association

Enclosure: Original motion rationale

18. Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Category: Teachers/Personnel and Employee Relations

Submitted for Consideration at: AGM 2019

Submitted by: SD 28 (Quesnel) and SD 74 (Gold Trail)

Motion as Adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That BCSTA work with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Advanced Education and the Union of BC Municipalities to create a strategy for recruitment and retention of those interested in working in the educational field; and that the strategy could include such things as loan forgiveness, housing, travel allowance and other measures to encourage people to stay within the community.

Motion as Presented:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That BCSTA work with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Advanced Education and the Union of BC Municipalities to create a strategy for recruitment and retention of those interested in working in the educational field; and that the strategy could include such things as loan forgiveness, housing, travel allowance and other measures to encourage people to stay within the community.

Rationale:

This motion is needed because school districts, especially rural districts, are experiencing staffing shortfalls of teaching staff as well as support staff. The shortfall is significant and is having a negative impact on schools and students as classroom and critical non-enrolling teaching positions remain unfilled. Support staff positions are also a recruitment and retention challenge. District and school teams are working to lessen the impact on students and their families, but the current situation is not sustainable.

It is critical that in order to maintain and improve quality education for students, new, additional and effective staff recruitment strategies are implemented. While boards of education know that BC has an outstanding public education system, the current staff recruitment and retention challenge is weakening the quality of public education, particularly in rural communities and schools where these vacancies may remain over long periods. Staff vacancies add pressures to existing staff, creating a further challenge. The recruitment and retention challenge is also resulting in reduced esteem and support of public education by communities, families and students, ultimately undermining student achievement and public education.

Recent graduates in select in-demand occupations should have their student loans forgiven by agreeing to work in publicly funded schools in underserved communities in BC, or with children in other occupations where there is an identified shortage in BC.

The provincial government could create a rural remote living allowance (subsidy/assist with housing). Incentives could include:

- leave provisions,
- flex days,
- travel allowance,
- loan forgiveness, and



- signing bonus

School districts and the province need to be partnering with municipalities to increase availability of housing.

We need to retain qualified staff who will stay within the community!

Reference(s):

[BC Loan Forgiveness Program](#)

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