



October 9, 2025

Ref: 312830

Tracy Loffler, President
British Columbia School Trustees Association
Email: c/o mrussell@BCSTA.ORG

Dear Tracy Loffler:

Thank you for your letters of August 25, 2025, regarding the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) 2025 Annual General Meeting motions. Thank you for the advocacy your members have demonstrated on these important issues. The six motions outlined are addressed below with the intention of providing information that reflects the Ministry of Education and Child Care's ongoing commitment to strengthening the K-12 education system in British Columbia.

Post-Secondary Institute Transition Rate

Students enrolled in dual credit programs such as the “Train in Trades” program cannot be included in the post-secondary transition rate. These students are still enrolled in the K-12 system so have not fully transitioned to a post-secondary institute (PSI). Any transition to post-secondary is calculated based on the date a graduation credential is issued. This method is consistent with the Student Transitions Project (STP) led by the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. The Ministry of Education and Child Care participates in the STP.

Regarding the inclusion of BC students attending post-secondary at a PSI throughout Canada, the Ministry does not have access to the complete set of student data to include them in the PSI transition. Since 2020, the Ministry has twice utilized the Statistics Canada data environment to calculate a Pan-Canadian transition rate for BC students. The resource requirements for the Ministry and Statistics Canada to perform the data linkage and analysis each year are substantial and, unfortunately, the Ministry has not yet been able to add the Pan-Canadian transition rate to annual reporting. That being said, work is being done to develop a Pan-Canadian post-secondary transition rate in the future.

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Climate Change and Critical Thinking Curriculum

Educating students about climate change and preparing them to contribute to climate change solutions as future leaders is a priority for the Ministry. Ministry staff have worked closely with government partners like BC's Climate Action Secretariat (CAS) to help teachers talk about climate change in their classrooms, including developing the [Climate Change Connections in the BC Curriculum: Kindergarten – Grade 3](#) guide. This teacher resource features climate education learning opportunities that support the learning standards of the BC curriculum and provide teachers with science-based background information about climate change in the province. This K-3 guide was well received by teachers and I have asked staff to continue working with CAS on similar resources for Grades 4-8 and 9-12.

The current curriculum provides a strong foundation for this learning. Topics related to the environment and climate change are found throughout the curriculum, especially the required Kindergarten-Grade 10 Science curriculum. Elective senior secondary science courses such as [Earth Sciences 11](#), [Environmental Science 11](#), [Science for Citizens 11](#), and [Environmental Science 12](#) provide opportunities for students to study the environment and climate change in more detail. Locally elected school boards can also work with educators to develop and approve Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) courses that address climate change topics beyond what is included in the provincial curriculum.

Teaching students about critical thinking is vital to ensuring we are preparing students to be informed citizens. As you note in your letter, critical thinking is one of the Core Competencies the provincial curriculum is built around. As such, there are learning standards across the entire curriculum from Kindergarten to Grade 12 that promote critical thinking. This means that teachers in all subject areas and grade levels should be developing critical thinking skills with their students. The provincial graduation assessments also honour the importance of critical thinking by including this as a key component of the Literacy 10 and 12 and Numeracy 10 assessments. However, there are always opportunities to further improve how our system is promoting the development of these vital skills and how we are assessing them.

One of the areas that the Ministry is focusing on is ensuring that students have the fundamental skills needed to engage in critical and creative thinking. Through projects like the [K-12 Literacy Supports](#) initiative and the [BC Learning Pathways](#), we are working to make sure that all students have the strong literacy and numeracy skills needed to access information, make informed decisions, and communicate important information and ideas. We want every student to be proficient in the literacy and numeracy skills they need to be successful in school and throughout the rest of their lives.

It is our collective goal for students in our province to graduate with the knowledge and skills needed to be active, educated citizens in a rapidly changing world. The Ministry will continue working to support teachers and promote student learning on the topics you have raised and will ensure that both climate change and critical thinking are priority topics considered as part of any future curriculum review and revision process.

Non-traditional Education Programs and Initiatives

The Ministry values cross-sector collaboration to ensure school districts are supported in implementing new programs and initiatives. This coordinated approach helps align efforts with subject-matter expertise and contributes to safe, caring, and inclusive school environments.

For initiatives and programs beyond the traditional scope of the education sector, the Ministry collaborates with relevant partners to ensure implementation is guided by appropriate expertise. For example, in response to the recent amendments to the [Support Services for Schools Order](#), the Ministry is collaborating with Focused Education Resources to identify vendors capable of offering consortium pricing for Automated External Defibrillators to school districts. Additionally, we have engaged with the Ministry of Citizens' Services to facilitate access for school districts to order intramuscular naloxone through their [Product Distribution Centre](#).

We continue to engage with the Ministry of Health, BC Centre for Disease Control, and the Provincial Health Services Authority to ensure health-related programs and initiatives are informed by current public health expertise. This collaboration helps ensure schools are equipped with current resources and guidance when implementing related initiatives.

The Ministry remains committed to supporting school districts in delivering responsive and evidence-informed programs that promote the well-being of school communities and advance positive outcomes for all learners.

K-12 Workforce Plan

Sincere appreciation is extended to the BCSTA for its ongoing involvement in both the development and implementation of the [K-12 Workforce Plan](#). Your organization has played a vital role in shaping recruitment and retention initiatives, and the continued collaboration on this important work is deeply valued.

As you know, over the past three years, the Ministry, in partnership with BCSTA and other sector partners, has launched a series of initiatives focused on K-12 staff training, recruitment, and retention. While we recognize that there is still more to do, we are beginning to see positive impacts, particularly in rural and remote school districts. For example, almost 200 pre-employment incentives have been allocated across 23 school districts, practicum placement awards are helping northern school districts host teacher candidates, and investments in hybrid teacher education programs are increasing accessibility for students who wish to remain in their communities while pursuing teacher certification.

Building on these efforts, I am pleased to share that several new initiatives aligned with the K-12 Workforce Plan are being implemented this school year. These include the launch of a Northern Return of Service Bursary, which will provide financial supports to teacher graduates who commit to working in northern British Columbia for three years. We are also working in close collaboration with Indigenous organizations on initiatives aimed at increasing the number of Indigenous teachers in public schools. In addition, we are working towards re-establishing a provincial teacher mentorship program to help strengthen teacher retention and support ongoing professional growth.

The recruitment and retention of K-12 staff remains a key priority for the Ministry, as reflected in my mandate letter. This includes expanding the number of education assistants in schools and expediting the certification and deployment of teachers. As you can appreciate, this work is complex and must be informed by current labour market dynamics, research, and thoughtful policy development. As a first step, I have asked Ministry staff to engage with sector partners to map out current state, gaps, and opportunities, and I am pleased that BCSTA was represented at the K-12 workforce meeting the Ministry held in June. Looking ahead, continued collaboration on this important file is appreciated.

Letters of Permission Process

The Ministry is continually seeking ways to reduce the administrative burden on employers while maintaining the integrity of the regulatory process, which protects children and ensures that all teachers working with students are able to operate in accordance with the professional standards. The Teacher Regulation Branch works to ensure that delays for Letters of Permission (LOP) applications are kept to a minimum. As of the second quarter of 2025, applications for an LOP were responded to in nine days and were issued nine days from when all documents were received.

Recruitment challenges faced by many districts are well understood and the ideas related to expanding the validity period of LOPs as well as considering making them valid for multiple districts are appreciated. As you know, the Ministry is implementing a K-12 Workforce Plan to support all stages of the recruitment and retention continuum. The Plan includes targeted actions to address the shortage of certified teachers in remote and rural school districts, and at this time we are prioritizing those actions rather than consideration of changes to LOPs.

One component of the Plan involves working with the BC Teachers Council to explore options to establish differentiated certification and increased flexibility for Teacher Education Programs offered in community. I encourage you to work through your representative member at that table to ensure your voice is represented in those decisions.

Again, thank you for taking the time to write and for the BCSTA's ongoing advocacy efforts regarding these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Beare".

Lisa Beare
Minister

cc: Board of Directors, British Columbia School Trustees Association
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