



BOARD OF EDUCATION

Delivered via email: K12fundingreview@gov.bc.ca

April 30, 2018

Reg Bawa
Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Education
Government of BC

Dear Assistant Deputy Minister Bawa,

RE: Funding Model Review – Discussion Paper Feedback

Thank you for the additional opportunity to provide feedback regarding the Funding Model Review. The Board of Education of the Sunshine Coast had an opportunity to discuss the Funding Model Review at our Committee of the Whole meeting on April 24, 2018. We respectfully submit the following considerations to the Review Committee. We have addressed some of these items in previous correspondence and would like to reiterate their importance in any Funding Model Review deliberations.

The commentary from our board can be summed up under the following:

- **Multi-Year Funding**: Changing to a multi-year funding model for school districts will help to provide additional flexibility and better financial planning to adequately support students in a more prudent manner and possibly allow districts to run a deficit within the cycle in order to fully meet students' needs in a specific year, rather than potentially cutting programs. This multi-year funding model should also be flexible to address increased student enrolment or changing demographics that would result in higher direct costs than previously anticipated.
- **Course Based Funding vs. FTE Funding at the Secondary Level**: As students approach the later years of secondary, they may not be required to attend school full time, yet still require support from non-enrolling staff (counselors, librarians, principals, etc.) and enrolling staff. The funding model needs to recognize the need for secondary students to have access to school staff to fully understand and meet graduation requirements in the era of a New Curriculum. It should also continue to provide flexibility for students to take and be funded for more than a full 1.0 course load to facilitate the greatest number of options in smaller, rural communities.
- **Special Education Funding**: Funding for students with special needs is allocated

based on a Medical Diagnosis Model, necessitating large amounts of paperwork for teaching and support staff and taking time away from direct student contact. The Medical Diagnosis Model does not take into account students that are “borderline”, not quite fitting a diagnosis, but requiring additional staff support to ensure success. School districts in BC spend, on average, double the amount they receive to support students with special needs. Districts do this by using general funding, provided for core programming, to hire additional special education teaching and support staff. Some districts, such as School District No. 46, have a significantly higher proportion of their students requiring additional supports, which can either place pressure on general operating budgets, or lead to inequitable service levels. The resulting potential for failure in properly serving students with special needs may lead to human rights violations and broader societal costs in the long term. Whatever the future model for supporting special education, it must continue to address underlying differences in student demographics from one District to the next.

- **New Curriculum**: The past funding allocation for focused staff support in curriculum implementation was greatly appreciated. It is important to recognize the direction of the new curriculum focuses on engaging students in learning, and will need to be funded in order to support all learners in the dynamic new world they are approaching. As the new curriculum will continue to reflect the direction of the new approaches to learning, both staff development and new learning resources will be required.
- **Capital Funding**: New, improved processes for accessing capital funding need to be addressed. School districts across the province have aging facilities, many beyond their useful life. Districts are also trying to respond to diverse physical student needs as well as curriculum requests to make buildings more welcoming. Also, as districts endeavor to reduce their carbon footprint, access to capital funding to improve environmental sustainability would be greatly appreciated.

Once again, we would like to reiterate that any funding principles be based on student needs and reflect student learning over student achievement.

Sincerely,



Lori Pratt
Board Chair

cc: Board of Education of School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)
Patrick Bocking, Superintendent of Schools
Nicholas Weswick, Secretary-Treasurer
Louise Herle, SCTA President

Janice Budgell, CUPE Local 801, President
Nicholas Simons, MLA, Powell River-Sunshine Coast
All Boards of Education, via BCSTA