



July 3, 2018

Ref: 203540

Lisa Lapointe, Chief Coroner
BC Coroners Service
Email: ChiefCoronerCorrespondence@gov.bc.ca

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

Thank you for providing the Ministry of Education with an embargoed copy of the death review panel report *Review of MCFD Involved Youth Transitioning to Independence*. The Ministry was grateful for the opportunity to review the report prior to the May 29, 2018, release date.

The Ministry of Education has reviewed the recommendations outlined within the report and agrees that actions need to be taken to prevent deaths of young people transitioning to independence from government child services.

The Ministry is undertaking a number of actions to support vulnerable youth that respond to the recommendations outlined in the report:

- The ERASE strategy includes training for school and district staff to create positive school cultures and climates, and enhance student connectedness to school—a strong predictor of emotional well-being. The Ministry also held mental health and trauma informed educator training sessions last year.
- The Ministry funded \$4.2 million in 2017/18 to support Provincial Resource Programs that provide direct support to students with mental health needs. Four of these programs are specifically for First Nations youth and focus on building cultural connections while in program attendance.
- \$63 million annual funding is provided to school districts, through CommunityLINK (Learning Includes Nutrition and Knowledge) and the Vulnerable Student Supplement, to deliver programs and services to over 60,000 vulnerable students. Over 43 percent of the spending is directed to child and youth workers, counsellor- or social worker-led programs.
- \$9,610 in per student supplementary funding is provided to students identified with Significant Behavioural or Mental Health Needs. This funding enables boards of education to provide supports and services for students with intensive behaviour intervention and/or serious mental health needs.

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The Ministry accepts the BC Coroner's Service (BCCS) report and recommendation number 2 and will work with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and school districts to implement the recommendation in alignment with current Ministry policies and priorities.

Addressing the BCCS Report Recommendation:

Work Completed to Date:

- *The [Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth in Care: Cross-Ministry Guidelines](#) (Guidelines) were revised in 2017, to improve information sharing, strengthen practice and joint planning, and promote effective communication between the Ministry and MCFD.*
- In addition to the revision of the joint guidelines, the Ministry is also in the process of implementing the response to a recommendation from the Representative for Children and Youth: *"the Ministry of Education, school districts and MCFD work together to create positions dedicated to information-sharing, coordination and advocacy in support of education outcomes of children and youth in care."* These roles are targeted to be in place by the fall of 2018, enabling all organizations to better support the development of plans for children and youth in care (CYIC).

Work Underway:

There are several pieces of work underway to help address the BCCS recommendation. Much of this work is focused on improving the Ministry's understanding of CYIC to better inform supports and services provided within the education sector. The Ministry is leveraging the use of data, engaging with school districts to better understand existing practices that are showing to be supportive of CYIC, and confirming existing plans that are in place for CYIC to inform a response to the recommendation.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review the Report and for the recommendations outlined for the Ministry of Education.

Sincerely,



Rob Fleming
Minister