Inspection Template Guide for School Administrators 2024-25

Introductory Comments:

This document has been prepared to assist School Administrators in completing the External Evaluation (EEC), Monitoring Inspection (MI) and stand-alone Program Review (PR) templates. It provides both background information and detailed instructions.

Using this Guide
For greater ease of accessibility, turn on Document Navigation by checking the Navigation Pane box located under the VIEW menu option in WORD. The Table of Contents is active and allows a user to use the mouse pointer and Control + Click to jump to a desired Section/Page.

Required Documentation for the Inspection
All required documentation can be downloaded from the Ministry website. [Independent schools inspection documents - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)](). Schools will need to download, complete, and submit both the appropriate **Report Template** and the **Appendices,** along with any required supporting documents.

2024-25 Submission Deadlines

EEC and Monitoring Inspections: **Thursday September 19, 2024**
Stand-Alone Program Reviews: **Thursday September 19, 2024**
Group 3 School Inspections: **Thursday September 19, 2024**
Online Learning (POLS-I) Schools: **Thursday, Oct. 3, 2024**

- Schools receiving an **External Evaluation by Committee (or ECC)** – the full Inspection for certification or recertification - can expect this to be conducted in-person (widespread health-related issues and restrictions permitting) by a small team of Ministry inspectors. Schools will be required to complete and submit the **EEC template** and associated documentation, together with the completed **Appendices A-B-C** in advance of the visit. The Chairperson for the inspection will contact the School and may request additional documentation ahead of an inspection. Schools should be prepared to share electronic access to planning documentation for every subject/course taught at the school at least a week prior to the inspection. Schools are asked to verify the inspection team is able to access these documents the week before the inspection.

  Schools due for an 'in-between' **Monitoring Inspection (MI)** can expect to receive a half-day visit (virtually or in-person) and are also required to complete and submit the **Monitoring Inspection template** in advance of the inspection visit. Monitoring inspections will not typically focus in detail on curriculum and classroom visits or teacher interviews. *Accordingly**, schools are only required to fill out Appendices A and B** for Monitoring Inspections*.

- If the School is **not due for a regular EEC/MI in 2024-25, but is adding new grades**, then it will need to prepare a Stand-Alone **Program Review Report Template** and fill out the tabs for **Appendices A and B** and **Appendix C** (but <u>for the grades that have been added since the most recent inspection ONLY)</u>.

- The 2024-25 Inspection Templates have undergone a redesign which further streamlines the School's data collection, removes duplicate questions that crept into previous iterations, and organizes the document's structure into more logical groupings. All inspection related inquiries have been organized under three main Parts: <u>I - **Essential Priorities,**</u> <u>II - **Operational Priorities**</u>, and <u>III - **Continuous Improvement Priorities**</u>. These are followed by **School Declarations**, **Report Summary**, and **Summative Declaration**. Also note that **Appendices A, B, and C** have been reformatted into MS Excel spreadsheets to assist with data extraction and management. These organizational and structural changes are designed to enable further inspection efficiencies in the future.

- **Note for Provincial Online Schools – Independent (POLS-I**): A small number of POLS-I will participate in Cohort 2 of the Accountability and Quality Assurance (AQA) process. These schools must still complete Section III of the independent school inspection template. It is anticipated that the material prepared for the POLS-I AQA presentation will constitute a significant component of the discussion in Part III – (the Continuous Improvement section) of the inspection template. Schools are encouraged to find the intersect between the two processes and to share their story with both the AQA and independent school inspectors.

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School Inspection Information

PART I: Essential Priorities

1.01 School Information

Updating Information
- The School is required to update all its contact information on the Inspection Template as well as with the Ministry. The Ministry of Education has introduced the Education Data Exchange (EDX) and all independent schools should have onboarded in the spring of 2024. More information regarding updating specific school information is provided in Sections 1.02 and 1.03. Information on EDX can be found at Education Data Exchange (EDX) - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca).

Pre-school and Child Care
- This is asked to gain a basic understanding of sector involvement in preschool or childcare. The Independent Schools Team does not regulate preschool or childcare spaces.

Calendar
- Indicate the structure of the School's calendar.

Summer School
- Indicate if the School offers summer school programs. (Keep in mind that courses offered for credit in the summer are not funded by the Ministry but do require same curricular documentation and minimum instructional hours as per the Educational Standards Order.)

School Associations/Affiliations
- Check as many FISA Associations or other affiliations and/or organizations that are applicable to the School's support network.

Student Information System
- Provide information on which Student Information System the School uses.

Note: Currently, there are many SIS applications being used by independent schools; including: DRUMS, MySchool, ManageBAC, Blackbaud, Powerschool, CAMS, SDS, etc.

The Ministry sees value in having all independent schools using the MyEducationBC student information system. A consistent sector-wide use of Ministry's SIS will enable the most consistent reporting on the Independent School Sector and will benefit schools and associations in terms of additional analysis with which Ministry is able to support schools.

1.02 Recent School Changes

Indicate whether there have been changes to School Leadership, Facilities or to the School's Authority since the most recent Inspection (EEC or MI), if this was not previously communicated to the Ministry.

School Leadership (Principal)
The Ministry recognizes that independent schools around BC have leadership structures that are configured differently. It is important to note that Section 8 of the Independent School Act stipulates:

> **8** An authority that operates an independent school must designate a teacher to be the principal of the independent school.

The Ministry therefore requires the Principal contact named for each Independent School to hold TRB certification.

Group Classification
- Indicate if the School is pursuing a Group Classification change with this inspection.

New Grades
- Indicate whether the School has added any grades to its educational program since the previous inspection visit; this immediate notification in Section 1.02 is pertinent information for the Inspection Team. It will be expanded upon in Section 2.08 of the report and Appendix C.

  Please note that those schools undergoing an EEC (with or without new grades being added) are required to complete the entire Appendix C. Those schools that are undergoing a Monitoring Inspection and are adding a new grade, are only required to fill out the sections in Appendix C that apply to this school year's newly added grade(s).

Adult Grad Program
- Indicate if the School is intending to offer Adult Graduation Program in the 2024-25 school year. Please note that prior approval from the Inspector of Independent Schools is contingent on the School having offered Grade 12 and the School's previous inspection record and overall performance.

1.03 Contact Information: School Authority

- Accurately reflect the correct name of the School's Authority that is on record with the Ministry AND which currently operates the School. School District and Contact Information App (gov.bc.ca) *This is to ensure that the Ministry has up-to-date information and that the School Authority registered in Ministry records has not been changed.* If the School requires further information/assistance, please contact: educationdataexchange@gov.bc.ca

- Most often, the Ministry works with School Administrators; however, at times, the Ministry needs to interact with a School Authority (school closures, consultations etc.). Schools are asked to carefully consider the contact information provided for the Authority. In Groups 1, 2 and 3 Schools, the individual is typically the President/Chairperson of the Board of Directors or Society. In Group 4 schools, the Authority contact is typically the Owner of the School.

  - The name provided should not be the Principal
  - The name provided should not be an employee of the Board.

If Changing Authority Names
- **Note**: Schools are not able to change the name of the School Authority itself on EDX; however, Schools can update contact information. If the Authority itself has changed, Schools are required to contact: educ.independentschoolsoffice@gov.bc.ca

- Inform the Ministry first, then contact the Corporate Registry to make the change. Send the Ministry the new incorporation information so that it can be updated within Ministry data systems. *Example: "Generic School Society" wishes to change its name to "Generic Academy Society."*

If Transitioning between Two Authorities
- The current Authority needs to inform the Ministry in writing at educ.independentschoolsoffice@gov.bc.ca. The Ministry also requires written confirmation from the other authority that they wish to accept responsibility for the School. The Ministry will need incorporation documents for the new authority as well.
- The Ministry will then review the transitional provisions of the Schedule to see if this would entail a transfer or whether the Ministry would require a new application.

1.04 School Authority: Financial Information

- Indicate under which option the School's Authority has been established.
- Provide evidence of having filed appropriate financial information (details below).
- A Certificate of Good Standing is no longer required.

Charitable or Not-for-Profit Status (for Society-operated Schools)

- Under the *Societies Act*, the School is required to provide evidence of its **charitable or not-for-profit status** as per Section 4(1)(a) of the *Independent School Act* by filing with Canada Revenue Agency within six months of the most recent fiscal year-end.

- Please ensure copy of official filing of **Form 3010** is available during the inspection. *Please note this is not applicable if the School is not Society-operated (but instituted under the Business Corporation Act or an Order in Council or Private Act).*

Bonding Information (for Group 4 Schools Only)

- The School is required to include bonding and refund information in its publications and promotional materials.

- Group 4 Schools are required to retain parent-signed copies of the Fee Refund Policy for each student.

- **For the first year of operation of a new Group 4 school**, the School's refund policy needs to include provisions for fee and deposit refunds in the event the School closes or is required to close unexpectedly. This is particularly critical in the first year of operation because, despite their best efforts, not all school have a successful start. If the Inspector of Independent Schools deems it to be a "failed start" then the School must be prepared to close in an orderly fashion and provide full refunds to students. Please see the Independent School Fee Refund Guideline.

- Each Authority must, by July 31 each year, forward to the Ministry, an audited Fees and Bonding Statement (FBS) completed by an independent accountant.

- If the School has enrolled more than 20 international students by the September 30 (1701) student count, the School's Authority must contact the Ministry and adjust the required bond accordingly ($5,000 per student). Note:

  - The initial bond posting is for CAN$100,000 to cover potential enrolment of a maximum of 20 students.

  - Inspectors will verify the student enrolment count as of September 30 (1701 report). If this count exceeds 20 students, then the School's authority will be required to submit an additional bond of $5,000 per student (over the initially placed bond of $100,000 for 20 students).

- Schools should be aware that a new Group 4 Independent School Bonding Policy was released in August 2021. This stand-alone policy replaces the bonding-related information that was previously contained within the Classification of Independent Schools Policy. *Schools with questions on the bonding process should contact: EDUC.independentSchoolsOffice@gov.bc.ca*

1.05 Contact Information: Principal and Emergency Contact

- This section has been amended to accommodate multi-school campuses and multi-campuses, operating under the same school code.

- Provide contact information for Head of School/Principal and Emergency Contact information. It is important to note that Section 8 of the Independent School Act stipulates:

    > **8** An authority that operates an independent school must designate a teacher to be the principal of the independent school.

    The Ministry therefore requires the Principal contact named for each Independent School to hold TRB certification.

- Ensure the Principal contact information on EDX is current: School District and Contact Information App (gov.bc.ca). If the School requires further information/assistance with EDX, please contact educationdataexchange@gov.bc.ca.

1.06 School Roles and Responsibilities

1.06a School Leadership
- It is of critical importance that a school has a clear administrative leadership presence at all times – especially in school emergency situations. Typically, this means that a TRB-certified Principal/Head of School or a formally appointed designate is on site in the absence of Principal/Head of School. In situations where the School operates multiple campuses, each campus must have an individual who is TRB-certified and designated to be in the leadership position.

1.06b Child Abuse Reporting
- To be in compliance with the Child Abuse Reporting protocols, the School must have appointed two individuals with well-defined roles that are associated with the protocol.

    Please ensure that both the **Appointed School Official (ASO)** and an **Alternate Appointed School Official (AASO)** at the School have been officially identified and named in the protocol.

    Note: The ASO is the primary person assisting law enforcement and/or MCFD when an investigation is required. If the ASO is not available (or is implicated and under investigation), then the AASO fulfills this role.

1.06c Privacy Officer
- Please list name of the individual who fulfills the role of **Privacy Officer** at the School.

1.06d Safe School Coordinators (erase Strategy and Training)

- Indicate how the School meets the requirements for **Safe School Coordinators** (including requisite training). See Safe & Caring School Communities – Independent Schools - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)

- What was formerly known as VTRA training is now being referred to as Basic threat and risk assessment training in the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care course offerings.

- **Basic threat and risk assessment training requirements may now be met through erase's basic threat and risk assessment training or through VTRA training (through the Center for Trauma-Informed Practice).**

- Each School must demonstrate how it meets two requirements

    1. basic threat and risk assessment training
    2. digital threat assessment training

    While the Ministry recognizes other courses offered through erase are meaningful learning opportunities, no substitutions are permitted in meeting the above two requirements.

- Section 1.06d of the template is designed to accommodate several iterations of erase training as training was impacted during the global pandemic.

    o Between 2020 and 2022, hybrid training was offered provincially online. This training encapsulated both Basic VTRA and Digital Threat Assessment training and meets the requirements for both.

    o Section 1.06d provides 2 options for each of the two requirements.

        ▪ Individuals who completed training between 2020 and 2024 should complete the Option 1 sections.

        ▪ Individuals who completed training post September 2023, should complete Option 2 sections.

- The Ministry does not have access to training dates and records. Individuals will need to contact Safer Schools Together (SST) if information is required.

1.07 Student Enrolment

- Schools are requested to provide enrolment details in the template to assist inspection teams with planning. Schools will also be requested to provide Inspectors with a copy of the 1701 that was submitted to the Ministry in the fall of 2024.
- Program Review – Please report enrolment (and special education designations) for new grade only and an overall head count for the entire school.

Note: The fall 1701 Student Data Information (generated by schools' September submissions) requires the Ministry's Data Management Division's processing. Reports are not available to inspectors until later in the fall.

ELL Students

- The BC Ministry of Education and Child Care defines English Language Learner (ELL) students as those whose primary language, or languages, in the home is/are other than English, and who may therefore require additional services in order to develop their individual potential within British Columbia's school system. English Language Learning (ELL) Teaching Resources - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)

- Students who receive ELL Support and meet the criteria described here Form 1701: Student Data Collection Form Completion Instructions for Independent Schools (gov.bc.ca)) although not eligible for additional funding in independent schools as funding is included in the basic allocation, should be reported on the 1701.

- The Ministry recognizes that independent schools may have other ELL learners enrolled at their schools who may not meet the criteria described above. Schools will be asked to discuss the number of additional ELL students so the Chairperson can provide additional notes in the summary box of this section. Schools will be asked to further elaborate on support services in Section 2.07d.

- Please note (Section 2.06b), as per the International Student English Language Learner (ELL) or French Language Learner (FLL) Assessment Policy for Independent Schools International Student English Language Learner or French Language Learner Assessment Policy for Independent Schools - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca), Group 4 schools are required to select and implement appropriate English Language (if primary language of instruction at the School is English) or French Language (if primary language of instruction at the School is French) Proficiency assessments that will enable the School to support ELL or FLL students upon enrolment. International ELL and FLL students may require additional services to develop their individual potential within BC's school system and meet the learning outcomes in the provincial curriculum. Schools should ensure the policies contain all required elements.

International Students

- For the purpose of the **International Student Graduation Credit Policy 2019**, an international student is a student from outside Canada who does not meet the residency requirements of Section 82 of the **School Act** in that the student:

    is in British Columbia for the purpose of attending an educational program and who is not eligible for provincial funding

All International students' records should contain valid visas/study permits. Schools are encouraged to initiate the International Student Study Permit renewal process three months in advance of the expiry date to ensure that a new study permit is in place by the time the current one expires. If permits are not on file at the time of inspection, the School (as part of the inspection follow up requirements) will need to confirm receipt of these permits.

- The Ministry recognizes that at times independent schools host international visitors who are not enrolled at the school Schools are required to count International students enrolled in the School who are taking classes and for whom the School provides student assessment and regular progress reporting.   This is not intended to include students who are visiting for a few weeks only. Guideline: Generally if a student has been added to the School's SIS and is receiving reporting, the student should be included in counts.

Students with Diverse Abilities or Disabilities (formerly Students with Special Needs)
- Schools are encouraged to note the Ministry is in the process of transitioning to updated language/terminology:
    - Inclusive Education – formerly Special Education
    - Students with diverse abilities or disabilities – formerly Students with special needs

Ministry Designations
- Using the colour coding in the template, schools are requested to list the total count for all students with Ministry Designations (Both funded– **Categories A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H** and non-funded **K, P, Q, R**)
- Schools are then asked to provide a separate count for the total number of students receiving supplementary funding (Categories **A, B, C, D, F, G, H**)

1.08 Staffing
Schools should complete Section 1.08 and then complete Appendix A and B in the Excel spreadsheet.

- Teacher certification is a requirement in order for Group 1, 2 and 4 schools to remain in good standing and eligible for continued group classification. All teachers (including Principal/Head of School) at Group 1, 2 and 4 schools must hold a valid British Columbia teaching credential issued by the British Columbia Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB).
- In extenuating circumstances, and under specific conditions having been met, the TRB may issue a one-year Letter of Permission that extends permission for a non-certified individual to teach in specific areas or grades.

According to BC's School Act, a teacher's responsibilities include designing, supervising and assessing educational programs and instructing, assessing and evaluating individual students and groups of students

Consequently, Teachers are defined as those individuals responsible for instructional planning and delivery, student progress evaluation and assessment, progress reporting, and communicating with parents. These

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> *roles cannot be assigned to anyone who is not a BC certified teacher or who does not hold a valid Letter of Permission.*

It is not acceptable to have a non-certified individual fulfilling any of the above-described roles. Having an additional teacher overserving in the classroom does not satisfactorily resolve certification issues.

- Prior to the Inspection, schools will need to login to the Employer page on the TRB website to input staff names in order to generate a **TRB Teacher Certificate Verification File**. The report may take a day or two to generate and will then need to be retrieved by logging into the website again. The Inspector will require this report.

Inspectors will review the status of each teacher at the School and Administrators should note the two requirements in Section 1.08a

      a. Valid Teacher certification (COQ, SR, SSR, SYR) or a TRB permission to teach (LOP) is in place and individuals teaching are within their appropriate teaching domain (SR, SSR, SYR) or teaching within areas of permission (LOP), and

      b. Current Criminal Record Check is in place.

1.08a Certification Summary

This section will

- first address teachers who hold certification/a Letter of Permission. Please note that there is **separate section in Section 1.08a for teachers who hold multiple certificates**.
- next address teachers with applications in process for certification and speak to CRC requirements for these individuals.

At the end of each of the above, a box will address the completion of Appendix A for each of the above circumstances.

1. **Teachers who hold current certification/a Letter of Permission**

Reporting Types of Certificates – (Teachers who hold current TRB Certification or Letter of Permission)

Section A: Teachers holding a single certificate – issued and current

- Certificate of Qualification (COQ)
- First Nations Language Teaching Certificate
- Independent School Certificates

The TRB may issue **Subject-Restricted (SR), School Restricted (SSR) or System Restricted SYR certificates.** These certificates would be issued to teachers who most often have had no actual TRB approved pedagogical (teacher) training and therefore do not meet requirements for a **Certificate of Qualification (COQ) but** are considered to be category or subject area experts, perhaps due to work in trades or life experience. In addition to having category or subject restrictions, these certificates may have grade, school or system restrictions associated with their permissions.

o   Independent Professional only
o   Independent Subject-Restricted (SR) only
o   Independent System Restricted (SYR)
o   Independent School Subject Restricted (SSR) only

Schools need to ensure that teachers are assigned to provide instruction only within the prescribed permissions:

- **(SR)** - teach ONLY within their designated categories. (SR certificates are not issued to Elementary generalist teachers but certain grades may be specified). Administrators are encouraged to reference the **Certification Category Chart** on the TRB website. Information pertaining to SR Certification can be found here: Become a Teacher (gov.bc.ca)
  Example: A teacher with School Restricted (SR) Humanities certification is not permitted to teach Science nor Math - nor serve as a generalist Elementary Teacher.
- **(SSR)** - teach ONLY within approved subjects/grades at the School for which certification has been authorized.
- **(SYR)** - teach ONLY at a Montessori or Waldorf school and within any specified grade (Column K) restrictions.

Section B: Letters of Permission

- A School must demonstrate that they have pursued BC certified teachers for a position at a school prior to applying for a Letter of Permission (LOP). It is generally expected that any requests for Letters of Permission would be submitted after Teacher Education Programs (TEP) in BC have graduated their students, as schools may find suitable TEP graduates to fill vacancies.

- The Director of Certification at the TRB can issue a Letter of Permission (LOP). This is a special permit issued to a person who is not a certificate holder. The LOP is for one person, for one specific teaching position in one particular school, and is valid for a maximum of one school year.

- Schools need to be committed to providing teachers with LOPs or restricted certificates with Professional Development in such matters as: BC Curriculum, Educational Standards Order, Instruction, Assessment/Reporting and Classroom Management. During the inspection visit, schools should be prepared to discuss how they support SR, SSR, and SYR certified teachers and/or individuals teaching with Letters of Permission.

Reducing LOPs

- Schools employing individuals who are teaching on an LOP, are required to discuss, and provide a plan to reduce reliance on staff with LOPs in the current year and how they intend to continue LOP reduction in the following year. (*Review strategies in relation to competitive salary and benefit levels, incentives, and marketing/advertising.*)

Section C: Teachers holding Multiple Certifications

Use this section to record dual certificate holders or to record teachers who are independent certified and layering a Letter of Permission on top to extend teaching permissions.

Completing Appendix A if VALID TRB CERTIFICATION OR PERMISSION (LOP) IS IN PLACE

For individuals who hold valid certification, after entering the name of the teacher, their FTE and listing their teaching assignments (including grade(s) and subject(s); schools should complete the black columns (columns G-J).

- If the teacher holds **a valid COQ** – selecting YES from the pull-down menu in column G is all that is required.
- If the teacher holds **Independent Certification**, the type of certification will need to be selected in column H and restrictions will need to be noted in the Column J.
  - Subject Restricted (SR)
  - Subject and School Restricted (SSR)
  - System Restricted (SYR)
  - Independent Professional
  - Independent Multiple Certificates (if this is the case, please scroll to the notes column to specify which certificates are held)
  - First Nation Language Teacher Certificate

If the teacher holds a **Letter of Permission (LOP)** – select YES from the pull-down menu in column I.

Permissions will need to be noted in Column J for any Subject/School Restricted Certificates and LOPs.

Note that both a certification and LOP can be entered for one individual when applicable.

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2. **Teachers Not Currently Certified**

Section C: Teachers with No Certification or LOP in place

- Every Group 1, 2 or 4 school is responsible to ensure all teachers are BC certified in order to retain their classification. If a non-certified teacher is employed by the School, it is expected that pursuing certification will be of highest priority. This process can be lengthy in nature and should be undertaken prior to/immediately upon hiring to ensure compliance. *It is incumbent upon the school's administration to ensure the applicant is regularly logging onto the TRB applicant portal (Check Applicant Status area) to monitor updates and is frequently apprising their School's Administration of the status of the application.*
  - **Reminder**: Once the TRB has completed its review and indicates the applicant is eligible for certification, then the annual practice fee must still be paid. Applicants who have become eligible for certification but fail to make this payment will NOT receive certification and do NOT meet certification requirements until the TRB has ISSUED the certificate.

- At the time of inspection, the School and applicant must demonstrate that they have done everything possible to meet requirements in the application process. If an application for certification has not been initiated or is very incomplete after October 10th, the School will likely be required to re-assign teaching responsibilities until evidence of a complete application is in place.

  - If any documents have not been submitted by the applicant, the TRB will NOT be able to proceed with the application review process, and the inspection chair (in consultation with the Inspector or Deputy Inspector) may require the School to assign a substitute teacher. *Teachers are defined as those individuals responsible for instructional planning and delivery, student progress evaluation and assessment, progress reporting, and communicating with parents. These roles cannot be assigned to anyone who is not a BC certified teacher/who does not hold a valid Letter of Permission.*

- In the week prior to an inspection, the School is expected to provide evidence that each non-certified teacher has a complete application submitted to TRB. Prior to the inspection, the applicant is asked to login to the TRB applicant area (Check Applicant Status area) to locate the listing called **Documents Received**. This page provides a list of each component of a TRB application and provides an update from the TRB on the status each of these elements. Please note that the status of a document can change. It may have been submitted, rendering the application initially complete; but when under review, the TRB evaluator may have deemed it insufficient and requires a further submission. **Therefore, the Documents Received screen is the only screen that will be accepted as evidence for inspection purposes.**

- As teacher certification is a requirement for Group 1, 2 and 4 classifications, any school with uncertified teachers will be required to provide an update/report to the Inspector of Independent Schools on a regular basis, until able to provide confirmation of certification. The Inspector will require confirmation that the School's Administration is <u>continuously</u> working with uncertified teachers who still need TRB certification to ensure all required documentation has been submitted to the TRB for evaluation.

- In order to clear the inspection requirement, schools are required to **confirm receipt of certification**. This should be done via email to educ.independentschoolsoffice@gov.bc.ca

Criminal Record Checks for Certifications IN-PROCESS
- In order to legally employ a teacher, the employer (School Authority) must have proof of a cleared Criminal Record Check through the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG). The inspection will verify that a CRC is in process or complete for every employee who has contact with students at the school.
- It is the School's responsibility to ensure that all required documentation regarding CRC clearance for all certificate applicants has been submitted to TRB. The School must provide a status update (screenshot) for applications in progress and copies of CRC applications/receipts that are pending.
- If in process, the School will be asked to confirm receipt of clearance. This requirement can be met in one of two ways:

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1. If a teacher has applied to the TRB and submitted the required Consent for a CRC form (requirement 28A), the status update on the applicant webpage will confirm when documentation submitted has been **received** by the TRB. The TRB will then process it. The status update should indicate the document has been **received and is pending**.

   o If the applicant has **submitted the Consent for a CRC form** and this can be confirmed during the inspection (via TRB screenshot), the Ministry will consider this to be a CRC in progress and no additional (separate) CRC is required. A requirement will be generated for the School to confirm receipt of certification of these individuals. Once certification has been granted, the CRC requirement will also be met. (Until the School provides this confirmation, the School will be deemed to be in non-compliance with Ministry CRC requirements.)

   o On occasion, the CRC clearance form is submitted to TRB and the clearance comes back from PSSG but other outstanding items prevent/delay teacher certification being granted at that time. Once PSSG has cleared the CRC and returned it to TRB, the status of the CRC Clearance form will indicate that the CRC has been **received and has cleared (is complete)**. In this case, though the individual remains uncertified, the CRC requirement will have been fully met.

2. Employers may apply for a separate CRC with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. This is generally unnecessary unless there is a delay in individuals being able to submit all required elements of an application to TRB. The School may wish to consider this option for teachers from other countries as TRB file evaluation takes longer for these applicants.

Note: If there are employees without CRCs at the School, the School needs to immediately apply online with the PSSG (through TRB or separately) and provide payment. In the event that an employee has been denied a CRC clearance letter, the School is required to confirm to the External Evaluation Team that the individual is no longer working with or alongside students during their employment at the School.

Individuals who do not have clearances or complete applications in place should NOT be permitted to have contact with students.

Completing Appendix A if Certification is IN-PROCESS at the TRB

Schools should fill in Columns K-M and have screenshots showing the progress of the application on hand at time for this inspection.

- **Column K**: Schools should indicate the type of certification/permissions being pursued
  - COQ
  - Independent Certificate
  - Letter of Permission
  - First Nation Language Certificate
  - Not yet submitted
- **Column L**: Schools should record the L number or 5-digit registration number assigned by the TRB.
- **Column M:** Schools should provide an update on the status of a Criminal Record Check for all teaching staff with pending applications.
  - Complete CRC (PSSG) on file
  - TRB shows clearance of CRC
  - TRB shows consent for CRC has been submitted and is pending.
  - Evidence of submission of CRC (separate from TRB)
  - Initiated – CRC submitted during the inspection via PSSG

1.08b CRC Verification for Non-Teaching Support Staff (Appendix B)

- Schools are required to ensure that a Criminal Record Check (CRC) has been completed for all current (non-teaching) staff/employees who work with, or alongside children or students during their employment. CRCs must be current (no more than five years old), on file at the School, and completed through the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) as required by the *Criminal Record Review Act* (CRRA).
- Non-teaching staff members with current TRB certification may also be listed in Appendix A as having current TRB certification confirms the requirement to have a current CRC in place, has been met.
- In circumstances where independent schools hire third party contractors for custodial or other ongoing services, if an employee of a contracted company may have unsupervised access, or potential (incidental) unsupervised access to a vulnerable person in the school, the school must have CRC clearances that have been processed through the Criminal Record Review Program (CRRP) at PSSG.
  - The Ministry has been advised that independent schools may complete the Criminal Record Check (CRC) process through the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.
  - For the CRC process, independent contractors are deemed to be employees because they are remunerated through the school. Visit the Criminal Record Check BC web page for more information.

- If a CRC application has been submitted and is pending clearance at the time of inspection, a requirement for the School to confirm receipt of the CRC clearance will be generated. The School is required to confirm receipt of the cleared CRC in writing to the Ministry in order to clear the inspection requirement.

Completing Appendix B for Non-Teaching Support Staff

- Schools are required to list all employees/non-teaching staff members at the School who have contact with students.

- Please note that the School must provide a copies of CRC applications/receipts for those that are pending.

Note re: Criminal Record Checks for School Volunteers
- The School may develop its own policy for CRC requirements for volunteers, but if choosing to request CRCs for volunteers then the School also needs to submit these CRC applications to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) and **not** the RCMP.

Part II: Operational Priorities

2.01 Compliance Requirements or Follow-Up items from most Recent Ministry Inspection

- The Chairperson will indicate the number of Statutory and Policy items that required follow-up in the School's most recent inspection. Schools should have this most recent inspection report on hand or the initial letter that followed the School's inspection and which lists all follow-up requirements (not the final "all clear" letter).
- Schools should have all supporting documentation pertaining to these requirements available for review during the inspection.
- Any item that may not have been satisfactorily addressed will again be listed in the appropriate section of this year's inspection report as a recurring follow-up matter for completion.

2.02 School Facilities

Compliance Letters

- Schools must submit a COPY of a **Municipal Compliance/Comfort letter** dated after **January 1, 2019,** from the local government/regional district to this Inspection Report confirming there are no compliance-related concerns regarding the School's facility and property.

  For First Nations on-reserve schools, a similarly current (after **January 1, 2019** equivalent statement from the Department of Indigenous Services Canada (DISC) or architect approval is acceptable. Band-operated schools will need to confirm compliance with **Asset Condition Reporting System (ACRS)** within the past three years.

Occupancy Permit

- If the School has constructed a new building or completed a substantial building change/addition since last Ministry inspection which required a building permit, then a recent copy of an **Occupancy Permit** or equivalent is required.

2.03 Maintenance and Safety

Fire Safety Equipment

- Safety equipment (extinguishers, alarms, etc.) must be checked annually by a third party. Schools should ensure recent inspection dates on safety equipment is up to date for the current school year.

Safety Logs

- The School should be logging all safety-related inspections and checks. Schools should have such a log available at the time of inspection.

Fire Department

- Local Fire Departments typically complete Fire Inspections that extend beyond ensuring equipment is functioning. Inspectors will verify that Fire Department inspections are up to date at the School, and that any required mitigations/re-inspections have been addressed.

  The Ministry recognizes that Fire Services in some areas are limited, or Fire Services are provided by volunteers, who do not perform such inspections. If this is the case, please make note in the Inspection report.

Lead Content in Water

- Schools must ensure **lead (Pb) content in drinking water** is tested once every three years and documentation is available for review during inspection. If mitigation was required, schools should identify actions taken, and make subsequent retesting results available during inspection. Please note that Health Canada has updated the requirements to reduce the maximum acceptable concentration of lead (Pb) to 0.005 mg/L.

2.04 Provincial Health Requirements

- During pandemic conditions or other widespread health-related issues and restrictions, Independent Schools are required to comply with Provincial Health requirements.

  - Schools are required to have developed a Communicable Disease Prevention Plan. The following link describes requirements as updated in September 2023:

    [292752 Attach 1_DRAFT Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines in K-12 Settings (gov.bc.ca)](gov.bc.ca)

2.05 Boarding School Programs

- Schools have a duty of care obligation to parents/guardians that includes boarding facilities. There are currently 13 Independent Schools that offer on-site student boarding facilities. Schools must provide assurance that they will maintain the safety and care of those students choosing to stay in residence. Student safety is always of paramount concern to the Ministry. Students who feel safe, protected, and well-cared for typically have better educational outcomes.
- New Boarding Guidelines were implemented in January of 2023. Schools are advised to review these guidelines.
- Boarding Schools must submit an annual report by July 15, 2024. Compliance with this requirement will be verified during the inspection.
- All personnel affiliated with the School's Boarding Program must have CRC clearances (through PSSG) in place.

2.06 Written Policies/Procedures
2.06a Statutory Requirements

*Most requirements in this section are rooted in legislation and will be listed as **Statutory Requirements,** if follow-up is required.*

- The School must ensure relevant Policies are communicated and accessible to parents, students, and staff. These policies could be included in handbooks, posted on the School's website or included in other parent communication.

Child Abuse Reporting Protocols
- The School's policy should align with [The B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect: For Service Providers (gov.bc.ca)](gov.bc.ca)
- If individual school staff have reason to believe that a child or youth needs protection under section 13 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act, the matter must be promptly reported to a child welfare worker. Phone 1 800 663-9122 at any time of the day or night. **It is everyone's duty to report actual or suspected child abuse.**
- If the child or youth is in immediate danger, school staff must call 9-1-1 or local police.
- If children and youth wish to talk with someone, schools need to make them aware of the Helpline for Children at 310-1244. The call does not require an area code. Calls can be made at any time of the day or night and can be made anonymously.

- Once an investigation is launched by child protection services or police, school personnel are required to assist the investigation process. Please ensure that policy refers to the **Appointed School Official (ASO) and the <u>Alternate Appointed School Official</u> (AASO)** that the School has identified in Section 1.06b of this Inspection Template.

Student Records Procedures

- Schools are required to develop and implement a Student Record Policy that aligns with the recently updated [Student Records Best Practice (gov.bc.ca)](). *Note: In July 2021, an updated version of the Best Practices Guidelines was posted. The update pertains to the legal requirement of disclosing student record information as per the Student Records Order.*
- Administrative staff should be fully aware of and using (operationalizing) the School's Student Record Policy.
- Schools should ensure Family/Guardian contact information is on file and up to date.
- The School's **Student Records Policy** must include provision to provide the required information to support the delivery of Health Services, Social Services, or other support services **without the need for prior parental consent** – see [Student Records Order]() section 6(1).
- If the School grants external credits (Equivalency or Challenge), individual student records must contain evidence of the school's process and evaluation.

Permanent Student Record (PSR)

- The School has an updated **PSR** on file for each student registered at the School.

- The School must address safe **PSR** retention (physical or digital) and 55-year PSR retention to ensure these records are preserved in cases of fire, theft, or disaster.

Electronic Student Records

As many schools move towards digitizing records, it is recognized that student records may be stored:

(a) entirely electronically
(b) entirely in hard copy
(c) in hybrid form – with some records stored electronically and others (perhaps historic documentation) still in hard copy

- For students currently enrolled at the School – there is no requirement for a school to retain printed report cards or 1704s. They may be stored electronically. However for the purpose of an inspection, all student files must be accessible during the inspection (this could involve providing access to an Inspector, printing all 1704s/report cards **if requested** or printing a specific sample of documents as requested by the Inspection Chair.) The Chair will provide additional information regarding how student files will be reviewed during the inspection prior to the inspection.
- When a student leaves the BC school system, the School is required to print (hard copy or to pdf) the 1704 and the last two years of student progress reports and store these records for 55 years.
- There are several key considerations for schools moving to electronic records that should be contemplated and reflected in school policy, including
  o security of student records - protected access to confidential documentation
  o server location

- ability to replicate student records in case of fire or disaster at the School
- record-keeping procedures for students leaving the BC school system
- long-term organizational system for the storage of permanent student records. These records must be accessed upon demand for 55 years

Registered Homeschooled Students

- A **PSR** must be on file for any registered Homeschooled students. The **Inclusions** section for each of these students should include the notation 'homeschooled.'

IEPs

- Schools must ensure student records contain up-to-date **IEPs** for the current school year (when applicable). As stated in completion instructions for [Form 1701: Student Data Collection](#), all students with Special Needs Designations must have a current IEP in place dated after September 30th of the previous school year (September 30, 2023). The IEP should specify day, month, and year that it was created.

Medical and Legal Alerts

- Schools are required to demonstrate Medical/Legal Alert indicators have been flagged on either 1704 physical cards or on MyEd or the School's Student Information System.

Inclusions

- Schools are required to ensure that **IEPs**, **Court Orders,** and relevant **Medical** Documentations are listed in the Inclusion section on the 1704 and that these documents are stored as safely and securely as the **PSR** itself. See the following guiding documents:
  - [Authority: School Act, sections 79 (3) and 168 (2) (gov.bc.ca)](#)
  - [Permanent Student Record Instructions - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)](#)
  - [Best Practices Guidelines for Independent Schools](#)

Declaration of Residency Form

- For Provincially funded students, the School is required to show evidence that they have verified that parents are lawfully admitted to Canada and ordinarily residents of BC. The School must be able to demonstrate and confirm how it has verified parent residency. A suggested form (not required) is available in [Student Records Best Practice (gov.bc.ca)](#).

Report Cards

- Schools are required to retain a minimum of two years of student progress reports in student files.

Protection of Privacy

- The School is required to have a written **PIPA (*Personal Information Protection Act*) Privacy Policy** in place for the collection, use and disclosure of student, teacher and parent information collected by the School.

- Under PIPA legislation, the School is required to appoint a **Privacy and Information-Sharing Officer**. This person will have been listed in Section 1.06c of the Inspection Template. In addition to requiring

someone be appointed to the role, The School's PIPA policy for PIPA should also <u>describe</u> the functions associated with the role.

Anaphylaxis Policy

- All schools should be familiar with the Ministry's document "[British Columbia Anaphylactic and Child Safety Framework.](#)"

- Schools are required to manage anaphylaxis and are required to develop policy to ensure storage and accessibility of epinephrine autoinjectors (EpiPen or other epinephrin auto-injectors), protocols for fieldtrips, emergency drills, student responsibilities, and staff training.

- In the event a student enrolls with anaphylaxis, the School will be required to operationalize the required Anaphylaxis Policy and protocols.

Harassment and Bullying Prevention (H&BP) Protocols

- Schools must have a **Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy** as required by the Harassment and Bullying Prevention Order [Authority: Independent School Act, section 4 (1) (c) (gov.bc.ca)](#) (and it must be <u>specifically named</u> as such).

Policy Requirements

- The policy must include the following 5 elements of the Inspector's Order:
  1. A statement of purpose that provides a rationale for the policy, with a focus on safe, caring, and orderly school environments.
  2. A reference to the protection of students' physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness, and protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
  3. One or more statements about what is (i) acceptable behaviour, and (ii) unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, threatening or violent behaviours while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school environment.
  4. One or more statements about the consequences of unacceptable behaviour, which must take account of the student's age, maturity, and special needs, if any.
  5. A commitment that the authority will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation by a person against a student who has made a complaint of a breach of the policy.

Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities (Inclusive Education)
The Ministry is currently updating language around Inclusive Education. At the time of publication, some of the links and documents did not yet reflect these updates, which are expected to be in place for the fall of 2024. The 2024-25 inspection documentation reflect this transitional period.

- When enrolling students with diverse abilities/disabilities, clear policy and practice transparency is important for all involved. Schools are required to develop and implement a school-specific Inclusive Education Policy describing the additional services a school can or cannot provide and any costs or cost-sharing that are associated with such services.

- Schools need to ensure their Inclusive Education programs and services are in alignment with the Ministry's [Special Education Services, Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.](#)

IEP Requirements

- As stated in completion instructions for [Form 1701: Student Data Collection](#), all students with Ministry designations must have a current IEP in place dated after September 30th of the previous school year (September 30, 2022). The IEP should specify day, month, and year that it was created.

- Schools need to ensure that IEPs are reviewed at least once a year; however, more frequent reviews are recommended.

School Completion/ Evergreen Policy

- Schools offering the BC Grad Program are required to develop and implement a **School Completion/Evergreen Certificate** policy to support students on modified programs.

  o The Evergreen Certificate is ONLY to be used as a pathway toward graduation for students with disabilities/diverse abilities who are unable to meet the Dogwood requirements. This is typically the case for students on modified programs as most graduate with a School Completion Certificate.
  o This is NOT intended to be used by ELL students.
  o School policy should include a description or procedures for determining when and how a student would move from the Dogwood to a School Completion pathway.

Inclusive Education Parent Funding Form

- Schools are required to ensure parents of students with Ministry designations have signed the [Special Education Funding: Parent/Guardian Confirmation Form](#).

2.06b Policy Requirements

The majority of the requirements in this section are matters that will be listed as Policy Requirements *if follow-up is required.*

Emergency Preparedness

- All schools are required to develop a **School Emergency Response Plan,** so they are prepared to deal with school-wide emergencies. Preparation should extend beyond fire, earthquake and lockdown drills to include other emergencies that may occur in the School's setting. *(Please note that the absence of such a plan is a serious matter and will be required to be dealt with immediately as a* **Statutory** *follow-up requirement.)* The [BC Emergency Management Guide](#) is an excellent resource for schools.

- Ensure that emergency drills and protocols for drill practices align with the [BC Emergency Management Guide](#) and reflect its recommended **minimum emergency drill frequencies** *(Fire drills 6/year, Earthquake drills 3/year, and Lock-down drills 2/year)* and that **the School maintains a log of all drills** in the school year.

- o If the School experiences new student enrolments partway through the school year (as is often the case with semester-based enrolments), it is good practice to schedule additional emergency drills at the beginning of each semester to ensure newly enrolled students are familiarized with drill procedures.
- o Foreign students may not have awareness of BC's emergency preparedness related to seismic events. Schools should pay be particularly aware of ELL students to make sure they understand all procedures.

Note: It is good practice to ensure that epinephrin autoinjectors (i.e., EpiPens) are taken along outside during emergency drills. (Making this a routine practice will be good preparation in the case of a real emergency.)

Student Supervision (before, during, after school)
- Schools are responsible for a child's/student's safety while under their care, so Schools are required to develop/update and implement policies that ensure adequate supervision of students **before, during, and after school**. Both policy and staff assigned schedule should be available at time of inspection.

Student Discipline
- Schools are required to have a clear **Student Discipline** policy. Best practice is to have a policy that includes measured, consistent, and gradually escalating consequences.

Anti-smoking (includes prohibition of vapour products)
- Schools are required to develop a policy in alignment with the Tobacco And Vapour Products Control Act which addresses safety regulations and prohibition of both tobacco **and vapour products** in schools and near entry/exit points.

Field Trip (Student Safety)
- Schools need to ensure policies and protocols are implemented to provide for the needs of students with medical or legal alerts (while at school or on school-sponsored trips). Provisions for anaphylaxis and epinephrin autoinjectors management for out-of-school events should be included.

- Schools need to develop communication protocols for school/parent/guardian communications in case of emergencies on local, national, or international school trips. Preparation should include:
  - o Collecting and organizing all relevant student contact information for such emergency communications.
  - o Supervisor/Chaperone access to this information in a manner that considers confidentiality
  - o Developing a communication protocol for notification of parents, managing media etc. (See also the Safe And Caring School Communities Policy - Section 3: *Student Safety Communication Protocol*.)
  - o Pro-actively informing the Ministry if a school trip emergency develops.

Transportation
- Schools need to ensure their Transportation Safety Policy includes **vehicle evacuation drills**. (These drills should be conducted at the beginning of each term/semester and as needed to ensure students are familiar with the process of vehicle evacuations).

- If the School uses the services of third-party bus transportation companies, the School needs to ensure these companies have an evacuation process in place and provide a plan to review vehicle evacuation procedures with students prior to use of service.

Appeals

- Schools are required to develop and publish to their audience (parents and students) a grievance appeal process that reflects the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice as described in the resource titled [Procedural Fairness: Best Practices for Independent Schools,](#) This Appeal Policy is intended for parents/students to grieve/appeal **administrative decisions made in relation to all of the School's discipline and operational decisions related to the entire program** (including all procedures and protocols relating to the operation of a Boarding Program).

Helpful Considerations

- A procedurally fair approach ensures that grievances are discussed at the point of origin and only escalate to a higher level when there is no satisfactory resolution. The Ministry expects schools to honour their appeal policy/protocol process throughout the process.

  For instance, a typical appeal for a classroom behavioral issue and its consequences will gradually escalate (when no conflict resolution is achieved) from the classroom teacher through the administrative leadership up to the principal (Head of School). Without satisfactory resolution, a further appeal may go to the Board or Authority level. In some instances, an Authority may choose to constitute an ad hoc Appeal Committee to review the matter.

  At any level of appeal, the School needs to ensure that principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are upheld and that:

  o   no one should be made to judge their own decisions.
  o   appellants always have a right to a fair hearing in the matter.

- Recognizing that independent schools often serve parent communities with specific cultures and values, the Ministry of Education and Child Care encourages BC's independent schools to develop or include dispute or grievance resolution processes that maintain procedural fairness and principles of natural justice, and which reflect and honour the values of their member communities.

- If The School is a member of an Association, the policy may wish to include a reference to their association's ombudsperson in the School's appeal process as an option for final review of process.

Principal/Head of School/ Teacher Evaluation Protocols

- Schools are required to develop and implement a cyclical evaluation policy and evaluation instruments specific to Principal (Head of School) and Teacher evaluations.

- Suggested practices include developing a multi-faceted collaborative evaluation process that includes teacher input and ownership in pursuing professional growth.

- Authorities are advised that performance evaluations for Principal (Head of School) are best conducted by educators with leadership experience.

- Operationalized: Schools should ensure the School's evaluation cycle is followed and records are maintained.

International Student (if applicable)

- Schools enrolling International students are required to review their Homestay Policy and Homestay application process (based on the [K–12 International Student 2024 - English (gov.bc.ca)](#) and require homestay agents to comply with the School's Homestay policy.

- Schools enrolling International students are required to apply the [International Student Graduation Credit Policy](#) (ISGCP). Schools are encouraged to pay particular attention to the definition of an 'International Student' in this policy.

  o The Policy applies to [International Students](#) studying in British Columbia who wish to earn a British Columbia Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma) and who have not had their educational program instructed in one of Canada's two official languages for at least two years prior to arriving in British Columbia. The International Student Graduation Credit Policy is not applicable to those students whose educational program was instructed in English or French for the two years prior to their arrival in British Columbia.

English Language or French Language Learner Assessment Policy (for Group 4 Schools ONLY)
International ELL and FLL students may require additional services to develop their individual potential within BC's school system and meet the learning outcomes in the provincial curriculum.

  o ***International Student English Language Learners (ELL)*** *are those International students whose primary language is other than English and who are enrolled in independent schools with English as the primary language of instruction*.

  o ***International Student French Language Learners (FLL)*** *are those International students whose primary language is other than French and who are enrolled in independent schools with French as the primary language of instruction.*

- Group 4 schools that enroll International Students are required to have an **International Student ELL or FLL Assessment Policy** to ensure that international students are appropriately assessed to support their learning.

- As per the [International Student English Language Learner (ELL) or French Language Learner (FLL) Assessment Policy for Independent Schools Policy](#), Group 4 schools are required to **select and implement appropriate English Language (if primary language of instruction at the School is English) or French Language (if primary language of instruction at the School is French) Proficiency assessments** that will enable the schools to support ELL or FLL students upon enrolment.

  o Schools enrolling international students into **Elementary or Middle school grades** may exclusively

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use school-developed ELL or FLL assessments.

- ○ Schools enrolling international students into the **Graduation program (grades 10-12)** are required to use a reputable, standardized, internationally recognized ELL or FLL Assessment

ELL Assessment Policy Requirements

- Schools should refer to English Language Learning (ELL) Standards when developing the School's ELL Assessment Policy.

  In addition to school-developed procedures, the School's **ELL or FLL Assessment Policy should include** the following elements:

  - o An initial assessment that will be completed as part of the student's application process for entry into a Group 4 school or within the first four weeks of the student's enrolment at the School. This must be conducted in order to inform what level or types of language learning supports the student should receive.

  - o Ongoing school-based Assessment, consistent with the English Language Learning (ELL) Standards, will be undertaken to analyze language proficiency development based on the Province's summative assessment reporting requirements

  - o Supports for ELL or FLL International Students, and

  - o Maintenance of ongoing records in relation to summative language proficiency assessments.

Boarding

- Independent schools with boarding are required to have a written policy, and associated procedures, which contribute to strong educational, social, mental, safety, and overall health outcomes for boarding students. [Independent Schools Offering Boarding Policy - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)](#)

Challenge and Equivalency

- Schools are required to articulate processes and procedures for evaluating external credits in a school-specific policy that adheres to Ministry requirements. Schools should have the policy and supporting documentation for any credit granted to students through Challenge and Equivalency available at time of inspection. [Earning Credit through Equivalency, Challenge, External Credentials, Post Secondary Credit and Independent Directed Studies - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)](#)

Educational Resource

- Schools are required to develop an Educational Resource Policy that:
  - o defines the process and procedure for selecting and removing learning resources and
  - o includes a mechanism to deal with challenges/appeals from users of these resources.

Note: This requirement came into effect when the Ministry discontinued recommending learning resources.

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Cash Payment

- Schools are required to develop a policy that minimizes fee payments in cash. The Federation of Independent Schools Association (FISA) has a sample policy template available for FISA BC members.

Drinking Water Testing

- The policy, [Testing Lead (Pb) Content in Drinking Water of Independent School Facilities](#), sets testing and regular retesting requirements (every 3 years) for independent schools. **It specifically requires testing water for lead (Pb) content.** This policy is meant to ensure the safety of all students and staff and is applicable to online schools as well - if they have any facility used by staff or students.

- Health Canada Guidelines have changed. Schools should amend their policies to reflect the current Maximum Acceptable Concentration (MAC) for total lead (Pb) in drinking water is 0.005 mg/L (5 µg/L), based on a sample of water taken at the tap and using the appropriate protocol for the type of building being sampled.

- School water testing policies must align with the Ministry policy, including:

  - working with the [appropriate Health Authority](#) to determine a testing program for their school facilities including a process for reporting test results to the Health Authority. A Band-operated school should work with and report to the [First Nation Health Authority](#)

  - developing, with Health Authority guidance, mitigation, and communication plans in case of a test over the maximum allowable concentration of lead (Pb).

  - a communication plan which includes notification of the Ministry of Education and Child Care for tests over the maximum allowable concentration of lead (Pb)

  - retesting at least every three years; please ensure the most recent tests were completed no less recently than 2020.

Note: In the event that the School is due for renewed water testing (for lead – Pb) during the 2024-25 school year, schools should ensure this testing is completed at the start of the school year and mitigation strategies (if any) are implemented well before the School is inspected.

Permanent School Closure (for schools in first 5 years of operation)

- Since 2021/22 school year, school authorities of all new independent schools are required to develop and maintain a **school closure risk mitigation plan** during the **first five years of operation** to minimize the impact of a potential school closure on the school community.

- Independent school closures can be caused by a variety of circumstances including a financial shortfall, enrolment decline, or damage to the School facility due to accident or disaster. School closure, particularly with short or limited notice, may have educational, financial, social, and emotional impacts on students, families, and school staff. The decision by an independent school Authority to close a school should be made in a considered manner and should be supported by a school closure policy

and plan to minimize the impact of any closure on the school community. Planning, communications, and awareness of legal and other requirements are key to reducing the impact on students, families, teachers, and staff.

- School closure can also be the result of suspension or cancellation of a school's Certificate of Group Classification by the Inspector of Independent Schools due to non-compliance with the requirements for certification. The Inspector may cancel or suspend an independent school's Certificate of Group Classification if the School fails to maintain the standards and requirements for the certificate or breaches a condition of the certificate, or if it fails to comply with the *Independent School Act* (*ISA*), regulations or orders made under the *ISA*, or a requirement of the Inspector. Independent school authorities are promptly advised by the Inspector of any issues that could result in the suspension or cancellation of a school's certificate to enable the School to respond in a timely manner. In exceptional circumstances, a school may have its Certificate of Group Classification cancelled without an opportunity to resolve the issues of concern.

- At the discretion of the Inspector of Independent Schools, Authorities of independent schools deemed to be at risk of a potential school closure may be required to develop and maintain a school closure plan.

- All independent school authorities closing a school are required to follow the procedures described in policy.

2.07 Inclusive Education

2.07a Student Well-being

Bullying Prevention

- Schools are asked to describe how the School intentionally and systematically incorporates anti-bullying strategies or additional programs to actively teach bullying prevention skills into its educational program. *Some examples/possible options: Open Parachute, Second Step, Virtues Program, Friends, WITS, PREVNET, Red Cross, Respectful Futures, Conflict Resolution training, etc.*

Anti-Racism k-12-anti-racism-strategy.pdf (gov.bc.ca)
- In January 2023, the Ministry launched the **Anti-Racism Action Plan**. The School is asked to describe how the School is working to create a climate of inclusion and belonging by engaging in the/some of the areas identified in the action plan.

Mental Health Strategy Mental Health in Schools Strategy (gov.bc.ca)
- The School is asked to describe initiatives/steps the School has taken to support students'/staff members' mental health in relation to the elements identified in the **Mental Health in Schools Strategy**.

2.07b Indigenous Education Programs at Non-First Nation Schools
- Schools enrolling students who identify as being Indigenous (e.g., First Nation, Métis, Inuit) or having Indigenous ancestry are required to describe how the School creates a sense of value and belonging for these students and how the School includes First Peoples cultures, languages, worldviews, and/or knowledge within the curriculum.

2.07c Inclusive Education - Learning Support Services

- Schools in receipt of Supplemental Inclusive Education funding, need to develop and maintain a separate **budget for these funds**. During the inspection, schools should be prepared to share and discuss these budgets from the last two years.

- Schools also provide learning support services to non-funded students. The School needs to ensure it reports on the 1701 all relevant categories, including codes **K, P, Q and R** and provides IEPs for these students. All funded independent schools already receive money in the basic allocation for supporting students identified on 1701s with K, P, Q, R categories.

- The School is asked to describe the assessment of provision and services for students with learning or physical needs.

- The School also needs to ensure transition planning is in place for students who plan to conclude their K-12 schooling.

- If applicable: The School is asked to describe its process when a student moves from the Dogwood to the Evergreen path.

2.07d English language Learners

- Schools with ELL learners are expected to assess students, provide support, and provide resources to support second language learning. This support should include Annual Instruction Plans (AIPs) for ELL Learners and proficiency should be assessed using the ell-standards-full.pdf (gov.bc.ca).

2.07d Accessibility

- Under the Accessible British Columbia Regulation (gov.bc.ca) (s.3.2), beginning September 1, 2023, Independent Schools are required to consider accessibility barriers and implement requirements outlined in the *Accessible BC Act.*

- Schools will be asked to describe what the School/association is working on in relation to:
  - Identifying accessibility barriers and achievements
  - Establishing and registering an Accessibility committee
  - Developing an accessibility plan and making it publicly available
  - Creating a mechanism to receive feedback on the accessibility plans and barriers to accessibility from members of the community so feedback will be considered in future versions of the plan.

Additional Reference : Accessible British Columbia Act (gov.bc.ca)

2.08 Program Review (For Schools Adding Grades Only)
If the School is not adding grades, proceed to Section 2.09

- If the School is adding a new grade, the inspector will review programming and Curriculum Planning Documents, as well as meet with the teachers instructing the new grade, to ensure the program meets Ministry requirements.

2.09   Summer School (For Schools offering Summer Courses for Credit Only)

If the School is not adding grades, proceed to Section 2.10

- Indicate if the School offers a Summer School program for credit. If so, describe the School's compliance with curricular and instructional time requirements. *Please note that Summer School in independent schools is not funded by the Ministry*.

- Ensure that summer school courses meet curricular requirements and time allotments, and that all curricular documentation demonstrating curricular compliance is available for review.

2.10   Instructional Time Requirements

Definition - Hours of Instruction

- As per the **Educational Standards Order** (ESO) (Section 3.1) " For the purposes of this section, 'hours of instruction' means in respect of an independent school, *an hour in which students of the independent school are in attendance and under supervision for the purpose of receiving instruction in an educational program, including work study and work experience programs, examinations or other learning activities provided by the authority, but does not include recesses, lunch periods and other scheduled breaks between classes; "school day" means a day scheduled as a day on which instruction is to be provided in an independent school.*"

Required Hours

- Schools must meet the **Educational Standards Order** requirements for instructional time allocations. According to the **Educational Standards Order**, for the 2024-25 school year, independent schools are required to provide **a minimum of 850 instructional hours in grades K-12; (K can be offered half-time with a minimum of 450 hours of minimal instructional time in a school year)**

Year-Round Schooling

- If operating on a year-round basis**,** schools are still required to provide 850 hours of instruction during September through June. Group 4 schools also need to meet this ESO requirement and need to provide evidence in their school timetable and schedule. (Note: unlike Groups 1 and 2 schools, Group 4 schools do not provide this evidence through the ES Audit for funding purposes.)

2.11   Professional Development

- Describe how (and for what topics) the School allocates time for professional development during the school year. *Possible Pro-D domains have been listed as suggested areas only.*

2.12-2.14 Curriculum: Primary (K-3); Intermediate (4-9); Graduation (10-12)

- Sections 2.12 (K-3); 2.13 (Gr. 4-9); 2.14 and 2.14 (Gr. 10-12 – Grad Program) are to be completed **for both** Monitoring and EEC Inspections. Each section contains overview questions that address key concepts in the K-12 curriculum.
- Planning documentation must include the curricular competency and content learning standards for the area/grade level of study.

- Curricular compliance documentation for The Primary/Intermediate/Graduation Program must include **student self-assessment of Core Competencies**. This may be managed through teacher supports, especially with younger students.

- Schools must provide meaningful information relating to student achievement and performance. As it is well-researched, reflects best practice and is aligned with a competency-based curriculum, independent schools are encouraged to review and consider implementation of the K-12 Student Reporting framework that is being adopted by BC Public Schools in 2024-25. Note: At this time, *the current reporting framework as presented in* K-12 Student Reporting Policy - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca) *is not prescriptive for independent schools. It is entirely satisfactory if schools wish to adopt a progress reporting framework that is Authority approved – as long as progress reports (formal and informal) are communicated with regular frequency*.

Curriculum: EEC vs. Monitoring vs. Program Review

- During a full **External Evaluation (EEC)**, a school's entire educational program will be reviewed. The Inspection Team will review curriculum documentation and meet with teachers. The School needs to complete Appendix C for External Evaluations.

- **Monitoring Visits** include a more generalized curricular review. The School does not need to complete Appendix C for Monitoring Visits.

- **Program Reviews** may be part of the regularly scheduled Monitoring or EEC visits, or may stand-alone in a 'off-cycle' year during which the School adds grades. As described in Section 2.08, a Program Review will include the review of programming and curriculum planning documents for the new grades, as well as teacher meetings, to ensure programming for the new grade meets Ministry requirements. Program Reviews require completion of Appendix C **for the new grades being added, only.**

Appendix C (new Excel Spreadsheet)

- **Appendix C** was developed to support schools in clearly understanding the documentation required to demonstrate compliance with BC's curriculum. For the 2024-25 inspection cycle, the Ministry has developed an MS Excel spreadsheet-based **Appendix C** (rather than the former MS Word based table).

- **Appendix C** has been divided into the same grade level groupings as Sections 2.12-2.14. The Appendices workbook contains several Excel spreadsheets that can be accessed via the tabs at the

bottom of the screen to enable schools to navigate to the relevant grade levels to fill out information for the School. *See ABOUT tab in the Appendices for more information.*

Educational Program Requirements – reflected in Appendix C

- All educational programs in K-12 must be in compliance with the **Educational Standards Order** and Ministerial requirements.

- **Big Ideas; Curricular Competencies/Content; Core Competencies; First Peoples Principles of Learning and Student Assessment** need to be reflected in the curricular compliance documentation.

- Planning documents should detail the delivery of **Personal Planning/Career Education** and **ADST** across all grades. If these subjects are integrated into other subject areas, planning documents should demonstrate where the curricular competencies and content learning standards are covered.

- If class configurations involve multi-grades, differentiation between the grades must be evident.

2.15 Graduation Program – Board Authority Authorized (BAA) Courses

BAA Course Requirements

(Reference: Board/Authority Authorized Courses: Requirements and Procedures (PDF))

- Schools are required to develop instruments or documentation that demonstrates curricular compliance for all Board Authority Authorized (BAA) courses, using the BAA Framework Template (DOCX) and BAA Course Form (PDF).

- BAA Courses must have adequate hours of instruction to warrant associated credits.

- BAA course titles must reflect the content of the course, include Grade 10, 11, or 12 in the course name, and not share names with Ministry developed courses.

- BAA courses cannot be modified, bridging, or remedial versions of the provincial curriculum. New/revised BAA courses cannot significantly overlap provincial curricula content (but may overlap Big Ideas and Curricular Competencies).

- BAA Courses that are sequential must have unique curricular components and not repeat educational content.

- ELL BAA courses must meet Ministry requirement to support students in acquiring proficiency in the English language and understanding of Canadian culture. ELL Course Guidelines (PDF)

BAA Course Approval Process for Independent Schools

Step 1: Submit the completed BAA Course Framework along with the BAA Course Form to the independent school authority chair for approval/signature. Select the most appropriate course code from the BAA Core Categories posted at Core Course Categories (PDF)

Step 2: Retain the approved BAA Course Framework and the BAA Course Form for the Inspector of Independent Schools and for the Ministry upon request.

- BAA Framework Template (DOCX)

- BAA Course Form (PDF)

Step 3: Submit the BAA Course Form to EDUC.GradStandards@gov.bc.ca. If in between inspections: The BAA Course Form is to be submitted prior to the next scheduled inspection and therefore, without the signature of the Inspector of Independent Schools or designate.

Step 4: School Authority Chairs ensure that schools are reporting the course with the same course title (as approved by the Inspector of Independent Schools) and with the same four or five letter course code (i.e., YVPA), as indicated on the BAA Course Form.

Step 5: Authorities are to review BAAs on a set cycle and/or as needed due to changes in provincial curriculum. If not revised, those BAA courses that do not meet requirements are to be delisted by the Authority.

Part III: Continuous Improvement Priorities

Background
Since September 2020, the Ministry has incorporated discussions regarding the use of evidence-based decision making to support enhanced student learning and well-being – specifically the ways in which this information can inform a school's strategic planning to support school improvement and enhanced student outcomes.

Questions to Consider
The types of questions the Ministry wishes schools to address in their planning center on:

➢ *How does the School know students are learning?*
➢ *Where is the School along the continuum of gathering and analyzing student performance data?*
➢ *To what extent does the School incorporate evidenced-based analysis of student performance data into its Continuous School Improvement Planning?*

3.01 Provincial Data Sets

The charts provide in Part III of the template ask Schools to:

- reflect on the school's usage of student performance data sets that are available through the Ministry's Provincially standardized testing:

    - FSA – Grades 4 and 7
    - Numeracy – Grade 10 Provincial Assessment
    - Literacy – Grades 10 and 12 Provincial Assessments
    - Grad Rates
    - Post-Secondary Transition Rates

3.02 School Data Sets

- reflect on the School's usage of any other standardized testing services (Possibilities include: ACADIENCE, CAT4, etc.) or Student Attendance Data, Student Performance Data, etc., for the School to engage in analysis and informed decision-making.

3.03 Sources of Possible Community Input (if applicable)

- reflect on the School's work with community input sources, (such as possible deployment of locally developed school surveys to collect input from parents, students, alumni, or other constituents) to provide additional insights into ways the School can further improve its programs.

3.04 Strategic Planning/Goal-Setting – Student Learning and Well-being

- consider how the School's student performance date could inform multi-year educational goals. Are data sources informing the School's planning in relation to student learning and well-being? Does goal-setting steer the School toward continually improving student outcomes?

3.05 Reconciliation and Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

- As British Columbia works towards Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, it is the Ministry of Education and Child Care's expectation that Independent Schools make concerted efforts to support Reconciliation through engagement with local Indigenous Peoples, where appropriate, and through decolonization and indigenization. Suggested references:

    - [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#)
    - [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

School Declarations

Principal's Declaration and Approval

- The Principal is responsible and accountable for making an accurate declaration of the School's status and inspection readiness. **The Ministry emphasizes to school authorities that false or inaccurate declarations may affect the School's certification status.**

  <u>**Note**</u>: *For Groups 1, 2, and 4, all teachers (and Principals or Heads of School) are required to be certified by the Teacher Regulation Branch in BC. While the term 'Head of School' or similar terms are not set out in the Independent School Act, the terms 'Head of School' and 'School Principal' are often used interchangeably and based on day-to-day operational practices and customs. Generally, these terms refer to the chief educational leader or educational administrator of a school.*

Document Submission

- Confirm that required attachments are included with submission of the School's completed Template.
  - ☐ Proof of Annual Report Submission
  - ☐ Evidence of Municipal Compliance
  - ☐ Copy of most recent Inspection's Ministry cover letter (lists requirements from last inspection)
  - ☐ Copy of School's response to Ministry that indicates remediation to items identified in last inspection.
  - ☐ Groups 1 and 2 Schools Only: Financial document establishing charitable or not-for-profit status of school.

Report Summary
(completed by the Inspector)

The Report Summary is entirely completed by the Inspector(s) and the following comments are provided to enhance understanding of the structure of Section 5.0.

Schools are encouraged to take careful notes during the inspection's close-out meeting and to start addressing the requirements immediately upon the conclusion of the inspection visit since the 4- and 6-week follow-up requirement deadlines (statutory and policy related follow-up items respectively) are based on the inspection close-out meeting date.

Commendations

- Following a full External Evaluation (EEC), Inspectors may choose to comment on a commendable aspect of the School's inspection preparation and/or an outstanding program component(s). This is typically not the practice for the in-between Monitoring Inspections.

Recommendations

- Recommendations are neither **Statutory** nor **Policy** matters and may be thought of as **suggestions for Best Practice.** In most instances, such recommendations are made verbally to School administration. Note that recommendations do not require compliance follow-up by the School.

Previous Inspection

- The Inspector will indicate if any requirements identified in this inspection continue to remain unaddressed from the previous inspection.

Statutory Requirements

- The School Authority is required to review the Statutory issues listed by the inspection team and are required to confirm in writing to the Independent Schools Branch its compliance by a date no more than **4 weeks** after the External Evaluation or Monitoring Inspection visit.

Policy Requirements

- The School Authority is required to review the Policy issues listed by the inspection team and confirm in writing to the Independent Schools Branch its compliance by a date no more than **6 weeks** after the External Evaluation or Monitoring Inspection visit.

Summative Recommendation

- The Report's Summative Recommendation is completed by the inspector(s).