INTRODUCTION

On December 2–4, 2019, a virtual certification inspection was completed on Maple Leaf International School – Dalian (MLIS-D) in Dalian, Liaoning Province, People’s Republic of China, referred to as the School or MLIS-D in this report. This was a virtual inspection with no on-site visit. The purpose of this inspection was to determine whether the requirements for the British Columbia (BC) education program have been met, according to the BC Global Education Program – Offshore Schools Certification Agreement. The inspection team (the Team), appointed by the Executive Director of Independent Schools and International Education, British Columbia Ministry of Education (MoE) in accordance with the BC Global Education Program – Offshore Schools Certification Agreement (the Agreement), consisted of Dan Miles and Edward Noot, who served as the Team Chair.

The School’s BC program has an enrolment of 1624 students, in Grades 10–12, housed in two gender segregated campuses. Students are enrolled in a dual credit program that leads to graduation from both the Chinese and BC programs. A 600 student Chinese middle school program is also run on this campus.

During their virtual visit to the School, the Team reviewed all standards required in the BC Global Education Program – Offshore Schools Certification Agreement and Operating Manual and met with the School’s superintendent, BC Principal, BC department heads and students.

The Owner/Operator, China Maple Leaf Educational Systems (CMLES) is responsible for the BC program. Maple Leaf International School - Dalian is one of 15 China Maple Leaf Educational Systems Schools in China offering the BC program and enrolling over 8000 students. CMLES operates over 60 additional Chinese program schools in China, as well as some international programs in other countries.
The philosophy or the BC program is articulated as follows:

The MLES educational philosophy is based on the belief that through blending the best of the innovations and higher level thinking western educational model with the cultural richness and discipline of the traditional Chinese educational model, students will be best prepared to meet the challenges of living and working in a more internationalized society.

MLES schools promote appreciation for the diversity of people and cultures, provides an optimal environment for learning and teaching, and offers a globally respected curriculum that inspires in its students the spirit and ideals of global citizenship.

MLES schools seek to develop students to their best potential and to provide them with a world of opportunity.

The Team would like to thank Maple Leaf International School - Dalian for its hospitality, cooperation and preparedness for the inspection visit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The School has satisfactorily addressed requirements contained in the previous inspection report.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Requirement Met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment:
The previous inspection report contained no requirements. The Team held a conversation with the School and is satisfied that all suggestions made in the last inspection report were thoughtfully considered by school leadership.

**BUSINESS PLAN 1.0**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Owner/Operator has submitted a business plan to the BC Ministry of Education, confirming the sustainability of the program.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☒ Requirement Met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment:
The Owner/Operator has submitted a business plan to the BC Ministry of Education addressing all required areas. The Dalian campus is viewed by many as the flagship of the Maple Leaf system and was the first BC offshore school, that began a pilot program some 20 years ago. In recent years, this campus has experienced an unanticipated, and rather significant, decline in enrolment. The 2019-20 enrolment of just over 1600 students represent a drop of approximately 20% from last year. While a 1600 student enrolment presents no sustainability concerns, the rapid downward trend in enrolment falls far short of business plan projections. The School and the MLES office are analyzing this trend and employing every effort to mitigate a further drop in enrollment.
## INSPECTION CATALOGUE 2.0

### 2.02 The Owner/Operator meets all requirements as set forth in the BC Global Education Program Offshore Schools Certification Agreement (the Agreement).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement Met</th>
<th>Requirement Not Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Comment:**
The Team confirms that the Owner/Operator meets all requirements as set forth in the Agreement.

### 2.03 The Owner/Operator has written approval from the appropriate government entity to operate the offshore school, as outlined in section 5.03 of the Agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement Met</th>
<th>Requirement Not Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Comment:**
The Team was able to provide documentation indicating support and approval of the BC program from the PRC Department of Education and the Liaoning Department of Education; however, the approval letters do not fully comply with the requirements outlined in section 5.03 of the Agreement. The School indicates that they have been granted an extension to meet this requirement. Once proper documentation is obtained it should be immediately forwarded to the MoE.

### 2.04 The School meets local building, safety and cafeteria codes and regulations. The facilities are deemed to be suitable to support the BC program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement Met</th>
<th>Requirement Not Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Comment:**
The Team viewed photos and videos of this impressive campus that included academic buildings, cafeterias, gymnasiums, student dorms, teacher apartments and outside track and playing fields for both the boys’ and girls’ campuses. Also highlighted in this photo gallery was the impressive Sherman Jen Library.

The Team viewed written local government authority to operate the buildings at the School as well as a license from the local authority to provide cafeteria food services and student dormitories. The Team also viewed a report from the local fire authority indicating that the School is in compliance with all local requirements.

The Team reviewed the School’s comprehensive emergency preparedness plans for fire, earthquake or any other natural disaster requiring a school evacuation.
The Team confirms that China Maple Leaf Education Systems and MLIS - Dalian has a plan in place for Maple Leaf schools in the event any of their schools face a temporary or permanent closure due to an unforeseen event. The plan has been signed by the Offshore School Representative (OSR) for Maple Leaf and the superintendent.

2.05 Offshore School Representative (OSR) - The Owner/Operator must appoint an individual to act as Offshore School Representative. This individual must be confirmed by the province and must meet all of the requirements set out in section 14 of the Agreement.

☒ Requirement Met ☐ Requirement Not Met

Comment:
The Owner/Operator has appointed an experienced individual to act as the Offshore School Representative (OSR). The OSR meets the requirements set out in section 1 of the Agreement and has been confirmed by the BC MoE as suitable for this position.

The OSR contract was renewed on September 1, 2018. The Inspector confirms that the OSR is knowledgeable about all aspects of the School’s operations and all related aspects of the Owner/Operator’s business operations; particularly the governance, business and administrative functions of the Owner/Operator’s operation of the School and that he is fully aware of his obligation to report critical information relating to changes in the operation of the School or ownership structure that could significantly impact the School’s operation.

The OSR role is shared with the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of CMLES, both of whom participated in the virtual inspection. The comprehensive administrative structure of CMLES provides robust support for individual schools in this system.

The OSR was approved for this role by the MoE in 2014, and since that time CMLES has undergone some major organizational changes which has resulted in a redefinition of other roles engaged by the OSR. Given that the OSR is now in multiple organizational relationships with the Owner/Operator (which is prohibited in the Agreement under Schedule B, Part II - 3), it is suggested that the OSR consult with the Executive Director of Independent Schools and International Education to determine whether he currently meets the requirements of an OSR as outlined in the Agreement.

The annual report indicated that the OSR is aware of his obligation to report, in a timely fashion to the Ministry any critical information relating to any changes in the operation of the School and/or ownership structure that could have a significant impact on the school’s operation – including proposed changes to the Owner/Operator’s governance structure, financial situation and student and/or teacher safety.
Commendation:
The comprehensive administrative structure of CMLES provides robust support for individual schools in this system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.06 The Principal meets the requirements as outlined in section 2.06 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☒ Requirement Met        ☐ Requirement Not Met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment:
The School operates on a co-principal model, with one principal overseeing the girls’ campus and one overseeing the boys’ campus. It was evident to the team that the co-principals’ work together cooperatively and constructively. Both principals meet and exceed all requirements as outlined in the Agreement and the inspection catalogue.

The Team reviewed the Principals’ job description and employment contract, both of which comply with requirements under the Agreement.

Each Principal holds a valid Certificate of Qualification from the BC Teacher Certification Branch (TCB) and meets the requirements outlined in the Agreement.

The Team noted, with appreciation, that the Principals were very well prepared for this inspection and were passionate in their support of the BC program.

Commendation:
The collaborative and constructive working relationship nurtured by the co-principals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.07 The School meets the administrative support requirements as outlined in section 2.07 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☒ Requirement Met        ☐ Requirement Not Met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment:
The School has a support system including vice-principals, education coordinators, department heads, admin assistants and the central administrative support of the CMLES system.

The 2018 inspection report classified the administrative support system as ‘extensive’, but this area has experienced reduced staffing levels in response to lower than anticipated enrollment. While a lower enrolment will allow for some efficiencies, care must be taken not to place unrealistic demands on administrative and support staff. Such reductions take a toll on workplace satisfaction, morale and eventually program effectiveness.
2.08 The School meets the Student Record requirements as outlined in section 2.08 of the Inspection Catalogue for offshore schools.

| ☒ Requirement Met | ☐ Requirement Not Met |

Comment:
The School verified that student files are securely stored. The virtual inspection process allowed for the Team to view only limited files. They are maintained by the administrative assistant and contain all required elements including the newly developed personal information consent forms for parents and students.

The School utilizes PowerSchool administrative software to manage student data.

2.09-2.14 The School meets the teacher certification requirements as outlined in sections 2.09-2.14 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

| ☐ Requirement Met | ☒ Requirement Not Met |

Comment:
The Team held numerous discussions with the co-Principals and superintendent about the difficulty MLIS–D has experienced in securing BC certified teachers. They began the year without a full complement of certified teachers and have covered assignments as they continue to bring teachers over to fill vacant positions. Processing and regulatory changes to acquire both BC teacher certification and Chinese work permits and visas have both contributed to the current staffing difficulties experienced by the School.

As such, the Team notes that not all authorized persons under the Agreement possess valid and current certification under the Ministry of Education. The School currently has five teachers awaiting confirmation of temporary certification exemption by the BC MoE. A letter requesting these exemptions was recently received by the MoE and is being processed.

The BC program at MLIS–D is supported by 75 teachers. The Team confirmed that 60 teachers hold valid COQs, while 10 are awaiting certification and are temporarily authorized with a letter of exemption. The Principals are supporting the TCB application processes and have confirmed that all required documents have been submitted by these 10 individuals, whose letter of exemptions runs until January 31, 2020.

All locally certified teachers have evidence of certification and local criminal records checks on file.

Staff contracts were reviewed and found to be comprehensive, addressing all the required areas.
Staff turnover at the School is an area of concern, as the inability of the School to find a suitable number of qualified replacements is impacting the BC program. The Team appreciated the stability of School leadership and intentional focus on leadership succession, when required. In a large offshore school, one would expect a fairly high level of annual turnover among teaching staff and it is critical that the School find ways of securing a suitable number of qualified replacements. CMLES is encouraged to review all factors that may be contributing to the teacher recruitment problem, including salary and benefits, recruitment strategies and the like.

The Team confirmed that all teachers are employed under proper Chinese work permits and Z visas. Teacher files are in order and well maintained and include evidence that teacher evaluations are occurring as per school policy. The Superintendent verified that principal evaluations are conducted as per MLES policy.

**Requirement:**
The School is required to confirm certification or authorized exemption of all teaching staff.

### 2.17 The School meets the requirements for curriculum implementation outlined in section 2.17 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

☑ Requirement Met ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**
The CMLES system has fully implemented the Grade 10, 11 and 12 modernized curriculum. Interviews with department heads permitted the Team to see the planning for activities where students were engaged in activities that foster the development of the core competencies, including collaborative project group work, hands-on experiential activities, inquiry projects and problem-solving activities. Evidence for these curricular activities included photographs and samples of assignments shown by the teachers to the Team.

Course overviews and lesson plans demonstrated that teachers are using strategies and instruments to support self-assessment in the area of core competencies.

The School demonstrated evidence in the course overviews of intentional integration of First Peoples Principles of Learning.

All teachers expressed appreciation for the professional development and support received from Department Heads and the system team for helping with the course planning for the current curriculum.

**Commendation:**
The School is commended for its coordinated approach to professional development for returning teachers and for new teachers unfamiliar with the new curriculum, which includes department heads supporting their staff, who come from such a wide range of experience, with in-depth support for the implementation of BC’s curriculum.

2.18 The School meets the requirements for English language assessment and acquisition as outlined in section 2.18 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

- Requirement Met  ☑ Requirement Not Met

Comment:
The School meets the requirements for English language assessment and acquisition.

The Team heard how MLIS-D has initiated a system approach to assist all schools in improving student achievement in English language proficiency. These initiatives include ELL teaching strategies for use by all teachers throughout the system. It also includes the hiring of an English language system coordinator to support each campus and the additional academic supports offered to students at risk through school-based teams. The Success Room is staffed by a full-time educator who coordinates learning supports on each campus. The Success Room is used by students who have approval for study blocks. Students also serve as peer tutors. The administrators explained how there is a well-developed system to support students that is linked to PowerSchool, the student information system.

ELL resources are used throughout the School including computer-assisted ELL learning and regular in-class school-wide Silent Sustained Reading of books accessed through the BC library in English.

Before any student is accepted into the full BC program, they are required to successfully complete the BC entrance exam. If they do not pass the exam there are a series of graduated interventions and supports to help them improve their language skills to successfully pass the exam in the following semesters.

Commendation:
The School is commended for its suite of strategies to support English language learners and its proactive approach to ensure all students are successful in the program through a combination of designated staff, the Success Room, school-wide support.

2.19(a-e) The School meets the course credit requirements (equivalency, challenge, exemptions and BAA courses) as outlined in section 2.19 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.
The Team reviewed MoE letters of approval to offer Mandarin 10, 11 and 12 and Chinese Social Studies 11 as exempted courses. The Teams confirms that the School is making appropriate use of these courses.

The School makes appropriate use of equivalency and challenge. The School makes extensive use of BAA courses and the Team confirmed that all BAA courses listed in the inspection catalogue have approval and course overviews aligning with the tenets of the new curriculum.

2.19(f-g) The School meets the course overview/course planning requirements as outlined in Schedule B Part I, 2. (e) of the Agreement; namely, that all BC program courses offered in the School meet or exceed the ministry learning outcomes/learning standards identified in the educational program guides for each course.

The administration and teachers are engaging in ongoing professional development on the new curriculum. Due to the large number of new staff and staff turnover, the department heads have taken special responsibilities for orientation to the curriculum.

The Team observed an exceptional level of engagement and enthusiasm in our interviews with the department heads. Many comments were made about the positive changes happening in all classes. They celebrated the improved engagement of students and commended the changes through all departments, including the senior math and sciences this year. The teacher surveys completed for this inspection also spoke frequently about the positive effects of the curriculum implementation through all the grades.

The Team observed that teacher understanding of the goals of the new curriculum is well developed. The administration is supportive of teachers demonstrating responsiveness in their approach to implementing the new curriculum. While CMLES provides system-wide curricular planning documents, the Team saw examples of teachers adapting planning to suit their subject and their students’ needs. Through conversations with department heads and through the response from the teacher surveys, the Team recognized a collaborative
approach to developing resources and assessment instruments to support implementation of the new curriculum.

**Commendation:**
The Team commends the School for their consistent and enthusiastic embrace of the new curriculum.

---

### 2.20 The School meets the instructional time allotment requirements as outlined in section 4.5 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools, including the requirements set out in sections 1.1 to 6, with the exception of s. 4(5)(b), 4 (6), 5 (8)(a) and (d) and s. 5.3 of Ministerial Order 41/91, the Educational Standards Order, enacted under the Independent School Act.

- [X] Requirement Met  
- [ ] Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**
The School exceeds the instructional time allotment requirements as outlined in section 4.5. The School is in session 6.67 hours daily for 176 days a year which equals 1173 instructional hours per year.

---

### 2.21 The School meets the assessment methods requirements as outlined in section 2.21 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

- [X] Requirement Met  
- [ ] Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**
The Team observed a variety of assessment methods, both formative (journaling, teacher-developed rubrics, group work) and summative (projects, poetry, writing). The department heads also shared examples of peer assessment and student self-assessment, including self-assessment of the core competencies. They discussed the impact that the BC curriculum was having in all grades and how teachers are adapting their assessment practices to better align with it. They also described the new sense of freedom and creativity that this curriculum allows for teachers and students.

The English department heads also described how teachers at the School have developed benchmarks in English Language Arts to create more accurate assessments and prepare students for the literacy exam. These benchmarks provide data that informs their teaching and supports teachers in ensuring that class grades accurately reflect exam grades.

---

### 2.22 The School meets the learning resources requirements as outlined in section 2.22 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.
Comment:
The School meets the learning resources requirements outlined in the Agreement. Although the School meets this requirement it became apparent to the Team that internet connectivity and somewhat dated classroom teaching technology do limit the creativity and enthusiasm of teaching staff.

Based on the Team’s interviews with staff, the School appears to be reasonably well-equipped with learning resources and has extensive facilities to support student learning. Each campus has a well-stocked library which contains fiction and nonfiction, textbooks, teacher resources, periodicals and audio-visual material. These items are used on site and in classrooms.

There are three computer labs on each campus. Classrooms have LCD projectors and a screen. The virtual tour made by the administration highlighted some of the campus facilities including science labs, drama, music and art rooms, a foods lab and a gym.

The student Success Room on each campus was described to be a central hub, where students and teachers gather throughout the day. This dedicated space supports students who are at risk and provides a supervised area for students with study blocks.

The Team saw evidence virtually showing the classrooms and halls to be welcoming spaces with student work and art on display.

2.23 The School meets the student progress report requirements as outlined in section 2.23 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

Comment:
The School meets the student progress report requirements as outlined in the inspection catalogue. The bilingual report card contains all required elements including a description of the meaning of the letter grades.

The admin team explained that teachers meet with parents regularly during the school year, using the Chinese counsellor for translation as needed. Because the report cards are bilingual, parents are encouraged to connect with teachers when they have questions or concerns. The School uses social media to connect with parents, and the PowerSchool parent portal is frequently used by parents to access students’ progress and attendance.
### 2.24 The School meets the parent/student handbook requirements as outlined in section 2.24 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

| ☒ Requirement Met | ☐ Requirement Not Met |

**Comment:**
The parent/student bi-lingual handbook is produced by the Maple Leaf central office and contains the necessary polices on parent/student dispute resolution, a student code of conduct and assessment.

### 2.25 The School meets the teacher handbook requirements as outlined in section 2.25 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

| ☒ Requirement Met | ☐ Requirement Not Met |

**Comment:**
The teacher handbook meets the requirements as outlined in sections 2.25 of the inspection catalogue. It contains the requisite policies on staff dispute resolution, teacher evaluation, principal/vice principal evaluation, human resources policies, student supervision, and student admissions. China Maple Leaf Educational Systems has defined the employment relationship for all authorized staff as directed by the BC Ministry of Education.

### 2.26 The School meets the distributed learning requirements as outlined in section 18 of the Agreement and section 2.26 of the inspection catalogue for offshore schools.

| ☒ Requirement Met | ☐ Requirement Not Met | ☐ Not Applicable |

**Comment:**
The School meets the distributed learning (DL) requirements outlined in the inspection catalogue. 86 students are enrolled in a total of 16 courses being offered by Global Education – SD73 Business Company. The staff explained that students’ tests are supervised by a BC-certified teacher or administrator. This year students do most of their work for the DL independently, without on-site support.
CONCLUSION

Commendations

The Inspection Team wishes to recognize the Owner/Operator, Principal and staff of Maple Leaf International School - Dalian for:

- the comprehensive administrative structure of CMLES provides robust support for individual schools in this system;
- the collaborative and constructive working relationship nurtured by the co-principals;
- a coordinated approach to professional development for returning teachers and for new teachers unfamiliar with the new curriculum, which includes department heads supporting their staff, who come from such a wide range of experience, with in-depth support for the implementation of BC’s curriculum;
- the suite of strategies to support English language learners and its proactive approach to ensure all students are successful in the program through a combination of designated staff, the Success Room and school-wide support; and,
- their consistent and enthusiastic embrace of the new curriculum.

Requirements

In order to meet the requirements of the BC Global Education Program – Offshore Schools Certification Agreement, the Team requires that by April 3, 2020, the Owner/Operator provide the Executive Director of Independent Schools and International Education, responsible for the BC Global Education Program - Offshore Schools, with a plan and timeline for proposed implementation of the following items:

- The School is required to confirm certification, or authorized exemption, of all teaching staff.

SUMMATIVE RECOMMENDATION

The Offshore Inspection Team recommends to the Executive Director of Independent Schools and International Education that, contingent on responding to the above requirements to the satisfaction of the Executive Director, the British Columbia education program offered at Maple Leaf International School – Dalian continues to be recognized as a British Columbia-certified school.