

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Education Sector

**INTEGRATED
RESPONSE
PLAN** *for*

CATASTROPHIC EARTHQUAKE



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of
Education

With thanks to the partners in education sector emergency planning:



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Executive Summary

British Columbia’s natural terrain holds the potential for a number of emergencies and schools, school districts, local governments and the provincial government all have plans to manage their operations during such emergencies. The *B.C. Education Sector Integrated Response Plan for Catastrophic Earthquake* connects these plans, with protocols and responsibilities that align the education sector’s collective response to the catastrophic earthquake scenario detailed in Emergency Management BC’s (EMBC) *B.C. Earthquake Immediate Response Plan*.

This plan was developed jointly by the Ministry of Education and EMBC, in partnership with the BC School Trustees Association, BC School Superintendents Association, BC Principals’ and Vice-Principals’ Association, BC Association of School Business Officials, First Nations Education Steering Committee and Federation of Independent School Associations BC.

BC’s Education System

Our K-12 school system educates more than 630,000 public, independent and home-schooled students each year. The Minister of Education and local boards of education co-govern the public education system, supported by the Ministry and school district staff, and working closely with the wider network of education sector partners, including professional education organizations, public libraries, First Nations representatives, provincial ministries and agencies and the private sector.

The Minister, supported by the Ministry, also governs the independent school system, working in partnership with the independent school authorities and professional organizations. First Nations schools are governed by First Nations chiefs and councils, and funded by the Federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs. They are also supported by the B.C. Ministry of Education and the First Nations Education Steering Committee.

Education Sector Emergency Planning

The entire education sector works hard to plan for and mitigate any threat to the safety of students. The Ministry of Education, districts, authorities, First Nations schools and professional education organizations have their own emergency plans which detail the response of that organization to an emergency (See Appendix C: Education Sector Emergency Plans). This *B.C. Education Sector Integrated Response Plan* unifies sector emergency planning with that of local governments and EMBC, without replacing those plans.

Connections: Education Sector in a Catastrophic Emergency



The Plan: Coordinating a Sector-wide Response to a Catastrophic Earthquake

This plan is based on a catastrophic earthquake in Victoria or the Lower Mainland, as laid out in the [B.C. Earthquake Immediate Response Plan](#). The highest level of severity, a catastrophic emergency, affects a number of local governments or regions, needs a significant response and support from all levels of government (from local to Federal), and requires a large and likely long-term recovery effort.

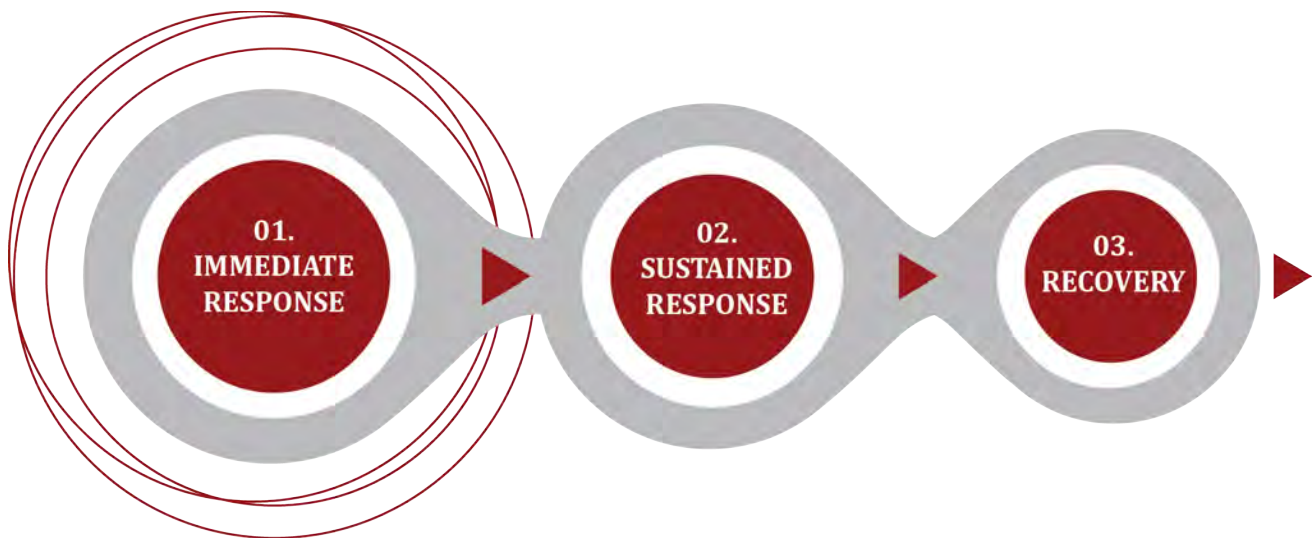
The *B.C. Education Sector Integrated Response Plan* details how the Ministry of Education, school districts, independent school authorities, and public, independent, and First Nations schools would work together:

- Immediately following a catastrophic earthquake (until immediate life-saving efforts end)
- During the sustained response (the management of damage)
- During the long-term recovery (rebuilding of infrastructure)

While this plan focuses on a catastrophic earthquake that has a serious impact on many communities and schools, many of the response protocols could also be applicable to other major emergencies.

As Emergency Management BC develops additional planning for other catastrophic emergency situations, the education sector partners will continue to coordinate with those plans.

3 Response Phases:



Introduction

British Columbia's natural features, from oceans to mountains, hold many gifts but these gifts are also accompanied by a potential for catastrophic emergencies. While we may not always be able to prevent such disasters, the best defense is careful preparation for the worst scenarios and our most vulnerable citizens.

The B.C. government is working to predict, manage and mitigate the consequences of such disasters. This work, coordinated by Emergency Management BC, brings together the planning and response efforts of provincial ministries, government agencies and local governments across the province. Central to this planning is the Province's *British Columbia Emergency Management System* guide (2016) and *B.C. Earthquake Immediate Response Plan* (2015). The *B.C. Earthquake Immediate Response Plan* details BC's large-scale emergency management structures and systems, showing how local and provincial bodies would work together in the event of a catastrophic earthquake centered on the Lower Mainland or Coastal Vancouver Island.

The education sector is committed to supporting the Province's emergency planning process, ensuring that students and educators are as safe as possible in a major disaster. In 2015, the Ministry of Education published the *Emergency Management Planning Guide for Schools, Districts and Authorities*, which details effective school and district responses to a range of emergency situations. Since the development of this handbook and toolkit, most school districts have created detailed staff and school-level materials and training for emergency response.

Successful emergency management is a collaborative effort, designed to ensure that many partners, at many different levels of government, are able to work together smoothly during an emergency situation. Successful planning is also ongoing. Plans should be sufficiently complete to allow anyone using them to act clearly and decisively, but also sufficiently flexible to allow for change in response to new situations.

The Organization of the B.C. School System

The B.C. school system is co-governed by the Ministry of Education and locally-elected boards of education. The Ministry provides high-level policy direction and funding for the school system, while boards of education manage school facilities, staffing and the delivery of education programs to B.C.'s approximately 550,000 public school students. (See Appendix B: Organization and Governance of Education in B.C.)

Additionally, the Ministry provides governance and standards for the independent school system, and its approximately 80,000 students, as well as funding for the majority of the 355 registered B.C. independent schools. Like public schools, independent and First Nations schools are responsible for the education of their students. They do not, however, receive capital funding for their school facilities and have greater autonomy in how they educate students. Independent schools are managed by independent school authorities, which act like boards of education, but often only manage the operations of a single school.

First Nations schools are managed by First Nations, under the jurisdiction of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, with separate funding and standards. There are approximately 130 First Nations schools in B.C. and 25 of these schools are certified B.C. independent schools, receiving similar funding and direction from the Ministry of Education as other independent schools in the province.

School boards, independent school authorities and First Nations chiefs and councils manage emergency planning for schools in B.C. As the owners of schools and school resources, they are also the main point of contact for any resource requests or emergency planning with local governments.

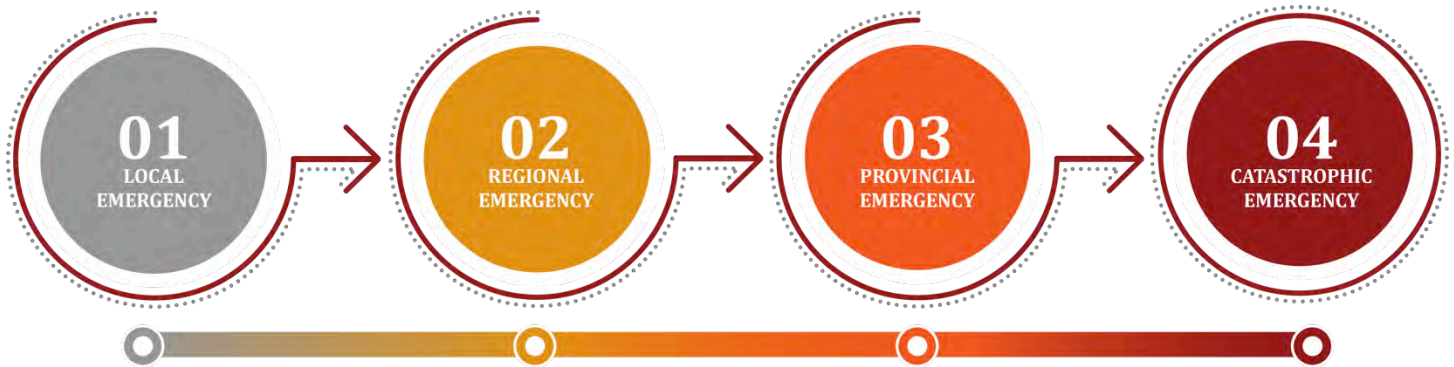
In a catastrophic emergency, the safety of all students is paramount and British Columbia's emergency response and support procedures will apply to all public, independent or First Nations schools.

Structure of Emergency Response in British Columbia

In British Columbia, the authority and regulation for emergency management planning and response is established by the following legislation:

- [Emergency Program Act 1996](#)
- [Emergency Program Management Regulation 1994](#)
- [Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation 1995](#)
- [Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation 1995](#)

These statutes allow emergency response to be effectively scaled to the severity of the emergency.



4 Levels of EMERGENCY

1. Local emergency

- A single community or local government is impacted;
- The local government can handle the emergency with limited outside assistance
- A local declaration of a state of emergency may be required

2. Regional emergency

- One or more local governments or communities is impacted
- Regional coordination, resources or supports are required as local government is unable to manage the emergency alone
- One or more local declarations of a state of emergency are required

3. Provincial emergency

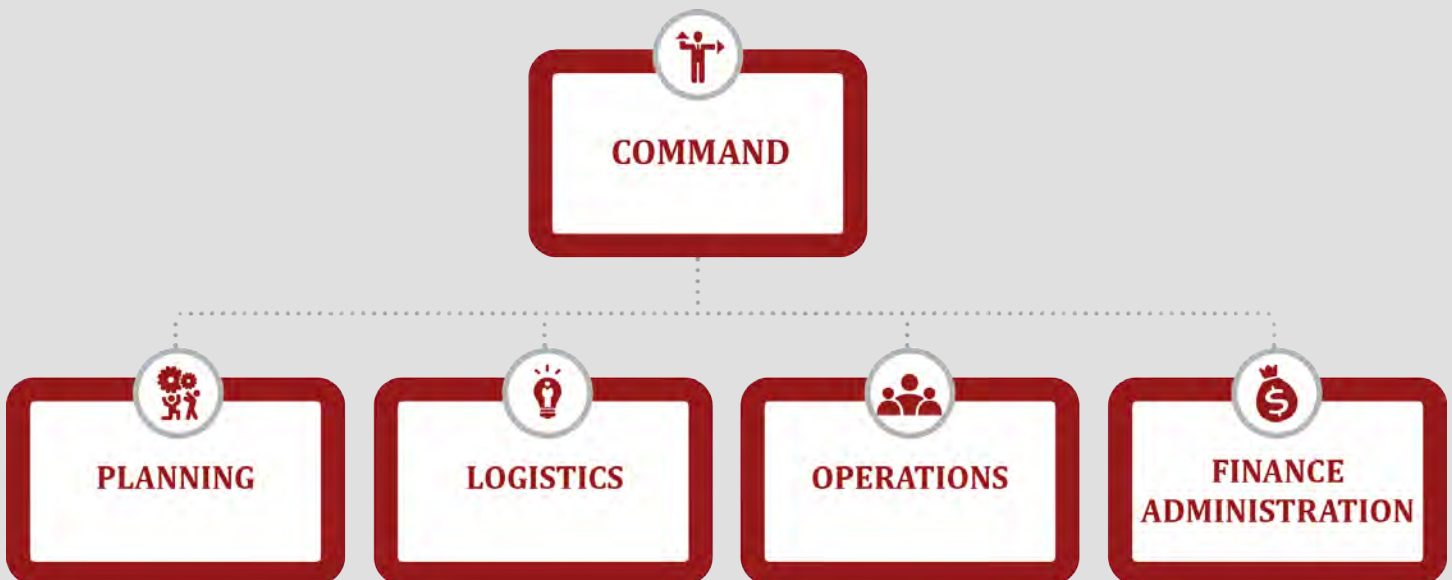
- One or more local governments or communities are impacted
- Provincial coordination, assistance or resources are required as regional authorities are unable to manage the emergency alone
- May require support from the Federal government or from other provinces or territories
- Requires one or more local declarations of a state of emergency, and may even require a provincial declaration

4. Catastrophic emergency

- Multiple local governments or regions are affected
- A large-scale, integrated response is needed from all levels of government, from local to federal
- Requires substantial outside assistance and resources
- Requires a provincial and possibly a Federal declaration of a State of Emergency
- Large-scale and potentially long-term recovery efforts are needed

All levels of emergency response are further organized by the *British Columbia Emergency Management System*, which lays out the process for emergency preparation and management, as well as the functional structure for involved organizations. The assignment of clearly defined functions to the different roles of the Incident Command System (command, planning, logistics, operations and finance/administration) of emergency management allows efficient and effective collaboration between a wide range of different agencies that may have little or no previous experience working together.

Incident Command System



Preparing the Education Sector for a Catastrophic Earthquake

While the Ministry of Education, school districts and authorities have all made real efforts to mitigate the potential effects of a catastrophic earthquake, such events have massive and unpredictable destructive potential. If a catastrophic earthquake hits the Lower Mainland or Greater Victoria, there will likely be:

- Large numbers of people hurt and killed
- Damage to approximately 30 percent of buildings in Victoria and the Lower Mainland
- Wide disruption of utilities and digital communications (i.e., electricity, gas, telephone, cell phone services, and internet)
- Damage to or complete destruction of transportation systems and infrastructure, such as roads, highways, bridges, tunnels, railways, airports, and sea ports

During the initial response, the focus of responders will be on:

- Saving lives
- Reducing immediate threats to life
- Ensuring public health and safety
- Providing emergency social services and mass care
- Restoring critical facilities, communication, utilities and transportation infrastructure
- Understanding the situation and helping the public to understand how best to respond

While the safety of students is the priority during an emergency, a catastrophic earthquake may overwhelm the available local, regional, and even provincial supports. School, district, authority and Ministry staff should plan to be cut off from services and aid for up to a week.

Following an earthquake of this size, some school buildings may have be unusable, while some may weather this event well and be able to be used as a community resource or reception centre.

The catastrophic earthquake scenario in this plan is based on the scenario detailed in the *B.C. Immediate Response Plan* (pg. 23).

While low probability, either a magnitude 7.3 earthquake beneath Vancouver or a magnitude 7.0 earthquake beneath Victoria, are likely to cause serious damage and significant casualties, with a very large and long-lasting economic impact.



Government Hill School, Anchorage, Alaska
March 27, 1964



Avonside Girls' High School, Christchurch,
NZ
February 22, 2011

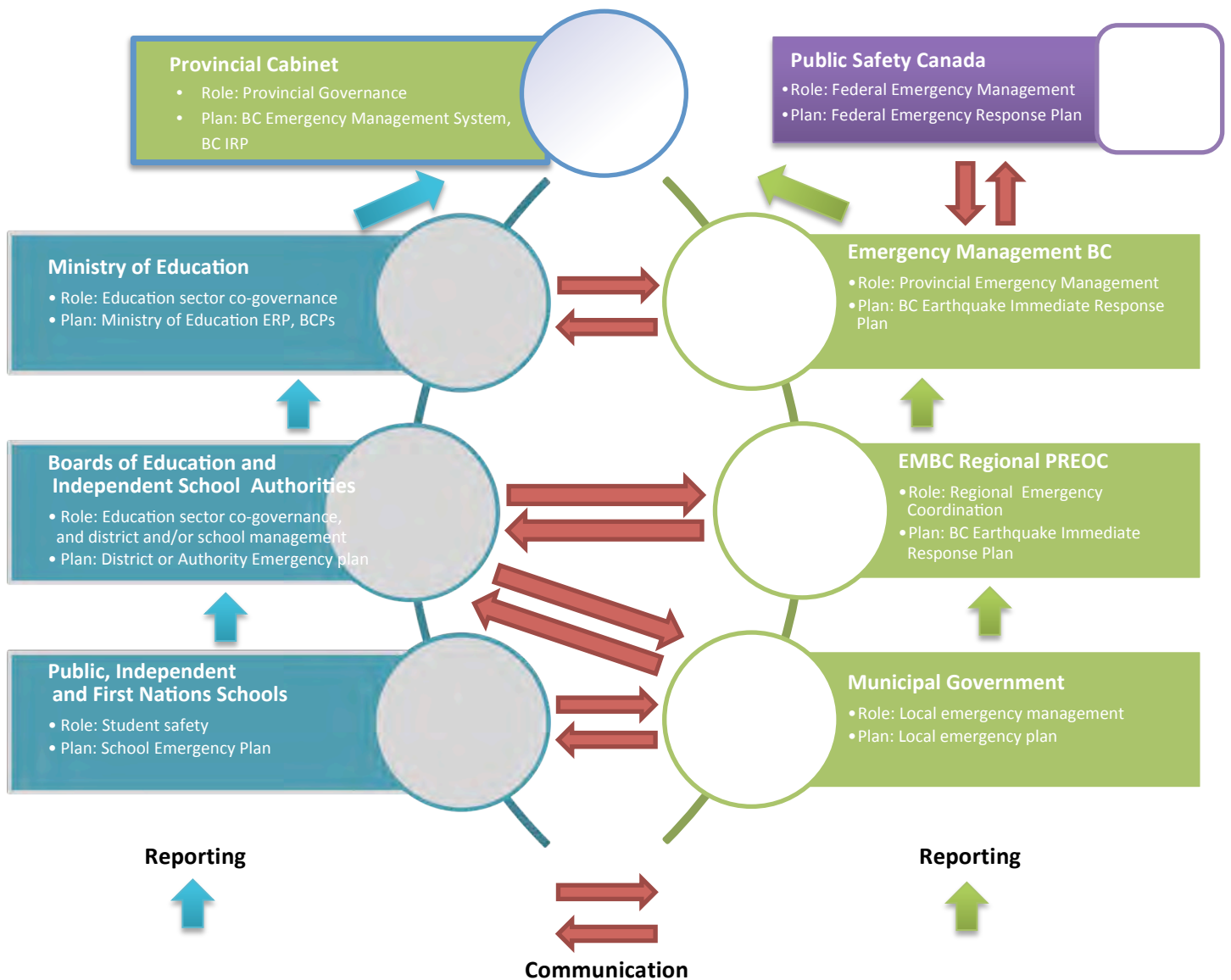


Ookawa Elementary School, Japan
March 11, 2011

Organization of the Education Sector During a Catastrophic Earthquake

During a catastrophic earthquake, the normal governance structures of the education system will remain, but there will be an increased requirement for greater collaboration and communication between the education sector and provincial and local emergency management partners, who will:

- Activate all applicable emergency plans (See Appendix C: Education Sector Emergency Plans)
- Establish **Incident Command System** organizational structures, as detailed in the B.C. Emergency Management System
- Ensure clear and accurate information flow between agencies
- Integrate into the Provincial emergency management structure



Phases of an Emergency Response

There are three defined phases to emergency response:

1. Immediate Response Phase

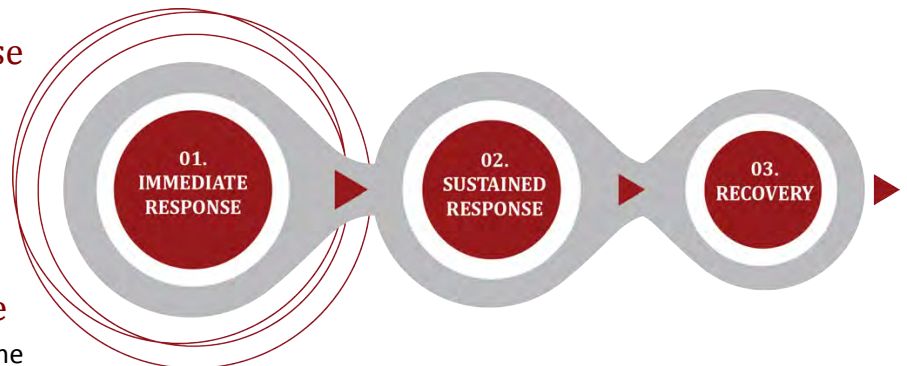
The Immediate Response Phase is the time between the emergency event and the end of immediate life-saving activities, up to a week later.

2. Sustained Response Phase

The Sustained Response Phase is the period of non-life saving response which lasts from between approximately a week after the event to between 3 and 12 months later.

3. Recovery Phase

The Recovery Phase is the period of rebuilding and recovery after life saving and non-life saving response has finished. Recovery from a catastrophic emergency can require years or decades.



Immediate Response in the Education Sector

Education Sector Challenges and Priorities

Following a catastrophic earthquake, communities, schools and businesses will face a number of immediate challenges:

- Emergency responders and health systems may be challenged by a large number of casualties
- Aftershocks are likely for at least a week, some of them dangerous earthquakes in their own right
- Damaged buildings may potentially collapse following the first quake or during aftershocks. It will be challenging to assess the safety of so many buildings (including schools) and the potential for collapse may prevent their use for a long time
- Infrastructure damage to roads and utilities will likely prevent their use and create ongoing dangers, such as localized flooding, gas leaks and electrocution risks
- Damage to transportation infrastructure is likely to create food and water shortages, particularly in the first three weeks

During this first week, the education sector as a whole will be focused on:

- Ensuring the safety of students and staff, including managing injuries where possible
- Reuniting students with their families
- Moving students and staff to emergency reception centres if their families cannot be contacted or they are unable to return home
- Assessing the structural safety of school buildings

Ministry of Education Challenges, Priorities and Actions

Challenges

Following a catastrophic earthquake, the Ministry of Education may experience a number of challenges, including:

- Staff injuries, casualties or challenges in reporting to work
- Damage to or destruction of Ministry buildings and infrastructure
- Damage to communication networks, impacting the Ministry's ability to connect with districts, authorities, partners and stakeholders

Priorities

The Ministry of Education has three main priorities during any emergency:

- 1. Act as a primary point of contact for the K-12 education sector**
 - Understanding the status of districts and schools involved in an emergency, including if possible, the status of affected students
 - Supporting the efforts of schools, school districts, local emergency managers, and the provincial emergency management system to ensure that students are safe
- 2. Support the provincial emergency response**
 - Providing timely information on the status and requirements of the K-12 education sector
 - Supporting schools and districts that are providing emergency responders with resources such as school space or busses
- 3. Maintain the critical functions of the Ministry supporting the education sector**
 - Ensuring funding and resources for districts continue so that staff can be paid and operations maintained
 - Ensuring that Ministry's student and school record systems are secure

The Ministry of Education also has defined responsibility, within the [B.C. Earthquake Immediate Response Plan](#), to:

- Provide a liaison to the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre to support the Emergency Social Services Branch
- Provide expertise and/or policy direction regarding school system requirements and accountabilities
- Provide support to school boards and school districts to interpret policy and revise guidelines in order to meet the immediate needs of students during the emergency
- Provide the status of school facilities in the impact areas
- Support the coordination and access to school facilities and school district resources

Ministry Actions

In the event of a catastrophic earthquake, the Ministry of Education will:

1. Activate the Ministry Operations Centre (MOC) at Level 3

(See Appendix D: Ministry Operations Centre (MOC) Activation Levels)

- As staff may not be able to reach Ministry offices immediately after a catastrophic earthquake, full activation may require some time, but a Ministry Operations Centre Director or liaison will be available to ministry staff or school district emergency contacts within 3 hours of the event.
- The Ministry Operations Centre will be located at either 620 Superior St, Victoria or (in the event of structural damage to the main Ministry offices) at the Ministry's warehouse space, 6578 Bryn Rd, Saanichton, near the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre.

2. Activate All Business Continuity Plans

- The Ministry has identified a number of key business functions, including ensuring district and authority funding and Ministry IT support as critical services to districts, schools and students. Staff and systems to support these functions are managed by the *Ministry Operations Centre Plan* and the supporting *Business Continuity Plans*.
- It should be noted that the Ministry of Education's critical IT infrastructure, including MyEducation BC servers, is located outside the Victoria and the Lower Mainland to ensure the security of school and student information in a catastrophic earthquake.

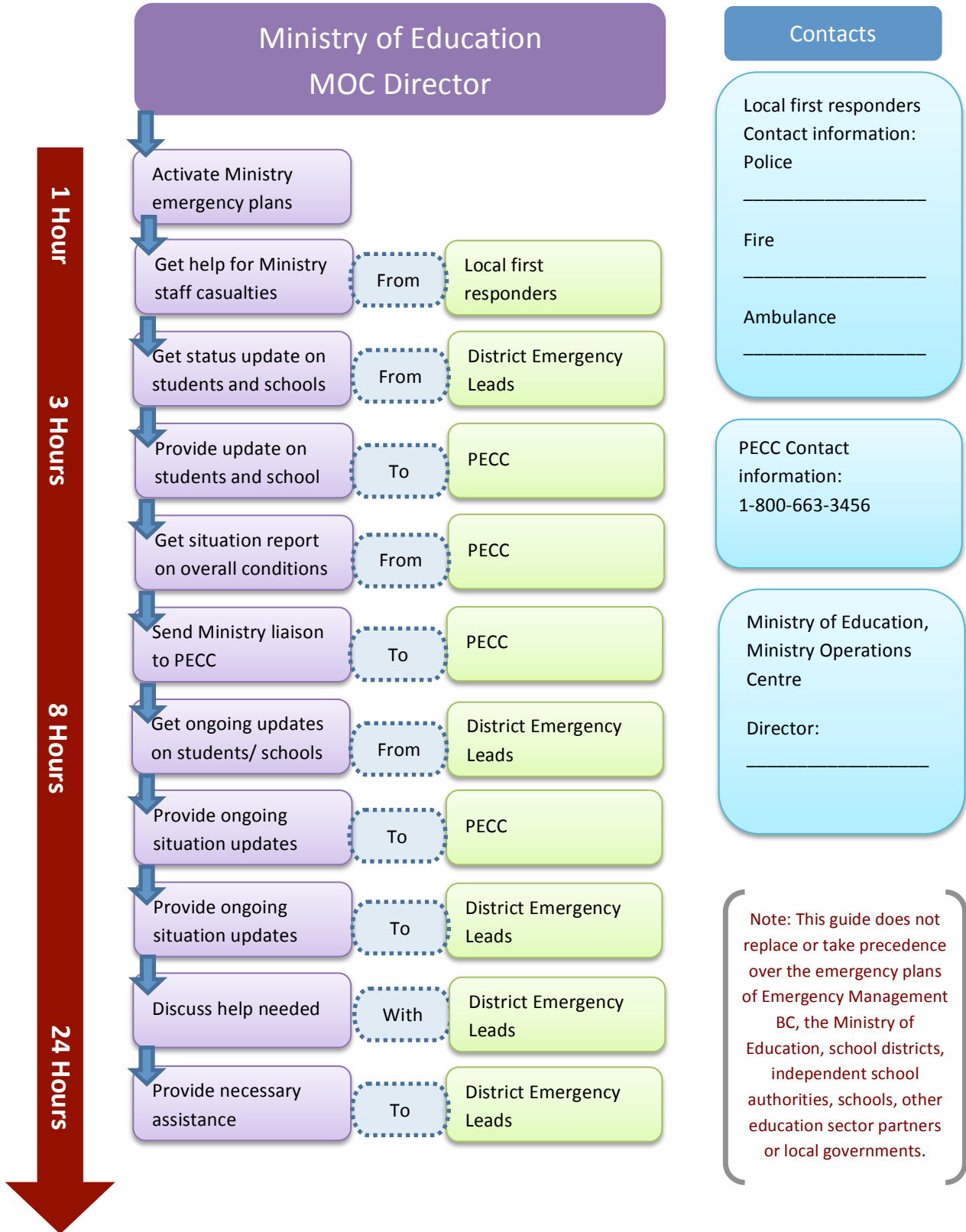
3. Establish Contact with EMBC, School Districts, Authorities and FN Schools

- One of the first goals of the Ministry Operations Centre Director will be to establish contact with any affected school districts and the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre.

4. Maintain Information on the Status of Affected Students and Schools

- Once communications have been established with Emergency Management BC, districts and authorities, the Ministry Operations Centre Director will work to gather and maintain awareness of the safety of students and status of schools in the affected area.
- Regular updates will be provided to the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre, education stakeholders and parents (if schools or districts are unable provide them).

Communication Flow Chart: Ministry of Education



District and Authority Challenges, Priorities and Actions

Challenges

Districts or authorities directly affected by a catastrophic earthquake may be facing a number of challenges, including:

- Student and staff injuries or casualties at schools
- Building and infrastructure failures at offices and facilities
- District or authority staff injuries, casualties or challenges in reporting to work
- School building and infrastructure failures
- Establishing communication with schools, parents, partners and stakeholders
- Assessing the safety of schools for students, staff and community use
- Emergency responders' needs to use structurally sound schools as community resources (reception and distribution centres, short or longer term housing etc.)

District and authority emergency plans should, to the best of their ability, account for all these potential events.

In the immediate life-saving phase, local first responders will be working to:

- Locate and rescue survivors
- Respond to any ongoing events or aftershocks

While emergency responders are likely to be overwhelmed, ensuring the safety of children will be a top priority.

Priorities:

In the event of a catastrophic emergency, districts and authorities should:

1. Activate their district or authority emergency management plans
2. Report any casualties or injuries to local first responders (ambulance, fire, police, etc.);
3. Establish contact with their schools, the Local Emergency Operations Centre or Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (as appropriate), and the Ministry Operations Centre (if possible)

Actions:

In the first week after the earthquake, casualty management and rescue will be the top priority for all first response agencies but resources will be extremely strained. The safety of any hurt or trapped students and staff will depend on effective communication between districts, schools and local emergency responders.

One of the most effective things districts and authorities can do to make students safer in a catastrophic emergency is to establish a positive relationship with their local municipal or regional government's emergency manager and ensure that the students, staff and resources of schools and district offices are clearly accounted for in local emergency plans.

Once district or authority staff are safe, establishing contact with schools (either in-person or electronically) should be the top priority. It is likely that most local infrastructure and services will be disrupted in a catastrophic emergency and that districts and authorities will need the ability to establish communication with their schools, emergency responders and the Ministry Operations Centre without available cell, internet or telephone service.

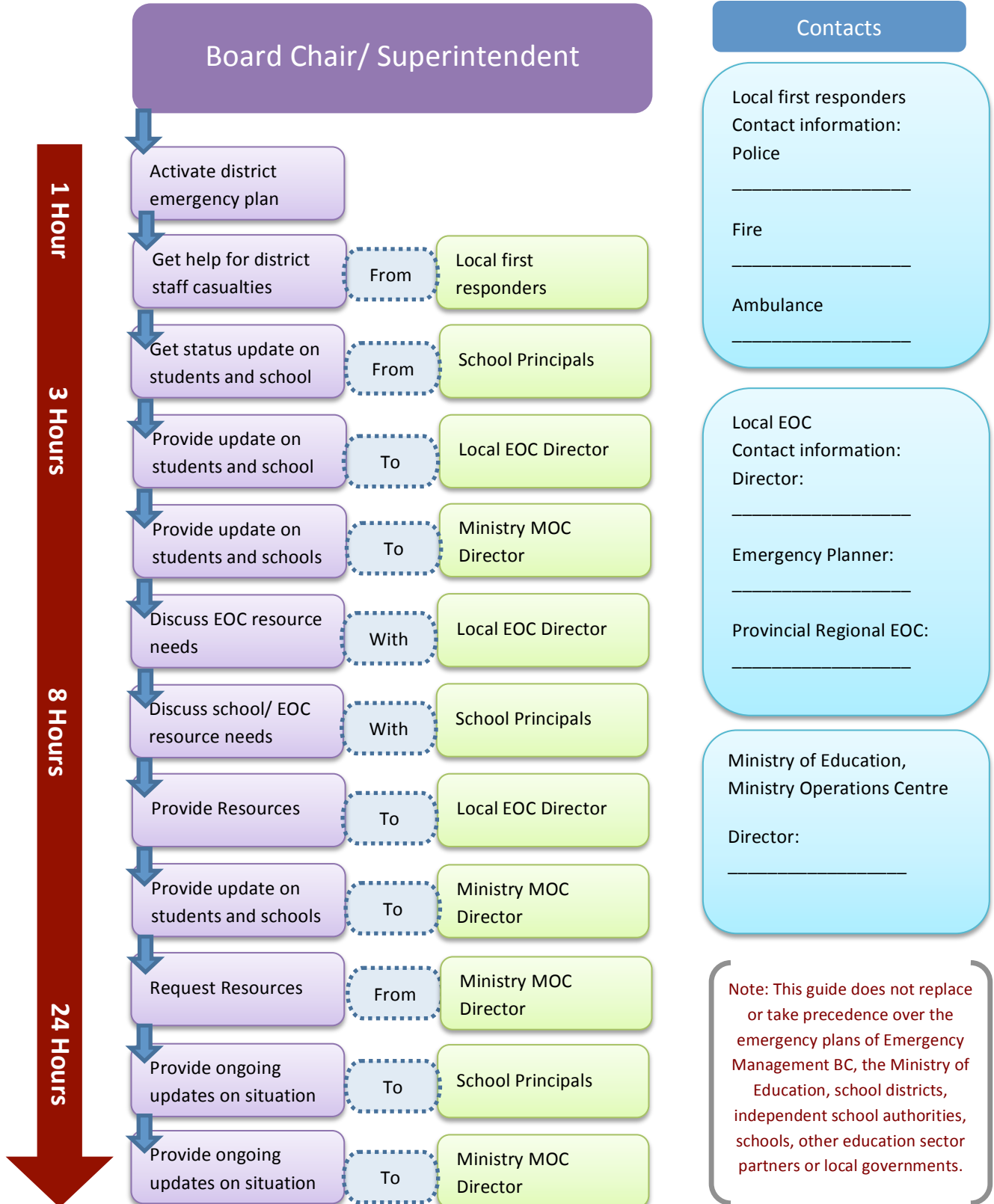
Once schools have been contacted, districts or authorities should report to their nearest emergency operations centre, which coordinate first responders and are equipped with resilient communications systems such as satellite phones. In urban areas, this is likely to be the local municipality's emergency operations centre. In rural or amalgamated areas, where district boundaries may include a number of municipalities or regions, this may be either the local EOC or the Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre.

Districts and authorities should:

- Be able to account for the location and status of each child until they have been reunited with their parents or guardians or taken into the care of emergency responders
- Establish or maintain contact with the local or regional emergency operations centres and the Ministry Operations Centre
- Be able to provide (if possible) updates on the status of students and schools to emergency response agencies and the Ministry
- Provide resources requested by local emergency response, such as schools or busses
- Ensure that staff members understand their roles and duties

For some independent and First Nations schools, the school authority manages a single school and the authority and school are functionally the same body and management staff. Those schools should refer to both this section and the following section to best understand their role during an emergency. Independent and First Nations schools may also benefit from establishing a relationship with local public school districts, in order to coordinate their planning and how they work together during an emergency.

Communication Flow Chart: Districts & Authorities



School (Public, Independent and First Nations) Challenges, Priorities and Actions

Challenges:

As with districts and authorities, schools directly affected by a catastrophic earthquake may be facing a number of challenges, including:

- Student and staff trauma or casualties;
- Structural and non-structural (lights, bookshelves, etc.) failures and collapse;
- Establishing communication with districts, parents and local emergency responders;
- Assessing the safety of schools for students, staff and community use; and
- Supporting local emergency responders' need to use the school as a reception or distribution centre, or as short or longer term housing etc.

School emergency plans should, to the best of their ability, account for all these potential events. School administrators should work with their district or authority and local government emergency manager to ensure that they understand the local response process and that students, staff and school resources are included in local emergency plans.

Priorities

In the event of a catastrophic emergency, schools should:

- 1. Activate the school's emergency management plan**
- 2. Report any casualties or medical needs to local first responders (ambulance, fire, police, etc.) in any way possible**
- 3. Account for the location and status of students and staff**
- 4. Contact the school district or authority**

Actions

If there are any student or staff casualties, local first responders should be informed as quickly as possible, followed by establishing contact with the district or authority.

Once contact has been established, schools should be prepared to provide first responders with ongoing updates on the safety of student and staff, and to provide any resources necessary to local emergency responders, including any use of school facilities that does not endanger the safety of students.

Gathering reports on local road conditions from first responders may help schools advise parents attempting to reclaim their children or assess the safety of staff travelling to or from the school.

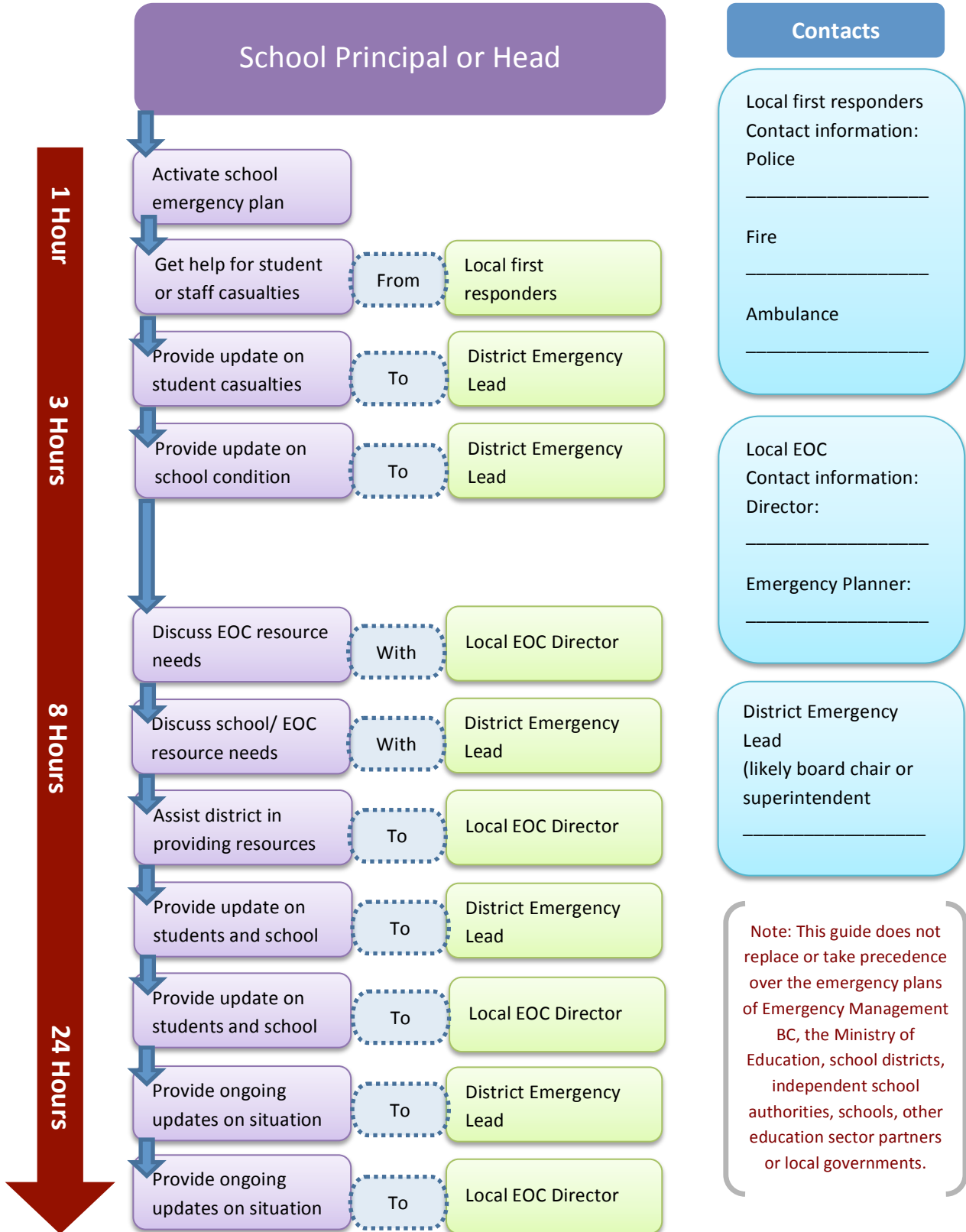
Once immediate safety issues have been managed, the first priority of districts and schools is the safe reunification of students and parents or authorized caregivers. Parents may reclaim their children quickly, may have trouble reaching the school for hours or days, or may have been injured or killed.

In the event of an emergency during school hours, school administrators and staff will need to be prepared to care for students at least until they are:

- In the care of emergency first responders (if injured)
- Reunified with their families
- Placed in the care of social services staff at an Emergency Reception Centre

Until students have left the supervision of the school, district and school staff should work with first responders to ensure that students are kept safe and emotionally supported at the school or local emergency reception centre.

Communication Flow Chart: Schools



Sustained Response in the Education Sector

Education Sector Challenges and Priorities

Following a catastrophic earthquake, communities and schools will face a number of ongoing challenges:

- Damaged buildings may potentially collapse following the first quake or during aftershocks. It will be challenging to assess the safety of so many buildings (including schools) and the potential for collapse may prevent their use for a long time.
- Infrastructure damage to roads and utilities will both prevent those services from functioning and present ongoing dangers themselves, such as localized flooding, gas leaks and electrocution risks.
- Damage to transportation infrastructure is likely to create food and water shortages, particularly in the first three weeks.
- Damage to sanitation infrastructure may increase the risk of disease outbreaks such as cholera.
- Mobilizing the full resources required from international sources may take a number of weeks.
- In the event of a Cascadia subduction earthquake, the entire West Coast, from Northern Vancouver Island to Northern California, would likely be affected, and already strained relief and resource supply lines may fail entirely.

During the sustained response phase, first responders and local emergency coordination centres will be working to:

- Prevent further damage from explosions, flooding, disease or other hazards
- Provide food and shelter for those without
- Manage infrastructure failures (food and water transportation systems, hospitals, etc.) that threaten the immediate health and safety of citizens

During the sustained response phase, the education system as a whole will be focused on:

- Providing resources as required to local and provincial emergency responders and agencies, including access to schools and school grounds, busses and heavy equipment, and situational information on school and student status.
- Maintaining the ability of schools and districts to restart education programs once the sustained response phase ends.
- Restarting classes when and where appropriate, including at alternate or temporary locations.

Ministry of Education Challenges, Priorities and Actions

Challenges

Ministry challenges during the sustained response phase may include:

- Staffing challenges;
- Managing basic business functions;
- Maintaining communications with districts, authorities and other partners; and
- Supporting districts with staffing issues or structural damage in district offices and schools.
- Assisting Emergency Management BC with any education sector-related issues or challenges.

Emergency response is complex and often presents new and challenging situations without easy solutions at the local level. Clear lines of communication are critical to ensuring that efforts are well-coordinated, students are as safe as possible, families are reunited quickly and the resources of schools are used effectively to support the communities around them.

Priorities

1. Ongoing Ministry Operations Centre management
2. Ongoing Ministry business continuity management
3. School safety assessment support, as required
4. District business function support (e.g. financial management assistance), if required

Actions

Once a fully staffed Ministry Operations Centre has been established, the Ministry will focus on supporting districts in their emergency response efforts, maintaining critical business systems and ensuring that information on student safety, schools and school resources is gathered and communicated as required to emergency response agencies, parents, and partners.

Districts, Authorities and Schools Challenges, Priorities and Actions

Challenges

District, authority and school challenges during the sustained response phase may include:

- Staffing challenges
- Parent communication
- Assessing school damage
- Ensuring school security
- Managing ongoing demands on district resources

Priorities

Once schools either close or become emergency reception or distribution centres, the organizational division between the roles of districts and authorities and the schools they manage will begin to diminish.

Key district, authority and school priorities:

- 1. Ensuring the safety of staff**
- 2. Managing basic business functions**
- 3. Establishing or maintaining communications with schools, parents, the Ministry, and local or regional emergency operations centres**
- 4. Supporting emergency responders' use of district resources and property, including school buildings**
- 5. Assessing or supporting the assessment of school safety**
- 6. Restarting classes when and where appropriate, including at alternate or temporary locations**
- 7. Establishing or maintaining school security, in coordination with local first responders**

Actions

Once the immediate response phase ends, schools will either be closed and secured or used as local emergency reception centres to support those in the community needing food, clothing or shelter.

The *Emergency Program Act* gives local governments the power to occupy or use any resources required to respond to the emergency. Once local emergency responders have indicated that they will need a school or other district/authority resource, the district's or authority's role is to support that use, while ensuring that the school, bus or other resource is, as well as possible, maintained for later educational use. Districts and authorities should be aware that compensation for damage or destruction of property being used during an emergency is governed by the *Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation* and be familiar with both the *Act* and *Regulation*.

Districts and authorities should be (in coordination with local first responders):

- Assessing the structural and non-structural safety of schools;
- Ensuring that school property is available for the use of first responders; and
- Taking all possible steps, while not interfering with emergency response needs, to safeguard school property in preparation for restarting educational programs.

Recovery in the Education Sector

Education Sector Challenges and Priorities

Recovery following a catastrophic earthquake is a complex process, dependent on priorities, conditions and the resources available at the time, and full recovery of a heavily damaged urban area may take years or even decades. Other catastrophic events, such as the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the 2011 Christchurch, New Zealand earthquake, and Hurricane Katrina's devastation of New Orleans in 2005, indicate a number of challenges to affected areas, including:

- Resources - Building materials and machinery may initially be scarce and expensive
- Labour – Skilled workers required to reconstruct buildings such as schools will be hard to find and expensive. Skilled trades are in generally in demand across Canada and many workers will have moved to other jurisdictions. There will likely be strong demand for skilled tradespersons who stay in B.C.
- Population movement – Many people may have left an area with extensive damage

Ministry of Education Challenges and Priorities

The Ministry's business continuity plans detail the process for resuming regular Ministry operations following an emergency event.

The Ministry's role in recovery will largely focus on assisting districts as they resume operations, and working to support and expedite districts' planning for the rebuilding or repair of affected schools.

Districts, Authorities and Schools Challenges and Priorities

Restarting educational programs is a priority during disaster recovery, as it provides a sense of normalcy to students, while allowing families and communities to re-establish work and other routines.

That said, reopening schools and resuming education programs in affected areas will be complex and require consultation and communication with the Ministry, teachers, local partners, parents and many others.

School districts, authorities and schools with damage may face a number of challenges:

- Rebuilding schools
- Hiring teachers to replace those who may have left the region
- Managing the transfer of schools, property or other district resources that may be currently used for long-term emergency response or housing
- Recovering student and personnel data, and other electronic information
- Replacing school district information systems, including hardware and software
- Financial recovery and operations
- Renting mobile educational units and leasing of neutral sites or spaces
- Replacing instructional materials and equipment, including textbooks
- Redeveloping instructional plans
- Initiating and maintaining education and support services
- Managing students' emotional stress and post-crisis reactions

Achieving an effective recovery will require schools, districts and authorities to have concrete recovery plans in place prior to a catastrophic event taking place. These plans need to consider how the school, district or authority will bring the system back to normalcy and address the following five areas of recovery: emotional and psychological, physical and structural, continuity of operations, restoration of academic learning and a student and staff debrief of the event.

Families and communities should not expect the resumption of school programs for a minimum of six months and individual schools or programs may or may not reopen, depending on damage, available resources, and district or government priorities.

Some schools may be undamaged or have sustained minor damage and be capable of continuing to provide education services to students. That said, restarting classes following a catastrophic earthquake is complex, and districts and authorities must weigh a great many considerations in the process including: the availability of staff; the numbers of students able to attend; the need to bring together students or classes from different schools; the need for school spaces as refugee or reception centres; structural safety assessments; the condition of water, transportation, sewer, or electrical lines and other infrastructure serving the school; the availability of basic resources; and many other potential concerns.

It will be important for districts, authorities and schools to keep in contact with parents and help them to understand how and why decisions are being made in the necessarily unpredictable process of rebuilding and restarting classes.

Emergency Planning Topics Contact List

[Note: These contacts are for planning PRIOR to an emergency]

If this is an emergency, please refer to the communication flow chart for your organization:

- [Communication Flow Chart: Ministry of Education – pg 14](#)
- [Communication Flow Chart: Districts & Authorities – pg 17](#)
- [Communication Flow Chart: Schools – pg 20](#)

Topic	Organization	Contact
<i>Business Continuity Planning and Ministry Operations Centre Management</i>	<i>Ministry of Education, Resource Management and Executive Financial Officer</i>	<i>Phone: 250 812-3871</i>
<i>School Seismic Mitigation Program</i>	<i>Ministry of Education, Resource Management and Executive Financial Officer, Capital Standards</i>	<i>Phone: 250 356-6750</i>
<i>Emergency Management Planning for Schools, Districts and Authorities</i>	<i>Ministry of Education, Learning Division</i>	<i>Phone: 604 817-3635</i>
<i>Public School Student Safety and Emergency Management Planning</i>	<i>School District Superintendents</i>	<i>School and District Contact Website: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/SP.do</i>
<i>Provincial Emergency Management and Planning</i>	<i>Emergency Management BC</i>	<i>Phone: 250 952-4913 Website: http://www.embc.gov.bc.ca</i>
<i>Municipal and Regional Emergency Plans and Coordinators</i>	<i>Municipal and Regional Governments</i>	<i>Phone: Call municipal or Regional office Website: Local Government Contacts (search by location): http://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/directories</i>
<i>Independent Schools Emergency Management and Planning</i>	<i>Federation of Independent School Associations BC</i>	<i>Phone: 604 684-6023 Website: https://fisabc.ca/</i>
<i>First Nations Schools Emergency Management and Planning</i>	<i>Emergency Management BC</i>	<i>Phone: 250 952-4913 Website: http://www.embc.gov.bc.ca</i>

Appendix A: Future Work

Our education and emergency management partners have identified the following as potential areas of future work that may support the education sector's ability to respond to a catastrophic earthquake:

Student Safety

Student Status and Reporting Guidelines Development

- Guidelines for student care and support in emergency social services protocols

Education Supports for Communities

Emergency Use of Schools Framework Development

- Framework for safe and effective use of schools by local and provincial emergency response agencies during a local, regional, provincial or catastrophic emergency

Planning and Readiness

Ministry Readiness

- Update of *Ministry Operations Centre Manual*

Sector Readiness Requirements

- Development of readiness policy or regulatory requirements

District and School Planning Guides

- Update of *Emergency Management Guide for Schools, Districts and Authorities*

Education Sector Emergency Exercise

- Development of tabletop emergency management package for school district

Appendix B: Organization and Governance of Education in B.C.

Public Schools

<p style="text-align: center;">SCHOOL PRINCIPAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supervises and manages a school, including students and teachers ○ Performs duties assigned by the board of education
<p style="text-align: center;">DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oversees schools and staff in a school district ○ Performs duties assigned by the board of education
<p style="text-align: center;">BOARD OF EDUCATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Responsible for the operation of the school district including determining budget, policy and education programs ○ Provides direction to school districts through district superintendent ○ Owns and manages district property, including schools
<p style="text-align: center;">B.C. MINISTER OF EDUCATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Co-governs the education system with local boards of education ○ Administers teacher professional standards ○ Manages student information systems
<p style="text-align: center;">PROVINCIAL CABINET & LEGISLATURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Responsible for funding the education system, including school construction ○ Sets Provincial government's education priorities ○ Determines legislation that governs the education system

Independent Schools

<p>SCHOOL HEAD OR PRINCIPAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Supervises and manages a school, including students and teachers○ Applies authority policy and manages staff within a school
<p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOL AUTHORITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Responsible for the operation of the schools owned by the authority including determining funding and policy priorities○ Provides direction to school head or principal
<p>B.C. MINISTER OF EDUCATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Responsible for oversight of the independent school system○ Administers teacher professional standards
<p>PROVINCIAL CABINET & LEGISLATURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Provides some funding of independent schools○ Sets Provincial government's education priorities○ Determines legislation that governs the education system

First Nations Schools

<p>FIRST NATIONS SCHOOL PRINCIPAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supervises and manages a school, including students and teachers ○ Applies First Nations policy and manages staff within a school ○ Supported by the First Nations School Association
<p>FIRST NATION CHIEF AND COUNCIL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Responsible for the operation of schools within the First Nation, including determining funding and policy priorities ○ Provides direction to First Nations school principal ○ Supported by the First Nations Education Steering Committee
<p>DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS & NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Responsible for allocating funding for education and building schools ○ Provides advice to Federal Cabinet on First Nations school education funding, legislation
<p>FEDERAL CABINET AND LEGISLATURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Responsible for funding of First Nations schools on reserves

Appendix C: Education Sector Emergency Plans

Ministry of Education

- **Ministry of Education Emergency Response Plan**
This is the plan you are currently reading, which details the Ministry of Education’s preparation for and response to a catastrophic earthquake scenario.
- **Ministry of Education Business Continuity Plans**
The Ministry of Education’s business continuity plans detail the critical work of the ministry, such as providing financial support for school districts and authorities, and the work required to ensure those functions continue in the event of a major emergency.
- **Ministry Operations Centre Plan**
In major emergencies, including a catastrophic earthquake, the Ministry of Education activates a Ministry Operations Centre to coordinate the activation of business continuity plans, and communication with the Provincial emergency management structure, school districts and authorities, education sector partners and families as necessary. The Ministry Operations Centre plans include emergency management procedures and protocols, including safety, staffing, information management, technical and building infrastructure support and assessment, and business continuity.
- **Ministry of Education Seismic Mitigation Program**
In preparation for a potential major earthquake, the [Seismic Mitigation Program](#) is upgrading or replacing 346 B.C. schools that [APEGBC](#) engineers have identified as high-risk in a seismic event. Since launching the Seismic Mitigation Program, the Ministry of Education has spent over \$1.5B to complete 164 school seismic projects throughout the province, with an additional 14 projects currently under construction, and 9 projects proceeding to construction (as of April 2017).

School Districts

- **[Emergency Management Planning Guide for Schools, Districts + Authorities](#)**
This plan was developed to ensure the education sector was able to effectively respond to a wide-range of emergencies and threats at the school and district/authority-level. By establishing a common approach to emergency management across the sector, the *Planning Guide* also improves coordination within the education sector and between schools and local emergency response groups or responders.
- **District or Authority operational emergency plans**
Districts may have individual business continuity plans for the activation of an emergency operation centre. [Contact your local school district for more information.](#)

Public Schools

- **Emergency Management Planning Guide for Schools, Districts + Authorities**
(as above)
- **District-specific school-level Emergency Management Plans and Protocols**
Many districts have supplemented the *Emergency Management Planning Guide* with detailed materials, plans and protocols. Contact local school districts for information.
- **Local Emergency Management Plans**
In B.C., every local Municipality and Regional government is required to have a local emergency management plan to coordinate response to any hazards that community might reasonably face. These plans must detail plans for any potential resources that might be required for emergency response, such as using local schools as housing or emergency distribution centres. Those interested in learning more about their local emergency management plan should contact their local emergency management coordinator (via civicinfo.bc.ca)

Independent Schools and Authorities

- **Emergency Management Planning Guide for Schools, Districts and Authorities**
(as above)
- The Federation of Independent School Associations BC (FISA BC) have produced a supplement to the *Emergency Management Planning Guide*, that provides a quick reference and guide for independent schools developing an emergency plan. Contact [FISA BC](#) or an [Independent School Authority](#) for more information

First Nations Schools

- First Nations have responsibility for local emergency planning, and are supported by [Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada](#), [Emergency Management BC](#) and the [First Nations School Association of BC](#). First Nations emergency management plans include planning for local schools.
- Approximately 25 First Nations schools are also registered as B.C. independent schools, and use the same emergency management planning resources as Independent Schools and Authorities (above)

Appendix D: Ministry Operations Centre (MOC) Activation Levels

Level 1: Minimum MOC Activation

- One or two business units have activated their business continuity plans (BCP) as a result of a localized flood condition, fire, gas release, power outage, IT failure or local health condition; or
- One or two business units may be disrupted due to anticipated work interruptions such as civil disobedience or disrupted access to the worksite; or
- A limited-scope interruption to Ministry business has occurred or is expected.

Staffing (minimum):

- MOC Director
- Risk management officer

Activities include:

- Coordination and support for affected business units
- Situational and risk assessment, including potential for raising MOC activation level or moving MOC
- MOC staffing needs and activation
- Media release coordination (with provincial government communications)
- Partner and staff updates and alerts
- Recovery status reporting
- Maintain personal activity logs and duty time sheets

Level 2: Escalated MOC Activation

- Two or more business units have activated their local BCP; or
- Two or more school sites have been affected; or
- Level 1 conditions have escalated; or
- A moderate interruption to Ministry business has occurred.

Staffing (minimum):

- Level 1 staffing;
- All identified MOC management positions;
- Section chiefs as required; and
- Section staff as identified by section chiefs.

Activities include:

- Level 1 Activities;
- Additional coordination and support for local business units as required;
- Coordination and support for affected districts and authorities; and
- Coordination and support for Provincial emergency response agencies (EMBC PECC or PREOCs).

Level 3: Full MOC Activation

- A major event, such as regional flooding, earthquake, disaster or health pandemic has occurred that drastically impacts the Ministry's ability to conduct business; or
- Multiple school sites have been affected; or
- Multiple business units have activated their local BCP; or
- A serious interruption to Ministry business has occurred; or
- Level 2 conditions have escalated.

Staffing (minimum):

- Full staffing;
- All sections;
- Some supporting units
- NB: in a major or catastrophic event, flexible and overlapping 24-hour staffing may be required.

Activities include:

- Level 2 Activities;
- Additional coordination and support for local business units as required;
- Coordination and support for affected districts and authorities; and
- Coordination and support for Provincial emergency response agencies (through Emergency Management BC).
- Initiation of support from other ministries or organizations as required;
- Ongoing resource needs and priority assessment according to situation and staffing availability.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Education Sector
INTEGRATED
RESPONSE PLAN *for*
CATASTROPHIC EARTHQUAKE



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