

**BC MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE –
FUNDING EQUITY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE
Updated December 2024**

Strategic Context – *Educated and engaged citizens that thrive in a rapidly changing world.*

The Ministry of Education and Child Care (the ministry) is responsible for ensuring the province’s 696,000+ K-12 students develop their individual potential and acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous, sustainable economy. (Ministry of Education and Child Care Service Plan, 2024/25 – 2026/27).

The ministry continually seeks to improve outcomes and enhance education experiences for all students to prepare them for achieving their career and life goals, no matter their background, learning needs, orientation, or where they live. The ministry’s role is to provide leadership and funding to the K-12 education sector through governance, legislation, policy and standards.

In this context, the ministry allocates operating grant funding to public school districts using a simplified, comprehensive and transparent student-based formula that was implemented in 2002/03, replacing the previous cost-based formula. In accordance with the *School Act*, school districts have the autonomy and flexibility to spend their operating grant according to local needs and district priorities. Targeted funds may require districts to spend in accordance with specific provincial education system transformation objectives.

Committee Purpose and Accountability

The purpose of the Funding Equity Committee (FEC) is to provide technical advice and recommendations to the Minister of Education and Child Care, through the ministry, on how funding changes can improve the equity of educational opportunity for all students in B.C., regardless of their background or where they live. The mechanism by which this equity can be achieved is the school district funding allocation formula and rates. The FEC will identify issues, opportunities, and potential changes to the formula and/or rates used to allocate funds to school districts for public education that can improve equity of opportunity across the province.

Education partner-appointed members are not accountable to their associations in performing their role on FEC. Members bring their experience and expertise to FEC in order to provide advice in support of province-wide education system objectives.

Roles and Responsibilities

Chair

- 1) Establish annual working priorities and meeting schedule;
- 2) Develop meeting agendas and prepare materials for the committee’s review;
- 3) Chair meetings and ensure all members have opportunities to provide feedback.

Members

1) Funding Principles and Assumptions

Make recommendations to modify the funding formula, rates and other grants (where applicable) that consider and are consistent with the agreed funding principles. For further clarity, to ensure that the formula:

- is aligned with government priorities and direction to the ministry;
- facilitates access to comparable levels of educational services and opportunities for individual students across the province;
- allocates available resources amongst Boards of Education in consideration of unique local and provincial operational requirements;
- supports strategic, multi-year planning for educational programming and school district operations;
- respects the autonomy of, and does not unnecessarily restrict, individual Boards of Education in the spending of their allocations to further student success;
- calculates funding using a clear and transparent methodology; and
- allocates resources to Boards of Education in the most efficient manner and ensures that resources provided are being utilized as intended.

2) Advise the committee on effective strategies to ensure a smooth transition to new funding formula elements while mitigating negative impacts on district operations. It will provide counsel about how to implement and communicate any changes to elements of the existing funding model.

3) Identify criteria to assess the impact of any funding changes that are implemented by the ministry, to determine if the change has its desired effect and to identify any unintended consequences of funding changes.

4) Overall, the FEC recommendations will be consistent with, and support the achievement of, education objectives as set out in the strategic context section of this Terms of Reference.

The Terms of Reference, including roles and responsibilities of participants will be reviewed annually.

Meeting Frequency

The Committee generally meets every other month but may convene at any time as required by the Chair. The number of meetings per year, as well as the approximate dates will be established during or before the Committee's first meeting of the school year.

Should the Committee wish to make recommendations to the Minister on changes to the operating grant funding formula or rates it must submit its technical recommendations by the end of the December of every year. This allows time for the Minister to consider the Committee's recommendations for possible inclusion in the Operating Grants Manual, which is required to be released by March 15 of every year.

Committee Composition and Operations

This Committee will consist of representatives from each of the following organizations:

- 3 representatives from the BC Association of School Business Officials (BCASBO)
 - Flavia Coughlan, Secretary-Treasurer, School District #39 (Vancouver)
 - Miranda Burdock, Secretary-Treasurer, School District #51 (Boundary)
 - Gerry Slykhuis, Secretary-Treasurer, School District #78 (Fraser Cascade)
 - Alternate: Ernie Gran, Secretary-Treasurer, School District #74 (Gold Trail)

- 3 representatives from the BC School Superintendents' Association (BCSSA)
 - Jacob Sol, Assistant Superintendent, School District #36 (Surrey)
 - Stephen Petrucci, Superintendent, School District #60 (Peace River North)
 - Christina MacDonald, Superintendent, School District #85 (Vancouver Island North)
 - Alternate: Katherine Shearer, Superintendent, School District #20 (Kootenay-Columbia)

- 1 representative from School District No. 93 (Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique)(CSF)
 - Pascale Bernier, Superintendent

- 1 representative from the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)
 - Jan Haugen, Director of Executive Services and Community Support

- 4 representatives from the Ministry of Education and Child Care
 - Chris Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Management Division
 - Chair, Caroline Ponsford, Executive Director, Funding and Financial Accountability Branch, Resource Management Division,
 - Alternate Chair, Tim Jah, Director, Funding and Allocation, Funding and Financial Accountability Branch
 - Jane London, A/Director, Strategic Policy and Planning, Funding and Financial Accountability Branch

When FEC members are no longer able to fulfill their role, the ministry will request that BCASBO, BCSSA, the CSF and FNESC provide potential representatives to the FEC who have a balance of expertise and experience, and who can represent a full range of district types in Committee discussions (i.e., rural/urban; extra small/small/medium/large; and different geographic regions) with no duplication of school district representation.

The Chair will confirm FEC members and alternates from this pool. To ensure that boards from all parts of the province have the opportunity to participate and to encourage capacity building in the sector, where possible, the ministry requests that representatives serve no more than three consecutive years on the FEC. To ensure transparency, if the ministry does not accept a proposed representative for the FEC, the ministry will explain the reasons for the decision in writing.

The Chair may modify FEC membership as needed.

Engagement, Consultation and Communication

The Committee and/or the ministry will engage or consult with education partners/stakeholders regarding the annual funding allocation formula review using approaches appropriate to the issue and available time to engage or consult:

- The Committee will consider the need for engagement or consultation at each meeting.
- Ministry representatives may consult with ministry program areas to bring forward emerging issues/initiatives that may have implications for the funding formula and rates.
- Engagement or consultation may be undertaken, as appropriate, with school districts, FNEsc Executive, Métis Nation BC (MNBC) executive, BCASBO Executive, BCSSA Executive and the BCSTA Executive, and each association's members as required, on interests and concerns regarding the funding allocation formula during the annual review process.
- Any report of the Committee to the Minister of Education and Child Care may be released, on an embargoed basis, to the FNEsc, MNBC, BCASBO and BCSSA Executives. Following the submission of a report to the Minister a briefing of the Minister of Education and Child Care by the Committee may be scheduled if needed.

Confidentiality

Recognizing that all materials and subject matter being reviewed by the Committee may be subject to government confidentiality provisions, Committee members shall maintain complete confidentiality of all materials, views, and discussions that occur, and may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. If at any time a Committee member is not able to keep complete confidentiality or unable to take a provincial or equitable view to the deliberations of the committee then they should identify this conflict to their organization or the Chair and ask to be replaced.

Meeting Location

Meetings will take place electronically via Zoom or another platform that enables members to video conference and screen share.

Terms of Reference revised: December 2024