

**BC MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE –
FUNDING EQUITY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE
Updated July 2023**

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

The province’s K-12 education system is responsible for ensuring that the learning outcomes of over 665,000 students are achieved, that they acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to a healthy society, and that they participate in our democratic institutions. (Ministry of Education and Child Care Service Plan, February 2022/23 – 2024/25).

The Ministry of Education and Child Care (the ministry) continually seeks to improve outcomes and enhance education experiences for each student to prepare them in achieving their career and life goals, no matter their background, learning needs, orientation, or where they live. The ministry’s role is to provide the leadership and funding to the K-12 education system, 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.

The Funding Equity Committee (“the Committee”), comprised of representatives from key public education partner associations, is convened to:

- examine the public education operating grant funding allocation formula and rates for continued appropriateness and effectiveness, consistency with agreed funding principles co-developed by the ministry and the BC School Trustees’ Association (BCSTA) (see full list under Funding Principles and Assumptions section below), and to provide technical advice on issues identified by the Minister of Education and Child Care.
- consider the implications of implementing the 11 equity recommendation (Appendix A) in the report of the Independent Panel for the Funding Model Review (the Panel) as directed by government.

Committee Purpose and Accountability

The purpose of the Committee 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 Committee 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.

The Committee may provide a written report to the Deputy Minister through the Chair when providing its advice and recommendations to the Minister. Education partner-appointed members are not accountable to their associations in performing their role on the Committee. Members bring their experience and expertise to the Committee in order to provide advice in support of province-wide education system objectives.

Funding Principles and Assumptions

The funding formula for the 2022/23 and future school years is based primarily on a per-FTE funding amount (approximately 80% of total funding), with supplementary grants for students with special needs, English language learning, Indigenous education, teacher salary differentials, enrolment decline, and unique geographic factors. These components together generate a total operating grant funding level for each district.

The Committee may 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.

The Committee will also advise the ministry 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.

The Committee may 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.

Overall, the Committee 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.

Committee Composition and Operations

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

- 3 representatives from the BC Association of School Business Officials (BCASBO)

- Flavia Coughlan, Secretary-Treasurer, School District #39 (Vancouver)
- Trina Cassidy, Secretary-Treasurer, School District #73 (Kamloops –Thompson)
- Miranda Burdock, Secretary-Treasurer, School District #51 (Boundary)
- 3 representatives from the BC School Superintendents’ Association (BCSSA)
 - Scott Stinson, Superintendent, School District #62 (Sooke)
 - Christina MacDonald, Superintendent, School District #85 (Vancouver Island North)
 - Jacob Sol, Assistant Superintendent, School District #36 (Surrey)
 - Alternate: Stephen Petrucci – Superintendent, School District #60 (Peace River North)
- 1 representative from the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)
 - Jan Haugen, Director of Executive Services and Community Support
- 3 representatives from the Ministry of Education and Child Care
 - Chris Brown, ADM, Resource Management Division
 - Caroline Ponsford, A/Executive Director, Funding and Financial Accountability Branch, Resource Management Division,
 - Tim Jah, Director, Funding Allocation, Funding and Financial Accountability Branch
 - Jane London, A/Director, Strategic Policy and Planning, Funding and Financial Accountability Branch
 - The ministry will ask BCASBO, BCSSA and FNESC to annually provide representatives to the Committee. BCASBO and BCSSA will be asked to each provide a pool of 5 representatives to the Committee who can create 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 choose BCASBO and BCSSA Committee members from this pool, with the remainder serving as alternates. Where possible, the ministry requests that representatives serve no more than three consecutive years to encourage capacity building in the sector. The ministry reserves the right to reject any proposed representative and should this occur the ministry will explain in writing the reasons for the rejection.

Committee Structure

- Chair: Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Management Division
- Alternate Chair: Executive Director, Funding and Financial Accountability Branch, Resource Management Division who will support meeting preparation and management
- Secretariat support: Senior Policy & Funding Analyst, Funding and Financial Accountability Branch, Resource Management Division
- Specialist support: As needed – e.g. Director of Financial Reporting, Funding and Financial Accountability Branch, Resource Management Division

The Chair may modify the membership of the Committee from time to time as needed. Membership will be reviewed by the Members of this Committee on an annual basis.

The responsibilities of the members are to:

- 1) Provide advice in support of province-wide education system objectives that are consistent with the agreed funding principles;
- 2) Provide input into annual work plan and participate in establishing a meeting schedule;
- 3) Review elements of the current funding allocation formula/rates as directed by the Minister of Education and Child Care;
- 4) Review elements of the current funding allocation formula/rates that the Committee members identify (related to new/emerging issues, availability of new/relevant data, or a new program/policy that may benefit from a funding formula consideration, or other reasons);
- 5) Review elements of the recommendations as directed by the Minister of Education and Child Care (e.g. related to new/emerging programs/policies, availability of new/relevant data),
- 6) Provide advice on the application/implications of model elements and identify strategies to improve the effectiveness of a potential new formula;
- 7) Suggest where subject matter experts are needed to help educate and understand the implications of a potential new program/policy/data before implementing a specific element;
- 8) Advise on strategies to ensure a smooth transition as funding changes are considered for implementation;
- 9) Consider ad hoc issues outside the work plan as directed by the Minister; and
- 10) Counsel the ministry on education and implementation strategies and the impacts on the operations of school districts.
- 11) Provide technical advice and recommendations in writing via approval of Committee minutes and summary reports as required.

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 equitably view to the deliberations of the committee then they should identify this conflict to their Association or the Chair and ask to be replaced.

Timeline

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 and the locations of the meetings 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.

Consultation and Communication

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

- The Committee will consider the need for 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.
- Consultation may be undertaken, as appropriate, with school districts, FNEC 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 FNEC, 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.

Reimbursements

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

Occasional in person meetings may be held; members will be reimbursed for travel and accommodation costs directly related to participation at the in person meetings in accordance with Provincial Government travel policy (see http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/ocg/fmb/manuals/CPM/10_Travel.htm) . Reimbursements must be submitted within 30 days of a meeting to K12fundingreview@gov.bc.ca.

Terms of Reference revised: July 2023.

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

Appendix A – Funding Model Review, Summary of Independent Review Panel Equity-Related Recommendations

- 1) First allocate funds for Indigenous students, unique SD characteristics, and inclusive education. Allocate the remainder allocated on a per-student basis
- 2) Maintain targeted funding for Indigenous students and establish minimum spending levels
- 3) Ministry to work with FNEESC to review indigenous targeted funding policy so it better supports continuous improvement for Indigenous learners
- 4) Consolidate unique district funding into a new supplement with two components; unique school district needs and unique school needs
- 5) Replace enrolment decline and funding protection with a single supplement
- 6) Consolidate funds for vulnerable students and unique needs into a single Inclusive Education Supplement with two components; assessment based for 'highest need' students and a prevalence model
- 7) Ministry works with CSF to develop a factor that recognizes CSF province-wide characteristics (in keeping with other recommendations)
- 8) Eliminate the Classroom Enhancement Fund and redirect funding through SD operating grants
- 9) Base funding allocations by number of school-age students (headcount) rather than course-based funding (FTE) and phase in by 2020/21
- 10) Develop a new policy/delivery model for Distributed Learning
- 11) Continue funding Adult Learning, Continuing Education and Summer School by course