



FUNDING MODEL IMPLEMENTATION
Online Learning

WORKING GROUP REPORT

OCTOBER 4, 2019

Background

The Online Learning Implementation Working Group (the Working Group) was tasked with assisting the Ministry of Education in determining the best approach to implementing Recommendation 10 of the Independent Review Panel's report:

With the shift to a per-student-based funding model, the Ministry should develop a new policy and program delivery model for Distributed Learning to ensure consistent access to quality programming for all students in the province.

The Working Group agreed that Distributed Learning (DL) has long supported the province's commitment to serve every student and to provide access to education despite the challenges of geography or circumstance. The Working Group also agreed that the current DL model needs improvement to ensure that issues of quality, equity, accountability and access are addressed, regardless of any new funding model.

The Working Group suggested that term DL was not well understood, and the current legislative definition was outdated and restrictive. They offered a few alternatives, including e-Learning or online learning. Either term supports their view that DL be considered an integrated part of the continuum of learning, not necessarily a separate "program." For the purpose of this report, we will use the term "e-Learning."

The Working Group discussed thoroughly the need for e-Learning, its integration across the education system and its potential to better support students. The work included:

- Workshopping the 22 recommendations from the Independent Review Panel for a common understanding and identification of the connections with Recommendation 10, and to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the recommendations;
- Defining challenges and opportunities that exist within the current model;
- Revising the vision statement for e-Learning, as a foundation for program and funding policy;
- Reviewing research, including a summary of current literature and promising practices in other jurisdictions;
- Collecting and reviewing samples of DL data from current DL program providers. This was compared to overall provincial data on course completion to articulate/provide evidence on the current successes and challenges;
- Developing student profiles (holograms) and the document "Student Journey" to better understand the range of learners served by DL, their learning needs and their goals;
- Analyzing and evaluating three potential service models for e-Learning, leading to the development of the proposed model;
- Identifying challenges and proposing mitigation strategies for the proposed model, including funding; and
- Providing advice on key policy questions from the perspectives of stakeholders.

Meetings and Membership

The Working Group met four times between March and July 2019. The Working Group has ten external members representing key partners in the BC K-12 education system and four members from the Ministry of Education, both from the Funding Model Implementation Team and the Distributed Learning program area. Eleanor Liddy (Ministry of Education) and Mike McKay (Implementation Coordination Committee) co-chaired the Working Group. The Working Group's membership and meeting dates are listed in Appendix A.

The Working Group also established an online "classroom" in MOODLE, one of the common learning management systems in use by K-12. This classroom was used for group discussion, posting questions and providing documents.

Summary of Discussion Themes

The current funding model and how it works

- Discussion of the current model included 1) the challenges associated with different funding for online vs. bricks and mortar learning, 2) the level of flexibility and choice inherent in both types of learning and 3) the challenges of cross-enrollment for funding.

The jurisdictional scan

- An overview of research on e-Learning and an international scan of best practices was completed.

Governance, quality assurance, capacity and looking to the future

- Both online and "traditional bricks and mortar" learning should focus on the student.
- Any new model must address the "competition" for students (i.e., funding) among various e-Learning providers (e.g., public, independent).
- Quality assurance reviews of programs should be rigorous and lead to improvement or change in practices if needed.
- Better data and information are needed to make informed decisions about student outcomes and effective programs.
- Blended learning (a combination of e-Learning and face to face delivery) is already being used in schools now and should be supported.

Accountability and funding

- There should be equitable funding regardless of how learning is delivered.
- There was considerable discussion about head-count vs course-based funding. Members of the Working Group raised some concerns about elements of both methods of funding. For example, the current model provides school districts with funding for each course and is seen as supporting students who take more than a traditional full load of eight. A move to the headcount model would potentially reduce that additional support, and limit choice for students.
- How can the Ministry address the loss of revenue due to students attending classes outside of their home districts?
- School districts should be accountable for their students, no matter where those students take some of their program choices.
- Audit and compliance requirements should be the same for all program delivery, regardless of online or bricks & mortar. This process could be linked to the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning and should emphasize program quality rather than only funding compliance.

Equity and access

- E-Learning must improve learning for students with diverse and unique needs, students in remote or rural regions (keeping in mind that not all school districts offer e-Learning), and those students who cannot access a course at their school.
- Equity cannot simply be determined by a dollar value.
- Any new model must maintain or improve flexibility and choice for students/families while focussing on improving student outcomes.
- All teachers will have access to a similar set of e-Learning tools and resources.

Independent e-Learning

- Independent e-Learning must align with changes in public e-Learning in order to ensure program quality for all learners.

Indicators of Success

There was also considerable discussion on how best to measure student success and outcomes in the e-Learning environment. The Working Group pointed out that the traditional metric of course completion within the school year painted an inaccurate picture, due to the continuous entry model.

Other metrics suggested were:

- Completion rates and timelines for courses (within 6, 10, 12 months from the active start date);
- A range of student achievement metrics beyond course completion rates;
- Learning Analytics to better inform student engagement, pulled from the Learning Management System (LMS);
- Rates of transition from Foundations courses to high school completion courses;
- Rates of transition to post-secondary institutions;
- Feedback from post-secondary institutions, employers, local First Nations;
- Feedback from students and parents;
- Availability and quality of e-Learning programs throughout the province;
- An accountability framework adhered to by all partners; and
- Regular assessment for quality assurance.

Considerations

Funding model

- The Working Group strongly endorsed the principle that all learning be funded equally irrespective of delivery model. They also noted that currently e-Learning courses are funded less than courses offered in brick & mortar schools.
- The service delivery model for e-Learning recommended by the Working Group could be adapted to align with a funding model that is either course-based or student-based (headcount). Risks and benefits were identified for adapting to both funding models.

Other considerations

- The Working Group recommended that accountability mechanisms be improved to focus on course quality in order to identify and share promising practices and intervene where evidence of quality is lacking.
- The Working Group recommended that all students should have a home school district before enrolling for courses outside of their home district. That home district will continue to hold primary responsibility for the student's learning journey.
- There is a need for a transition period to allow students to complete their courses, for school districts to adapt to the new model and for the Ministry to establish the infrastructure required.
- A change in the funding approach for students with diverse needs or for all supplemental funding could result in some specialized e-Learning schools closing. This could potentially limit student and family choice.

Related policy implications

- The Working Group recommended a single policy be created for e-Learning that recognizes:
 - Continuous entry;
 - The rise of blended learning to be supported by the new service-delivery model;
 - The need to address the new limits to cross-enrollments and access to the proposed provincial infrastructure for e-Learning; and
- The Working Group recommended that a final review of changes to both the funding and service delivery models be conducted with the Ministry of Education data analysts, subject matter experts including practicing teachers and school district leaders to consider potential unintended consequences and to recommend mitigation strategies beyond those identified by the Working Group.

Conclusion

A high quality 21st century e-Learning option is essential because all students must be able to access the courses they want and need, regardless of where they are located and their personal circumstances. For all students, urban and rural, their current and future realities will require skill and sophistication in navigating e-Learning environments to learn, exchange information and connect with the wider community for study, work and social engagement. A robust e-Learning environment will help learners develop those skills.

Quality e-Learning, supported by a skilled and engaging teacher, helps BC to achieve its commitment to equity. It means that students are able to access foundational and elective courses whether they live in a rural or urban area, whether they are working through health or social challenges and regardless of their particular learning needs or styles.

The Ministry’s decision to create a Working Group to examine Recommendation 10 speaks to the importance of the service provided today and that which is needed for the future.

The Working Group appreciated the opportunity to thoroughly examine this recommendation with a wide group of partners. Given the significant changes proposed as part of the funding model review, the Working Group members valued the Ministry’s commitment to allow for the necessary time to consult and to thoroughly investigate the original Recommendation 10, its potential application and the challenges and mitigations related to the various models that were explored. The Working Group felt that this was a useful approach for future efforts to manage large-scale change to BC’s education system.

Proposed approach	Implications of proposed approach	Mitigation strategies
<p>Universal Access Model</p> <p>Provincially supported and funded infrastructure (LMS, Course Resource Repository and Capacity Building)</p>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a platform for consistency across the system (quality, student centred, student choice, inclusivity, accessibility) • Allows for cost efficiencies • Provides user equity • Access to infrastructure to be provided to all teachers • Provides access to entire education system • Provides IT support system-wide (financial accountability, inclusivity, accessibility, future oriented, quality) • Ensures tools and infrastructure provide a secure FOIPPA compliant environment <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring equitable oversight between provincial and local systems • Perception of “lost autonomy” by school districts • School district and educator capacity to utilize new infrastructure • Funding implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the ability to localize and personalize course content • Review and reporting requirements linked to the District Accountability Framework • Establish an on-going governance body including school district representatives to select and oversee the function of the LMS, assure course quality content and provide direction and advice • Develop a transition plan to include funding and support for capacity building

<p>Development of a Master Agreement to support the transition to the new model</p>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes expectations of school districts that students have access to online courses either through a district-based e-Learning program and or the provincial service • Will be linked to the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning • Provides the ability to create standards for reporting student data • Reinforces school district responsibility for their students, regardless of who is delivering the course <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts' ability to transition from existing infrastructure to the new provincial model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a transition plan • Revise current policies
<p>Approved Provincial e-Learning Service Providers</p>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will ensure quality assurance as service providers will be viewed as the centre for expertise • Will allow for consistency e.g. onboarding, delivery, experience • Maintains choice for students where the local district cannot fully meet their needs <p>Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a predictable funding flow to support the e-Learning service delivery • May not fully address the diverse needs of all students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer a provincial RFP allowing for the selection of more than one provider to support the diverse needs and requirements of students • Develop the new funding model
<p>Limited Cross-Enrollment</p>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved quality and accountability • Reduction of “grade shopping” by students • Clarifies school district responsibility for students <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be perceived as a loss of choice for students due to no “district-to-district” or “public-to-independent” cross-enrollment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>School Act</i> will need to be revised to clarify cross-enrollment and what entity is responsible for the student • Alignment between public and independent e-Learning

<p>Equitable Funding</p>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforces the message that e-Learning is part of the overall learning continuum • Reduction of service disparity across the province • Simplifies the funding and reduces administrative burden to school districts • E-Learning will be funded the same way as other learning <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential downsizing or elimination of some current local programs • May lead to an expectation of an increase to the overall block 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a provincial infrastructure • Recommending a three-year implementation plan
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Appendix A: Working Group Membership and Meeting Dates

Membership:

Name	Organization
Eleanor Liddy (co-chair)	Ministry of Education
Mike McKay (co-chair)	Implementation Coordination Committee
Sterling Olson	BC Association of School Business Officials
Rob Peregoodoff	BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
David Truss	BC Distributed Learning Administrator's Association
Karen Fello	BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association
Andrew Holland	BC School Superintendents Association
Carolyn Broady	BC School Trustees Association
Larry Kuehn	BC Teachers' Federation
Tracey Mathieson	Canadian Union of Public Employees - BC
Jo Chrona	First Nations Education Steering Committee
Manu Madhok	Rural Education Advisory Committee
Teresa McClintick	Ministry of Education
Mario Miniaci	Ministry of Education

FMI Secretariat Support:

Delaney Chester	Ministry of Education
Jonathan Foweraker	Ministry of Education

Meetings:

- March 8, 2019 – Victoria
- April 29, 2019 – Victoria
- May 27, 2019 – Victoria
- July 3, 2019 – Victoria

Future state learner journey

Explore



I have different learning needs, learning styles. I need access to various sources of information to make informed decisions about learning options.

Evaluate



I need a to understand my learning options and a way to evaluate my options more and feel confident about my learning choice (including PSI admissions).

Commit



I need to understand the requirements to register/apply and proper technology/tools to access the learning option I choose.

Experience



I need an engaging educator and interesting content. I need a way to submit assignments and be evaluated. I need space to socialize.

Complete



I need a way to demonstrate progression and measure my performance, and advancement.

Continue



I need ways to understand new education needs and clarity on the paths to advance my learning. I need motivation.

Off-board



I need to understand my exit options and a path to re-enter (B&M or continue with Flexible Learning) if I choose to do so.

Learner Needs

Learner Actions

Evidence

Value

Learning plan
Conversations
Online: Websites / chats / emails
Course catalogs
Grad requirements

Learning plan
Program descriptions / course catalogs
Prior learning
Application forms

Application / registration form
System enrollment in course
Onboarding technology
Onboarding general

Conversations
Online communities / chats / forums
Learning resources (lessons, tests, assignments)
Course content
Systems supports (educator, tech)
Resource supports

Progress reports / ongoing feedback
Certificates of achievement / success measures
Assessments
Final mark

Learner experience
Graduation requirements
Course catalogue
IEP / learning needs

Transcript
Feedback / self-assessment form
Technology to track status
Learner Satisfaction
Survey

Understanding of learning needs and awareness of options

Simple assessment of options that meet different learning needs

Easy sign up and onboarding

Engaging learning environment (content, people, technology)

Clear metrics to evaluate progress and achievement of learning outcomes

Better understanding of my learning needs and am aware of options to move forward

Simple off-boarding process with opportunity to reflect and provide feedback

Line of interaction

The value theme refers to what the learner should feel as they progress through their learning experience





WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Student Success

Focus all talents, efforts and resources on improving student success.

WHAT WE ARE AIMING TO ACHIEVE

Educated Citizen

Intellectual - Human/Social - Career Development

HOW WE DO IT

- High and Measurable Standards
- Student-Centered Learning Structures
- Future Orientation
- Safe & Effective Environments
- Quality Teaching & Leadership

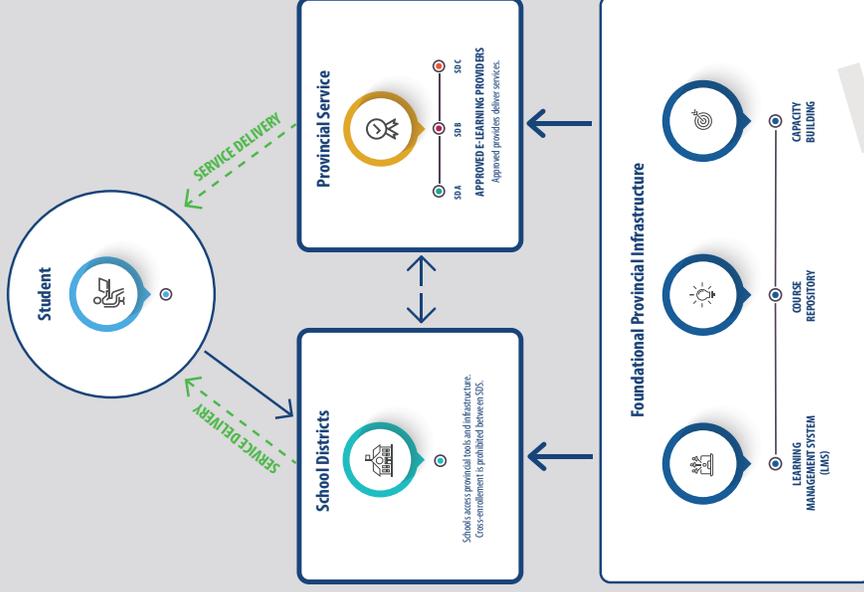
Distributed Learning

Distributed learning (online, blended) will be recognized as a part of the overall continuum of ways for all students to learn and achieve success.

STUDENTS SERVED

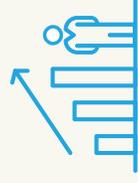


SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL



MEASURES

- Course Completion
- Enhanced Accountability Process
- Assessment
- Student Engagement via Learning Analytics
- Parent Satisfaction



IMPACTS

- Increased Course Completion
- Increased Student Graduation
- Increased Transition to Post-Secondary and Employment
- Improved equity, access and course quality



DL Concept 2019



Ministry of Education