



October 12, 2017

Ref: 196541

To: All Board Chairs, Superintendents, Secretary Treasurers
All School Districts

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to announce that the Rural Education Enhancement Fund (REEF) is now accepting new applications for the 2018/19 school year with the attached timeline, process and criteria. These are the same as for the 2017/18 REEF process.

If you already have schools with approved funding, starting in the 2016/17 or 2017/18 school year, you do not need to re-apply for those schools. If you have increased costs for your current approvals, please submit an updated costing by February 15, 2018.

For any questions, please contact me at Kim.Horn@gov.bc.ca (250 896-3680) or Jonathan Foweraker at Jonathan.Foweraker@gov.bc.ca (250 896-2673).

Thank you for your continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

Kim Horn
Executive Director
Sector Resourcing and Service Delivery Branch

Attachment: REEF Application Process, Criteria and Timeline

Rural Education Enhancement Fund 2018/19 Application Process, Criteria and Timeline

Application Process

Districts do not have to have a Board bylaw motion or vote on school closure; however, districts must present a business case that demonstrates that the school is at risk of closure as part of a long-range facilities plan, and that their local stakeholders are aware that the school is being considered as part of this plan.

At a minimum, the following information is required as part of the application process:

- School district name and key contact person (including contact information);
- List of school(s) for which funds are being requested under the REEF;
- Overview of local community context (i.e., location of schools, community engagement/consultation processes, etc.);
- Overview of school district and school context (i.e., current enrolment, historical enrolment trends, forecast enrolment, facility information, etc.);
- Rationale outlining why the school is at risk of being closed (i.e., implications for students and community if school is closed);
- Outline of expected savings from closing the school;
- Identification of the schools within the areas that have capacity to receive the students, the distance between schools, and any unique geographic features for consideration;
- Distribution of funding between educators' compensation, administration, utilities and supplies and ongoing maintenance; and
- Where a District has approved REEF funding for 2016/17 or 2017/18, they may submit an application for additional funding for subsequent years by showing actual and projected costs for the school in receipt of REEF funding.

Criteria

- A rural community outside Greater Victoria, the Lower Mainland, and Kelowna areas with a population less than 15,000 and where isolation creates demonstrable challenges;
- The potential school closure would leave the community with no school;
- Funding is used to keep the school open;
- Closures where the primary driver is facility condition are not included; and
- Closure would have a detrimental educational impact on students and/or social/economic impact on the community.

Timeline

October 2017–December 2017

- Informal consultation between School Districts and Ministry on potential school closures (driven by Fall 2017 enrolment data and projections)
- Announcement of REEF criteria and process

December 2017

- Recalculated grants announced

January 1, 2018

- REEF 2018/19 applications can be accepted

February 15, 2018

- Deadline for applications requiring a decision by March 15, 2018
- Districts to be notified as soon as possible of their application status

March 15, 2018

- REEF 2018/19 funding announcement