



January 31, 2020

The Honourable Rob Fleming
Minister of Education
P.O. Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Fleming:

The Campbell River Board of Education was pleased to receive a response from you to our previous letters of March 2019 and November 2019, regarding the recommendations from the Funding Model Review. However, we were disappointed that the two major concerns we brought forward to you in both letters, based on Recommendations 6 and 9, were not addressed directly.

The Board of Education for SD72 (Campbell River) has serious concerns about the proposed implementation of the Prevalence Model for funding students with Special Needs.

The Campbell River school district's student population has unique characteristics. Campbell River is a transient community, with 25% of our student population being of Indigenous heritage, many from outlying coastal communities with minimal family or community supports while they are in our community. The child poverty rate is also higher in Campbell River than in many other communities in the province. Many of our families of children with special needs cannot afford private assessments which, as you know, are necessary for those children to receive designation and support with their Special Needs. With lack of proper identification of Special Needs, we believe the implications of the prevalence model will not allow our district to adequately address and support many of those children who need supplemental assistance.

The recommendation to change funding from the number of courses being taken, to the number of students is of particular concern to the Board. In SD72, many high school students choose to take extra courses outside of regular school hours. All FTE generated funds directly support staffing for these courses. Changing the funding model without a corresponding increase in FTE funding will change the innovative and engaging cultures of our high schools. In SD72 the implementation a 'head count' model of funding will result in the loss of many, if not most of this district's locally developed, Board approved courses with the loss of approximately 4.5 FTE teaching positions. We believe this type of unique, creative, local programming contributes to the international reputation of success that the province of BC has achieved.

If all the recommendations of this review in this model are implemented as currently proposed, we strongly request and recommend the inclusion of a mechanism for review and adjustments for unforeseen negative impacts on districts throughout our province to avoid creating 'winners and losers' situations within the various school districts throughout the province.

At present the Board believes that it is necessary to express a third major concern: the lack of detailed and comprehensive information on funding available at this time when planning for the next school year is already underway. Implementation of the recommendations will impact the budget process, programming, and staffing for 2020-2021, as well as long-term planning related to the district's new

2019-2023 Strategic Plan. Having no specific details from the Ministry on the formula, or when it is to be implemented presents a serious obstacle to accurate and effective decision making that will impact our students and many as yet undetermined aspects of our district operations.

We share the vision you have expressed of an equitable education system that supports the success of all students regardless of their learning needs, their background or where they live in BC.

The Board of Education for SD72, as elected representatives for the district strongly requests that you listen carefully to our valid concerns, based on our student learning needs, their backgrounds, and where they live. Our students should have the same opportunities as all students throughout the province. Anything less does a disservice to the children for whom our Board has this important responsibility.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Richard Franklin.

Richard Franklin
Board Chair
School District 72 (Campbell River)

c: Premier John Horgan – premier@gov.bc.ca
Honourable Carole James, Minister of Finance - FIN.minister@gov.bc.ca
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