



December 9, 2011

Ref: 150946

To: All Board Chairs  
Boards of Education

As you know, earlier this year, I asked all boards of education, under the umbrella of the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA), to provide input into the education funding formula. The BCSTA committee collected input from school districts and submitted a report entitled *A Commentary on the Operating Grant Allocation Process*, which made recommendations for changes to the funding formula under the principles of equity, predictability, stability, flexibility and transparency. Those recommendations were received and reviewed within government and the Technical Review Committee.

I am pleased to announce that, in line with those recommendations, government will be introducing changes to the funding formula that will become effective in 2012/13.

First, additional funding will be provided through the operating grant to maintain current CommunityLINK funding levels for all districts while providing additional resources to districts with growing vulnerable student populations. This additional funding will be provided through a new CommunityLINK allocation model based on census and provincial data to ensure that resources are directed where they are needed most. This supplement is intended to start to address funding concerns we've heard from boards of education that have increasing vulnerable student populations. As we move forward in transforming the way education is delivered, a central part of these discussions will be how BC's education system can best support vulnerable student populations.

Second, a new allocation based on student location will be phased in to replace the current transportation supplement. This new allocation model will use school-age population density and enrolment data and will provide support to districts for transporting special needs students. This funding will be incorporated into the Supplement for Unique Geographic Factors and will be recalculated annually based on current enrolment, school locations and population density.

Third, \$1.5 million in funding will be provided to support rural and remote elementary schools with fewer than 75 students that are 40 km from the next school or require travel on unpaved roads.

.../2

Fourth, to provide additional support to small districts, \$3.7 million in funding will be added to the Low Enrolment Factor, increasing it to approximately \$52.8 million to provide \$1.375 million to every district with 2500 or fewer students.

Government is committed to a sustainable funding protection model that provides equity and predictability for all school districts. The BCSTA report recognized that the current level of funding protection was not sustainable or predictable and requested funding protection be phased out and replaced with more equitable and sustainable funding for all school districts. Therefore, beginning 2012/13, districts with declining student populations will be protected to at least 98.5 percent of the previous autumn funding level. This change will provide the additional funding required to support the changes to CommunityLINK, the Transportation supplement, the Small Community Supplement and the Low Enrolment Factor.

I believe these changes are consistent with the recommendations made by the BCSTA and will address many of the important issues with the current formula while providing certainty to school districts. I have asked the Ministry's Resource Management executives to communicate further with school district secretary treasurers over the coming days to discuss these changes further.

Thank you for your participation in this important process and thank you for your ongoing hard work on behalf of students in British Columbia.

Yours truly,



George Abbott  
Minister

pc: All Superintendents of Schools  
All Secretary Treasurers