

March 7, 2019

**Honourable Minister, Rob Fleming**  
Ministry of Education  
PO Box 9045  
Stn Provincial Government  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

**RE: Funding Model Review**

The Board of Education for Maple Ridge - Pitt Meadows School District No. 42 appreciates the extensive funding model review consultation undertaken by the Ministry of Education to date, and would like to thank the Independent Panel for their work and the detailed recommendations put forward to government. We are also thankful for the commitment expressed by you with respect to the additional consultation before a new funding formula is implemented.

Our board is pleased to offer this written submission in response to the request for feedback on the report of the Independent Funding Model Review Panel. Before we provide our recommendations, however, we would like to once again outline what we feel should be guiding considerations for the implementation of a new funding formula:

- the final formula must support the best possible student outcomes;
- the final formula must be fair and equitable, and not benefit some school districts through the impoverishment of others;
- any changes to the funding formula that will result in additional funding being distributed to some school districts and funding being taken away from others should be phased in over a reasonable number of years and in conjunction with overall increases to education funding;
- adequate funding must be provided to meet the ongoing operating costs of each school district no matter what the final formula looks like.

**Theme 1: Equity of Educational Opportunity**

***“Recommendation 3: The Ministry should work with the First Nations Education Steering Committee to support the continuous improvement of outcomes for Indigenous learners, particularly determining whether changes are needed to the policies that govern the use of the Indigenous student targeted funding envelope. Targeted funding for Indigenous students;”***

The majority of students receiving aboriginal education services in our school district are not represented by the First Nations Education Steering Committee.

We are recommending that, when implementing this recommendation, the Ministry of Education should work with First Nations Education Steering Committee, Métis Nation British Columbia and all other representative organizations for indigenous populations in British Columbia.

***“Recommendation 6: The Ministry should create a single Inclusive Education Supplement that incorporates all of the following: Supplemental Special Needs Funding; English/French Language Learning; Supplement for Vulnerable Students; CommunityLINK; Ready Set Learn; Supplemental Student Location Factor; and Funding currently in the Basic Allocation that was previously allocated to high incidence categories of special needs.***

***This single Inclusive Education Supplement should allocate funding through two components:***

***COMPONENT 1 – students requiring high-cost supports should be funded, and school districts should continue to report and claim these students to the Ministry for funding. Specifically:***

- ***Funding eligibility criteria and the annual funding rate for students requiring high-cost supports should be developed and communicated by the Ministry, focusing on those students that are physically dependent and/or have needs that significantly impact the students’ learning; and***
- ***All funding claims in this category should be based on a medical diagnosis, and should be subject to compliance audits to verify that eligibility criteria have been met.***

***COMPONENT 2 – the remaining inclusive education funds should be allocated to school districts through a prevalence-based model, using a comprehensive range of third-party medical and socio-economic population data. Categories of data and weightings should be as follows:***

- ***Health factors (50%)***
- ***Children in care (20%)***
- ***Income and Earnings (20%)***
- ***English/French Language development (10%)”***

Our recommendation to the Independent Panel was that the new funding model for students with special needs move closer to the actual funding required to meet the educational needs of students with special needs.

The recommendation put forward by the panel does not provide sufficient information to allow school districts to fully understand the impact of implementing this new model of funding for students with special needs.

We would like to note that, in our school district, moving to this model would not be in alignment with our restored teacher collective agreement language, which is based on Ministry of Education defined categories.

**It is our recommendation that the funding model contemplated in Recommendation 6 be fully modeled by the Ministry of Education and that the model be shared with all school districts for feedback before implementation is considered.**

In addition, we would like to point out that the implementation of this recommendation may also require amendments to applicable legislation, Ministry of Education policy, and, most concerning, changes to the restored teacher collective agreement language.

***“Recommendation 9: The Ministry should base funding allocations for school-age educational programming on the number of students, rather than on the number of courses being taken. The Ministry should phase out the current course-based funding model by the 2020/21 school year.”***

The revised provincial curriculum at K to 9 mandates that student learning will be personalized and deliberate connections will be made across the disciplines in order to engage students in learning. The current funding model recognizes that the education of the whole student is our goal, and funding is consequently assigned to each student. We support the recommendation that the funding for K to 9 should continue to be based on the number of students.

Our experience is that while the per student funding model for grades 10 to 12 appears to be equal, it does not create equity of access for students.

We believe that the current course-based funding model or a model which offers similar flexibility is much better suited for grades 10 to 12. The current model allocates funding based on student FTE calculated as 0.125 FTE for each course in which a student enrolls, with no maximum FTE per student headcount. We see this flexibility in funding having positive effects at our schools.

We have directed the power of this funding model at our students who are less engaged at school. We found that more vulnerable students tended to take fewer courses, tended to be enrolled in many support blocks, and tended to find unrewarding the courses they needed to take for graduation. English, Science, Social Studies, and Math courses are often very challenging for these students, who were often at least one year behind their peers in terms of grade to grade transitions. By encouraging their participation with elective area teachers who generally focus on more hands-on learning, these students have found much greater success. In both our most innovative school and our most traditional settings, all students – but particularly our at-risk students – have done better.

Our objective is to offer all students authentic opportunities for engagement, increase our students' chances of achieving a Dogwood graduation certificate or an adult graduation, and encourage greater participation in post-secondary.

The success of the current model in our school district is illustrated through the improvement we have seen in results for our students of Aboriginal ancestry and students with special needs since we started encouraging grade 10-12 students to expand the breadth of engagement with our teachers by taking more courses.

Those students who were in grade 9 in 2014/15 form the six year graduation rate of 2017/18. We saw an increase of almost 13.1% in our Aboriginal completion rates (from 72% in 2014/15 to **85.1%** in 2017/18), an increase of over 12.4% in our completion rates for students with special needs (from 69% in 2014/15 to **81.4%** in 2017/18), and an increase of over 4.7% in our completion rates for all students (from 86.7% in 2014/15 to **91.4%** in 2017/18). These are the best results ever achieved in this school district.

The current model also supports students who want to explore courses beyond those required for graduation. Perfect examples are fine arts and sports electives. All interested students can benefit from the richness of these additional offerings. Our gifted students and university and college bound students also benefit because post-secondary institutions are tending to look for students who have interests in many areas and who have done some exploration in their learning.

On average our students take 8.6 courses each year over their grade 10 to 12 years. Removal of the per course funding option for our students would result in an estimated funding loss of about \$1.4 million which we currently use for additional teacher staffing. In order to preserve the rich programming available in our secondary schools we need for the Ministry of Education to either continue the current course based funding model or provide the additional funding required through an increased overall per student amount for grades 10 to 12.

It is our recommendation that the Ministry of Education does not implement the funding model contemplated in Recommendation 9 and that the current course-based funding model is preserved for grades 10 to 12 or replaced with a similarly flexible approach – one that permits an increased overall per student funding for grades 10 to 12.

### **Theme 2: Accountability and Theme 3: Financial Management**

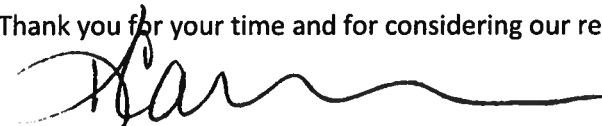
The Board of Education for Maple Ridge - Pitt Meadows School District No. 42 is committed to fostering and supporting an inclusive community of learners. Our vision is for every individual to feel valued and for all learners to reach their potential. We value the uniqueness of each individual and provide diverse learning opportunities so that all our learners have the capacity to learn and succeed.

To support our vision we have implemented a robust strategic planning and financial planning model and are pleased to see that many of the recommendations contained in the Accountability and Financial Management themes reflect our practice.

It is our recommendation that the Ministry of Education work collaboratively with school districts on the implementation of the recommendations contained in Theme 2: Accountability and Theme 3: Financial Management.

We are looking forward to engaging further with you and your representatives regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Panel.

Thank you for your time and for considering our recommendations.



Korleen Carreras  
Board Chairperson

Cc:  
*Board of Education, School District 42 - Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows*  
*The Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture*  
*Mr. Bob D'Eith, MLA*  
*Mr. Scott MacDonald, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education*  
*Ms. Sylvia Russell, Superintendent of Schools*  
*Ms. Flavia Coughlan, Secretary Treasurer*  
*All Boards of Education*