

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BRIEFING NOTE**

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Peter Fassbender, Minister, for **Information** at the request of **Director of International Education Branch, Knowledge Management and Accountability Division**

SUBJECT: Offshore Schools Program Strategy Update – August 2014

BACKGROUND:

British Columbia's Offshore Schools Program (OSP) has authorized schools outside Canada since 1997 to offer the BC graduation program. Students are awarded Dogwood diplomas upon successful program completion.

Offshore School Snapshot

Offshore Schools: 41	K-7/K-12: 10 schools
Countries: 6	7/9-12: 2 schools
Students: 10,300	10-12: 29 schools
BC teachers: 615	

In June 2014, the Minister of Education confirmed his commitment to the OSP and directed the Ministry to develop an OSP Strategy to present to the Planning and Priorities Committee in the fall.

DISCUSSION:

A draft OSP Strategy is currently in development. The draft strategy identifies the challenges and risks of the OSP, articulates its purpose and benefits, and lays out a three year strategic plan that will lead to:

- increased pathways between offshore schools and BC's post-secondary institutions to attract more offshore schools graduates to BC
- a sustainable quality assurance and accountability strategy that protects BC's overseas reputation
- program stability, growth of current schools and certification of new schools in desired markets

Timeline:

Action	Date
Draft Strategy complete	August 15
Consultation with partner groups*	August 18-29
Finalize strategy	September 12
Sign-off by the Minister	September 19
Planning and Priorities Committee	Early October

LINKS TO OTHER MINISTRIES:

***Partner groups include:**

- **Ministry of Advanced Education**
- **Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training**
- **Ministry of International Trade**
- **BC Council for International Education**
- **Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat**

<u>Contact Information</u>		Approved by:
Knowledge Management and Accountability Division Tel: 250-356-6760 File: 280-30	ADM Initial (IR)	Dave Byng Deputy Minister
		Date signed:

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION BRIEFING NOTE

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Peter Fassbender, Minister, for **Information**, at the request of Knowledge Management and Accountability Division

SUBJECT: Meeting Notes: Federation of Independent Schools Board Meeting on May 28, 2014.

KEY POINTS: 1.

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2. The Ministry announced three policy changes in relation to distributed learning, specifically funding for Grade 8 and 9 cross-enrolment at 63% of the flat rate and ability for Distributed Learning (DL) schools to work with the Yukon.
3. The remaining agenda items were discussed and are considered regular business items.

BACKGROUND:

FISA has been an effective voice for independent schools in the Province since 1966, nearly 50 years. The FISA mandate is to ensure that policy changes in the education sector are equitable to independent schools, funding remains stable at 50 percent and 35 percent, and to lobby government for changes which will further support improvement in the independent school system.

There are five member associations within FISA British Columbia:

- The **Association of Christian Schools International in British Columbia** (ACSIBC) represents 25 schools.
- The **Associate Member Group** (AMG) encompasses over 100 individual schools such as Montessori, Waldorf, special needs schools, and religious schools (among them evangelical Protestant, Jewish, Sikh, and Seventh-day Adventist schools).
- The **Catholic Independent Schools in British Columbia** (CISBC) represents 77 schools and is organized into the Archdiocese of Vancouver and the Dioceses of Kamloops, Nelson, Prince George, and Victoria.
- The **Independent Schools Association in British Columbia** (ISABC), which is also a member of the Canadian Association of Independent Schools, represents 22 schools.
- The **Society of Christian Schools in British Columbia** (SCSBC), which is also a member of Christian Schools International, encompasses 40 schools.

In total, the FISA represents 292 of the 348 independent schools in the Province. This translates into representing over 91 percent of the total independent school enrolment in the Province.

There are four groups of independent schools. **Groups 1 and 2** schools must employ BC certified teachers and follow the BC curriculum, and are funded. **Group 4** schools must meet the same requirements as Groups 1 and 2, with the addition of a bonding requirement; however, these schools are not funded since the majority of the students are international. **Group 3** schools only meet basic regulatory requirements and are not funded. The method for calculating independent school funding is detailed in the Independent School Regulation and is based on the average student funding of the independent schools local public school district.

Over the past decade, independent schools have seen their grants from the provincial government increase substantially. In the 2000/01 school year, independent schools were provided with grants totaling over \$147 million for 52,695 FTE students. In the 2013/14 school year, independent schools grants are estimated to be \$321 million for 74,334 FTE students.

DISCUSSION:

The bi-annual FISA Board meeting was held on May 28th and included an introductory message from the Deputy Minister, Rob Wood, and an introduction to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Partnerships and Relations, Paige MacFarlane. In addition, the Superintendent of Trades and Student Transitions, Larry Espe, presented his work on skills and trades and the new jobs blueprint.

For ease of reference, meeting notes related to each topic discussed at the meeting are highlighted in red text below.

FISA Board Meeting Agenda and Ministry Messages

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2. Bill 36: Cross-Enrolment in Grades K-9 Update (FISA Agenda #7)

Ministry staff communicated the following:

- Announce DL funding at 63% of the \$400 flat rate.

- Explain that the current fiscal environment and government commitment to a balanced budget does not provide the ability to apply the Grade 10-12 funding amounts to Grades 8 and 9 cross-enrolment.
- The Ministry is not considering regulations for cross-enrolment in K-7 at this time. Further consideration will be given as the transformation progresses and with the implementation of new curriculum, data collections systems and funding formulas/processes.

Meeting Notes:

- The FISA Board was appreciative of the 63% funding for DL. No follow-up questions from the Board.

3. DL Yukon – Update (FISA Agenda #8)

Ministry staff communicated the following:

- The Ministry will enable independent DL schools to work with the Yukon Department of Education by way of the 2014/15 DL Agreement. The Yukon will maintain discretion regarding which schools they work with but all independent DL schools will be enabled to work with the Yukon should the Yukon choose.

Meeting Notes:

- The FISA Board was appreciative of the announcement. No follow-up questions from the Board.

4. Special Education – Request (FISA Agenda #9)

Ministry staff communicated the following:

- The Ministry appreciates the proactive role FISA has taken with regard to special education training sessions. As discussed with FISA, we will participate in fall regional special education training sessions in conjunction with the annual fall regional tour.
- The Ministry will consider the FISA request for extension of descriptive and not punitive audits.

Meeting Notes:

- The FISA Board appreciated that the Ministry would consider this request.

One follow-up question from a Board member:

- What is the appropriate or acceptable format for showing special education budgets and spending to the audit teams? The Ministry will follow-up with the member and provide a response.

5. ERASE – Update (FISA Agenda #10)

Ministry staff communicated the following:

- Extend appreciation for FISA involvement and participation in training and implementation.
- Provide a general update on independent school participation in Level 1 and 2 training, progress of onboarding schools and program success to date.

Meeting Notes:

- The FISA Board expressed appreciation for involvement in the process.

- The FISA Board was interested in the ERASE report and the Ministry has followed-up with the URL to the online ERASE report
http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/downloads/ERASE_Report.pdf

6. MyEdBC – Update (FISA Agenda #11)

Ministry staff communicated the following:

- General progress updates and opportunities for training and information sessions.
- We have received 85 signed MOUs from independent schools. Some of the MOUs cover multiple schools –there may be as many as 112 schools. Fifty-three public school districts have also signed MOUs. There are only 102 independent schools on BCeSIS.

Meeting Notes:

- There was concern expressed from a number of Board members regarding the lack of training being scheduled or information being provided. The Ministry has initiated a query with the MyEdBC team and will provide FISA an update once information has been gathered.

7. BCED Plan - Update (FISA Agenda #12)

Ministry staff communicated the following:

- General updates on progress towards curriculum implementation and transformation.
- Consideration of an “innovation zone” concept which was very well received as was the reduced requirements around course overviews.

Meeting Notes:

Follow-up questions/requests:

- Ensure that schools being inspected in the Fall of 2014 were notified of reduced requirements for course overviews in order to avoid unnecessary work over the summer. The Ministry will follow-up with this communication.

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8. Summer School – Request (FISA Agenda #13)

Ministry staff communicated the following:

- The Ministry requests that FISA provide further information regarding this request for consideration, including:

Meeting Notes:

- FISA will provide further information for discussion and clarification, including magnitude of issue.

9. Low Interest Loans for Capital Projects Involving Student Safety/Trade and Skills Training (FISA Agenda #14)

Ministry staff communicated the following:

- Government is unable to support this request given the current fiscal challenges and commitment to a balanced budget.

Meeting Notes:

- FISA was disappointed but understood that given the fiscal climate this was an unlikely request.

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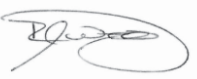
10. DL Best Practices (FISA Agenda #15)

Ministry staff communicated the following:

- Focus to date has been implementation of the \$600 cap on third party services and resources.
- The Ministry will continue to work with the DL Committee on the Best Practices document over the coming months.

Meeting Notes:

- FISA is looking forward to continued work on the best practices with the Office of the Inspector.

<u>Contact Information</u> Knowledge Management and Accountability Division Ph: 356-6760 File: 280-20		
	ADM Initial	Rob Wood
	(IR)	Deputy Minister
		Date signed: July 2, 2014

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BRIEFING NOTE**

PREPARED FOR: The Honorable Peter Fassbender, Minister of Education, for
information

SUBJECT: Safety Concerns for Students in Shop Classes

BACKGROUND:

s.15, s.22

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DISCUSSION:

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****Link:** [Suggested recommendations for Eric Leighton coroner's inquest \(PDF\)](#)

Contact Information: Wilma Clarke Executive Director Teacher Regulation Branch (604) 775-4817	PMc	Agree/Disagree:
	ADM Initial	Rob Wood Deputy Minister
		Date signed: