

Meeting Note

Advice to Parliamentary Secretary Andrew Mercier

Date: March 25, 2021

Cliff #: 121357

Prepared for: Parliamentary Secretary Andrew Mercier

Date, Time of Meeting and Location:

Tuesday, March 30, 8:45-9:15am

Microsoft Teams meeting

Attendees:

- Parliamentary Secretary Mercier
- Jeff Hannah, Ministerial Assistant
- A/ADM Catherine Poole
- Suzanne Hoffman, Superintendent Vancouver Board of Education
- Rob Schindel, Associate Superintendent Vancouver Board of Education

Issue(s): Introductory Meeting with Vancouver Board of Education.

Background:

- School District 39 (SD39) is a large, urban, and multicultural school district, operating 89 elementary schools and 18 secondary schools, as well as two adult education centres.
- SD39 has an annual enrollment of approximately 50,000 students in Kindergarten to Grade 12, as well as over 2,000 adults in adult education programs.
- SD39 offers a range of career-related programs and courses, including:
 - Industry Training Authority (ITA) programming – Youth Explore Trades Skills, Youth Explore Trades Sampler, Youth Work in Trades;
 - Ministry-authorized Work Experience courses; and
 - Dual credit programming (post-secondary courses for high school credit) in non-trades sectors, such as Cisco and IT Networking, Health Care Assistant, and Fashion Design and Technology.
- The Vancouver School Board (VSB) is a locally elected body with responsibility for determining local education policy in conformity with the Public Schools Act of 1873 for SD39. It is comprised of 9 elected trustees and a student trustee.
- Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sports Melanie Mark, and Superintendent Suzanne Hoffman had a conversation in December, and Minister Mark suggested Superintendent Hoffman connect with Parliamentary Secretary Andrew Mercier regarding trades.

Discussion:

- Youth who enter career-related programs in the K-12 system benefit from being able to access training and hands-on work experience and from exposure to employment in the trades sector, providing a pathway into the trades workforce.
- Relative to the eight other Lower Mainland school districts, SD39 is considered average in terms of enrolments and funding for trades and career-related courses and programs. When accounting for SD39's size and student population, these numbers could be higher.
- Given the current staffing complement (ITA reports SD39 has three staff dedicated to trades careers) and based on experiences at other school districts, higher enrollments could be achieved with further internal investments. However, parents in SD39 may have different cultural expectations related to careers and skills training, including the trades.
- Regarding dual credit programming, VSB may point to a lack of clarity with funding criteria for post-secondary course claims, which has dissuaded some districts from pursuing this avenue. The Ministry of Education has been working to provide school districts with clarity on the funding policy.
- Students in K-12 who are accessing career-related programs and courses, specifically those related to trades training and construction, will be able to help address the high demand for workforce in the trades sector (73,000 expected job openings in skilled trades over the next 10 years.)
- Ensuring youth have the skills for the labour market is critical to ensure they are resilient during labour market disruptions. Labour market data shows that youth in the labour market (15-24) have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The youth unemployment rate was 15%¹ in February 2021, compared to 5.5% unemployment for 25-54 year-olds.

Key Messages:

- Our government is committed to delivering accessible and affordable skilled trades training to ensure British Columbians get the education and training they need for good paying careers to participate in B.C.'s economic recovery.
- B.C.'s economic recovery plan includes commitments to skills training and education, recognizing that this will be integral to supporting people and the labour market.
- Programs such as SD39's career-related programs and courses are pivotal in introducing the trades in an accessible way to youth and supporting their participation in the economy.
- As we recover from the global pandemic, it is imperative that we work as a collective to support and address those populations most affected by the pandemic, including youth and other under-represented groups accessing the Trades.

If asked about dual credit programming and funding

- I encourage you to continue working with the Ministry of Education.

Attachment(s):

- **Appendix A** – Suzanne Hoffman, Superintendent Vancouver Board of Education

¹ This is down from a peak of 29% in May and June; however it is up 5.6% since February 2020.

- **Appendix B** – Rob Schindel, Associate Superintendent Vancouver Board of Education

Contact: *Catherine Poole, A/ADM, Workforce Innovation and Division Responsible for Skills Training (250-508-0420)*

Appendix A – Suzanne Hoffman, Superintendent Vancouver Board of Education

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Appendix B - Rob Schindel, Associate Superintendent Vancouver Board of Education

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