

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE  
**DECISION BRIEFING NOTE**

**DATE:** September 25, 2023  
**CLIFF:** 293522

**PREPARED FOR:** Christina Zacharuk, Deputy Minister – **FOR DECISION**

**SUBJECT:** Direct Award Sole Source – Over \$25,000

**PURPOSE:** Direct Award for Governance Specialist

**BACKGROUND:**

- The Continuous Improvement Program has assembled a team to review the Enhancing Student Learning Annual Reports for all 60 districts, commencing this week.
- This core team consists of select ministry staff, a secondee and a former retired superintendent on contract as the Chair.
- The Chair has requested to add an additional contractor who would bring a unique, governance-based lens, which is an important component of the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning.
- The Framework works extensively within the realm of governance, so it is vital for the program to have a governance specialist on contract for this work as well as the creation of governance related materials and direct advising regarding the Framework in a governance context.
- Because this work is ongoing and related directly to the review process it is most logical to have the same contractor for the entirety of the coming school year and, if necessary, into the following year.

**DISCUSSION:**

- The review team and process would benefit from a member who understands BC school district governance and has an in-depth understanding of the Framework Policy, Order, and various support mechanisms.
- The provincial government's procurement policy (CPPM Chapter 6, Section 39(d)(ii)) states a contract can be directly awarded if it can be strictly proven that only one contractor is qualified, or is available, to provide the services.
- The Continuous Improvement Program team could identify only one contractor with the relevant governance expertise and experience.
- Stephanie Higginson has the required qualifications as the former BCSTA president and as a former Board Chair.
- Having served as BCSTA president during the implementation of the Framework makes her uniquely qualified for this role as she was the governance expert in the development of the Framework Policy as part of an advisory committee and the partners' Roundtable.
- Higginson is a widely known and highly respected sector leader with in-depth system knowledge. Her understanding of governance and its place in the Framework is unmatched.

- Higginson has previously worked on contract with the Ministry to develop governance resources for the Continuous Improvement Program and is well-versed in communicating key messages regarding the Framework.

#### OPTIONS:

1. Award contract to Stephanie Higginson.

##### IMPLICATIONS:

- Allows the report review process to include perspectives beyond superintendents and ministry staff.
- Higginson is available to begin the work, possesses the necessary knowledge of the Framework and will not require extensive onboarding.
- Continuous Improvement Team staff can only identify one contractor with the relevant governance expertise and experience although conducting a competitive procurement process may identify more contractors with the relevant expertise.

2. Do not include the additional contractor on the review team.

##### IMPLICATIONS:

- No representation from a governance perspective
- Could reduce the legitimacy of the review process.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- \$50,000 would be allocated from existing Framework budget.

#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND PRIVACY IMPLICATIONS:

None

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Option: 1



Approved/Not Approved

Christina Zacharuk

Deputy Minister of Education and Child Care

September 27, 2023

Date Signed

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**Program ADM/Branch:** Cloe Nicholls, GAD

**Program Contact (for content):** Lucas Corwin, Executive Director, Governance and Legislation

**Drafter:** Cynthia Drumond/Heather Hedstrom

**Date:** September 20, 2023