

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BRIEFING NOTE**

DATE: August 29, 2016
CLIFF: 189071

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Mike Bernier, Minister, for **Decision**, at the request of the **International Education, Independent Schools and Partner Relations Division** regarding the **timing of operating grant payments**.

SUBJECT: Timing of operating grant payments for independent bricks and mortar schools.

BACKGROUND:

On March 15, 2016 the Federation of Independent School Associations British Columbia (FISA BC) submitted a letter to the Deputy Minister requesting that the Ministry consider adjusting the timing of operating grant payments to bricks and mortar independent schools to better support the timing of independent school expenses.

In the letter, FISA BC indicates that many independent school authorities are currently using financial instruments such as loans, lines of credit and overdrafts in order to meet expense obligations prior to receiving grant payments, or between grant payments, from the Ministry.

The Ministry asked FISA BC for additional information to quantify the scope of the issue in the sector and the amount of money and cost associated with independent school authority use of bridge financing before or between grant payments.

FISA BC conducted a survey of member schools with 142 schools responding to the survey. Sixty-seven (47 percent) responded as using interim financing and 75 (53 percent) indicate that they do not use interim financing. Of the 47 percent who use interim financing, the following costs and amounts have been provided:

DISCUSSION:

Ministry staff have been engaged with Provincial Treasury and Treasury Board staff (TBS) regarding the request to amend the timing of operating grants to independent schools. Attachment 1 provides confirmation to proceed from TBS so long as the fiscal implications are achievable within the Ministry budget management plan.

s.13



Attachment 2 provides details on the current grant payment schedule juxtaposed to the proposed amended grant payment schedule for reference.

OPTIONS:

s.13

RECOMMENDATION: Option 1

- Attachment: 1. Treasury Board Confirmation
 2. Current and Proposed Grant Schedule Details
 3. Draft Amended Grant Payments Order – for signature if approved

Contact Information International Education, Independent Schools and Partner Relations Ph: 604-775-4043 File: 280-20		Agree / Disagree: 	Agree / Disagree: 
	ADM Initial	Dave Byng Deputy Minister	Honourable Mike Bernier Minister
	RS	Date signed: August 31, 2016	Date signed: August 31, 2016



AUG 24 2016

352655

Ramona Soares
Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Education
5th Floor – 620 Superior Street
Victoria BC V8W 9H3

Dear Colleague:

Re: Timing of Operating Grant Payments and ^{s.12} Independent Schools for

I have been advised of the Ministry of Education's request to amend the timing of operating grant payments for Group 1 and 2 independent bricks and mortar schools and change the bonding requirements for Group 4 independent schools.

Grant Timing

As this request better aligns the flow of grant payments with operational expenditures, the Ministry is authorized to amend the timing and percentage of operating grant as follows:

Month of Payment	Percentage of Operating Grant	
	Current	Proposed
September		30%
October	20%	
January	30%	40%
March	20%	
June	30%	30%

.../2

Ministry of
Finance

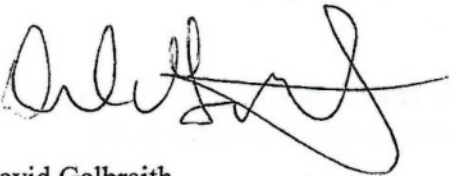
Treasury Board

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9469 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9V8

Location Address:
1st Floor - 617 Government
Street
Victoria BC

s.12

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Galbraith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Galbraith
Deputy Secretary to Treasury Board

cc: Jim Hopkins
Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Finance

Brian Jonker
Executive Director
Ministry of Education

ATTACHMENT 2: Current and Proposed Grant Schedule Details

The grant payment schedule is specified in the Grant Payments Order, which is a Ministerial Order under the *Independent School Act*. The current grant payment schedule has historically been rationalized to a 10-month school operation cycle, September 1 to June 30. The resulting payment schedule pays 10 percent of the eligible grant for each month of school operations. Independent school funding remains at 50 percent / 35 percent for Group 1 and Group 2 respectively.

Payment #	Payment %	Payment Date	Payment Period	Time to payment
1 st Payment	20%	October 31	September 1 – October 31	2 months
2 nd Payment	30%	January 31	November 1 – January 31	3 months
Sub-total	50%		5 months	
3 rd Payment	20%	March 31	February 1 – March 31	2 months
4 th Payment	30%	June 30	April 1 – June 30	3 months
Sub-total	50%		5 months	
Total	100%		10 months	

The proposed grant payment schedule is rationalized to a 12-month school operation cycle, July 1 – June 30 which better reflects current operating requirements. Independent school funding remains at 50%/35% for Group 1 and Group 2 respectively.

Payment #	Payment %	Payment Date	Time between payments	Time to Payment
1 st Payment	30%	September 30	July 1 – September 30	3 months
2 nd Payment	40%	January 31	October 1 – January 31	4 months
Sub-total	70%		7 months	
3 rd Payment	30%	June 30	February 1 – June	5 months
Sub-total	30%		5 months	
Total	100%		12 months	

The proposed schedule will:

ATTACHMENT 3: Ministerial Order for Signature (if approved)

For Minister's Signature

Background

- The Grant Payments Order under the *Independent School Act* sets out the grant payments schedule for Group 1 and 2 independent schools.
- s.13
- s.13,s.14
-
- The current Grant Payments Order is also included in Appendix 3 as a reference.

Authority: *Independent School Act*, section 12 (2), (4)

{	Ministerial Order 37/04 (M37/04)	Effective July 1, 2004
{	Repeals M44/91	
	Amended by M196/06.....	Effective August 31, 2006
	Amended by M423/14.....	Effective December 10, 2014
	Orders of the Minister of Education	

Payment Schedule

1 Commencing with the grants for the 2006/2007 school year, the grant for each school year under section 12 of the *Independent School Act* shall be paid to an authority in accordance with the schedule of payments in section 2.

2 (1) Subject to sections 3 and 4, the grant payable with respect to students enrolled in an educational program not delivered by means of distributed learning will be paid according to the following schedule:

- (a) an estimated portion of the grant for a school year shall be paid
 - (i) as to 20 per cent on or before October 31 of the school year,
 - (ii) as to 30 per cent on or before January 31 of the school year,
 - (iii) as to 20 per cent on or before March 31 of the school year,and
- (b) any remaining portion of the grant payable to an authority in a school year will be paid on or before June 30 of the school year.

(2) The grant payable with respect to students enrolled in Kindergarten and grades 1 to 9 in an educational program delivered by means of distributed learning as of September 30 of that school year will be paid according to the following schedule:

- (a) 20 per cent on or before October 31 of the school year,
- (b) 30 per cent on or before January 31 of the school year,
- (c) 20 per cent on or before March 31 of the school year, and
- (d) 30 per cent on or before June 30 of the school year.

(3) The grant payable in respect of students enrolled in Kindergarten and grades 1 to 9 in an educational program delivered by means of distributed learning after September 30 of that school year but on or before February 15 will be paid according to the following schedule:

- (a) 40 per cent on or before March 31 of the school year, and
- (b) 60 per cent on or before June 30 of that school year.

(4) The grant payable with respect to students enrolled in Kindergarten and grades 1 to 9 in an educational program delivered by means of distributed learning after February 15 but on or before May 15 will be paid on or before June 30 of that school year.

(5) The grant payable with respect to students enrolled in grades 10 to 12 in an educational program delivered by means of distributed learning

- (a) who are enrolled as of September 30 of that school year will be paid according to the following schedule:

- (i) 50% on or before October 31 of the school year, and
 - (ii) 50% on or before January 31 of the school year;
- (b) who are enrolled after September 30 of that school year but on or before February 15 will be paid according to the following schedule:
 - (i) 50% on or before March 31, and
 - (ii) 50% on or before June 30;
- (c) who are enrolled after February 15 of that school year but on or before May 15 will be paid according to the following schedule:
 - (i) 50% on or before June 30, and
 - (ii) 50% on or before October 31 of the following school year.

[am. M196/06; am M423/14; am M423/14, effective July 1/15]

Conditions of Grant Payment

3 (1) The estimated proportional payments to an independent school under subsection 2(1)(a)(i)(ii) and (iii) will be based on information respecting the per FTE student grant of the public school district and student enrollment levels for the independent school, available to the Minister at the time a payment becomes due.

(2) The remaining portion of the grant payable to an authority under subsection 2(1)(b), will be based on the final grant calculation made in accordance with section 3 of the Independent School Regulation.

[am. M196/06]

4 Despite subsection 2(1)(a) the Minister may withhold or reduce a proportional grant payment to an independent school under that subsection if, in the opinion of the Minister, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the expected total student enrollment in an independent school in a school year will not exceed 50 per cent of the total number of students enrolled in that independent school in the previous school year.

[am. M196/06]

Operating Costs

5 For the purposes of section 12(4) of the *Independent School Act*, “operating costs” of an independent school for a school year means an authority’s “operating expenses”, as defined in the *Independent School Act*, for operating an independent school but does not include principal repayments and interest payments on capital debt incurred by the authority, the cost of leasing facilities and the costs incurred for the payment of property taxes with respect to that school.

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministerial Order No.

ORDER OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

I, Mike Bernier, Minister of Education, order that the Grant Payments Order, M37/04, is amended as follows:

1. *Section 2 (1) (a) is deleted and the following substituted:*

“(a) an estimated portion of the grant for a school year shall be paid

- i. as to 30 per cent on or before September 30 of the school year,
- ii. as to 40 per cent on or before January 31 of the school year, and”.

2. *In section 3 (1), “subsection 2(1) (a) (i) (ii) and (iii)” is deleted and “subsection 2 (1) (a) (i) and (ii)” is substituted.*

Date

Minister of Education

(This part is for administrative purposes only and is not part of the Order.)

GRANT PAYMENTS ORDER

(5) The grant payable with respect to students enrolled in grades 10 to 12 in an educational program delivered by means of distributed learning

- (a) who are enrolled as of September 30 of that school year will be paid according to the following schedule:
 - (i) 50% on or before October 31 of the school year, and
 - (ii) 50% on or before January 31 of the school year;
- (b) who are enrolled after September 30 of that school year but on or before February 15 will be paid according to the following schedule:
 - (i) 50% on or before March 31, and
 - (ii) 50% on or before June 30;
- (c) who are enrolled after February 15 of that school year but on or before May 15 will be paid according to the following schedule:
 - (i) 50% on or before June 30, and
 - (ii) 50% on or before October 31 of the following school year.

[am. M196/06; am M423/14; am M423/14, effective July 1/15]

Conditions of Grant Payment

3 (1) The estimated proportional payments to an independent school under subsection 2(1)(a)(i)(ii) and (iii) will be based on information respecting the per FTE student grant of the public school district and student enrollment levels for the independent school, available to the Minister at the time a payment becomes due.

(2) The remaining portion of the grant payable to an authority under subsection 2(1)(b), will be based on the final grant calculation made in accordance with section 3 of the Independent School Regulation.

[am. M196/06]

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[am. M196/06]

Operating Costs

5 For the purposes of section 12(4) of the *Independent School Act*, “operating costs” of an independent school for a school year means an authority’s “operating expenses”, as defined in the *Independent School Act*, for operating an independent school but does not include principal repayments and interest payments on capital debt incurred by the authority, the cost of leasing facilities and the costs incurred for the payment of property taxes with respect to that school.

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministerial Order No. M 342

ORDER OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

I, Mike Bernier, Minister of Education, order that the Grant Payments Order, M37/04, is amended as follows:

1. *Section 2 (1) (a) is deleted and the following substituted:*

- “(a) an estimated portion of the grant for a school year shall be paid
- i. as to 30 per cent on or before September 30 of the school year,
 - ii. as to 40 per cent on or before January 31 of the school year, and”.

2. *In section 3 (1), “subsection 2(1) (a) (i) (ii) and (iii)” is deleted and “subsection 2 (1) (a) (i) and (ii)” is substituted.*

September 7, 2016

Date



Minister of Education

(This part is for administrative purposes only and is not part of the Order.)

Authority under which Order is made:

Act and section: Independent School Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 216, s. 12 (2), Schedule, s. 3 (1) (a)

Other (specify): _____

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
INFORMATION NOTE FOR MINISTER**

DATE: October 26, 2016

CLIFF: 189554

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Mike Bernier, Minister, for **Information** in preparation for meetings at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) 2016 Convention.

SUBJECT: The District of Chetwynd wish to discuss a new high school for its community, served by School District No. 59 (Peace River South) (the "District").

KEY MESSAGES:

- Chetwynd Secondary is currently not included in the school districts Five-Year Capital Plan or the Ministry's Ten-Year Capital Plan and is not seen as a need based on either condition or enrolment growth.
- The Ministry's focus for capital investment in this area is one maintaining the schools in good condition. As such the Ministry looks forward to reviewing the District's submission at the end of September.
- The Ministry looks forward to the District's upcoming 2016/17 Capital Plan submission, due September 30, 2016, and the inclusion of new and updated capital project requests for the District.

BACKGROUND:

- Enrolment projections indicate a small increase in student population over the next five years. There is currently an average utilization of 59 percent across the school district and 47.7 percent in the District of Chetwynd. This equates to 763 vacant seats in the school district with 503 of these vacancies at Chetwynd Secondary.
- In its 2015/16 Five-Year Capital Plan submission, the Board identified the following priorities (in order):
 1. Canalta Elementary – Mechanical upgrade;
 2. Windrem Elementary – Roof replacement;
 3. École Frank Ross Elementary School – Mechanical upgrade;
 4. Little Prairie Elementary – Boiler Upgrade;
 5. Tumbler Ridge Elementary – Mechanical upgrade;
 6. Chetwynd Secondary/Windrem Elementary - Mechanical upgrade.
- The Board has never identified the replacement of Chetwynd Secondary (built in 1964) in any of its previous Five-Year Capital Plan submissions. The current Facility Condition Index (FCI) for Chetwynd Secondary is 0.27, indicating that it is in very good condition.
- A mechanical upgrade for the school was identified the sixth highest priority project request in the Board's latest capital plan submission in 2015/16.
- The District has four schools located within the District of Chetwynd. These include:
 - Chetwynd Secondary 8-12; Utilization 37.1%; FCI - in good condition
 - Don Titus Elementary K-7; Utilization 29%; FCI – in good condition
 - Little Prairie Elementary K-7; Utilization 64%; FCI – in good condition
 - Windrem Elementary K-7; Utilization 99%; FCI – in fair condition

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION INFORMATION NOTE FOR MINISTER

DISCUSSION:

- Despite the age of the Chetwynd Secondary (52 years old), the building is well-designed and has been appropriately maintained by the District and is in very good condition.
- The Ministry prioritizes capital funding based on the following:
 - Mitigating high safety/Seismic risk
 - Maintaining the life of the asset
 - Expanding classroom space in areas of rapid growth
- Based on the principles noted above, the replacement of Chetwynd Secondary would not be ranked by the Ministry as a high priority for capital funding, relative to other capital priorities being considered for funding support; and is unlikely to be supported by a positive benefit / cost business case.
- In May 2016, the District was advised to proceed to construction for three School Enhancement Program projects and five school bus replacements. Of the three School Enhancement Program projects, one is located within the District of Chetwynd:
 - Windrem Elementary – Roof Replacement - \$700,000
- The other two projects include:
 - École Frank Ross Elementary - \$1.1M – Phase 1 Boiler/Ventilation upgrades
 - Central Middle Elementary/Secondary - \$288,000 – Dust extractor replacement
- The Ministry has previously provided capital funding of \$206,000 through the School Enhancement Program at Chetwynd Secondary for a sawdust collection system replacement.
- Additionally, the Ministry currently has an open call to all School Districts for the Five-Year Capital Plan submissions to inform the fiscal 2017/18 – 2019/20 Capital Plan development. Closing for submissions is September 30, 2016 and the Ministry will then review all submissions to determine the highest priorities in the following programs:
 - Seismic Mitigation and Safety
 - Expansion
 - Building Envelope
 - Carbon Neutral Capital
 - School Enhancement
 - Buses
- The Peace River South Board of Education can update its requests for capital projects involving the need for new space, replacements, renovations and site acquisitions in its upcoming 2016/17 Five-Year Capital Plan submission to the Ministry.


OTHER RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Since 2001, the Province has invested \$3.9M in the District to complete five construction projects, including four SEP projects (approved in 2015) and the replacement of Pouce Coupe Elementary (approved in 2007).
- The Province also invested \$30,000 for additional Full-Day Kindergarten spaces.
- In addition the Province has committed \$2.05M in funding for School Enhancement Projects in 2016/17.

(See Appendix C for more details)

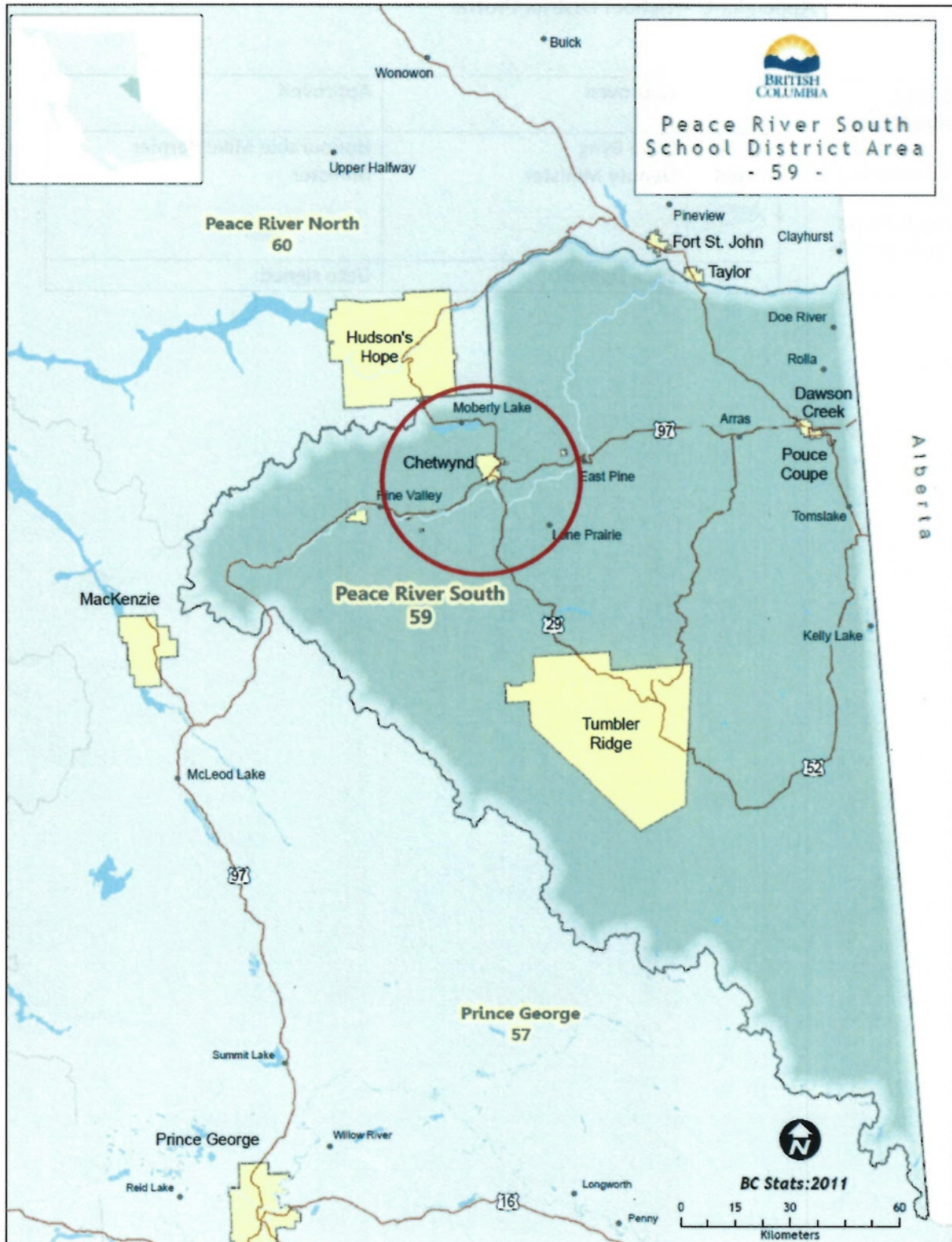
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
INFORMATION NOTE FOR MINISTER**

Attachment: Appendix A – Map of the District of Chetwynd
Appendix B – Municipal Profiles
Appendix C – School District Profile

Contact Information John Woycheshin Capital Division #250-217-8318 Department File		Approved	Approved
	ADM Initial 	Dave Byng Deputy Minister	Honourable Mike Bernier Minister
		Date signed:	Date signed:

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
INFORMATION NOTE FOR MINISTER



Appendix A – Map of Chetwynd



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INFORMATION NOTE FOR MINISTER**

Appendix B – Municipal Profile

City of Chetwynd
School District No. 59
(Peace River South)

Name	Profile
 <p>Merlin Nichols Mayor</p>	<p>No profile provided</p>
 <p>Clay Bassendowski Councillor</p>	<p>No profile provided</p>

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
INFORMATION NOTE FOR MINISTER**



**Alec Brownlee
Councillor**

No profile provided



**Mel Deck
Councillor**

No profile provided

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
INFORMATION NOTE FOR MINISTER**



**Rochelle Galbraith
Councillor**

No profile provided



**Ernest Pfanner
Councillor**

No profile provided

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
INFORMATION NOTE FOR MINISTER**



**Laura Weisgerber
Councillor**

No profile provided

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
INFORMATION NOTE FOR MINISTER**

Appendix C – School District Profile

School District Profile

School District No. 59 (Peace River South)



Background

Position	Name	MLA Constituency
Superintendent	Leslie Lambie	
Board Chair	Tamara Ziemer	
Secretary-Treasurer	Melissa Panoulis	
MLA:	Mike Bernier	Peace River South
Trustees:	Crystal Hillton	
	Wayne Ezeard	
	Richard Powell	
	Sherry Berringer	
	Andrea Smith	
	Nicole Soontiens	

Student Enrolment (2015/16)

Elementary	Secondary	Graduated Adult Students	Total
2,056	1,386	Msk	3,444

Public School Count (2015/16)

Elementary	Elementary Junior Secondary	Elementary-Secondary	Secondary	Total
13	1	3	4	21

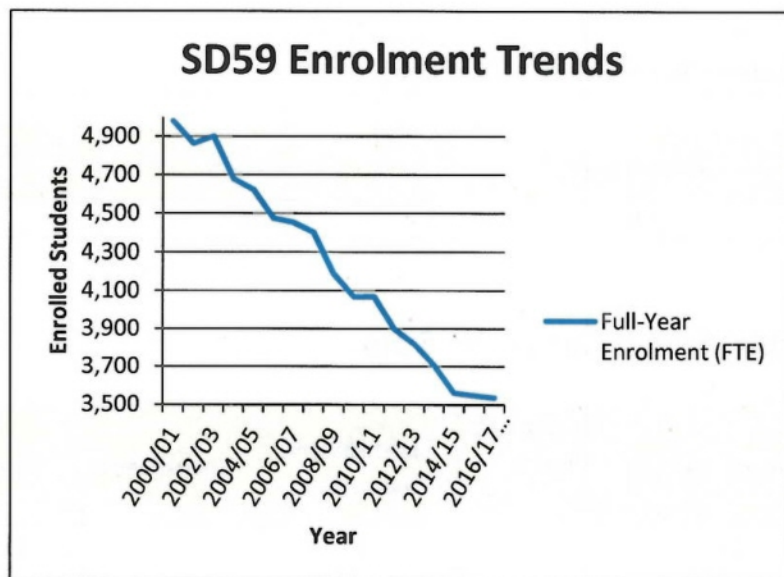
Class Size

There were 4 (14%) fewer classes with more than 30 students in 2015/16 than in 2005/06.

Enrolment and Funding

Year	September	Full-Year		
	Enrolment (FTE)	Enrolment (FTE)	Operating Funding	Per Pupil
2000/01	4,979	4,979	\$38,232,934	\$7,678
2001/02	4,860	4,860	\$38,382,413	\$7,898
2002/03	4,898	4,898	\$38,740,122	\$7,910
2003/04	4,676	4,676	\$38,142,076	\$8,157
2004/05	4,621	4,621	\$38,198,943	\$8,267
2005/06	4,473	4,473	\$38,804,733	\$8,675
2006/07	4,407	4,451	\$40,304,177	\$9,056
2007/08	4,348	4,401	\$41,618,878	\$9,457
2008/09	4,128	4,186	\$42,286,720	\$10,102
2009/10	4,009	4,065	\$42,477,709	\$10,450
2010/11	4,024	4,066	\$42,569,863	\$10,469
2011/12	3,839	3,896	\$42,581,407	\$10,930
2012/13	3,711	3,816	\$42,308,809	\$11,088
2013/14	3,610	3,704	\$41,571,777	\$11,224
2014/15	3,483	3,559	\$40,798,171	\$11,465
2015/16	3,492	3,546	\$40,625,945	\$11,458
2016/17 estimated as at March 2016	3,492	3,535	\$39,944,461	\$11,299

One-Time Funding	
2001/02	\$910,654
2002/03	\$443,056
2003/04	\$257,795
2004/05	\$272,123
2005/06	\$19,300
2006/07	\$2,554,467
2007/08	\$0
2008/09	\$0
2009/10	\$0
2010/11	\$0
2011/12	\$0
2014/15 (labour settlements)	\$697,128
Total	\$5,154,523



Accumulated Operating Fund Surplus/(Deficit)*	
1995	\$1,714,306
1996	\$2,445,835
1997	\$2,385,435
1998	\$1,818,706
1999	\$1,856,757
2000	\$965,470
2001	\$1,682,485
2002	\$2,269,471
2003	\$4,416,076
2004	\$4,194,946
2005	\$1,624,602
2006	\$1,091,175
2007	\$1,169,493
2008	\$2,078,199
2009	\$3,557,100
2010	\$3,143,802
2011	\$2,896,519
2012	\$3,624,843
2013	\$3,878,605
2014	\$4,886,753
2015	\$5,676,814

* Prior to 2005, unfunded employee future benefits liabilities were not identified.

Capacity Utilization

2016/17 ACTUAL ENROLMENT				OPERATING CAPACITY				PERCENT UTILIZATION
K	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC	K	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC	TOTAL
288	817	413	943	304	2,730	2,100	750	58.8%

Total Capital Investment

Since 2001, the Province has invested more than \$3.88M in the Peace River South School District, including \$3.06M for the replacement of Pouce Coupe Elementary and just recently \$818,500 for four School Enhancement Program projects at Dawson Creek Secondary, Tumbler Ridge Secondary, Chetwynd Secondary and McLoed Elementary - Secondary. The Province also invested \$30,000 for additional space for Full-Day Kindergarten.

Completed Capital Projects

Year	New	Replace	Additions	Reno	Seismic Mitigation Project	School Enhancement Project	Total Cost	Buses
2001/02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
2002/03	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2003/04	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2004/05	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2005/06	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2006/07	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2007/08	0	1	0	0	0	0	\$3,064,864	4
2008/09	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2009/10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2010/11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2011/12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012/13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2013/14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
2014/15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2015/16	0	0	0	0	0	4	\$818,500	0
Total	0	1	0	0	0	4	\$3,883,364	48

Projects Completed Since 2001

Year	School	Project	Total Cost
2015	Dawson Creek Secondary	SEP: Replace sawdust collection system	\$282,500
2015	Tumbler Ridge Secondary	SEP: Replace sawdust collection system	\$236,000
2015	Chetwynd Secondary	SEP: Replace sawdust collection system	\$206,000
2015	McLoed Elementary - Secondary	SEP: Upgrade HVAC controls	\$94,000
2007	Pouce Coupe Elementary	Replacement: 40K/75 student capacity	\$3,064,864

Projects Approved for Development

Year	School	Project	Total Cost
2016	Windrem Elementary School	SEP: Roof repairs/replacement	\$700,000
2016	Central Middle School	SEP: Safety enhancements – dust extractor replacement	\$288,900
2016	Ecole Frank Ross Elementary	SEP: Heating and ventilation upgrades	\$1,060,725

StrongStart BC Program

6 StrongStart BC programs

Total Annual Funding - \$128,000

Total Year to Date - \$1.13M

1. Dawson Creek Secondary (Dawson Creek)
2. Tremblay Elementary (Dawson Creek)
3. Don Titus Elementary (Chetwynd)
4. Tumbler Ridge Elementary (Tumbler Ridge)
5. StrongStart Outreach Program #1
6. StrongStart Outreach Program #2

School Closures by Board

Year	School	Reasoning
2000/01	Kelly Lake Elementary-Junior Secondary (K-12)	Declining enrolment
2004/05	Dr. H.J. O'Brien Educational Centre	Declining enrolment
2004/05	Dokie Elementary	Declining enrolment
2009/10	Parkhill Elementary	Declining enrolment
2013/14	Tate Creek Elementary	Declining enrolment

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BRIEFING NOTE**

DATE: August 18, 2016
CLIFF: 189975 – Hesquiaht (Hesh kwee at)

PREPARED FOR: Minister Mike Bernier and Deputy Minister Dave Byng, for Information, at the request of the Provincial Director of Aboriginal Education, for a meeting during the all-Chiefs' gathering with Councillor Priscilla Sabbas-Watts.

SUBJECT: How can the Province support our students even though on-reserve schools are a federal responsibility

BACKGROUND:

The Hesquiaht First Nation (pronounced Hesh-kwit or Hes-kwee-at) is a Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations band government located on the west coast region of Vancouver Island. Their traditional territory stretches roughly from Nootka Sound to Clayoquot Sound. The largest community (about 40 people) is at Hot Springs Cove (formerly known as Refuge Cove) and can be reached by boat or float plane. It is the most geographically northern and remote of the five Nuu-chah-nulth Nations. It is a member of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council.

The Nuučaanuł (Nuu-chah-nulth) language is spoken by the Hesquiaht and a dozen other First Nations on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

The community had to rebuild after a tsunami in 1963, which had devastating financial impact. The residents are used to living in isolation since it takes over an hour to commute by boat into Tofino. The majority of Hesquiaht people live in Port Alberni and other urban centers. The total member population is approximately 700.

Two of eight Hesquiaht reserves are occupied by Hesquiaht members: one at Hot Springs Cove and the other at Hesquiaht Harbour. The reserve community of Hot Springs Cove is located on the cove's west side, and is home to about 60 people. There are only four adults residing in Hesquiaht Harbour.

The traditional territory of the Hesquiaht is within the boundaries of School District 70 (Alberni). There is a (non-First Nations Schools Association member) First Nation elementary school on reserve called Hesquiaht First Nation Place of Learning. It currently has five students; the band is anticipating about 10 in September. When students complete elementary school, families need to relocate or find student boarding in other communities for their children to continue their schooling. Note that there is no longer a water taxi and transportation is expensive (Appendix 1).

The Hesquiaht were also devastated by the 1990s economic collapse of their traditional fisheries and forestry activities. The band is working to keep the community thriving on a number of fronts, including the development of eco-tourism opportunities, infrastructure and housing, treaty negotiations, and the marketing of the community and territory.

DISCUSSION:

Given the geographic and demographic realities faced by the band, they will be most interested in discussion of transportation funding and/or solutions, or funding for the new Hot Springs Cove School to expand beyond Grade 6. These are matters to be discussed primarily with the federal government, through Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, but BC plays an important partnership role.

School District 70 (Alberni Valley) reported they had not been contacted by Hesquiaht to discuss options.

TEFA is a government-to-government style agreement signed in 2012 by BC, Canada, and BC First Nations, represented by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC). TEFA requires Canada to fund some services provided by FNESC (and the FNSEA) and to fund First Nation band operated on-reserve schools in a way comparable to BC public schools.

B.C.'s commitments in TEFA include:

- consulting early on any changes to legislation, policy, standards, and funding;
- sharing expertise, learning resources, and bulk purchasing opportunities; and,
- giving on-reserve schools and students access to provincial exams and the Dogwood.

Administration of provincial exams in on-reserve schools started in 2013/14 with a pilot project, and in 2014/15 First Nation schools were given full access the provincial exam program.

The Ministry and FNESC are now working on a formal process to issue the Dogwood to successful students. In the meantime, the Minister has chosen to award the Dogwood to any students who wrote exams in 2013/14, and who successfully complete all the requirements of BC's graduation program in 2015/16. This is a historic decision as these are the first students to earn the Dogwood on reserve in a school not under BC's jurisdiction.

The above is an example of how, through TEFA implementation committees, the parties are working together to build capacity in the First Nations school system. Here are a couple additional examples:

- the Ministry provided information and support allowing INAC and FNESC to create a funding manual and estimator tool for First Nation school administrators; and,
- the Ministry extended to band-operated schools the standing offer pricing negotiated to save school districts money when buying school buses.

Furthermore, to help implement TEFA, the Ministry and FNESC signed in June 2015 a relationship protocol.

Current and upcoming work, as per the TEFA implementation work plan, includes increasing the quantity and quality of Local Education Agreements (LEAs) and implementing BC's commitment to extend Dogwood access to First Nation schools.

While TEFA will expire next year, the Province is committed to negotiating its renewal, and has arranged for the necessary meetings throughout the fall. Items for discussion and potential

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inclusion in a second agreement include transportation, technology, Indigenous language learning, and incentives and/or supports to promote LEAs.

Appendix One: An excerpt of an email from Priscilla Sabbas-Watts, Hesquiaht Councillor

<u>Contact Information</u> Aboriginal Education 250-213-5314		Approved 
	ADM initial	Dave Byng Deputy Minister
		Date signed: September 1, 2016

Appendix One: An excerpt of an email from Priscilla Sabbas-Watts, Hesquiaht Councillor

Prior to about 2005 secondary students attended High School in Ahousaht at Maaqtuusiis Secondary School. This was a good arrangement as the kids were able to travel back and forth by school boat. While this was a good arrangement for the students it was incredibly costly. The boat fair alone equalled approximately \$20 per student per day, but the boat had to run regardless if there was one student or 10. Even if there were 10 students it did not cover the costs of fuel and maintenance for the boat.

Leadership at the time met with Ahousaht, but their Education Authority required the full amount that was provided federally for each student to attend the school, this was fair of them to request. However, it meant we could not supplement the transportation costs. Chief and Council made the difficult decision to stop sending Hesquiaht children to school in Ahousaht and that they could either do distance education in the community or move to Ahousaht, or other neighbouring towns with relatives and receive support from room and board. With this decision we saw a number of families that had resided in the community for a long time move after a year or so, they wanted to be with their children and not have them boarding out. For some it felt too much like residential school.