

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DECISION BRIEFING NOTE**

DATE: March 24, 2021
CLIFF: 244635

PREPARED FOR: Scott MacDonald, Deputy Minister – **FOR DECISION**

SUBJECT: Distributed Learning (DL) Agreement Renewals

PURPOSE: Seeking approval of interim agreements

BACKGROUND:

- Currently, Boards of Education¹ and Independent School Authorities may provide all or part of an educational program by means of distributed learning (DL) only with the prior agreement of the Minister. The agreements outline obligations and expectations for DL. To operate a DL school and receive funding, a signed agreement needs to be in place.
- There are 46 boards of education, operating 53 DL programs and 16 independent school authorities with DL agreements. Agreements with boards of education end on May 31, 2021. Independent DL Agreements will end on April 30, 2021. The Ministry can renew or terminate the agreements at its discretion.
- Bill 8 received Royal Assent on March 5, 2020 and includes several provisions with respect to online learning. These provisions will come into force on July 1, 2021:
 - all references to 'Distributed Learning' will become 'Online Learning'
 - all boards of education and independent school authorities can provide online learning to their own students
 - boards and authorities are only required to have an agreement with the Minister if they are providing online learning to students not enrolled with their district/authority
- Note: In Spring 2020, due to COVID-19, the Ministry granted boards and authorities without an agreement temporary permission to offer DL for the 2020/21 school year. These letters expire July 1, 2021. No further action regarding these agreements is necessary.

DISCUSSION:

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¹ For the purposes of this note, this includes the Francophone Education Authority

OPTIONS:

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Option 2: Issue extension letters for current DL providers until June 30, 2021, and issue new interim OL agreements for **a one-year term** (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022).

Pros:

- Provides certainty in the short term while allowing boards and authorities time to successfully adopt or integrate with the new policy and provincial infrastructure.
- Supports the new OL legislation (effective July 1, 2021).
- The Ministry can renew or terminate the agreements at its discretion.

Cons

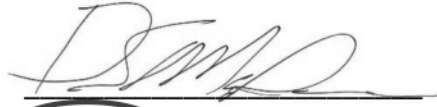
- May not provide enough time for unexpected changes to the phased implementation timeline, and another temporary DL agreement may need to be issued.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Interim agreements are Status Quo therefore, there are no implications.

RECOMMENDATION:

Option: **2**



Approved/Not Approved

D. Scott MacDonald

Deputy Minister of Education

March 29, 2021

Date Signed

Program ADM/Branch:Eleanor Liddy, Services and Technology, Online Learning Branch

Program Contact (for content): Jennifer Riddel

Drafter: Teresa McClintick, Maureen Jones

Date: March 24, 2021

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Withheld pursuant to/removed as

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