



A Message from the Minister



As another year gets underway in B.C.'s K-12 schools, I welcome all of B.C.'s dedicated teachers back after what I hope has been a safe and enjoyable summer. This is an exciting time for education in B.C., and together, we are approaching this school year with a continued focus on student success.

B.C. is a world leader in education, and we are focused on continuing to improve outcomes for all students. Students are now graduating at the highest rate ever, and it has been encouraging to see outcomes for Indigenous students and students with special needs continuing to improve over recent years. These great results come from the hard work being done in our education system by students, support staff, parents and above all – teachers. The work you do is vitally important to a student's ability to reach their full potential and succeed.

I'm excited that for the first time this year, all students in the province will be learning from B.C.'s innovative new curriculum and working towards completing the new Graduation Program and assessments, with the K-12 curriculum redesign process now complete. Many of you have been using the new curriculum for some time now, and have played a pivotal role in its development and successful implementation. We can all be proud that B.C.'s new curriculum is now providing more flexibility to teachers, and more opportunities for students to explore their passions through inquiries and hands-on learning while developing their foundational knowledge, skills and competencies. We've heard teachers' requests for more support on



Indigenous perspectives and Health Education topics in the new curriculum – resource development work is underway in both those areas, and materials will be available during the upcoming school year.

Our government is committed to creating an equitable education system that supports all students to succeed, and we can only do that through true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. We are leading the way as the only jurisdiction in Canada with a tripartite agreement that ensures an equitable education for all First Nations students, no matter where they choose to go to school. We successfully negotiated a five-year B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement with the federal government and the First Nations Education Steering Committee, on behalf of Indigenous rightsholders, securing a \$100-million federal investment to support Indigenous language and culture, adult education and transportation in First Nations schools.

Many of you will notice construction underway at your schools this year, thanks to 10,000 new student spaces approved for fast-growing B.C. communities, and seismic projects that are upgrading more than 22,000 student seats to protect students, teachers and staff in an earthquake. Over the past two years our government has approved over \$1.5 billion in school capital projects, and we will continue to invest in school buildings through a \$2.7-billion capital budget to ensure students and teachers learn and work in safe, modern and comfortable environments.

This year, total education funding grows to \$6.6 billion – \$1 billion more than there was in 2016-17. We're allocating 23% more funding to ensure school districts can support students with special needs in the classroom. Here in B.C., we will continue to support and invest in public education, in contrast to some other Canadian provinces. We understand that there is always room to improve, and we are working hard every day to better support student success.

I look forward to another year of working together to make improvements in our education system to support all students as they strive to reach their goals, and I wish every B.C. teacher the best for the year ahead.

Rob Fleming,

Minister of Education

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