

# A Review of Special Education in British Columbia, June 2000 Workplan Update – February 2002

## **A. School Board Policies/Guidelines/Procedures**

**There is a cluster of recommendations that require boards to report to the Ministry:**

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
2. Given the inconsistencies in the application of the practice of inclusion, the Minister of Education should direct school boards to review the principles of inclusion and integration set out in <i>Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines</i> to ensure that appropriate policies and programs have been established for students who have special educational needs, and to report to the Minister the results of that Review by September 2001.
25. The Minister of Education should direct school boards to indicate by September 2001 how the practices of the school board are consistent with the requirements of the Individual Education Plan Order.
21. The Minister of Education should direct school boards to report by September 2001 how they are using classroom based early assessments to detect students' skill difficulties and determine appropriate teaching/ learning strategies to correct learning difficulties in reading, writing, spelling and numeracy.
22. The Minister of Education should direct school boards to report by September 2001 whether their special education policies require the appropriate use of criterion referenced assessments at the classroom level for the purpose of planning instruction, adapting instruction, and providing remediation.
28. The Minister of Education should direct school boards to ensure that procedures are established to monitor the success of students, including students with special educational needs, on a regular basis throughout the school year and to report to the Minister about the procedures established by September 2001.
36. The Minister of Education should direct that school boards report to the Minister by September 2001 indicating what steps they have taken to ensure that information about students who have special educational needs is maintained and transmitted in accordance with the Permanent Student Records and Individual Education Plan Ministerial Orders.

## **UPDATE, at February 2002:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most boards have now submitted their reports to the Ministry, using the response template developed by the Ministry in partnership with field representatives. Two reports have recently been received, leaving five district reports outstanding.</li> <li>• Ministry staff members have reviewed these reports for completeness and compliance with requirements. The reports indicate that districts have ensured that their special education policies and practices are current, are in keeping with Ministry requirements, and have been made known employees and the public.</li> <li>• Key findings and issues were summarized as background material for the Deputy Minister's district visits with Superintendents of Schools, fall/winter 2001.</li> <li>• A number of boards reported that the processes they established to complete their reports (district special education working teams, etc.) will be maintained, to address future district work in special education.</li> <li>• The Ministry will not be preparing a formal report about these district submissions – instead, we will continue to use them as references in our ongoing work with school boards as they implement their Accountability Contracts.</li> </ul>
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23. The Minister of Education should direct school boards to implement policies and practices to ensure early identification of, and intervention with, students who have special educational needs, and to report to the minister about the implementation of such policies and practices annually, beginning June 2002.
29. School boards should promote the use of Performance Standards with students who have special educational needs and report about such use by September 2002.

**UPDATE, at February 2002:**

- Although Boards were not required to report on these two recommendations until 2002, a significant number elected to do so in their fall 2001 submissions (approximately 50% reported). Information was available to the Deputy Minister for his fall meetings with district Superintendents of Schools.
- Ministry staff are currently inventorying the variety of strategies and approaches to early identification and intervention being undertaken by boards.

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**There is a cluster of recommendations that require the Ministry to direct Boards' activities:**

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
1. The Minister of Education direct that, by September 2001, each school board formally adopt the Ministry of Education provincial special education policy or develop a district policy that complements the provincial policy in its applicability to the local jurisdiction.
4. The Minister of Education should direct school boards to develop policies by September 2001 on suspension and expulsion of students with special needs that will ensure that such students have been adequately assessed, that appropriate interventions are applied before suspension is considered, that the grounds for suspension are clear and appropriate, that meaningful education programs or interventions are offered during the period of suspension, and that planning is undertaken for successful re-entry.
5. The Ministry of Education should formally remind school boards of their responsibility to provide an educational program to students who are removed or excluded from school under Section 91(6) of the <i>School Act</i> .
38. The Minister of Education should direct that the delivery of Career and Personal Planning curriculum for students who have special educational needs contain information related to workplace or post-secondary transition issues.
30. The Minister of Education should direct that students with special educational needs should continue to participate in province-wide programs such as Foundation Skills Assessment and provincial examinations whenever possible in order to facilitate the evaluation of the effectiveness of special education interventions.
31. The Minister of Education should direct that evidence of the effectiveness of programs and outcomes for students who have special educational needs be included in school board annual reports.
45. The Minister of Education should direct school boards to address in their annual technology plans the technological needs of students who have special educational needs.

### **UPDATE, at February 2002:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions to boards regarding FSA administration address inclusion/exclusion of students with special needs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyses of achievement data for students with special needs – their performance on measures such as FSA, graduation, transition rates – have been shared with each school district to inform development of their Accountability Contracts.</li> </ul>

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**There is a cluster of other recommendations that speak directly to boards:**

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
3. School boards must ensure that each student's educational program is based on educational needs of the student with special educational needs and not based solely on funding allocations.
18 .School boards should ensure that when special education funds are allocated to schools for site based management that the maximum benefit for students with special educational needs is derived from these financial resources. School boards should consider retaining some of the targeted funds as a contingency to provide district or regional services to specific programs.
24 .School boards should assess the needs of students with special gifts and talents and provide them with appropriate early intervention and sustained support.

The nineteen (19) recommendations above were formerly conveyed to School Board Chairs, Superintendents of Schools and Secretary-Treasurers in a May 15, 2001 letter from then-Minister of Education, the Honourable Penny Priddy.
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## **B. Training Issues:**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8. The Minister of Education should encourage the British Columbia College of Teachers to ensure that all teachers who successfully complete an approved program of initial teacher education have undertaken course work that includes attention to special education as well as practica that involve work with a diverse range of students who have special educational needs.

26. Faculties of education, as part of their initial teacher education, should provide instruction in the preparation of IEPs and parental participation in the process.

39. The Minister of Education should ask institutions responsible for preparation of school counsellors to include in their curricula attention to the unique needs of students who have special educational needs with respect to post-secondary education and work.

- During 2000/01, senior ministry officials met several times with Deans of Education, during which time these recommendations were reviewed and discussed. In May 2001, Deans complied with a request to submit information about how their various training programs address issues of special education and school safety. Next steps are to be determined.

7. The Ministry of Education should establish a program of tuition rebates to enable teachers to enroll in approved credit courses to increase their understanding of students who have special educational needs and their understanding of successful methods for addressing the educational needs of such students.

9. The Ministry of Education should provide tuition rebates to teachers who undertake advanced study in special education in areas of significant shortage such as visual impairments.

- In February 2001, the Ministry announced a provincial initiative, the Teacher Tuition Rebate Program, to support teachers who wished to enhance their skills. Courses eligible for rebate included those in special education and behavior management.
- Utilization data reveal: 61/404 teachers enrolled in a special education or behavior course and received a tuition rebate; 1/21 school district grants to support training addressed special education/behavior
- In 2000/01, Ministry staff continued to work with UBC and the western provinces to promote a western consortium approach to the training of teachers of students who have sensory impairments. Differing provincial priorities and interests suggest that a consortium approach will not be viable at this time. UBC continues to introduce innovative approaches to enhancing enrollments in its deaf and visual impairment training programs, and continues to liaise with the Ministry.

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10. The Ministry of Education should provide resources for the development of distance education courses in special education so that teachers working in remote regions of the province may undertake such courses in their home communities.

- No progress to report.

6. The Minister of Education should request that the British Columbia School Superintendents' Association and the British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association report to the Minister by September 2001 how the associations ensure that factors critical to the success of special education services are understood and practiced by their members.

- The Ministry has contracted with the BC School Superintendents' Association to update the well regarded resource, *Every Administrators' Guide to Special Education* (originally developed in the mid-1990's). A new draft will be finalized at March 31, 2002. Distribution and implementation to follow in the next fiscal year.

12. The Minister of Education should direct the deputy minister to empanel a committee to delineate the roles and responsibilities of non-teaching employees who work with students who have special educational needs as well as appropriate standards for the preparation of such personnel. This committee should report to the Minister by September 2001.

- a. In June 2001, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation and the Canadian Union of Public Employees BC issued a joint paper, *Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers and Teacher Assistants*.

### **C. Collective Agreements:**

13. The Minister of Education should ask employer and employee organizations to identify clauses in existing collective agreements that might adversely affect students with special needs or contravene the rights of such students under the *School Act*, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, or provincial human rights legislation, and to undertake steps to eliminate such clauses from future agreements.

- This recommendation was conveyed to employer and employee organizations in fall 2000.
- Bill 28 introduced February 2002.

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## D. Ministry of Education Supports:

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
27. IEPs should be dynamic and teacher-coordinated. The Ministry of Education should provide school boards with a range of IEP templates and clear instructions that parents must be consulted about the program being planned. The IEPs developed using the templates should outline the students' needs and pathways to success and be specific about the results to be obtained.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic IEP templates, able to be customized to meet local circumstances, were issued to boards in September 2001. Use by boards is elective.</li> </ul>
42. The Ministry should gather and disseminate information about effective models for the use of school based teams using the ministry's website.
41. The Ministry of Education should include on its website information about successful practices in the provision of services to students who have special educational needs and support district, regional and provincial conferences about the provision of services to students who have special educational needs.
32. The Ministry of Education should re-distribute a synopsis of the <i>Review of Learning Assistance Services</i> by December 2000 to assist school boards in reviewing their own models of learning assistance delivery.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> </ul>
40. The document being prepared by the Ministry of Education on career/life transitions for students with special educational needs should be completed and made available as soon as is practical, but no later than December 2000.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> </ul>
11. The Ministry of Education should work with local school boards, the B.C. Council of Administrators of Special Education, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation and the British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association to ensure the continuation of the Effective Behaviour Support Training Program and other staff development activities of the Safe Schools Initiative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Done</li> </ul>
43. The Ministry of Education should continue to support the funding for technologies to assist students who have special educational needs and their teachers.
44. The Minister of Education should investigate by December 2001 whether students who have special educational needs requiring technologies have timely access to them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rec. # 43: Funding has continued</li> <li>• Changes to the Auditory Training Equipment program, providing FM amplification equipment to Hard of Hearing students, will be required following closure of the provincial Audiology Support Unit by Ministry of Health Services. Options are currently being explored for coming school year.</li> </ul>

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**E. Funding and Accounting:**

14. The Ministry of Education should modify the current per pupil portion of the funding system such that students in the Severe Disabilities (Low Incidence/High Cost) and Dependent Disability categories continue to be funded using per pupil formulas under the present system and that supplementary funding for services for all other students with special educational needs (including learning assistance) be provided to school boards on a proportional basis.

19. The Ministry of Education should refrain from establishing new categories for funding students who have special educational needs.

15. The Ministry of Education should change its auditing system for special education funding from one that focuses on compliance with assessment and planning processes and procedures to one that focuses on the educational progress of students who have special educational needs.

16. The Ministry of Education should continue to target funds for special education until appropriate procedures are established to ensure that resources are being used to improve success for students who have special educational needs.

17. The Ministry of Education should revise its Accounting, Budgeting, and Financial Reporting Manual to ensure clarity for the Ministry of Education, school boards, employees, parents and the community in accounting for all targeted special education funds.

- Special Education considerations have been included in the review of funding.
- Announcements to be made shortly.

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**F. Accountability:**

20. The Ministry of Education should examine performance of students receiving special educational services in comparison to students who have not been identified as students with special educational needs.

- Analyses of achievement data for students with special needs – their performance on measures such as FSA, graduation, transition rates – have been shared with each school district to inform development of their Accountability Contracts.
- A focus of work in 2002/03

46. The Ministry of Education should make available on the Ministry website its guide to ensuring procedural fairness in appeals arising under Section 11 of the *School Act*.

- No action to date

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**G. Inter-ministerial Work:**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

33. The Ministries of Education, Children and Families, Health, Social Development and Economic Security, and Attorney General should commit to completing the review and revisions to the 1989 Inter-ministerial Protocols of Support Services by December 2001.

34. Consistent with the provisions for the protection of privacy, the Minister of Education should encourage the Minister for Children and Families, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Social Development and Economic Security, and the Attorney General to have the ministries and agencies under their control develop appropriate communication protocols for gathering and sharing relevant information about students who have special educational needs to ensure that they derive maximum benefit from the services being provided.

- Work was initiated on revising the InterMinisterial protocols in 2000/01.
- Tabled during government's Core Review of Services
- Work will begin again as soon as possible

35. The Ministry of Education should work with other ministries to develop a system that ensures that children with special needs have a continuum of services that begin in infancy, continue through the preschool and school years, and lead to their transition into the work force or post-secondary study.

37. The Minister of Education should discuss with the Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology appropriate ways of ensuring the smooth transition for students who have special educational needs from secondary schools to post-secondary institutions or other environments.

- Transition issues are to be assumed by the Ministry's Standards Team.

47. The Minister of Education should issue a report by September 2003 indicating the progress made toward the implementation of the aforementioned recommendations.