

# BC's Education Plan



## Minister's Message

This is an exciting time of change for education in British Columbia.

We're starting from a strong position: motivated and talented students, outstanding teachers, committed parents, skilled administrators and dedicated education partners. We are also fortunate to live in a province that values education and gives young people opportunities to excel.

And yet our education system is based on a model of learning from an earlier century. To change that, we need to put students at the centre of their own education. We need to make a better link between what kids learn at school and what they experience and learn in their everyday lives. We need to create new learning environments for students that allow them to discover, embrace, and fulfill their passions. We need to set the stage for parents, teachers, administrators and other partners to prepare our children for success not only in today's world, but in a world that few of us can yet imagine.

Inspired by innovative change already taking place in B.C. communities and developed through many months of consultation with educators, students, parents and other British Columbians, BC's Education Plan responds to the realities and demands of a world that has already changed dramatically and continues to change.

Before us lies a tremendous opportunity. We know more now than we've ever known about how children learn. It is time to use that knowledge to change what we do so students can realize their full potential.

As both a parent and grandparent, I want an education system that gives all children the best opportunities to be successful in whatever career they pursue. I'm sure every British Columbian feels the same way. By working together, we can take what we know is a good education system and make it great. That's what BC's Education Plan is all about.

George Abbott  
Minister of Education



## The Challenge: Education In A Fast-Changing World

Most people agree that British Columbia's education system is a good one. Teachers are skilled, facilities are sound and students succeed.

Yet an education system designed in the very different circumstances of an earlier century can't possibly always meet the challenges students face – both now and in the future. In the social, economic and technological environment of the past, change was much more gradual than it is today. Many of the opportunities and jobs we're preparing our students for don't even exist today. So while we enjoy a strong and stable system, we need a more nimble and flexible one that can adapt more quickly to better meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

We've all got a stake in preparing our young people for success in a changing world. Our challenge is clear. The world has changed and it will continue to change, so the way we educate students needs to continually adapt.

## The Opportunity

Children are natural born learners, and teachers are passionate about teaching. We have a unique opportunity to forge that common ground toward a more innovative education system that meets the needs of B.C. families today and in the future, to keep our young people achieving and thriving in a dynamic, rapidly evolving world.

We need to build on the many strengths of our existing education system while modernizing education so it can adapt and respond to students' needs. And we need to involve British Columbians more directly in discussions and decisions about education.

We can make education more flexible so students and families benefit from the exciting knowledge economy we're part of. To do that, students must be at the centre of a more personalized approach to learning. They will still learn basic core skills, but they will also have more freedom to pursue their individual interests and passions within a particular topic. Teachers are fundamental

to student success. Teachers must be supported to work with students in a variety of roles: guide, mentor, coach, content expert. Our schools must be more adaptable in responding to student needs.

We must continue to work with Aboriginal communities, through partnerships like Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements with school districts to focus on the needs of Aboriginal students and improve learning outcomes.

We must make better use of technology in education so our young people will be equipped to use it effectively and ethically.

We need more responsive and effective interventions for students who are struggling.

Parents must also be involved in planning their child's education and then helping them to achieve success. In partnership with their children's teacher and their child, parents will play an important role in supporting their child's learning.



## Building on Our Strengths

BC's Education Plan will build on the strengths of our existing system while moving to adaptable education for the world of today and tomorrow. New legislation will be required for some of these changes, while others can be made through collaboration and engagement with all education partners.

### STAYING SOLID ON THE BASICS



For all students, reading, writing and math skills will still be emphasized and students will still be required to meet core learning outcomes. B.C. students have a strong track record of success in international measures of these skills and BC's Education Plan will build on that success.

### MORE REAL-WORLD SKILLS

While a solid knowledge base in the basic skills will be maintained, to better prepare students for the future there will be more emphasis on key competencies like self-reliance, critical thinking, inquiry, creativity, problem solving, innovation, teamwork and collaboration, cross-cultural understanding, and technological literacy. We can also connect students more directly with the world outside of school, with increased focus on learning these skills across topic areas.

### IMPROVED STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Students' progress will continue to be monitored through rigorous province-wide assessments. Effective classroom assessment practices are key to student success and will be even more vital in a more personalized learning environment. Educators will have more ability to decide how and when each student is assessed. New tools will be developed to provide greater access, richer information, and more consistency across the province on student progress. Regular reporting to parents both formally and informally will remain key.

### IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS

A great teacher has always been the key to creating outstanding educational experiences. Under BC's Education Plan, this will continue. To help students succeed in a rapidly-changing world, teachers will be empowered to shift from being the primary source of content to focus on helping students learn how to learn.

This Plan will make it easier for teachers to use their professional knowledge and discretion to guide students toward the skills and knowledge that will help them thrive in later life. By having the curriculum built around fewer but higher level outcomes, this plan gives teachers and students more time and flexibility to explore student's interests and passions.

### EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Students, parents and teachers all need the teaching profession to be administered in a way that ensures high standards and puts the public interest first. To achieve these goals, this Plan will address widely-shared concerns about how our province's teaching profession has been regulated. It will make sure teacher regulation protects both students and the public interest. It will also ensure teachers get regular, meaningful feedback to inform how they teach.

This Plan opens the door for new ways of learning – not just for students, but for teachers as well.

### GREATER FLEXIBILITY

Under BC's Education Plan schools will gain new flexibility to design programs that really work for all students. There will be more flexibility and choice regarding how, when and where learning takes place, and there will be more flexibility about how students are organized for learning. Public and independent schools, including speciality programs like traditional schools and academies, will continue to be options for parents and students.

## FREEDOM TO ADAPT

This Plan will give students, families and educators more say on how, where, when and what students will learn. In many cases, the way classes and schools look might change. School calendars may change if boards of education see that as benefitting students. Almost certainly, more learning will take place outside of the school setting.

## British Columbia's Response: Flexible, Adaptable, Excellence In Education

BC's Education Plan is based on a simple principle: every learner will realize their full potential and contribute to the well-being of our province.

To move our education system from good to great, the Plan has **five key elements**:

- 1) Personalized learning for every student
- 2) Quality teaching and learning
- 3) Flexibility and choice
- 4) High standards
- 5) Learning empowered by technology

## 1 Personalized Learning for Every Student 🙌

Under the Plan, teachers, students and parents will work together to make sure every student's needs are met, passions are explored and goals are achieved. This means student-centered learning that's focused on the needs, strengths and aspirations of each individual young person. Students will play an active role in designing their own education and will be increasingly accountable for their own learning success. It's all about putting students at the centre of education. That means giving teachers and schools the flexibility to make



sure each student is well served by their educational program. Each student is unique and our education system will support each student's interests and ways of learning.

## ACTION STEPS

- We will work with our education partners to identify the attributes of an educated citizen and how that will be articulated throughout the education program culminating in graduation.
- Curriculum will be redesigned to reflect the core competencies, skills, and knowledge that students need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- A curriculum with fewer but higher level outcomes will create time to allow deeper learning and understanding.
- Increased flexibility will be key to making sure that student's passions and interests are realized, as well as their different and individual ways of learning.

## 2 Quality Teaching and Learning ✓

BC's Education Plan acknowledges the complexity of the teacher's role. Teachers will receive support as they continue to adjust their roles to match what students need, moment by moment, to design personalized education that opens the door to educational success for British Columbia's young people. Professional standards will be high, and we will bring in a new system to regulate the teaching profession.

## ACTION STEPS

- We will work with our education partners to make sure that Professional Development days are used to enhance educators' knowledge base and professional expertise. It is important that teachers are able to refresh and develop new practices throughout their careers by participating in professional learning opportunities. On Pro D days, parents make alternative arrangements for their children and they need to be assured that these days are used as intended.
- We will work with universities to ensure teacher preparation programs give new teachers the knowledge and skills they require to support student learning.

- We believe mentoring is key to supporting teachers' professional learning, both in their formative years and throughout their careers. Teachers will have increased access to learning opportunities by working with teacher mentors and each other.
- We will work collaboratively with educators, to increase transparency and accountability and to ensure that the interests of children are protected. New legislation will create a teacher regulation system that puts the public interest first. The goal is to raise the stature of the teaching profession and increase public confidence in the profession's disciplinary processes.
- Working British Columbians in most professions participate in performance evaluation sessions with their employer. Principals will be doing the same with teachers. Regular feedback to teachers will help focus their professional development opportunities.

### 3 Flexibility and Choice ↗

BC's Education Plan will mean more choice for students and families with respect to how, when and where learning takes place. Boards of education will also have more flexibility to organize classes and other learning experiences so they can better direct resources to support student learning. Districts will also have more flexibility to vary the school calendar to better meet their student needs. Students will continue to create blended learning opportunities through online learning and class-based environments. Enrolment in online courses has grown by more than 500% in the last five years.

#### ACTION STEPS

- Boards of education will be able to set their own school calendars to better meet the needs of their community.



- Parents and students will still have choice and opportunity to decide which school their child attends within the public and independent school systems.
- We will create better opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning with more flexibility and choice with respect to what, how, when and where their child learns.
- We will expand our current learning credential program to better recognize learning that takes place outside of the classroom – like arts, sports, science and leadership programs – so that students are fairly acknowledged for this work.

### 4 High Standards ★★

What students know and what they are expected to learn with respect to knowledge and competencies is reflected in a strong core curriculum. Student performance with respect to provincial standards will be key to moving forward. Student progress will be reported to parents in a more meaningful, effective and consistent manner across the province, enabling parents to play a key role in shaping their children's education.

#### ACTION STEPS

- We will ensure our standards remain relevant and robust so that every graduate has every advantage to succeed in life.
- We will build on basic core curriculum skills but also make sure that students are well-versed in the competencies they need to succeed, like critical thinking and teamwork.
- All assessment activities, whether province-wide or classroom-based, will support ongoing student learning. Our provincial assessment programs will be reviewed to ensure they focus on key competencies and critical skills and knowledge. Classroom assessment tools, including performance standards and other assessment support material, will be developed with educators.
- Effective intervention strategies and supports will be available to teachers, students and parents to more quickly identify students who are struggling and to address their specific needs.

## 5 Learning Empowered by Technology

B.C. leads the country on internet connectivity – 85% of British Columbians use the internet on a regular basis.

BC's Education Plan will encourage smart use of technology in schools, better preparing students to thrive in an increasingly digital world. Students will have more opportunity to develop the competencies needed to use current and emerging technologies effectively, both in school and in life. Educators will be given the supports needed to use technology to empower the learning process, and to connect with each other, parents, and communities. Schools will have increased Internet connectivity to support learners and educators.



### ACTION STEPS

- Learners, educators and families will have improved access to digital tools and resources that support both face-to-face and online learning.
- The Province will promote the use of technology for both students and educators.
- The Province's new agreement with TELUS to provide all telecommunications services for government will allow for improved access to the Internet in B.C. schools.
- An improved provincial student information and reporting system will help teachers plan a more personalized learning experience with students and their parents.



## Taking The Next Steps

Under BC's Education Plan, ours will be an education system that's more flexible, dynamic and adaptable, to better prepare students for a bright future. We're not alone in recognizing the need for change. Jurisdictions around the world are re-examining how their education systems are designed and they are working to make them more responsive to the kind of learning children need now, and what they will need in the future.

The way to get from good to great is through personalized learning, supporting teachers, creating more flexibility and choice for families, maintaining high standards and embracing technology. It is an opportunity for every child, every student, every learner to do their very best in education.

Working with our education partners, and in consultation with the public, we will get from good to great as we bring personalized learning into classrooms. And we invite all British Columbians to get involved in this exciting transformation.

We are engaging students, parents, teachers, educators and community groups to help shape this new blueprint for education. We are bringing all education partners and the public into this dialogue to fully realize BC's Education Plan.





Learn more about how you can be involved at:  
[www.bcedplan.ca](http://www.bcedplan.ca)