



September 21, 2021

Amanda Flentjar, Regional Coordinator
Autism Society of British Columbia (AutismBC)
3688 Cessna Drive, Richmond, BC, V7B1C7
604 434 0880 ext 109 aflentjar@autismbc.ca

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education
Victoria, BC
250 953 3547 EDUC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

CC: learningsupports@gov.bc.ca; EDUC.independentSchoolsOffice@gov.bc.ca; DM.Education@gov.bc.ca

Subject: Clarity Needed on Changes and Consultation for the 2022-2023 School Year Impacting the Autism Community

Dear Honourable Jennifer Whiteside,

We reach out to you today in an effort to ensure we have accurate, up to date information to share with families we support. This time of year is often difficult for our community and interim changes along with uncertainty about the 2022/23 school year has added to that stress.

As an organization supporting over 3,500 families and students with diverse needs across BC we are committed to inclusion. We strive to provide families with the information and resources they need. We ask that you assist us in this endeavor and confirm or correct the following as well as answer the questions below.

Changes this school year (2021/22):

- Legislative changes took effect July 1, 2021 after the passing of [Bill 8](#).
- Distributed Learning (DL) is now Online Learning (OL)
- Boards and independent school authorities with current distributed learning agreements have been issued interim online learning agreements for the 2021/22 school year

Changes happening for 2022/23 school year:

- All public-school districts will offer Online Learning
- All boards and independent school authorities with current distributed learning agreements (2021/22) will need to reapply for a new agreement.

Questions:

- Will all public districts be required to have an Online Learning program?
- Has the criteria for independent school providers to obtain agreements for the 2022/23 school year been determined? When will this information be public? When will the application and approval process begin?
- Will students currently enrolled with independent school programs be required to enroll with their local public school district for the 2022/23 school year?



Autism Society of British Columbia
3688 Cessna Drive, Richmond, BC
Tel: (604) 434-0880 Toll Free: 1 888-437-0880
Charitable Business #107810046 RR0001

- “A **single** provincial learning management service and shared course content repository will be available to educators.” Does this apply to both public and independent schools? Will this be the only approved source?
- “Provincial Online Service Provider”, will there be a list of approved providers students must use for support services. (Similar to the [RASP](#) list used by MCFD).

We have heard the Ministry of Education will be providing opportunity for families to learn about upcoming changes, ask questions and provide feedback. These opportunities will be cohosted by other organizations.

For students enrolled with a public school:

[BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils \(BCCPAC\)](#)

To register: andreasinclair@bccpac.bc.ca No dates provided.

For students enrolled with an independent school:

[Federation of Independent Schools \(FISA\) BC](#)

No contact provided. No dates provided.

For Indigenous families:

[First Nations Education Steering Committee \(FNESC\)](#) and [Metis Nation BC](#)

No contact provided. No dates provided.

Our questions:

- Is this accurate?
- How many meetings are scheduled?
- Limit to meeting participation?
- Q & A format?
- Questions pre-submitted?
- Who will be speaking? Rep from MOE?

Has consideration been given into how to address the unique needs and concerns of students with current funding designation categories and diverse learning needs? Engaging these families and appropriate support organizations is important and vital for inclusive education.

We are seeking up to date and proactive information directly from you in order to best support families in our communities. We look forward to hearing from you and working together to address the needs and concerns of BC families.

Sincerely,



Amanda Flentjar

&

Kaye Banez
Board Vice President, AutismBC