



May 2, 2017

Ref: 192967

Michael Marchbank  
British Columbia Public School Employers' Association  
**Email: michael.marchbank@fraserhealth.ca**

Dear Mr. Marchbank:

Thank you for your three letters sent on February 20, 2017, regarding the resolutions from the BC Public School Employers' Association's (BCPSEA) 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting. As you may be aware, the government of British Columbia is currently in a transition period due to the general election scheduled for May 9, 2017. I am pleased to respond to your letters and will take your issues forward to the incoming government once the writs of election have been returned and the Minister of Education has been appointed.

### **Exempt Compensation**

As you may know, in-range salary increases throughout the BC public sector, including the K-12 sector, are based in part on employee performance in addition to the other core principles of salary differentiation, transparency of decisions, and accountability to taxpayers. These principles have been adopted by boards of education. School districts have made submissions to BCPSEA, for approval by the Public Sector Employers' Council (PSEC), for salary adjustments since 2015 and to transition to a new regional salary structure for Principals and Vice-Principals since 2016 that includes an assessment of employee performance. As is the case for all public sector employers, the decision to provide compensation increases, consistent with public sector policies and expectations, rests with individual employers recognizing this consistency also includes the expectation to fund increases for management/exempt from within existing operational budgets.

### **Rural Staff Recruitment and Retention**

The rural education review is in progress and the issue of recruitment and retention has been at the forefront of discussions. Through this process, it has become clear that rural school districts have been struggling to recruit and retain qualified education sector professions for both educator and operational/administrative positions. As well, the Ministry of Education understands the recent agreement with the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) will result in additional recruitment challenges for rural school districts. Letter of Understanding No.5 of the teachers' collective agreement provides for a rural stipend of \$2,300 annually to teachers working in certain rural areas. In light of the difficulties faced in rural school districts, the Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Education and the Minister of Education determined that immediate action was required.

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Following your resolution, the Ministry established a one-time \$2 million fund, which will flow to school districts through the BC Public School Employers' Association's recruitment and retention program (Make a Future – Careers in BC Education). The funds are to be used for:

- free job posting services and access to an online teacher application management system;
- coordination of national and international recruitment efforts; and
- local incentives, such as enhanced funding for travel expenses for professional development, relocation expenses and transitional housing assistance.

Ministry staff are currently working with BCPSEA staff to further define the eligibility criteria and process by which rural school districts may access the funding. As well, the Ministry is exploring longer-term recommendations for helping rural school districts with recruitment and retention as part of the Rural Education Strategy.

### **Memorandum of Agreement with the BCTF**

As communicated to board chairs and school district senior staff on March 24, 2017, government has committed to fully-funding the recently-established Memorandum of Agreement with the BCTF regarding the restoration of language for specialty teachers, class size and composition, and processes related to teacher workloads.

Notional funding allocations have been provided to school districts by the Ministry, and their preliminary staffing plans are due to the Ministry on April 28, 2017. Going forward, school district allocations will be adjusted to actual staffing needs, and I expect that BCPSEA liaison officers will be an important resource for staff as they work to develop and refine their staffing plans over the coming months.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Kim Abbott, Executive Director, Sector Resourcing and Service Delivery Branch, Resource Management and Corporate Services Division, by phone at (250) 896-3680 or by email at [Kim.Abbott@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Kim.Abbott@gov.bc.ca).

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Dave Byng  
Deputy Minister

pc: George Farkas, Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Management and Corporate Services Division  
Tiffany Ma, Executive Director and CFO, Financial Services  
Caroline Ponsford, Project Director, Service Delivery Sector Resourcing and Service Delivery  
Jonathan Foweraker, Director, Funding and Allocation Sector Resourcing and Service Delivery  
Renzo Del Negro, Chief Executive Officer, BC Public School Employers' Association