

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2017EDUC0004-000015  
Jan. 5, 2017

Ministry of Education

### **Province provides \$50 million for priority measures to hire teachers, support students**

VICTORIA – B.C. students will soon benefit from an agreement reached with the BCTF to provide school districts with \$50 million to immediately begin hiring teachers and improve student supports, Education Minister Mike Bernier announced today.

The funding is for the 2016-17 school year and is equivalent to compensation for approximately 1,100 teachers. The actual number of teachers hired will be determined by districts, local unions, and the hiring process.

The priority measures, outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed this week by the Province, the BC Public School Employers' Association and the BCTF, are the first step in responding to the decision from the Supreme Court of Canada as negotiations continue on the restored collective agreement provisions.

The funding will go towards:

- Hiring additional classroom teachers this school year where it is feasible to do so given current timetable, physical space and labour supply limitations.
- Hiring additional specialty teachers this school year where it is feasible to do so. This includes, but is not limited to, teachers employed as special education teachers, speech language pathologists, behaviour intervention specialists, school psychologists, Aboriginal support teachers, counsellors including for mental health, ELL teachers, and teacher librarians.
- Where it is not feasible to add additional teachers during the current school year, the funding may be used to fund district-level capacity building opportunities such as upgrading existing teacher qualifications during the 2016-17 year, teacher recruitment programs and teacher mentoring programs.

The priority measures MOA provides districts with the flexibility to work with their local teachers' union to determine how best to use the funding to provide additional education services for students by hiring new teachers and specialist teachers.

The parties agreed in the last round of bargaining that they would reopen the agreement and negotiate from the restored contract provisions. The parties continue to meet and jointly review the old contract language as well as current district-level information on classrooms and composition. These negotiations will determine how to modernize the language so it reflects changes to classrooms that have taken place over the past 15 years.

Both sides are working collaboratively to ensure that the final agreement on the restored provisions will have a meaningful impact on student outcomes and working conditions for teachers into the future. In the meantime, the action announced by the B.C. government today

is ensuring students benefit from enhanced learning environments now – while negotiations for a final agreement are underway.

The priority measures funding is in addition to the \$5.1 billion invested in public education in B.C. which includes \$100 million in the learning improvement fund that is already in place to help hire more teachers and education assistants.

**Quote:**

**Mike Bernier, Minister of Education –**

“We have to find a way that is both practical and appropriate for the education system we have today. This new funding will help to kick-start the changes we all know are required following the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision. While the positive negotiations continue, we’re going to keep focused on solutions that work for kids in their classrooms.”

**Learn More:**

View the Memorandum of Agreement:

[http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/publications/overview/whats-new/17-01-05/issue\\_No\\_2017-01\\_Parties\\_Reach\\_Priority\\_Measures\\_Memorandum\\_of\\_Agreement.aspx](http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/publications/overview/whats-new/17-01-05/issue_No_2017-01_Parties_Reach_Priority_Measures_Memorandum_of_Agreement.aspx)

**Media Contact:**

Government Communications and Public  
Engagement  
Ministry of Education  
250 356-5963

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [www.gov.bc.ca/connect](http://www.gov.bc.ca/connect)