

Ministry of Education

2002/03 - 2004/05 Service Plan Summary

Mission

To provide a top-notch education system to students of all ages.

The system's mandate is set out in the *School Act*

The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

Strategic Shifts

The table below outlines the strategic shifts that are being undertaken by the Ministry of Education.

Current practices...	Shifts to...
Focus on finance and process	Mandated focus on student achievement and outputs rather than inputs
School boards restricted by regulation and red tape	School boards freed from regulations and policies
Accountability is defined as compliance with process	Accountability for results through accountability contracts, monitoring and public reporting
Limited attention to school level activity	Focus on schools THROUGH school growth plans, transparent funding showing school level detail, reporting on school level data
School boards have limited power to be entrepreneurial	School boards have the ability and are encouraged to engage in entrepreneurial activities such as the marketing of locally developed resources and offshore schools.
Ministry has limited ability to intervene for educational reasons	Ministry intervention, when required, through better use of data, accountability contracts, appointment of an advisor(s), appointment of an official trustee
Ministry funds "one -size -fits -all" programs	Ministry funds learning, boards develop programming choices and direct expenditures that reflect their local needs
Ministry collects data	Ministry shares information with schools, school boards and the public
Complex funding formula containing historical anomalies	Understandable, comprehensive and transparent funding system
Annual funding to school boards	Predictable, 3-year funding envelope
School boards driven by rules, regulations and policies	School boards driven by student achievement results

Core Business Areas

The business of the Ministry is to set educational standards based on the outcomes students need to achieve, monitor student performance and report the results to the public, work with schools and communities to improve student and school performance, fund schools based on a fair and workable framework, and oversee the governance of the system as a whole. This includes governance, funding, setting standards, monitoring performance and reporting on that performance.

Major Initiatives

Improving student achievement is the overarching goal in the Ministry and in all parts of the education system. To support this goal, the Ministry is committed to providing greater local autonomy to school boards to provide a new range of choice for parents, students and staff and providing an understandable, transparent, comprehensive and population-based funding formula.

Governance

More autonomy for school boards will result in elimination of unnecessary regulations and allow boards to do their work with as few strings attached as possible. It will also allow them to be more responsive to their communities and give them freer rein to explore entrepreneurial options.

Overseeing governance of the education system to help ensure continuous progress will be focused on three tasks:

1. Redefining the role of school boards to:
 - a. focus on student achievement
 - b. de-regulate but hold boards accountable through individual contracts
 - c. enhance school boards' ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities.
2. Create a system that encourages greater parental involvement in their child's school.
3. The Ministry will provide funds, set broad strategic directions, monitor and report on system performance.

Funding

An understandable, transparent, comprehensive and population-based funding formula for school districts and independent schools will be developed, for implementation by the fall of 2002.

The Ministry will:

1. conduct a review of the per pupil amount.
2. review current funding allocation policies, which may result in a redistribution of funds.
3. review the capital plan to better align the current capital stock, enrolment growth patterns and the use of public private partnerships to enable more efficient allocations.

Standard Setting

Better accountability measures will be included in the Minister's accountability contract with each school board and in plans for improvement at the school and district level.

Standards will be set at three different levels:

1. The Ministry will establish what students should achieve – in key curriculum areas – by grade levels.
2. The Ministry will establish standards for achievement with each School District in consultation with School Boards.
3. The Ministry will provide parameters and lay out expectations for fiscal and asset management.

Performance Monitoring

Involvement of parents and the wider community is critical to the success of the K-12 education system. Teacher, parent and student satisfaction surveys at the school and district level will enable the Ministry to monitor satisfaction levels.

School system performance will be monitored using the student level data system and results from examinations, assessments, surveys, school growth plans and school district accreditations.

Regular inspection of independent schools will continue to be conducted through the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools.

Performance Reporting

The Ministry has a great deal of data and information about student achievement. A core function of the Ministry is to report this information in order to inform the public and schools about school performance. There are two main reasons for this:

1. to assist parents and students in making informed choices about schooling, and
2. to introduce data and information into the decision-making process of staff in the school and school district.

Non-core Functions

- Program design, resource development and implementation

Empowering boards to make decisions around program design, development and implementation will provide increased autonomy, flexibility and choice for local decision makers.

- Transportation

The Ministry will work with School Districts to determine the most efficient and cost effective ways to provide transportation services.

- Facilities and Capital Management

Cross-government strategies are being explored to ensure the most cost-effective and efficient management of facilities. The use of public private partnerships will allow government to better leverage the amount of funding required for school district capital requests.

Ministry Resources

	Fiscal Year				Percent Change 2001/02 – 2004/05
	(Restated estimates) 2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	
Operating Expenses (million \$) *	4,842	4,842	4,842	4,842	0%
FTEs **	363	350	339	325	-10.5%

* The budget for Education will be maintained over the next three years.

** In addition, the Ministry's staffing reduction plan, over the next three years, includes elimination of 25 teacher positions providing expertise to the Ministry. This will bring the percentage reduction to 17%.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES RELATING TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

A. New Era Commitments

New Era Commitments Achieved



- Restore education as an essential service under the Labour Code
- Guarantee that parents of students attending schools are entitled to volunteer their services

New Era Commitments In Progress and/or Planned for 2002/2003:

- Establish specific goals and outcomes to measure the success of educators in public schooling
- Support more flexibility and choice in public schooling
- Give local school boards more autonomy and control over the delivery of education services, subject to provincial curriculum and testing standards
- Devote more of each education dollar to improving the quality of education, and less to bureaucracy
- Give school boards multi-year funding envelopes
- Maintain current funding arrangements for independent schools
- Improve school accreditations

New Era Commitments Planned for 2003 and Beyond:

- Maintain and increase education funding levels by increasing revenues through economic growth
- Work with educators and employers to expand job training and skills development opportunities
- Provide teachers with more technology training
- Put more computers in schools and increase resources to improve computer literacy for students of all ages
- Ensure that music, arts and physical education curricula are fully funded

B. Key Projects

- Develop accountability contracts with school districts, including reporting of outcomes.
- Improve student performance over four years.
- Clearly define the role of the provincial Ministry of Education, including the current governance model and role of interest groups and make recommendations.
- Examine opportunities for providing increased flexibility and choice in public schooling.
- Develop an understandable, transparent, comprehensive population-based funding formula for school districts and independent schools.
- With the Chief Information Officer, make recommendations for enhancing technological infrastructure in schools.