



December 21, 2016

Ref: 170113

Dear Mayors/Chief/Chairs:

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Ministry of Education is undertaking a review of rural education practices and rural education funding, led by Parliamentary Secretary Linda Larson. The Ministry of Education has made a request to gather input from a range of stakeholder groups, including local government and other community organizations, to inform the development of a new Rural Education Strategy by the end of the 2016/17 school year.

All feedback received will help shape the final report and the development of recommendations for the future. The main goal is to find long-term solutions for the unique challenges facing rural school districts, while considering the important social, cultural, and economic roles that schools play for small communities.

As you know, the relationships between school districts, community organizations, and local governments are critical in helping to ensure the success of students across rural British Columbia. With respect to this goal in mind, I hope that you will spread the word amongst your communities, and encourage participation in an online discussion forum at: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/ruraleducation/>— open until January 31, 2017, at 4:00 pm.

As well, submissions from local governments and other community organizations are welcome to help outline their specific feedback on rural education and rural schools by sending them to the Ministry of Education at: rural.education@gov.bc.ca, or Attention: Jonathan Foweraker, Resource Management and Corporate Services Division, PO Box 9151, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria BC V8W 9H1.

Should you choose to provide a submission, please note:

- There is no standard format or template to follow; it is up to your organization to determine the format and approach that works best for you;
- Be sure to outline your organization's views on the greatest challenges and barriers in rural education, such as funding, facilities, educational programming, and human resources including any thoughts or feedback on future improvements;

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- Highlighting best practices, innovative research, specific examples of successes and challenges are encouraged;
- A list of organizations invited to participate and their final submissions will be posted on the rural engagement website; and
- Deadline is January 31, 2017, at 4:00 pm.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Linda Larson, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Education, thank you for taking the time to ensure that communities have an opportunity to share their input as part of this important project. If you require further information, you can reach George Farkas, Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Management and Corporate Services Division, by telephone at: 250 356-1883, or by email at: George.Farkas@gov.bc.ca, and he will be pleased to assist you.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Dawes
Deputy Minister

Enclosure

pc: Dave Byng
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Education

George Farkas
Assistant Deputy Minister
Resource Management and Corporate Services Division
Ministry of Education