

OPINION-EDITORIAL

B.C.'s plan for education transformation

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Minister of Education

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VICTORIA - With the new school year well underway, contract talks between government and the teacher's union have been at the heart of most discussions about education in this province. Like all British Columbians, I continue to hope for a swift resolution to these negotiations.

At the same time, I want you to know about another discussion that's taking place. It's a much broader conversation government has been having with students, parents, teachers, and other education partners about our plan to make our good education system a great one.

To do that, we need to first acknowledge that every student has their own unique learning style, as well as individual interests and passions, and we need to give them opportunities to achieve their goals.

The reality is that our world has changed, and continues to change. An education system designed in the very different circumstances of an earlier century can't possibly meet the challenges students face - both now and in the future. Education, to be truly meaningful for students, must reflect the times in which we live and recognize the promise of every child.

That's why B.C.'s new education plan is based on a simple principle: every learner will realize their full potential and contribute to the well-being of our province. The plan has five key elements:

- \* Personalized learning for every student.
- \* Quality teaching and learning.
- \* More flexibility and choice.
- \* High standards.
- \* Learning empowered by technology.

As we transform education in this province, we will see some key changes. These include maintaining basic core skills for students, but at the same time redesigning curriculum to include key competencies like

critical thinking, insight and teamwork - the kinds of skills and knowledge that students will need to succeed in the 21st century.

We will also support families by creating better opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning with more flexibility and choice with respect to what, how, when and where their child learns.

We will expand our current learning credential program to better recognize learning that takes place outside of the classroom - like arts, sports, science and leadership programs - so that students are fairly recognized for the passion and commitment they bring to this work.

New legislation will create a teacher regulation system that puts the public interest first. The goal is to increase public confidence in the profession's disciplinary processes and to raise the stature of the teaching profession.

Our plan for education supports a simple truth - children are born learners, and teachers are passionate about teaching. We have a unique opportunity to forge that common bond toward a more innovative education system that meets the needs of B.C. families today and in the future, to keep our young people achieving and thriving in a dynamic, rapidly evolving world.

The good news is that innovative change is already happening in schools and neighbourhoods across the province. Educators have great ideas for preparing students to take on the future and we want to allow them the freedom to act on those ideas. A more nimble and flexible education system will be able to adapt more quickly to better meet the needs of students.

As both a parent and grandparent, I want an education system that gives all children the best opportunities to be successful in whatever career they pursue. I'm sure every British Columbian feels the same way.

Very shortly we will be engaging the public and tabling our plan to move education forward, hand-in-hand with teachers, parents, students and all those who share an interest in ensuring our province's bright future.

We've all got a stake in preparing our young people for success in a changing world. Our goal is to take what is widely viewed as a good education system and make it exceptional. Together, we can and will accomplish that goal.

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