

Room for Improvement: Toward Better Education Outcomes for Children in Care **RCY Annual Review Year 4**

The Office for the Representative for Children and Youth released the report *Room for Improvement: toward better education outcomes for children in care* on October 26, 2017 and included six recommendations. The report is concerned with the inequities of educational outcomes and achievements for children and youth in government care. The report highlights the additional supports these children need to facilitate their school success but are not always provided. Such supports include stability at home and at school settings, positive and consistent relationships that support education, more adult collaboration with the students, addressing mental health and trauma, and better support for Indigenous students. The report also notes that funding improvements and accountability in monitoring for children and youth in care can contribute to positive change.

The assessment evidence for this report was a combined action plan submitted by the ministries of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and Education and Child Care (MECC). It was provided to the RCY in April 2023 and is the fourth assessment conducted for this report.

Recommendation implementation is ongoing with four recommendations assessed as complete, one as substantial progress and one as some progress. The Representative is encouraged with the completed recommendations from both ministries but still has concerns with the remaining two. The ministry of Education and Child Care's new K to 12 funding model outlined in recommendation #2 is close to being realized but is held up pending further government approval. While the one-time-only funds for children and youth in care is interim progress, the long-term solution is still outstanding. Similarly, MCFD has made progress for recommendation #5 for implementing trauma-informed practices but have not yet realized implementing assessments regarding the trauma-related needs of children and youth coming into care. The Representative is anticipating the implementation of the final two recommendations which are long overdue.

RCY Assessment Definitions:

- **Complete** = All activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete
- **Substantial Progress** = Most of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete
- **Some Progress** = Some of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete
- **No Progress** = None of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete (pre-planning may be underway but there has been no progress in formal planning or implementation).

Date Published: March 11, 2024

	Recommendation	Ministries' Response	Previous Assessed Progress	June 2023 Assessment
#1	<p>That the Ministry of Education allocate specific funding to each school district based on the number of children and youth in care, funding that would be dedicated to support the learning of these students. This should be a priority of the ministry as it undertakes a review of the K to 12 education system's current funding formulas.</p> <p>Ministry of Education to implement specific funding to school districts for children and youth in care by September 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop mutually-agreed upon principles for the new funding model. • Draft a discussion paper summarizing current state and outlining potential options to consider for a new model. • Report of the Funding Model Review Panel to Minister of Education. • Establish Funding Model Working Groups to review the recommendations of the Independent Panel and provide information to the Minister on the implications of implementing the recommendations. • Develop the new Funding Manual; and Implementation and transition materials. • New operating grant manual and tables for 2021/22 school year; Transition information for stakeholders; and Monitoring and evaluation plan for Ministry. 	<p>Substantial Progress</p> <p>The Ministry of Education has made substantial progress towards the allocation of specific funding for children and youth in care through the Independent Panel for the Funding Model Review, in their report: Improving Equity and Accountability: Report of the Funding Model Review Panel. The Ministry successfully completed the development of mutually-agreed upon principles for the new funding model; a discussion paper summarizing current state and outlining potential options to consider for a new model; a report to the Minister of Education containing 22 recommendations focused on equity, diverse student populations, and system efficiencies (including a new inclusive education supplement that accounts for the numbers of children and youth in care); and the implementation of the Equity of Opportunity Supplement that was implemented in 2020.</p> <p>Full implementation of the Funding Model Review, scheduled for</p>	<p>Substantial Progress</p> <p>The Ministry (now Ministry of Education and Child Care – MECC) has made interim progress towards specific funding for children and youth in care via one time only funds and increased targeted and supplemental funding via the Equity of Opportunity Supplement, implemented in 2020.</p> <p>The review and development of a new funding model for the K to 12 education system's funding formulas has been substantially completed, but progress towards the implementation of equity related recommendations remains on hold pending further direction/approval from Government.</p> <p>At this time no target date for implementation has been provided to the RCY despite being four years past due.</p>

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			<p>February 2021, was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Preliminary funding for the 2022/23 school year was announced on March 11, 2022 to meet the Ministry's obligations under the School Act. The earliest that a new funding model could be introduced for the 2023/24 school year with funding announced, as per the School Act, would be on or before March 15, 2023.</p>	
#2	<p>That the Ministry of Education strengthen its accountability to improve and monitor supports for children and youth in care across the province, as well as tracking and reporting out on educational outcomes for these students.</p> <p>Ministry of Education to present Representative with draft plan to strengthen accountability for education of children and youth in care by January 2018. Ministry of Education to begin reporting publicly on educational outcomes of children and youth in care by September 2018.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft a provincial accountability and reporting framework to create a system-wide focus on continuously improving educational outcomes for all students, with a specific focus on improving equity of outcomes for all students, with a specific focus on Indigenous students, children in care and students with diverse abilities or disabilities. • Develop a provincial <i>How are we Doing? CYIC and YAG</i> report on educational outcomes of children and youth in care to be shared for consultations with stakeholders. • Incorporate stakeholders' feedback, finalize and publish annual reports on educational outcomes of children and youth in care titled <i>How are we Doing? CYIC and YAG</i> 	<p>Complete</p> <p>The Ministry of Education piloted the accountability and reporting framework in nine school districts and published a report on children and youth in government care and on Youth Agreements.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education has implemented the framework in the 2020 school year.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
#3	<p>That the Ministry of Education implement the Auditor General's 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position paper <i>Meaningful Reconciliation</i> was developed in co-operation with representatives 	<p>Substantial progress</p>	<p>Complete</p>

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<p>recommendation that the ministry “collaborate with boards of education, superintendents, and Aboriginal leaders and communities to develop a shared, system-wide strategy with accountabilities to close the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student outcomes,” and that this strategy include specific actions to improve education outcomes of Indigenous children and youth in care.</p>	<p>from the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), Métis Nation British Columbia and input from education representatives from school districts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tripartite Education Agreement</i> (BCTEA) Implementation 	<p>The Ministry of Education has made substantial progress in their work to implement the Auditor General’s 2015 recommendation through the <i>Meaningful Reconciliation</i> report, written in collaboration with representatives from the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), the Métis Nation of British Columbia and input from education representatives from school districts, and with the implementation of the <i>Tripartite Education Agreement</i> (BCTEA) in June 2018.</p>	<p>The Ministry (now Ministry of Education and Child Care – MECC) has implemented the AG’s 2015 recommendation to develop a shared, system-wide strategy with accountabilities to close the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student outcomes. This work is supported by an extension of the BC Tripartite Education Agreement, the ministry’s Equity In Action Project and Framework for Enhancing Student Learning, along with investments to support improving educational outcomes for Indigenous Children and Youth in Care (CYIC) and Indigenous students with disabilities and diverse abilities.</p>

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#4	<p>That the Ministry of Education, school districts and MCFD work together to create positions dedicated to information sharing, coordination and advocacy in support of education outcomes of children and youth in care.</p> <p>Ministry of Education and Ministry of Children and Family Development to have positions in place by September 2018.</p>	<p><u>High-level agreement between ministries:</u> Specific roles and responsibilities for EDUC and MCFD at a high level will be outlined in an agreement between ministries.</p> <p><u>Delegated Aboriginal Agencies</u> MCFD to hold meetings with a working group of DAAs to identify the following in relation to improving information sharing, coordination and advocacy between DAAs and school districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles for DAA leadership • Roles for school district leadership • Roles for MCFD • Roles for Ministry of Education • Approaches to engaging and supporting DAA leadership • A draft plan for further action <p><u>Capacity building and information sharing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of Leads for MCFD and school districts will be updated and shared annually. • Capacity building will be promoted and supported through information sharing on actions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regional and provincial opportunities to share promising practices ○ Joint training opportunities, such as information sharing regarding children and youth in care ○ System changes (e.g., changes to permission forms) ○ Current literature and promising practices (for example: evidence-based coordination models). 	<p>Complete</p> <p>The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Family Development have completed this recommendation through an Information Sharing Agreement outlining their respective roles and responsibilities regarding information sharing, coordination and advocacy. In addition, the Ministries developed <i>A Guide to Sharing Information about Children and Youth in Care</i>, which outlines roles and responsibilities of MCFD/DAA social workers and caregivers and school personnel.</p> <p>For long term success, Ministries will have to ensure ongoing capacity building and awareness of information sharing agreements to support consistent implementation across school districts.</p>	<p>Complete</p>

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#5	<p>That MCFD ensure that an evidence-based approach is used to assess trauma-related needs of all children and youth coming into care and that, based on assessed needs, supports for recovery from trauma are implemented consistently across all care settings, including schools.</p> <p>Ministry of Children and Family Development to have assessments and subsequent supports in place by September 2019.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of <i>Trauma Informed Practice Guidelines</i>. • Develop key actions to support mental wellness of children in care. • Inclusion of trauma-informed practice in the plan for the residential care system 	<p>Some Progress</p> <p>MCFD has reviewed evidence-informed trauma-related assessment tools that could be used for all children and youth coming into care and has acknowledged that trauma screening is a foundational element of trauma-informed practice.</p> <p>A trauma screening tool is being considered and engagement underway. No implementation plan or timeline for when an evidence-based approach to assess trauma-related needs of all children and youth have been identified.</p>	<p>Some Progress</p> <p>MCFD has completed the implementation of a fulsome array of practice resources to support trauma informed practice across service streams in the ministry.</p> <p>Efforts to include TIP in planning for the care system are evident in policy enhancements and framework planning, however, the ministry has still made little progress towards a process to assess trauma-related needs of all children and youth coming into care. Assessments and subsequent supports the Representative called for by September 2019 are now considerably overdue.</p>

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#6	<p>That MCFD facilitate by legislation or other means the authorization of caregivers to make decisions involving the participation of children and youth in care in age- and developmentally appropriate activities, including school activities that require written permission. This authorization should apply a reasonable and prudent parent standard and protect caregivers who follow this standard from liability.</p> <p>Ministry of Children and Family Development to have this change made by September 2018.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment to <i>Financial Administration Act Regulation</i> to repeal requirement to have indemnity forms approved by Risk Management Branch of the Ministry of Finance prior to being signed. • Updates to the <i>Children and Youth in Care Policies, Standards for Foster Homes</i>, and <i>Foster Family Handbook</i> to reflect regulatory changes. • Communication to the field about the changes to the <i>Regulations, Policy and Standards</i> 	<p>Complete</p> <p>MCFD amended the <i>Financial Administration Act Regulation</i>, updated the <i>Children and Youth in Care Policies, Standards for Foster Homes</i> and <i>Foster Family Handbook</i>. MCFD communicated these changes to MCFD/DAA staff, the BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations and social workers in the field. The Ministry of Education communicated these changes to its staff.</p>	<p>Complete</p>