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governance

“The Public: The public of British Columbia has the right to expect that schools operate effectively and efficiently and are accountable for evaluating and reporting their progress on a regular basis. The public has the corresponding responsibility to provide schools with the necessary resources and moral support to fulfill their mission.”

BC Ministry of Education,
Statement of Education Policy Order

The School Act

The *School Act* sets out the rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, principals, school district officials, school boards and the Minister of Education. The Act also gives authority to school boards to govern according to public school legislation and regulations.

The *School Act* allows the minister to issue “orders” to carry out any of the minister’s powers, duties or functions under the act. These are Ministerial Orders. Examples of orders of interest to parents include:

- Special Needs Students Order
- Individual Education Plan Order.

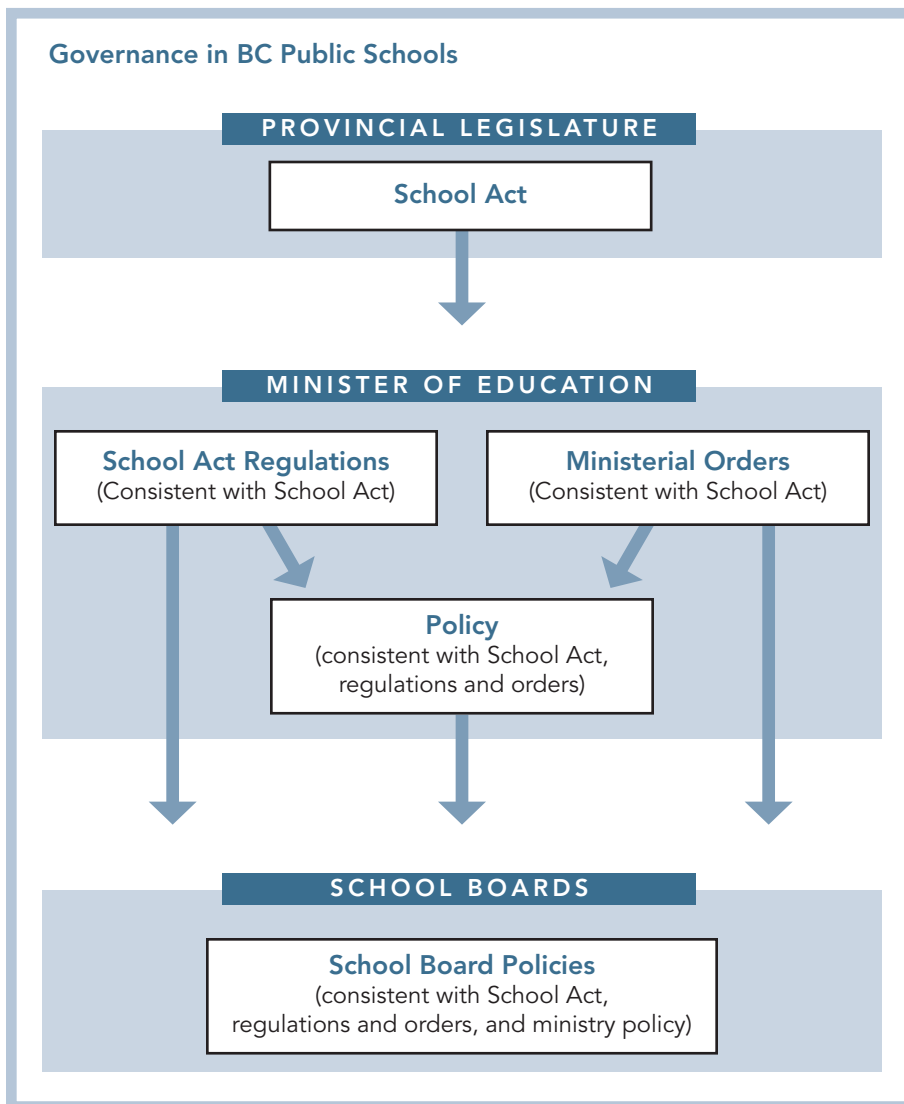
The Act also requires the minister to advise the Provincial Cabinet of any additions or changes to regulations made by orders in council. An example of a regulation is the BC School Regulation issued under Sections 5 and 175 of the *School Act*. The power and duties of principals, vice-principals or directors of instruction and the duties of teachers, superintendents of schools and secretary treasurers are in this regulation.

The Teaching Profession Act

The *Teaching Profession Act* establishes the structure and responsibilities of the BC College of Teachers. (See page 72)

Ministry Policy and Procedures

Policy is one of the ways the ministry achieves the government’s goals and objectives. The ministry develops policies to outline clear rules and expectations that guide the delivery of its programs and services. Ministry policies can flow from legislation or from funding decisions. Policy must comply with existing school law such as the *School Act* and the *Teaching Profession Act*. The procedures give education partners guidelines on how to carry out ministry policy.



“In the Ministry of Education, there are different kinds of policy:

The “musts” which require compliance (e.g., the School Act requires children aged 5-16 to attend school)

The “shoulds” which encourage or provide incentives (e.g., school planning councils should consult the wider education community)

The “mays” which are enabling (e.g., providing school boards with more flexibility when establishing local school calendars).”

Ministry of Education
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy

The ministry decides education policies that:

- set educational standards based on what 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
- distribute funds for the education system, and
- oversee the governance of the system as a whole.

Examples of ministry policy include:

- Diversity in BC Schools: A Framework
- accountability contracts between the ministry and school boards
- School Planning Councils
- Special Education.



■ Find more about the legislation and policy at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw ; ministry policy at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy

“Accountability Contracts are the school boards’ public commitment to improving student achievement.”

Key Work Resources. BCSTA.
November 2005

The Accountability Framework

The Ministry of Education’s Accountability Framework focuses school and school board attention and resources on improving student achievement.

Each year the school board sets goals and targets for student achievement in an accountability contract. The district uses information from a variety of student assessments to help set goals and targets. Each school district’s contract is different, because it responds to student needs in that district. The ministry monitors the contracts and gives feedback to districts through deputy minister’s visits, ministry contact and District Reviews.

The parts of the Accountability Framework are:

- school plans developed by the School Planning Council
- Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements (EA)
- District Reviews.

The District Review and Parent Involvement

One way that the ministry sees how a school district is meeting the goals of its accountability contract is with a District Review. A District Review Team visits each school district in the province every three years. A school superintendent chairs the team and other members include parents, educators and ministry staff. The team looks at 10 key areas related to school and district improvement.

One of the areas explored is whether a school district meets expectations about parental involvement. The team asks:

1. At the school and district levels,
 - a) how are parents encouraged to support their child’s achievement?
 - b) how are parents and parent groups, including the PACs and DPACs, involved in efforts to improve student achievement?
2. How are School Planning Councils reaching out to engage all parents, including parents of specific groups such as Aboriginal, Special Needs and ESL students, to support achievement for all students?
3. What strategies is the district finding most useful in engaging parents?

District Reviews are posted on the ministry website www.bced.bc.ca

The School Board

There are 60 school boards in B.C, including Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, which governs the system providing services to Francophone students in BC. School boards are responsible for designing and providing educational programs that reflect the wishes of the local community. They are also responsible for the management and operation of schools in the district.



The Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique is BC's only francophone education authority. Established in 1995, the authority meets BC's obligation under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to enable francophones to manage their own education programs. Students enrolled in CSF schools receive the same standard curriculum as other BC students; however, they receive their instruction in French and have an added linguistic and cultural component.