



Denise Wood
President, Nanaimo District Teachers' Association
3137 Barons Road
Nanaimo, BC, V9T 5W5

RE: Framework for Enhancing Student Learning

Dear Ms. Wood,

Thank you for your letter dated January 15, 2021. Your correspondence was shared at the January 27, 2021 public Board meeting.

As noted in the Board's Strategic Plan, our Strategic Plan does align with the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning. It is important to note, however, that it is the Superintendent's Operational Plan that we use to measure the success of our Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives and not the results of the Foundational Skills Assessment.

We are in agreement that data collection is important. The Operational Plan contemplates the creation of 2 unique data systems. These data systems will support two of the Board's strategic Goals and two of the Board's strategic Objectives. By accumulating and assessing local data, the Board will have further insight into how we can make relevant decisions to support student success.

The Board will comply as required with Ministerial Order 302/20 (M302/20), Enhancing Student Learning Reporting Order, and we are required to use the Foundational Skills Assessment and the Grade 10 Literacy Assessment for the reporting. The Board also recognizes though that this information is a snapshot in time and not the full picture of our student's knowledge, abilities, or achievements.

We hope you find some reassurance related to the Board's self-assessment on the success of the Strategic Plan as it relates to the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning.

Sincerely,

Charlene McKay
Board Chair

January 15, 2021

Charlene McKay
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, School District 68
395 Wakesiah Avenue
Nanaimo, BC, V9R 3K6

via email

Dear Ms. McKay:

I am writing today at the direction of the Executive Committee (EC) of the Nanaimo District Teachers' Association. The NDTA EC met on January 5 to discuss our concerns with the Ministry's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Policy Statement and the associated Ministerial Order.

The policy purports to improve educational outcomes for all students, focus on The Educated Citizen, and enable strategic planning, coordinated implementation and reporting.

Our concerns include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **The use of standardized testing as a measure of student success.** Standardized testing in the province was meant to be a system-wide check, and not a measure of individual achievement. The BC K-12 curriculum encourages a more balanced and individualized approach to instruction and classroom-based formative assessment, and the Board's own vision of a "courageous, innovative, inclusive, and personalized learning community that inspires success for all" aligns with that approach. Schools do so much more than these tests reveal, and a narrow focus on standardized test results will not allow the Board to assess whether the goals and objectives of strategic plan are being met. These tests take valuable time and resources away from classroom learning which undermines the ability to provide courageous, innovative, and personalized learning experiences for all students. Narrowly defined measures of success and achievement do nothing to indicate whether students are developing the ability, skills, understanding, and responsibility to become confident, curious and caring citizens.
- **The use of graduation rates as a measure of system success.** Grad rates are also a narrow measure of success that do not recognize the experiences and opportunities that schools provide to students. They also don't tell us whether students are prepared for life *after* graduation. An emphasis on graduation rates means that the Board cares about credentialing, rather than creating Educated Citizens.

- **The lack of recognition for teacher autonomy.** Teachers have the autonomy to determine how to teach, and how to assess. Teachers know how their students are doing, and they don't need a standardized test to tell them.
- **The lack of consultation with teachers.** Teacher input is missing from the documents. Teachers' voices on what effective assessment for learning looks like, supported by research literature, should guide this policy.

For this reason, the NDTA stands in opposition of this Policy and Order, and we urge the Board to refrain from using data collected from standardized Ministry tests when evaluating whether you are meeting the targets of your Strategic Plan.

Data collection is important, but not all data is useful. Standardized tests and graduation rates were introduced as cheap alternatives to the accreditation process, and as accountability measures they fail to recognize whether students have a positive and successful school experience, or whether there is continuous improvement of instruction and assessment. The Board needs to ask the right questions to collect the data it seeks, and then the Board, and the Ministry, must act on the results to support students and adequately fund programs. Please keep in mind that low FSA scores and graduation rates have never resulted in any additional funding to school districts in BC. As measures of success, their only purpose is to legitimize underfunding.

Sincerely,



Denise Wood
President, NDTA

cc Karen Matthews, Manager, Administrative Services
Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer
Board of Trustees