

# Ministry of Education K-12 International Education Sector Engagement Summary

## May 2018



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

Ministry of  
Education



## Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	3
<b>DETAILED DISCUSSION SUMMARY</b> .....	4
1) PRIORITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION .....	4
2) BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION .....	4
3) CAPACITY.....	5
4) DIVERSIFICATION .....	7
5) CURRENT MINISTRY ACTIVITIES.....	8
6) POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES.....	9
7) INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTED LEARNING .....	10
NEXT STEPS .....	10
<b>APPENDIX 1 – Teleconference Information Package (Sent to Registrants)</b> .....	11
<b>APPENDIX 2 – Follow Up Email with Additional Information on Ministry Initiatives</b> .....	16



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## OVERVIEW:

- To inform engagement planning, a preliminary session was held on April 9 at the International Public School Education Association (IPSEA) quarterly meeting. 20 districts attended.
- An additional six teleconference sessions were held between May 22 – 24, 2018.
- 61 individuals registered for the teleconferences, including 56 participants representing 46 school districts and independent schools. Six follow-up written submissions were also received.
- Other participants included: British Columbia Council for International Education; International Public School Education Association; Federation of Independent School Associations; British Columbia School Superintendents Association; Independent Schools Association of BC; Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training.

## KEY FINDINGS:

- Sector priorities include: (i) providing intercultural experiences for resident and international students, (ii) continuing the educational and economic benefits for resident students, (iii) diversifying international student populations, and (iv) supporting B.C. students and teachers in gaining international experiences through exchange and mobility.
- The sector feels strongly that international education benefits B.C. students, schools, and communities by (i) adding diversity to schools and communities, (ii) providing opportunities to develop intercultural skills, (iii) enabling the hiring of additional teachers, (iv) enabling additional courses, course sections, and programs (i.e. specialty academies), and (v) providing economic and intercultural benefits for families, communities and the province.
- School districts have developed policies and/or processes that address and/or prevent the displacement of resident students by international students. Districts strongly expressed that displacement is not an issue – in spite of some media reports to the contrary – and that as opposed to taking spots from resident students, international students generate spots for them.
- Most districts and schools express that they have already met preferred enrolment targets for international students. Capacity for enrolment growth exists in some rural districts and in some districts and schools with new programs, but student numbers would be relatively small.
- Most districts and schools are moving to diversify their international student populations. Diversification brings risk (i.e. uncertain enrolment numbers and potential for alienating current relationships) and adds additional administration costs (i.e. adding supports in new languages).
- The sector strongly endorsed the Ministry's work to support international education, including the Global and Intercultural Skills Pilot (GISP), scholarship programs, government missions, the Ministry's International Student Orientation website and Memorandums of Understanding with foreign government partners.



## KEY FINDINGS: (cont.)

- Support was expressed for potential ministry activities including (i) developing ELL benchmarks, (ii) supporting increased pathways for K-12 international students to transition to B.C. post-secondary studies, (iii) expanding opportunities for outbound mobility, (iv) conducting a survey of international students, (v) improving school, district, and Ministry data collections, and (vi) exploring opportunities for sharing services. Limited support (and some opposition) was expressed for a potential school twinning initiative.

# DETAILED DISCUSSION SUMMARY

## 1) PRIORITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Based on preliminary conversations with districts and schools, the Ministry compiled a list of four top priorities for international education:

- Providing intercultural experiences for resident students*
- Providing excellent educational and life experiences for international students*
- Continuing the educational and economic benefit for resident students*
- Diversifying international student populations*

Participants largely agreed with this assessment of top priorities. A few suggestions for additions were provided including:

- Re: (a.) above, widening the scope to include providing intercultural experiences for international students, teachers, homestay families and B.C. communities as a whole.
- Adding resident student and teacher mobility.
- Adding support for post-secondary pathways and continuing education for international students wishing to study in B.C.

## 2) BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Teleconference participants were asked to comment on the benefits to students, teachers, schools and communities of having an international education program:



- Participants overwhelmingly emphasized the value of the diversity that international students add to B.C. schools and communities – even in some urban areas where international programs introduce to students and cultures who would otherwise not be present in the community.
- Resident students develop interculturalization skills through interacting with international students. This was emphasized as increasingly important in light of the trend towards globalization and the necessity for resident students to have this skill for employers and to be able to engage respectfully with First People’s and with also with newcomers to Canada (e.g. Syrian refugees).
- Interaction with international students helps foster tolerance, understanding and respect for other cultures, and may lead to increased interest in pursuing international experiences for resident students.
- Participants discussed the benefits of homestay programs for families and communities, both financial in terms of supporting home-ownership, particularly in expensive urban areas of the province, and in the providing resident children with sustained opportunities to learn about new cultures and people.
- Participants also discussed the economic benefits associated with international education programs, including the use of revenue to implement additional programming to benefit all students. Several examples included
  - a. The hiring of teachers, administrators and support staff (e.g. counsellors) who support all students;
  - b. specialist academies (e.g. sports or arts) that would otherwise not have been possible to place within a school or region;
  - c. elective and specialist courses (particularly in smaller schools);
- Participants also touched on the wider benefits to Canada that can result from international education programs including:
  - Promoting a wider understanding and awareness of Canada; and
  - Creating potential future opportunities for political, economic and academic links between Canada and other countries.

### 3) CAPACITY

Participants were asked to comment on whether their school or district programs were at or nearing internal targets for international students. Answers varied by program, but the following trends were identified:

- Many independent school and school district representatives reported limited capacity for growth.



- Capacity exists in some rural districts, school districts with new international education programs and in some new independent schools, however there is a relatively small ability to absorb additional students.
- Several districts and independent schools reported room for growth for summer programs.

Based on preliminary conversations with districts and schools, the Ministry compiled a list of four main factors affecting district and school capacity to run international education programs:

- a. *Class size and composition requirements*
- b. *Homestay availability*
- c. *Building space constraints*
- d. *Growing resident populations (certain areas)*

Participants largely agreed with the main factors affecting program capacity and expanded on the following topics:

#### Class Size and Composition:

- Class size and composition were identified by several district participants as affecting capacity for growth, at both the elementary and secondary school levels.
- Several participants discussed the importance of class composition of international students and cultural groups, to foster interculturalization and prevent overwhelming teachers and students.

#### Homestay Availability:

- Homestay availability was identified as a key factor affecting capacity for international students:
  - In rural areas small resident populations were identified as a challenge.
  - In urban areas housing and rental market pressures were seen as challenges.
- Participants commented on the difficulty of finding homestays for short-term and summer programs, accommodating large groups of students for short time frames.

#### Building Constraints:

- Seismic upgrading was identified as a challenge by some school districts, as they seek to find space to accommodate students while upgrades are implemented.

#### Growing resident populations:

- The issue of displacement of resident students was not identified as a problem by participants; in most cases, schools are able to resolve issues on a case-by-case basis.
- Districts have also developed policies and/or processes designed to deal address and prevent the possibility of international students displacing resident students. Many districts have



developed district-wide and school specific international student enrolment targets in consultation with the school community.

- The majority of feedback received stated that revenue generated from international education programs often goes towards adding teachers, courses and specialty programming, thereby accommodating more resident students.

#### Rural Location:

- Many rural and smaller programs identified challenges of recruiting students and also of diversifying international student populations, including economic and time constraints and overcoming stereotypes based on location and size.

#### Study Permit Applications:

- Several participants reported study permit delays and rejections for certain groups, affecting enrollment of international students.
  - It was noted by Ministry representatives that study permit issuance is the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

## 4) DIVERSIFICATION

Participants were asked whether their international programs were seeking to diversify their international student population, and if so how.

- Many participants discussed the importance of diversification including:
  - Promoting interculturalization among international and resident students; and
  - Encouraging English practice for international students.
- Several challenges were identified with seeking to diversify, including:
  - Having uncertain enrolment projections as spaces need to be help for students that may or may not arrive;
  - disappointing existing partners (agents, schools, etc.) by reducing enrolment allotment to make space for students from new regions, partners, etc.;
  - Developing new relationships with reputable agents;
  - Taking time and attention away from traditionally reliable markets;
  - Adding more language support services to schools
- Representatives from smaller and/or rural programs in particular discussed the challenge of diversification, noting the cost to programs and the difficulty of promoting their programs over larger ones in urban areas.
- Participants tended to agree that diversification is important, but also challenging.
- Participants discouraged the development of any specific diversification targets set by the Ministry.



## 5) CURRENT MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

Participants were asked to comment on their familiarity with and usefulness of current Ministry activities related to international education, including the Global and Intercultural Skills Pilot (GISP), scholarship programs for international education, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreements with international partners, provincial missions supporting international education, and the B.C. for High School International Student Orientation Website

- Many participants communicated a desire to learn more about GISP. Those participants already involved with GISP reported that they find the programming useful and important.
- Participants expressed strong support for scholarship programming, especially those scholarships supporting B.C. student and teacher mobility.
  - Participants were appreciative that scholarships have been opened up to include more countries in their focus.
- Appreciation was shown for Ministry missions and MoU agreements with international partners as adding legitimacy for programs, especially when entering new markets. Some participants requested more frequent communication regarding MoUs and other Ministry activities.
- Those participants who were aware of the BC for High School International Student Orientation Website expressed that they found the content helpful.

### **B.C. Offshore School Involvement:**

Participants were also asked to what degree their school or district partners or collaborates with B.C. Offshore Schools:

- Partnerships with B.C. Offshore schools were reported to be relatively infrequent.
- Several participants indicated they would be open to pursuing exchange opportunities with B.C. Offshore Schools and would appreciate Ministry support communicating with Offshore school representatives.





## 6) POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Participants were asked to comment on the potential usefulness to their programs of possible future Ministry actions, including an international student survey, development of benchmarks for ELL assessments, school twinning initiatives, improving data collections on international students, and pathways workshops designed to increase international student transitions from B.C. K-12 to B.C. post-secondary:

- Based on feedback, development of ELL benchmarks and pathways workshops received the greatest endorsement from participants.
- According to participants, ELL benchmarks could be helpful as a way to ensure students are set up for success in B.C. schools, thus improving their overall experience.
- Likewise, participants generally felt that activities meant to facilitate the transition from K-12 to post-secondary would help ensure a positive experience for international students.
  - Participants generally enjoyed previous pathways workshops led by the Ministry.
  - For future workshops, it was suggested that more emphasis be placed on forming concrete steps toward creating pathways.
- Participants shared their support for collecting more data on international students (i.e. development of student survey and/or use of international tags in MyEducation BC)
- Some participants discussed including resident students and B.C. Offshore Schools in future international student surveys, and suggested collecting information on international students' plans following Grade 12.
- Some participants expressed interest in Ministry support for school twinning initiatives, while others reported they already have many such requests and that these requests are difficult to facilitate at the district level.

### Other Suggestions for Future Ministry Activities Discussed:

- It was requested that the Ministry review the 1701 process for student exchanges when exchanges do not take place within the same school year – the desire was to change the existing process to enable funding to occur if the exchange took place over a two-year process (but before graduation).
- Possible Ministry initiatives were suggested for supporting promotion of rural areas, particularly for newer programs including supports for partnerships between rural and larger districts when travelling to promote programs, offering multiple perspectives of B.C.
- Discussion of potential efficiencies through a “shared services” approach to district and independent school international education program administration was discussed, for example marketing and recruitment missions and services for international students (e.g. support in the student’s own language).



## 7) INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTED LEARNING

- While not all sessions had time to discuss distributed learning for international students, it was discussed on some of the calls and in some of the written feedback.
- There was general support for restrictions and oversight in terms of quality of programs to ensure integrity of the education program.
  - Several participants demonstrated support for restricting the number of courses international students could take through international distributed learning.
  - There was general feedback asking whether the Ministry could indicate on transcripts whether online courses were taken within or outside of a district or independent school.
- Several participants commented on the value of distributed learning for international students including:
  - Better preparing international students to study in B.C.
  - Meeting unique student needs, including providing missed courses to students who need to return home prior to being able to graduate (e.g. for required military service).
  - Keeping up with changes in education due to impact of technology.

## NEXT STEPS

- Following the teleconference sessions, in order to respond to the request for increased communication on Ministry initiatives, participants were sent an email with resources and links related to Ministry initiatives. The communication is included as Appendix 2.
- The Ministry intends to use feedback from the sessions to better understand sector preferences regarding potential future international education actions and strategic direction.
- Please send any questions, concerns or feedback regarding this summary document to Alyssa Amit at [Alyssa.Amit@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Alyssa.Amit@gov.bc.ca)



## APPENDIX 1 – Teleconference Information Package (Sent to Registrants)

# K-12 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SECTOR ENGAGEMENT – INFORMATION PACKAGE

May 22 - 24, 2018

### PURPOSE:

To discuss current trends and issues in K-12 international education including: capacity, diversity, international education promotion in non-traditional areas of the province, post-secondary pathways and other topics.

### SCHEDULE OF TELECONFERENCE SESSIONS:

WHEN:	WHO:
May 22 <sup>nd</sup> – 9:00am to 10:30am	Independent school representatives
May 22 <sup>nd</sup> – 1:00pm to 2:30pm	School districts outside the Metro area
May 23 <sup>rd</sup> – 9:00am to 10:30am	School districts outside the Metro area
May 23 <sup>rd</sup> – 1:00pm to 2:30pm	School districts within the Metro area
May 24 <sup>th</sup> – 9:00am to 10:30am	School districts within the Metro area
May 24 <sup>th</sup> – 1:00pm to 2:30pm	Independent school representatives

Sessions are offered by region, but open to anyone to enable participation.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR JOINING TELECONFERENCES:

Please call the appropriate number listed below and enter the Conference ID when prompted.

#### Join by Phone:

Local - Victoria: +1 (250) 952-9304

Local - Vancouver: +1 (604) 398-9304

Toll-Free: +1 (888) 952-9304

Conference ID: 7678239#

#### Additional Information

- Call 1-778-676-7578 to resolve any technical difficulties dialing in.
- Please mute your telephone when you are not speaking (Press \*6 to mute or unmute)
- *Questions or Comments:* please contact Ms. Alyssa Amit at [Alyssa.Amit@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Alyssa.Amit@gov.bc.ca)



## AGENDA

TIMING	DISCUSSION TOPIC	DETAILS
5 minutes	<b>Introductions</b>	Participants to introduce themselves
5 minutes	<b>Purpose of Teleconference</b>	Brief summary of the purpose and context of engagement sessions
75 minutes	<b>Discussion Questions</b>	See pages 3-5 for specific questions
5 minutes	<b>Closing and Next Steps</b>	Next steps and opportunities to provide additional feedback

## Written Feedback Welcome

- There are likely more questions than time permits. Questions have been prioritized.
- Written submissions of district or school responses to questions are welcome.
- Please send written responses within a week of the teleconference to [Alyssa.Amit@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Alyssa.Amit@gov.bc.ca)

## Next Steps

- Submit written feedback (within one week of teleconference session) if desired.
- The Ministry intends to provide a summary of all teleconferences to participants for review and confirmation in June. The summary document will capture high-level themes and trends without attributing them to specific districts or schools.

*See following page for discussion questions*



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### A. Primary Questions *(between 10-15 minutes of discussion per item)*

#	Topic	Questions
1.	Priorities for International Education	<p>I. From preliminary conversations with districts and schools, we are under the impression that top school and district priorities for international education include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Providing intercultural experiences for resident students</li> <li>b. Providing excellent educational and life experiences for international students</li> <li>c. Continuing the educational and economic benefit for resident students</li> <li>d. Diversifying international student populations</li> </ul> <p>Do you agree with these priorities and/or would you offer any others?</p>
2.	Benefits of International Education	<p>I. What are the benefits for B.C. students, teachers, schools and communities of having an international education program?</p>
3.	Capacity for International Students	<p>I. We've heard that the main factors affecting district and school capacity to run international education programs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Class size and composition requirements</li> <li>b. Homestay availability</li> <li>c. Building space constraints</li> <li>d. Growing resident populations (certain areas)</li> </ul> <p>Would you agree and/or offer any other factors affecting capacity?</p> <p>II. In general, we've heard that most districts and schools are at or nearing the internal target for international students – are there schools or districts that are still targeting growth and if so, how much?</p>
4.	Diversification	<p>I. Is your district or school seeking to diversify its international student population and if so how?</p>



**A. Primary Questions Cont.***(between 10-15 minutes of discussion per item)*

#	Topic	Questions
5.	Current Ministry Initiatives	<p>I. How familiar are you with the following Ministry activities relating to international education? How beneficial to schools, districts and B.C. students are these activities? Do you think they could be improved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <u>The Global and Intercultural Skills Pilot</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Pilot program to recognize acquisition of intercultural skills in resident and international students</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. <u>Scholarship programs for international education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Supporting in-bound and outbound student and teacher mobility and Chinese language study.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. <u>MoU agreements with international partners</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Currently there are agreements with 12 governments in 7 countries supporting student and teacher mobility and sharing of information and best practices</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. <u>Provincial missions supporting international education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Past missions include France, Netherlands, Belgium, Colombia, China and Japan.</li> </ul> </li> <li>e. <u>B.C. for High School International Student Orientation website</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provides information on B.C. school system in 11 languages</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>II. To what degree does your district or school partner or collaborate with B.C. Offshore Schools in support of international education objectives?</p>
6.	Potential Activities	<p>I. Comment on the potential usefulness to your school or district if the Ministry at a future date undertook one or more of the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Survey of international students</li> <li>b. Developing benchmarks for ELL assessments that would enable easy comparison of different assessment and standards</li> <li>c. School twinning initiative</li> <li>d. Improved data collection – e.g. working with districts and schools to implement and utilize existing international data flags in MyEducation BC</li> <li>e. Pathways workshops or other activities designed to increase international student transitions from B.C. K-12 to B.C. post-secondary</li> </ul>



**B. Secondary Questions** *(For discussion time permitting or via written feedback)*

#	Topic	Questions
7.	Interculturalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. What barriers and/or opportunities have schools or districts identified regarding interculturalization for B.C. students?</li> <li>II. Please comment on the role of Ministry programs or initiatives, e.g. Global and Intercultural Skills Program (GISP), in addressing barriers to interculturalization.</li> </ul>
8.	Risk Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. If international student enrollments suddenly declined significantly, how would it impact your school or district?</li> <li>II. Is your school or district taking any steps to mitigate this risk?</li> </ul>
9.	Challenges for International Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. What are the main challenges faced by your district or school with regard to international education?</li> </ul>
10.	Promotion of International education in rural and non-traditional Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. What barriers and/or opportunities or strategies do you see for the promotion of international education in rural and non-traditional regions or communities?</li> </ul>
11.	Distributed Learning for International Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. What is the value of enabling international students in B.C. and/or outside B.C. to take distributed learning courses?</li> <li>II. Should the Ministry consider placing some restrictions on the ability of international students (inside and/or outside B.C.) to access distributed learning?</li> </ul>



## APPENDIX 2 – Follow Up Email with Additional Information on Ministry Initiatives

Dear Teleconference Participant,

On behalf of the Ministry of Education International Education Branch, thank you for your participation in the K-12 international education sector engagement teleconferences.

We very much appreciated the opportunity to discuss the benefits and challenges of your programs and hear your feedback on current and potential Ministry activities.

We encourage you to submit written responses, as we were not able to get through all discussion questions.

All written submissions will be accepted until the end of the day **Thursday, May 31, 2018**. Discussion questions are attached.

Links and Resources:

- [A list of our current MoU agreements with international partners](#)
- [BC for High School International Student Orientation website](#)
- [Information about current scholarship programs for international education](#)
- Watch our new video here: [International Education in British Columbia](#)
- The Global and Intercultural Skills Pilot (GISP)
  - o Pilot program to promote acquisition of intercultural skills in resident and international students
  - o For more information about the program, email Dwayne Cover at [Dwayne.Cover@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Dwayne.Cover@gov.bc.ca)
  - o For those attending the [BCCIE Summer Conference](#), there will be a session about GISP Tuesday, June 19 at 2:00pm. The Ministry's Brian Jonker and Dwayne Cover will be speaking.

We will be providing a high-level summary of teleconferences to send to participants for review and confirmation in June.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Amit

