



British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

December 12, 2016

The Honorable Linda Larson  
Parliamentary Secretary  
Box 998 – 6369 Main Street,  
Oliver, BC V0H 1T0

RE: Request for additional consultation opportunities regarding Rural Education

Dear Ms. Larson,

I would first like to begin by stating that BCSTA is supportive of the current initiative to review Rural Education in the province of B.C. For several years, our members have supported recommendations to both review and strengthen K-12 education in remote and rural communities. We agree that now is an appropriate time to examine what is working as well as what might be improved in order for rural education to deliver the best possible opportunities for both students and their families.

With the current *Conversation about Rural Education* input process coming to an end on January 9, 2017, I would like to put forward to you three recommendations as to how the dialogue on rural education should be expanded to ensure the voices of boards of education and school districts may be fully heard. As I am sure you would appreciate, we consider local boards of education and school districts as being the best qualified to provide meaningful input to the question of what is needed to improve rural education across the province.

BCSTA would ask that you:

1. Confirm as soon as possible the series of regional meetings to be held around the province (with a focus on rural communities) so that boards, school districts and community members might prepare to come together to discuss rural education and to offer their perspectives on what is working and what might be improved. Where possible, provisions for teleconference input or webcasting should be provided to enable participation from remote communities.
2. Provide all boards of education and education partner groups with the opportunity to review the results of the current input survey, and to respond more fully as to their recommendations for rural education improvement.
3. Provide Boards of Education, education partner groups, and other stakeholders with the opportunity to provide feedback to any draft recommendations you might make before your final report and recommendations go forward to government later this school year.

The over-arching intention of these three recommendations is to ensure that the core stakeholders in the K-12 education system, as well as members of the general public, can provide you with fulsome and complete input to your final report to government. It is certainly our belief that a broad-based and open process for considering changes to rural education will only strengthen the final outcome.

Thank you for considering our request. The member boards of BCSTA look forward to engaging with you on how the students within our rural and remote communities might best be served.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teresa Rezansoff', with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

**Teresa Rezansoff**  
*President*  
BC School Trustees Association

cc: Donna Barnett,  
Minister of State for Rural Economic Development

Mike Bernier,  
Minister of Education

Dave Byng,  
Deputy Minister of Education

George Farkus,  
Assistant Deputy Minister of Education

BCSTA Member Boards of Education