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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2018EDUC0008-000184  
Feb. 9, 2018

Ministry of Education

### **Students to benefit from funding to support teacher hiring**

VICTORIA – To make sure students are getting the support they need in the classroom, government is taking action to assist school districts with recruitment and retention challenges.

“School districts have successfully hired thousands of teachers to meet the needs of our students, and we need to ensure they can continue on that path,” said Education Minister Rob Fleming. “We are investing to train more than 100 new specialist teachers in the highest-demand fields, so students can continue to thrive and benefit from quality teaching.”

The actions are in response to recommendations made by an expert task force appointed by the Minister of Education to identify immediate actions that can be taken to help address teacher workforce challenges facing school districts, while long-term solutions are sought.

Immediate actions government is taking include:

- Creating more than 100 additional spaces in teacher education programs over the next two years. These spaces will produce qualified special education, French language, secondary math and physics teachers, and help meet some of the highest demand for teachers. Intake for 92 spaces is September 2018, while 15 will start in January 2019. (Total funding: \$571,000)
- The creation of 37 additional spaces in teacher education programs in French is co-funded by the Government of Canada through the Canada-British Columbia Agreement on Minority-Language Education and Second Official-Language Instruction 2013-2014 to 2017-2018.
- Supporting initiatives aimed at increasing the number of Indigenous teachers throughout British Columbia. The funding provides for curriculum development for new pathways for Indigenous students to enter teacher education programs, and will also enable the University of British Columbia to pilot community-based delivery of all four years of its Indigenous Teacher Education Program in Williams Lake/Quesnel to approximately 20 Indigenous students. (Total funding: \$260,000)
- This reflects government’s commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Supporting the B.C. Public School Employers’ Association (BCPSEA) and other partner groups to develop regional profiles that accurately define how B.C.’s teacher supply-and-demand challenges are being uniquely experienced in each region, so that targeted recruitment strategies can be further refined.
- Supporting BCPSEA’s development of the BC Passport feature on [makeafuture.ca](http://makeafuture.ca) – which will allow applicants to apply for teaching opportunities to multiple districts with the one application. (Total funding: \$31,500)

- Supporting the B.C. School Superintendents' Association (BCSSA) and BCPSEA to collaborate in helping school districts develop and enhance materials and practices that promote effective recruitment and retention. (Total funding: \$100,000)

"K-12 teachers are helping to shape the minds of our future innovators and creators," said Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. "We know there are shortages, particularly in specific areas. Investing in targeted teacher education spaces, such as French language, special education and math and physics, will help tackle recruitment and retention challenges in classrooms. We also need to increase the number of Indigenous teachers, and supporting the development of new education pathways, as well as community-based delivery of UBC's Indigenous teacher education program, will help us get there."

Government will continue to work with sector partners to find the best ways to implement the remaining recommendations.

"This announcement is an important and welcome part of the overall strategy to address critical staffing needs in B.C.'s K-12 education system, through a strategic investment in public post-secondary teacher education programs," said Kris Magnusson, dean of education at Simon Fraser University and task force member.

The task force found that since March, public schools in the province have successfully filled the vast majority of the 3,700 full-time teaching positions required this year. Government is funding the new teaching positions as a result of restored class size and composition limits set out in the memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF), combined with growing student enrolment in most districts.

"New investment in teacher education programs is an important component of a larger strategy to ensure our schools have all of the classroom teachers, specialists, and on-call teachers our students need," said Glen Hansman, president of the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF). "The teacher shortage, created and left behind by the previous government's legal fight against B.C. teachers, is bigger than this announcement will fix, but the focus on increasing Indigenous teachers and specialist teachers is very welcome. The BCTF will continue to work with the government to implement more of the task force's recommendations."

"The BCSSA is immensely proud of the work done by school districts in managing the addition of more than 3,500 teachers across the province," said Chris van der Mark, superintendent, Bulkley Valley School District and task force member. "The BCSSA appreciates government's support, complementing the expertise and leadership provided by BCPSEA to ensure districts can continue to develop and maintain effective recruitment and retention practices beneficial to public education."

While hiring efforts have been largely successful, they have exacerbated existing teacher recruitment and retention challenges facing some school districts.

The task force received the findings of a recent survey, where 54 school districts identified some difficulties finding and retaining learning assistance teachers, teacher librarians, counsellors, senior science and math teachers, and French teachers.

Some districts also have reported challenges finding substitute teachers, due to depleted Teachers Teaching on Call (TTOC) lists and the increasing number of TTOC's not accepting

assignments. Recruitment and retention challenges can be greater for rural school districts, but the MOA amplified the challenges for all districts.

To address these long-term recruitment and retention challenges, government is supporting a comprehensive review of the labour market challenges, to be conducted by BCPSEA. The project is funded through the Canada British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement as a Sector Labour Market Partnerships project. The study will specifically look at the long-term labour market outlook for specialty positions, rural and remote teachers and teachers on call. The findings will inform strategies to provide solutions to these challenges.

**Quick Facts:**

- There are approximately 46,000 teachers in the province's 1,566 public schools.
- In 2016-17, overall public school student enrolment grew by approximately 1.1%.
- Government is fully funding teacher hiring and enrolment increases, accounting for over \$515 million to support students and fund about 3,700 full-time teaching positions.
- From July 1, 2017, to Sept. 30, 2017, 855 teachers migrated between districts, up from 308 during the same time in 2016.

**Learn More:**

See the full task force report here:

<https://www2.qa.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/recruitment-retention>

A backgrounder follows.

**Contact:**

Government Communications and Public  
Engagement  
Ministry of Education  
250 356-5963

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## BACKGROUND

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### **More spaces available for teachers in training**

The Ministry of Education is providing \$831,000 in one-time funding to four of B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions to increase the number of available teacher training spaces. These spaces will support the development of specific teaching skills that are in immediate high-demand in B.C.

\$571,000 will be used to create 107 new spaces in specialty teacher education programs over the next two years:

#### University of Victoria

- 15 new spaces – special education certificate – intake starts September 2018
- 15 new spaces – diploma in special education – intake starts January 2019
- Total funding: \$126,000

#### University of British Columbia

- 20 new spaces – secondary math and physics – intake starts September 2018
- 20 new spaces – French immersion – intake starts September 2018
- Total funding: \$240,000

#### Simon Fraser University

- 17 new spaces – French language – Intake starts September 2018
- 20 new spaces – graduate diploma in education in special and inclusive education – Intake starts September 2018
- Total funding: \$205,000

The remaining \$260,000 will be used to increase the number of Indigenous teachers throughout B.C.:

#### Nicola Valley Institute of Technology

- Indigenous teacher education – curriculum development
- Total funding: \$50,000

#### University of British Columbia

- Indigenous teacher education – curriculum development
- Indigenous teacher education – piloting of community-based delivery for existing students
- Total funding: \$210,000

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