



June 6, 2024

Ref: 299735

Dear Board Chairs and Superintendents:

I want to bring your attention to an area that I and the team at the Ministry of Education and Child Care are aware of in schools and in community over the last year. There are several incidents that have raised concerns about anti-Semitism in BC classrooms and schools that I am compelled to raise with you, the leaders of our K-12 education system.

I know the commitment to ensuring all students have access to safe, inclusive, and quality learning environments that support them to achieve their best, is a commitment shared across the education sector. This is my top priority as Minister.

As Board Chairs and Superintendents, you know that the responsibility for providing appropriate and relevant learning opportunities for students is a district responsibility. I know and respect that districts value having this autonomy at the local level to deliver education to the many diverse communities across British Columbia. This approach has ensured we can continue to provide students with a world-class education.

How students receive their education can differ between districts, schools, and even between classrooms. Where it aligns with learning standards of the curriculum, individual educators may decide to teach about current events or human rights topics from all around the world in their classrooms. Classrooms should be a space where students learn about complex subjects, but it must be done in a way that does not cause harm to students.

This teaching must be trauma-informed and age-appropriate. Students in British Columbia come from a diverse range of cultural, religious, and ideological backgrounds, and my expectation is that teachers will work to ensure that all students feel welcomed, supported, and safe in the classroom so that their curiosity can thrive.

Erase includes resources for teachers to support trauma-informed practices in the classroom. The Ministry of Education and Child Care has developed training for teachers on trauma-informed and compassionate practices through a [Trauma-Informed Practice](#) webpage.

It is also important for teachers to use significant professional judgement and expertise when determining what topics and issues to address, in which grades, and to ensure topics are taught in a careful, respectful, and age-appropriate manner.

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In addition, boards of education are responsible for determining how learning resources are chosen for use in schools, and boards must also have policies and procedures for choosing learning resources. I encourage you to have conversations in your district about ensuring that your teachers are following local learning resources policies and are choosing culturally responsive, age-appropriate resources to support the learning in their classrooms.

When issues or concerns in classrooms arise, my expectation is that school districts, as the direct employers of teachers, take them seriously and take prompt action. As a regulated profession, teachers must abide by their [Professional Standards for BC Educators](#), which, among other things, require them to treat all students equitably and with respect, understand the subjects they teach and implement effective instructional practices. Under section 16 of the [School Act](#), superintendents are required to report any conduct by a teacher that causes significant emotional harm to a student to the Commissioner for [Teacher Regulation](#). Superintendents are also required to report any conduct by a teacher they consider to be in breach of the Standards to the Commissioner if it is in the public interest to do so.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has connected with a number of school districts where concerns were raised and understand that swift actions were taken to investigate and address incidents that were brought forward. I commend this responsiveness and expect that all school districts will work effectively with educators to review classroom environments, teaching lessons, and materials, where needed, to ensure we are best meeting the learning needs of every student in the classroom.

Please continue to keep Jennifer McCrea, Assistant Deputy Minister, System Liaison and Supports Division (Jennifer.McCrea@gov.bc.ca) apprised if incidents of concern arise. Thank you for all your work to keep students safe and learning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Singh', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Rachna Singh
Minister