

**REVIEW
OF THE B.C. GLOBAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

B.C. Global Education Program Review
July 2017

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Background

Since 1998, the Ministry of Education has administered the B.C. Global Education Program, commonly referred to as the B.C. Offshore School Program. At the start of the 2016/17 school year, there were 46 B.C.-certified schools in 8 countries, serving 12,484 K – 12 students. This included five schools in Korea, enrolling 752 students and employing 89 B.C.-certified teachers.

Quality Assurance in the B.C. Global Education Program

The Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that all schools offering the Global Education Program are well suited for success and are able to contribute to the Government's goals and priorities for international education. Quality assurance protocols include:

- New schools must successfully complete a four-step application process.
- Owner/Operators must sign an annual Certification Agreement with the Province.
- The Ministry conducts scheduled annual inspections of all schools (schools in good standing may request a biennial inspection) by qualified B.C. Offshore School Inspectors.
- Since 2013, the Ministry also conducts annual unannounced inspections.
- Inspectors are qualified by a periodic, transparent, public Request for Qualifications process that follows Government procurement standards (See *Appendix Two* for qualifications).
- The Ministry annually publishes a range of documents to maintain full program transparency, including Inspection Reports and each year's Operating Manual and Certification Agreement.
- BC Offshore School Principals must have a valid B.C. Certificate of Qualification or an Independent School Subject-Restricted Teaching Certificate.
- Teachers must be B.C.-certified educators – exemptions are possible for PE 10-12, Fine Arts 10-12, Language, Local History and Local Culture.
- Schools must submit annual two-part reports that include an Inspection Catalogue, used by Inspectors during inspections, and a Business Plan, analyzed by the Ministry.
- Offshore schools agree to adhere to certain education policies designed to address specific areas of student and school achievement e.g., if a student's score on a provincial exam is 25% or lower than his or her course grade, then the exam score is recorded as the student's final grade.
- Course equivalency must be evaluated by a B.C.-certified teacher with subject matter expertise.
- Distributed Learning (DL) courses must be taken through a Ministry-approved DL provider.
- Board/Authority Authorized courses must be approved by the Director of International Education.
- Schools that are found to be in continued non-compliance with the Certification Agreement are placed on probation and/or de-certified (see *Appendix Three*).

Program Review

As a result of sudden school closures in Korea, the Ministry reviewed the (i) educational outcomes and (ii) the Ministry's administration of the B.C. Offshore School Program.

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Review Findings

Education Outcomes Summary

- Student achievement data indicates that the educational performance at B.C. Offshore Schools is in line with B.C.'s reputation for excellence in education (see *Figure 1* below).
 - On average, offshore school students outperform B.C. students in math; perform on par in science; and perform less well in English-language intensive courses.
 - A performance gap in English-language intensive courses is expected for offshore school students, as many only start full English and cultural immersion programs in grade 10.
 - Offshore school students' educational performance on B.C. provincial exams is nearly identical to international students studying in B.C. and to resident B.C. students designated as English Language Learners (ELL).

Figure 1 - Offshore School Program Provincial Exam Results Compared to B.C. Results

	Average Provincial Exam Result (15/16)				Pass Rate (15/16) (% of students with C- or better)		Comments
	Offshore School Program	All B.C. Average	Int'l students in B.C.	ELL students in B.C.	Offshore School Program	All B.C. Average	
English 12	52%	69%	54%	54%	56%	91%	In English language courses, as expected, Offshore School Student achievement is lower than the B.C. Provincial average by up to 17% – scores are within 3% of international students studying in B.C. and resident ELL students.
Com. 12	54%	63%	56%	57%	63%	85%	
English 10	55%	69%	58%	58%	67%	90%	
Social Studies 11	65%	71%	65%	63%	90%	93%	In social studies, Offshore school student exam scores were 6% lower than the Provincial average. Offshore student scores were within 1% of international students studying in B.C. and resident ELL students.
Math. 10	80%	70%	79%	73%	96%	84%	In math and science, offshore school students perform as well or better than B.C. resident students.
Science 10	69%	70%	70%	67%	95%	92%	

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Offshore School Program Administration Summary

The Ministry of Education will implement 15 action items across four administrative areas: (i) Local Government Authorizations, (ii) Inspections, (iii) Risk Management, and (iv) Engagement with Schools, Teachers, Students and Parents.

Action items are presented in *Appendix One – B.C. Global Education Program Review Action Items*.

The Ministry of Education examined local government authorization documentation provided by all offshore schools and vetted the documentation against the standards of the 2016/17 Certification Agreement. Specifically, documentation was reviewed for:

- Original documentation;
- Valid date;
- English translation;
- Notarization of documents and translation;
- Reference to the B.C. (or Canadian) education program; and
- Incorporation documents (e.g. business license).

Through this process, it was determined that:

- The 5 Korean offshore schools' documentation is no longer recognized by the Korean government as appropriate approval to operate a B.C. Offshore School in Korea;
- All 40 remaining, currently-certified and operating B.C. Offshore Schools have approval documentation in place; and
- The Ministry will implement a new standard for demonstration of local government approvals as part of the 15 actions items outlined in this report; the new process will be implemented through the 2017/18 certification agreements.

Conclusion

The Ministry will implement 15 action items in four areas over the next 24 months to strengthen the B.C. Global Education Program's administrative foundation and reduce risk of unplanned school closures (see *Appendix One* below).

The Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that schools in the B.C. Offshore School Program provide a world-class education, consistent with B.C.'s reputation for the highest quality education and standards and reputation as a world leader in International Education.

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Appendix One: B.C. Global Education Program Review Action Items

Area	Action Item / New Standard	Implemented within 3 - 24 months	Next Steps / Comments
1. Local government authorizations	i. Require annual renewal of local government authorizations unless documentation provides multi-year approval (up to a maximum of 5 years)	6 months by January 31, 2018	The changed standard will be included in 2017/18 Certification Agreement; Dec. 15, 2017 deadline for owners to provide new authorizations
	ii. Transfer responsibility for verifying authorizations from contracted school inspectors to Ministry staff with expertise in local authorization requirements	12 months by July 31, 2018	Verification complete before recertification for 2018/19
	iii. Require translation and notarization of all authorization documents; process to be overseen by Ministry approved local market specialists	6 months by January 31, 2018	Notarization/translation required for all new documents being provided by Dec. 15, 2017.
	iv. As required, provide information on authorization documents and processes to the country's Consulate in Vancouver or Embassy in Ottawa when necessary	12 months by July 31, 2018	School authorization information provided to country by March 2018 if required – enabling time for feedback (if any) in advance of recertification
2. Inspections	v. a. Hire a Deputy Inspector (duties to include oversight of offshore school inspections) b. Increase Ministry presence during inspections	12 months by July 31, 2018	Approvals, recruitment, hiring to be completed as soon as possible; at latest by July 31, 2018
	vi. Require annual inspections for all schools (i.e. no longer allow biennial inspections)	3 months by October 31, 2017	Previously granted exemptions for 2017/18 inspections will be honoured; no new exemptions will be provided
3. Risk management	vii. Require schools to provide Ministry with current (real time) teacher contact information, visa type and employment status	3 months by January 31, 2018	Initial data collection by Sept. 30 (with Annual Reports); real time exemption reporting thereafter
	viii. Develop an International Education Advisory Committee to provide high-level strategic and risk management advice on both offshore and onshore international education	9 months by April 30, 2018	Draft TOR and membership by January 31, 2018; First meeting by April 30, 2018

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Area	Action Item / New Standard	Implemented within 3 - 24 months	Next Steps / Comments
	ix. Require schools to develop emergency plans for unplanned suspensions of school operations; schools will be required to have plans vetted for accuracy and functionality by a Ministry approved, local market specialist	12 months by July 31, 2018	Locally-verified emergency plans will be due to Ministry before July 31, 2018.
	x. Develop a contingency mechanism to support schools in emergency situations	24 months by July 31, 2019	Planning, research, consultation and Ministry implementation by July 31, 2018. School level Implementation during 2018/19 school year
	xi. Using Offshore School Program cost recoveries (\$40,000): a. Develop an offshore school leadership scholarship b. Support regional teacher professional development	12 months by July 31, 2018	Scholarship design – Fall 2017 First intake – Spring 2018 Disbursement – June - July 2018
4. Engagement with schools, teachers, students and parents	xii. Develop and implement a biennial Offshore School Student Survey	18 months by Jan 31, 2019	Survey design – by Jan. 2018 Data collection – Jan – June 2018 Analysis and Final report – by Jan 31, 2019
	xiii. Add complaint function to the Offshore School Program website and maintain the current standard of response to complaints within 48 hours	6 months by January 31, 2018	Build and Approvals Aug. – Sept. 2017 PIA complete – November 30, 2017 Launch – by December. 31, 2017
	xiv. Require all schools to have Offshore School Representatives (OSR) and conduct quarterly OSR meetings (no longer allowing school principals to play the role of Ministry Liaison)	6 months by January 31, 2018	Changes to 2017/18 Operating Manual and Certification Agreement – By August 2017; School compliance by fall inspections
	xv. Use plain language to explain the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry and the school's owner/operator and include on both the Ministry website and the Make-a-Future website (teacher recruitment); require language to be included in schools' contract with teacher	12 months by July 31, 2018	Ministry website and Make-A-Future Website updated by Oct. 31 2017 Owners required to include new language in next contract with teachers (e.g. before 2018/19 school year)

Appendix Two: B.C. Global Education Program – Inspector Quality

The inspection process for B.C. Offshore Schools ensures the high standard of quality educational programs. During an inspection, a team of inspectors appointed by the Ministry will inspect the offshore school's administration, program of studies and facilities to ensure adherence to the Certification Agreement. Annual inspections are conducted at the expense of Owners/Operators. The Ministry may also conduct random, unannounced inspections.

B.C. Offshore School Inspectors meet the following current eligibility requirements:

- A minimum of 5 years' experience working in a senior administrative capacity (e.g., superintendent, assistant superintendent, district principal, school principal or vice principal) in a British Columbia public, independent or offshore school;
- Experience working with a diverse range of educational partners and stakeholders;
- Demonstrated knowledge, and two years of experience with school evaluation, audit or inspection processes in BC schools (public, independent or offshore);
- Expertise in current BC standards and practices for curriculum development and implementation and student assessment;
- Understanding of the linkage between regulatory requirements and educational programs in schools, with consideration of business operations in schools;
- Ability to write reports for external audiences, with consideration of recommendations or best practices for internal partners (e.g., Owners/Operators of British Columbia Certified Offshore Schools);
- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing;
- Ability to manage complex situations and concerns raised by school authorities and education partners and stakeholders; exploring options while simultaneously enhancing relations; and
- As applicable, knowledge of the School Act and Independent School Act and accompanying Schedules, Regulations, Minister's and Inspector's Orders.
- Professional experience effectively leading, mediating, facilitating and building consensus among diverse working groups with competing interests;
- Experience working and travelling in other countries;
- Cross-cultural skills and understanding of norms in other cultures, including a sensitivity to the protocols and culture of international education within the K-12 education and post-secondary education system;
- Knowledge of best practices in English Language Learner education; and
- Knowledge of the BC Global Education Program and British Columbia International Education Strategy.