



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

June 18, 2019

New progress audit on education of Indigenous students

VICTORIA – The Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia has released a progress audit on the Ministry of Education’s changes since the office’s 2015 report on the education of Aboriginal students in the B.C. public school system.

The original 2015 audit found there were gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in reading, writing and math assessments; in graduation rates; and in how safe they feel in school. These are strong indicators of a student’s future well-being.

“The stakes are high for Indigenous students, their families and communities, and the province, because students who graduate from high school have improved life chances in areas such as employment and health,” said Carol Bellringer, auditor general.

In 2015, the office made 12 recommendations to assist the ministry in closing the gaps. This progress audit found the gaps have gotten smaller but are still substantial.

In 2015, the graduation rate for Indigenous students was 24% lower than for non-Indigenous students. The gap is now at 16%. While there has been improvement, there is still more to do.

Today’s progress audit shows that the Ministry of Education has taken action to address many of the original recommendations. It implemented a new curriculum to teach all B.C. students about Indigenous culture and history, and introduced a program, called Equity in Action, to guide districts through an intensive process to identify barriers to Indigenous student success. The ministry hired a director of Indigenous analytics to improve how it uses data to focus on the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

The ministry still has work to do in areas such as developing an Indigenous education strategy, ensuring important data around student success is collected and reporting publically on its progress.

“Full implementation of our recommendations requires multiple parties to be part of the solution — Indigenous communities, government, school districts, teachers, unions, parents, and students,” Bellringer said. “During our interviews for the progress audit, we heard about increased government collaboration with Indigenous leaders and communities.”

In the 2015 audit the office used the word *Aboriginal* to encompass the three Indigenous groups (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) listed in the Canadian Constitution. Since then, both the federal



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and provincial governments have started using the word *Indigenous*. Accordingly, the office now uses Indigenous.

The full progress audit and the original 2015 report are both available on the Office of the Auditor General website: www.bcauditor.com.

Bellringer will answer questions pertaining to the report via a news conference.

News Conference Date: June 18, 2019

Time: 11:30 a.m. (Pacific time)

Dial-in Information:

From Vancouver: 604 681-0260

From elsewhere in Canada and the USA: 1 877 353-9184

Participant Pass Code: 44848#

During question and answer period, to ask a question: Press 01

During question and answer period, to exit the question queue: Press #

About the Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia

The auditor general is a non-partisan, independent officer of the legislature who reports directly to the legislative assembly. The *Auditor General Act* empowers the auditor general and staff to conduct audits, report findings and make recommendations.

Contact us:

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