**FISA Friday Updates**

**Jan. 26, 2024**

Earlier today, Premier Eby unveiled measures aimed at enhancing child safety, including restricting the use of cellphones in schools. The Province will collaborate with school districts to ensure that they have cell phone usage policies in place by September 2024. While this requirement does not apply to the independent school sector, school authorities may want to use this as an opportunity to develop or reassess their own policies regarding student access to and use of mobile devices during school hours.

The “not applicable” status of today’s announcement underscores the considerable autonomy bestowed upon the independent school sector in BC. Our independence is most evident in the relatively slim Independent School Act (and accompanying [Orders](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/manual-of-school-law)) in contrast to the much heftier the School Act and additional requirements (Reporting Order, School Calendar Regulation, the BCPSEA/BCTF Collective Agreement, etc.) Even though our legislative framework may be streamlined, the accountability measures as evidenced through the independent school inspection process are arguably more stringent.

While certain matters that draw public attention such as today’s “cell phone ban”, which is an exaggeration of the announcement, may not be applicable to independent schools, what is indubitably applicable is our obligation to serve the students entrusted to us by their families. In fulfilling this prime objective, independent schools enrich the public good, which may ultimately help foster a societal fabric where child safety is not legislated but is deeply woven into cultural norms and everyday habits of all.

Link to Premier Eby's announcement <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024PREM0004-000088>

**Shawn Chisholm Leave of Absence**

The FISA office is quieter than usual due to Shawn temporarily stepping away from his duties to deal with an unanticipated health challenge. He is receiving excellent treatment and is obeying the orders of his medical team dutifully. Shawn looks forward to a healthy and timely return, as do we. Feel free to send well wishes to be passed along to [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca) with a subject line of “for the AMAZING Shawn”. During his absence, please direct inquiries to Janet at [Janet@fisabc.ca](mailto:Janet@fisabc.ca).

**FISA Fees**

Last spring, the FISA Board determined that member fee rates should be set on a 3-year cycle to give schools the ability to budget accordingly. As you know, the fee for the current year is $7.00/FTE. The fee for 2024-2025 will be $7.50/FTE and the fee for 2025-2026 will be $8.00/FTE. This approach diverts from our past practice of maintaining fees at a stable rate for several consecutive years, which inevitably necessitated more significant increases to catch up to inflation and other cost pressures. The Board will continue to review the fee structure annually and provide members with advance notice of any potential fee increases.

**MyEDBC Fees**

Aside from gathering our own membership fees, FISA also collects fees on behalf of the MyEDBC iGroup Help Desk and Make a Future. The MyEDBC iGroup invoices for participating schools will be sent shortly and reflect a decreased rate for 2024-2025 – from $5.50/FTE to $5.12/FTE, a savings of $0.38/FTE. This reduction is due to cost sharing efficiencies generated by having an ever increasing number of users. Make a Future invoices will be sent in mid-March for the service period of April 2024-March 2025. The Make a Future fees remain unchanged at $3.92/FTE.

**International Students**

Earlier this week, the federal government announced an intention to [decrease the number of international students](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/01/canada-to-stabilize-growth-and-decrease-number-of-new-international-student-permits-issued-to-approximately-360000-for-2024.html) by ~35% in 2024 compared to 2023. Study permit applications for elementary and secondary students are not included in the cap. As a reminder, all BC elementary and secondary schools are considered [Designated Learning Institutions](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/study-permit/prepare/designated-learning-institutions-list.html) and may accept students with student permits at the school’s discretion.

**Erase Training**

As announced in the January 12th Deputy Minister’s Bulletin, there is a new *erase* website to be used to register for training opportunities - <https://pages.saferschoolstogether.com/erase-professional-sessions>.

At this time, they are offering two courses (each with multiple training dates)

## Digital Threat Assessment® (DTA) - Virtual sessions [January 31](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/digital-threat-assessment-january-31-2024-remote-tickets-796407254537?aff=oddtdtcreator) [February 27](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/digital-threat-assessment-february-27-2024-remote-tickets-796896016437) [April 10](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/digital-threat-assessment-april-10-2024-remote-tickets-796899205977) [May 15](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/digital-threat-assessment-may-15-2024-remote-tickets-796903669327)

## Basic Threat and Risk Assessment – in Person sessions [January 22 - Kelowna, B.C.](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-risk-and-threat-assessment-january-22-2024-kelowna-bc-tickets-794585435427) [February 5 - Victoria, B.C.](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-risk-and-threat-assessment-february-5-2024-victoria-bc-tickets-800341311407) [February 6 - Richmond, B.C.](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-risk-and-threat-assessment-february-6-2024-richmond-bc-tickets-800345674457) [February 7 - Merritt, B.C.](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-risk-and-threat-assessment-february-7-2024-merritt-bc-tickets-800350288257) [February 28 - Campbell River, B.C.](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-risk-and-threat-assessment-february-28-2024-campbell-river-bc-tickets-800370388377) [April 15 - North Vancouver, B.C.](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-risk-and-threat-assessment-april-15-2024-north-vancouver-bc-tickets-800359174837) [April 22 - Williams Lake, B.C.](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/basic-risk-and-threat-assessment-april-22-2024-williams-lake-bc-tickets-800371281047?aff=oddtdtcreator)

## \*Click on the date to go to the registration page.

The [Ministry’s Inspection Template Guide for School Administrators 2023-24](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/independent-schools/documents) confirms that the **Basic Threat Risk Assessment** course offered by the Ministry through Safer Schools Together *erase*trainings **meets independent school inspection requirements for VTRA** training. And the Digital Threat Assessment course meets DTA requirements. Hybrid sessions which combine both DTA and VTRA trainings are currently not being offered. Therefore, schools may need to register for each of these trainings separately or rely on their association-level SSC to fulfill DTA requirements.

Independent schools are also encouraged to promote the [Family Sessions](https://pages.saferschoolstogether.com/erase-family-session) that are directed towards parents, caregivers, and grandparents

**Feeding Futures**

**Partnerships**

FISA has established valuable partnerships with diverse organizations to support independent schools with their Feeding Futures Funding. These partnerships include Backpack Buddies, School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program + Milk, Gordon Food Services and Munchalunch (Provincial). Sysco (Lower Mainland), Flourish and Nourish Cowichan catering services (Vancouver Island), and Shoppers Wholesale (Northern Area). For further details on these partnerships, please reach out to Rocio [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca)

**FFF Sharing Ideas Session – Feb. 8th**

Building on the success of our previous Feeding Futures Sharing Ideas Session, we are excited to host another session on **February 8, 2024, from 10:30 to 11:15 am (PST)**. Our goal is to facilitate a 45-minute casual conversation, providing the opportunity for school leaders to exchange ideas and resources employed in your school that could inspire fellow school leaders. Additionally, we hope to gather insights on how FISA can best support independent schools in the first year of the Feeding Futures Initiative

If you would like to attend, please register at:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvceqqrTIsGdRqwW7ALeIsH6o-WI5qScah>

Please take a moment to complete a 2-minute survey to designate primary and alternative contact persons for receiving all information related to Feeding Futures.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W6T9Z5G>

**Student Learning Survey (SLS)**

Independent schools may find that participating in the Ministry’s [2023/2024 Student Learning Survey](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/student-learning-survey) provides valuable data which can be used to inform continuous school improvement planning. The SLS is targeted for students in grades 4, 7, 10, and 12, but other grades can participate (e.g., grade 8 students can take the grade 7 survey). Public school SLS data is accessible to the public on a district level, however, independent school data will not be publicly accessible. Participating schools will receive a report with their responses.

Independent schools intending to take part in the SLS need to contact the Ministry at [EDUC.ReportingUnit@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EDUC.ReportingUnit@gov.bc.ca) to get an account set up. The survey runs from Jan. 8 to May 24, but please don’t delay in informing them if you intend to participate.

**District Authority Scholarship (DAS)**

Please remember to promote the DAS award widely within your secondary school community. It’s a chance for grade 12 students to be rewarded for their efforts in a wide variety of categories: ADST, Community Service, Fine Arts, Indigenous Languages & Cultures, Languages, Physical Activity & Health, and Technical & Trades Training.

**Fraser Valley Region** –  [click here for the Fraser Valley Application Form](https://fisabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/DAS-App-FraserValley-2024.docx)– Due April 8, 2024  
(Fraser Valley encompasses schools from Coquitlam to Hope)

**Metro Vancouver** –  [click here for the MetroVan 2024- Info Package and Application Form](https://fisabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/DAS-MetroVan-2024-Info-Package-update-Jan-2024.pdf) – Due April 5, 2024

**Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands** – [click here Vancouver Island Info Package and Application Form](https://fisabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Vancouver-Island-District-Authority-How-To-Apply-2024.pdf)– Due March 14, 2024

**Interior and North** – [click here Northern and Interior Application Form 2024](https://fisabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Northern-Interior-DAS-2023-24-1.pdf) – Due April 8, 2024

Students graduating from Provincial Online Learning Schools–Independent should apply in the region where the school is located.

In order to ensure that DAS related messages are received by the correct person in your secondary school, please complete this short 2-minute[online form](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DAScontact2023-24)**identifying your school’s DAS coordinator**. No action is need from schools that do not enroll grade 12 students.

**Pro-D Invitations**

**AI – MasterMind Group - iGroup**

*With the growing prominence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the educational landscape, it is important for us to stay abreast of the latest developments and applications in this field. We are looking to establish an AI Mastermind Group for Independent Schools, a collaborative group designed to foster the exchange of ideas and experience using tools among schools. This would be a very practical group meeting that would have lots of time for questions and testing out tools and ideas. This is not a forum for policy discussion, it is technology focused.****The format of the group would be as such:*** *1. The group would meet every 1 - 2 months in person with each meeting lasting 3 - 4 hours.*

*2. The idea would be that during each meeting we would have 2-3 different schools/people presenting on what they are doing with AI, or tools that they are testing or ideas they have for AI and problems they have discovered. Each presentation would be 45min to 1 hour. And then after each presentation there would be 30-45mins for people to ask questions or test out the tools themselves and have discussions with other people.*

*3. The meeting would be technical in nature, allowing for a deep dive into some of the more technical aspects of using AI tools.*

***Next Steps:***

*1. We are thinking of doing the first meeting on 16th Feb 2024. Most likely between 9:30am to 12:30. We have not confirmed a location; it will all depend on how many people are interested, however it will most likely be in the Langley or Surrey area. There will potentially be a cost, maybe $30/meeting,  the plan is to keep the cost low to cover room and snack costs.*

*2. If you are interested in joining this group please fill in this form so that we can figure out room size needs and interest levels:*[*https://forms.gle/sumVFfVq1tP8Ck22A*](https://forms.gle/sumVFfVq1tP8Ck22A)

*3. Once we have confirmed a location we will notify people who have completed the form.*

*If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at*[andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com).

*Andrew Smit*

**ISABC Professional Development Conference – Feb. 16, 2024**

ISABC, one of the five FISA member associations, invites all independent school educators to their Inspire. Empower. Sustain. virtual conference. The conference will focus on raising awareness, providing information and support, and elevating the conversation around: **Mental Health and Wellbeing, Environmental Sustainability**, and **Indigenous Education. Attendees from non-ISABC member schools is $50/person. For more information and to register visit**<https://isabcconference2024.vfairs.com/>**. Don’t delay as registration closes on Sunday, January 28th at midnight.**

**Good News Stories**

Is there something exciting taking place at your school? Here’s your opportunity to share it with others. Kindly submit your stories for review to [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca), using the subject line "Good News." Include a brief one or two-sentence synopsis along with a link to the full story.

**Jan. 19, 2024**

Residents in the Metro Vancouver area are well aware that we often find ourselves the subject of jokes from the rest of the province whenever we get a snowfall of a few centimeters. However, the events of this past week, signified by chaos on the roads and number of school closures, underscore the importance of not taking life’s small joys for granted. From a daily commute untouched by accidents, the simple act of flipping a switch to illuminate a room or warm a space, the laughter of a child recounting their wintery adventures, or the steady beat of your heart circulating oxygenated blood throughout your body – these seemingly ordinary moments are truly precious. May the coming week bring a return to normalcy, sprinkled with an increase in gratitude.

**Erase Training**

As announced in the January 12th Deputy Minister’s Bulletin, the Ministry has a new erase website to be used to register for training opportunities - <https://pages.saferschoolstogether.com/erase-professional-sessions>.

At this time, training dates are scheduled for Digital Threat Assessment (online sessions) and Basic Threat Risk Assessment (in-person sessions). The [Ministry’s Inspection Template Guide for School Administrators 2023-24](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/independent-schools/documents) confirms that the Basic Threat Risk Assessment offer by the Ministry through Safer Schools Together meets independent school inspection requirements for VTRA training. The hybrid session which combined both DTA and VTRA trainings are currently not being offered. Therefore, schools may need to register for each of these trainings separately, or rely on their association-level SSC to fulfill DTA requirements.

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Please take a moment to complete a 2-minute survey to designate primary and alternative contact persons for receiving all information related to Feeding Futures.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W6T9Z5G>

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**District Authority Scholarship (DAS)**

Please remember to promote the DAS award widely within your secondary school community. It’s a chance for grade 12 students to be rewarded for their efforts in a wide variety of categories: ADST, Community Service, Fine Arts, Indigenous Languages & Cultures, Languages, Physical Activity & Health, and Technical & Trades Training.

For independent schools the province is divided into 4 DAS regions, each with their own application process and due dates.

1)    Metro Vancouver - Chairs: Katie Larson and Katelyn McGuinty

2)    Fraser Valley – Chair: Chris Blesch

3)    Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands – Chairs: Ruth McGhee and Sarah Edgar

4)    Interior & North – Chair: Mike Campbell

Application forms are available on the FISA website under the [**Scholarship & Awards tab**](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/)**.** Students graduating from Provincial Online Learning Schools–Independent should apply in the region where the school is located.

In order to ensure that DAS related messages are received by the correct person in your secondary school, please complete this short 2-minute[**online form**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DAScontact2023-24)**identifying your school’s DAS coordinator**. No action is need from schools that do not enroll grade 12 students.

**FISA Mental Health & Wellness Supports:**

* **BC Children's Hospital School Support Teams Webinar Recording**

Thank you to all that attended and participated in the BCCH’s mental health webinar on December 11th. The webinar recording is available [here](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

* **Foundry Webinar Recording**

Thank you to everyone who participated in the [Foundry](https://foundrybc.ca/) webinar. If you were unable to attend live, the recording is available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

* **Mental Health Resources**

FISA has compiled a short list of some of the free and/or easy to access resources that may be of interest to educators. The list is available here [https://fisabc.ca/mental-health-substance-use-resources](https://fisabc.ca/mental-health-substance-use-resources/)/

**Good News Stories**

St. Helens School in Vancouver kicked off its centennial celebration with a mass at Evans Lake. The outdoor education program engaged 180 students from grades 4 to 7 over three nights, focusing on environmental awareness, social interactions, art, and faith. Congratulations on your 1st 100 years!

**Jan. 12, 2024**

Happy New Year Independent School Leaders!

Most independent schools are returned to normal operations after what I hope was a restful and joyous winter break. While most of the province did not experience the weather we traditionally expect around Christmas – the severe temperatures we are witnessing presently indicate winter has arrived! I appreciate that independent school leaders have heightened awareness of the impacts severe weather presents to their school operations and I thank you for keeping community safety as a priority.

The [recalculated/final 20223 – 2024](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/independent-schools/funding) per student grant figures for were published by the MECC earlier this week and FISA also provided a comparative analysis between this school year’s preliminary and final grant amounts. Most school districts, and hence the independent schools that are located within their geographical boundaries, received an increase in the final per student funding. This has been a trend in recent years, partially due to COVID and collective agreement settlements from the public sector - but this is not always the case. As a former principal I experienced years when the recalculated grant was less that the preliminary grant, so I empathize with schools that must deal with that challenging reality (and there are several independent schools dealing with that situation this year). FISA recognizes each school has their own budgeting process and FISA always encourages schools to be reasonable and lean more towards conservative revenue projections for their government grant for the upcoming budget year. Dealing with a recalculated grant that surpasses what was anticipated from the preliminary grant is much easier to manage than when the final/recalculated grant is less than expected.

**Feeding Futures**

FISA has been developing partnerships with various organizations to support Independent Schools with their Feeding Futures Funding. These partnerships include Sysco (Lower Mainland), Flourish and Nourish Cowichan (Vancouver Island), Back Pack Buddies and School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program + Milk (Provincial). If you are interested in partnering with any of these organizations, please contact Rocio at [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca)

Join us on **January 18, 2024, from 1:00 to 1:45 pm (PST)** for a Feeding Futures virtual session to exchange ways to create stigma-free food delivery approaches in schools. We'll also explore students' active involvement in food preparation and any other successful ideas or resources employed in your school that could inspire fellow school leaders. While the primary focus of this meeting is on the high school level, we welcome participation from anyone interested.

If you would like to attend, please register at:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvduqrrjwjGtI9oJxJSjp7YROCKFSA26tw>

For schools participating in Feeding Futures, please take a moment to complete a 2-minute survey to identify the primary and alternate contact persons for receiving all information related to Feeding Futures. Please submit your responses by January 15, 2024. Thank you.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W6T9Z5G>

**District Authority Scholarship (DAS)**

FISA has been managing the DAS application process for independent schools for over 30 years. In the beginning (1991) it was a small task as only 20 scholarships for the amount of $500 each were available to graduates of independent schools. In 2007 the Ministry increased our allocation to 200 awards. And in 2013 they implemented a proportional allocation system based upon grade 12 enrollment, which saw the independent school allocate catapult to slightly over 400 awards. Additionally, the award’s monetary amount was increased in 2015 to $1,250. Cumulatively, 6044 independent school graduates have earned DAS awards totalling $5.1 million.

The DAS program is designed to recognize high school graduates who excel in seven overarching areas: ADST, Community Service, Fine Arts, Indigenous Languages & Cultures, Languages, Physical Activity & Health, and Technical & Trades Training.

For independent schools the province is divided into 4 DAS regions:

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2)    Fraser Valley – Chair: Chris Blesch

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Each region has their own application process and due dates. The application forms are available on the FISA website under the [Scholarship & Awards tab](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/). Students graduating from Provincial Online Learning Schools–Independent should apply in the region where the school is located.

In order to ensure that DAS related messages are received by the correct person in your secondary school, please complete this short 2-minute[**online form**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DAScontact2023-24)**identifying your school’s DAS coordinator**. No action is need from schools that do not enroll grade 12 students.

Please promote the District Authority Scholarship opportunity widely within your secondary school community.

**French Teachers –****3-Week Summer Study in Quebec** - **Applications close Jan. 15, 2024**

Independent school educators are invited to participate in a three-week immersion program, held in the heart of Quebec City, for French second language teachers. The Institut 2024 will be offered in two sessions:

* Institut A**:** July 8-25, 2024
* Institut B**:**July 30-August 16, 2024

Successful applicants will be offered a place in one or both institutes based on language competency.

BC public and independent school teachers and BC teacher candidates who speak French as an additional language are eligible for a Canadian Heritage bursary. To apply or learn more visit the

[Institut de français, UBC à Québec webpage](https://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/quebeccity/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Institut-de-francais-%28Quebec%29---Application-opens&utm_source=Envoke-Institut-de-francais-%28Quebec%29-2023-application-opens&utm_term=July-2024-Institut-de-fran%C3%A7ais%2C-UBC-%C3%A0-Qu%C3%A9bec%3A-Now-accepti).

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**Jan. 9, 2024 - Final 2023 - 2024 Per Student Operating Grant Allocation**

The Ministry of Education has released the [Final Operational Grants for the 2023 - 2024 school year](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/independent-schools/funding#:~:text=Some%20independent%20schools%20in%20B.C.,Employ%20B.C.%20certified%20teachers).

A chart comparing the 2023 – 2024 Final per student Operating Grant and the 2023 – 2024 Preliminary Grant (released in March 2023) for each school district is attached for your review. The report reflects an **average increase of $180/FTE for Group 1 independent schools and a $126/FTE increase for Group 2 independent schools**.

The Final Grant figures reflect an average overall funding increase for independent schools throughout the province, however 5 school districts, and the independent schools located within their boundaries, will experience a decrease in their per student grant. FISA continues to advocate for fair and just funding for all BC independent schools, in alignment with the BC Independent School Act.

The per student grant for Provincial Online Schools – Independent remains unchanged at **$3,480/FTE** and the Special Needs funding categories also remain unchanged.

This year’s Final Recalculated Grant amounts are welcomed by most schools and school districts, due to a predominantly positive funding variance - which is not always the case. Recognizing many independent schools will be commencing their 2024 – 2025 budget deliberations soon, and your reliance on anticipated per student government funding (which also informs tuition rate discussions) FISA suggests it would be prudent to use conservative revenue projections for your 2024 – 2025 budgets (the Preliminary Funding Rates for Independent Schools are traditionally available in late March or early April). The FISA Board has also committed to provide its member schools with the 2024 – 2025 FISA membership fees in the near future to support your budget preparation processes.

**Jan. 5, 2024 – No Update**

**Dec. 29, 2023 – No Update**

**Dec. 22, 2023**

Today FISA offers an abbreviated weekly update – because, quite frankly, we know how busy today will be for the schools that are still in session and anticipating a well-deserved break. We expect the reading of the FISA Update will not/and should not be a priority – but there is some good stuff if you choose to read on!

**The Recalculated/Final 2023 - 2024 Independent School Funding Rates**

Historically the MECC releases the recalculated/final per student funding rates for independent schools late in the week before schools start their winter break. FISA looks forward to the publishing of the final rates and provides some analysis and district level comparisons between the Preliminary Funding Rates (released in March) and the Recalculated Rates for our member schools. As of this morning, the information has not been released. As mentioned in last week’s update, FISA was aware that the recalculate amounts may be delayed. Therefore, with the FISA office being closed between Christmas and New Year’s, schools can anticipate a FISA update on the recalculated per student funding rates early in January 2024.

**Feeding Futures**

Thank you for the heartfelt messages we’ve received regarding how this funding will make a difference for your students and families. Feel free to share photos, stories or ideas on how this fund is positively impacting your students to [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca)

**FFF sharing ideas: Highschool level.**

Join us in the new year to share ideas on approaches to create stigma-sensitive food delivery in schools. We’ll also explore students' active involvement in food preparation, and any other successful ideas or resources employed in your school that could inspire fellow school leaders.

This meeting is specifically focused on the high school level, but we welcome participation from anyone interested. Our aim is to engage in a 45-minute casual conversation on **January 18, 2024, from 1:00 to 1:45 pm (PST),** to share ideas and gain some insights on what other areas FISA can support independent schools in the first year of Feeding Futures Initiative.

If you would like to attend, please register at:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvduqrrjwjGtI9oJxJSjp7YROCKFSA26tw>

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[Institut de français, UBC à Québec webpage](https://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/quebeccity/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Institut-de-francais-%28Quebec%29---Application-opens&utm_source=Envoke-Institut-de-francais-%28Quebec%29-2023-application-opens&utm_term=July-2024-Institut-de-fran%C3%A7ais%2C-UBC-%C3%A0-Qu%C3%A9bec%3A-Now-accepti).

**FISA Mental Health & Wellness Supports:**

·         **BC Children's Hospital School Support Teams Webinar Recording**

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·         **Foundry Webinar Recording**

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·         **Mental Health Resources**

FISA has compiled a short list of some of the free and/or easy to access resources that may be of interest to educators. The list is available here [https://fisabc.ca/mental-health-substance-use-resources](https://fisabc.ca/mental-health-substance-use-resources/)/.

As we wrap up 2023, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to all the people who work diligently to keep BC’s independent school sector strong and thriving. The ongoing success of our 313 member schools underscores the importance parents place on the freedom to choose a school that aligns with their child’s needs and family values.  Our five associations remain steadfast in supporting their members through an expanding range of services. The leaders of each association demonstrate exceptional talent and dedication to fortifying their organizations. Our collaborative relationship with Ministry officials stands as a model for other provincial independent school groups. Despite our core FISA office staff remaining a small team of four, we are experiencing significant benefits from the addition of part-time contracted individuals in key roles, including Mental Health Coordinators Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, bookkeeping services provided by Belinda Dykstra, as well as the Reconciliation and Equity in Action team, comprised of  Jenny Sanders, Amy Stromgren, Jamie Erbacher, and Darren Spyksma. We feel incredibly blessed to be part of such an amazing system and look forward to working with everyone after we take a short winter break. We’ll return refreshed and ready for 2024 on January 2nd.

**Dec. 15, 2023**

Recognizing that a portion of our member independent schools will be commencing their winter break sooner than many others, this week the FISA team would like to offer our sincerest best wishes during this holiday season to school leaders, staff members, parents and of course the students we all serve.  The richness of diversity that exists within independent schools means that many of our schools have religious focused celebrations that coincide with this holiday season and bring families together to share peace and joy!

As we say farewell to 2023, I look back on it as a transitional year - as schools shifted to post-COVID operations, with a return to more normalized practices while also embracing some promising practices initiated during the pandemic. My hope is that 2024 proves to be a year where peace abounds and independent schools continue to provide school choice for British Columbians through fostering learning environments where students, staff members and families may flourish.

**The Recalculated/Final 2023 - 2024 Independent School Funding Rates**

Historically the MECC releases the recalculated/final per student funding rates for independent schools late in the week before schools start their winter break. FISA looks forward to the publishing of the final rates and provides some analysis and district level comparisons between the Preliminary Funding Rates (released in March) and the Recalculated Rates for our member schools. In a recent communication from the MECC, it seems likely that this information will not be made available before Christmas this year.

Therefore, with the FISA office being closed between Christmas and New Year’s, schools can anticipate a FISA update on the recalculated per student funding rates early in January 2024.

**Dry Grad Fund Raising Campaign – Application Form due Dec. 18th**

The BC Liquor Distribution Branch (BCLDB) has confirmed that they will once again conduct their annual fundraising campaign in the spring of 2024 to support alcohol-free graduation celebrations in communities throughout BC - "Dry Grad". The campaign is dependent upon the generosity of patrons within a particular region, resulting in a wide variance in the amount participating schools receive per graduate. Last year the range was from less than $1 to $16.63 per student.

FISA manages the distribution of funds for the independent school sector. If your school would like to participate in the 2023-24 Dry Grad program, please**complete this**[**short online form**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DryGradDec2023)(less than 2 minutes) **by Dec. 18, 2023**. Note: this program is only open to schools with grade 12 students.

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**Feeding Futures**

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After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Additionally, if your school is involved in preparing holiday hampers or organizing other food distribution activities, we encourage you to share pictures with us at [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca)

**FISA Mental Health & Wellness Supports:**

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**Good News Stories**

You may recall that during the dark days of COVID, FISA dedicated a section in our updates to highlight noteworthy achievements of member schools. We are reviving this tradition. Please submit your stories for consideration to [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca) with the subject line “Good News”, along with a one or two-sentence synopsis and a link to the complete story.

**Dec. 8, 2023**

Earlier this week FISA was invited to participate in discussions with leaders from public health and education on how this health authority (VCH) could best help schools in their efforts to support improved mental health and wellness outcomes within their communities. The commitment to consultation was impressive - as was their desire to make decisions on future direction and resource supports based on research and analyzed data.

FISA also values the use of data to inform the supports we provide to the independent school sector. FISA is grateful for the mental health funding we advocated for that is received each year from the MECC to promote mental health and wellness within the independent school sector. Most of this funding is then allocated directly to the 5 FISA associations to support their association-specific mental health and wellness initiatives. The residual grant amount is allocated to sector-wide initiatives, as approved by the FISA Board, such as the contracting for the FISA Mental Health Coordinators (Michelle Hussey and Jamie Morris), mental health focused Provincial Outreach sessions and webinars, the [wellbeingbc.ca](http://wellbeingbc.ca/) website, and the participation in the MDI survey.

To support FISA’s desire to use research informed decisions to determine the future mental health and wellness supports independent schools require, and to collect the aggregate data required for grant accountability reporting to the MECC, independent schools will be asked to participate in a survey in January 2024. Schools will be asked to share their mental health and wellness priorities and goals, how they are working towards achieving these goals, how they are measuring the impact of their initiatives and how FISA may be able to support your efforts.

Please note FISA is aware of the many demands placed on independent school leaders, and survey fatigue is genuinely one of them! Please be assured that FISA will keep this in mind as we create this survey, making the FISA Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey as concise and user-friendly as possible.

**Some FISA Facts**

·         The headcount of independent school students receiving Level 1, 2 & 3 funding has **increased by** **31%** from **2018-19 to 2022-23**. During this same period, the funded special needs headcount in BC public schools **increased by 23%.**

**Dry Grad Fund Raising Campaign – Application Form**The BC Liquor Distribution Branch (BCLDB) has confirmed that they will once again conduct their annual fundraising campaign in the spring of 2024 to support alcohol-free graduation celebrations in communities throughout BC - "Dry Grad". The campaign is dependent upon the generosity of patrons within a particular region, resulting in a wide variance in the amount participating schools receive per graduate. Last year the range was from less than $1 to $16.63 per student.

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**2023 School-Aged Child Care Demand Survey for Parents**

FISA has been informed that the participation rate from independent school parents on the School-Age Child Care Demand Survey is off to a strong start. The Ministry values the data collected to help inform the expansion efforts of child care in BC and is grateful to the independent school which have distributed the survey link to their parent community. Time is running out as the survey closes on Dec. 14th. If you are uncertain as to the log in link for your school (only applicable to those with elementary grade levels), please look for an email from [support@awinfosys.com](mailto:support@awinfosys.com) on November 22nd  and 23rd which will provide more information.

**Feeding Futures**

Participating independent schools have received the initial draw (70%) of their Feeding Futures Funding allocation for the 2023-2024 school year. The funds were directly deposited into the same account in which your authority receives other MECC transfers (per student operations funding, Supplemental Special Ed). Please verify with your financial department that you have received this deposit. If you have not received the allocation yet, kindly inform FISA at [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca)

Thank you for all the messages we've received regarding how this funding will support your students and families. We are eagerly anticipating positive stories about the impact of this funding within your community. If you are preparing holiday hampers or other food distribution activities, please share some pictures with us.

**Mental Health & Wellness – BC Children's Hospital School Support Teams Webinar**

FISA is pleased to partner with the amazing school support teams within BC Children's Hospital to host an upcoming Q&A session for all FISA schools.

·         **Monday, December 11th – 12:00 to 1:00PM. Please RSVP at this**[**link**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAucemrrzIuH9JyZooeadD7Bv7Bwl2ajG52)**.**

This is your chance to directly connect with three BC Children's Hospital teams that support school communities (the Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre, School Health Promotion, and Compass) to learn more about what services, supports, and resources they offer across the province. The BC Children's teams offer a variety of resources aimed at supporting the mental health and well-being of students, families and school communities. To learn more about these services in advance of this conversation, please check out their websites: <https://keltymentalhealth.ca/>, <https://keltymentalhealth.ca/school-professionals> and at <https://www.compassbc.ca/>

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**Dec. 1, 2023**

I had the pleasure to meet with my provincial colleagues who serve in a similar role representing independent schools in their respective provinces. We connect at least twice each school year and it’s always insightful to share and compare experiences, successes, and challenges from the different independent school jurisdictions within Canada.

The meeting revealed there are two specific, consistent experiences independent schools face across Canada – increasing enrollment pressures (either expanding enrollment or expanding waitlists) and staffing challenges. The increase in enrollments have been experienced in both independent and public schools – and reflect the federal government’s initiative to aggressively increase immigration. K-12 workforce supply is problematic nationally, with Quebec experiencing the greatest challenge, reporting that 1 in 4 teachers working in their K-12 system are uncertified. While the two most westerly provinces are in the midst of a tight labour market, I am happy to report that BC and Alberta independent school associations have been provided the opportunity by their respective governments to be valued voices in the focused discussions on how to address the gap between educator demand and supply (which is projected to become more severe, at least in the short term). FISA’s voice is included in the efforts of the K-12 Workforce Task Force and we look forward to the future release of the K-12 Workforce Strategy Plan intended to support a sustainable, stable and highly qualified K-12 workforce.

**Some FISA Facts**

·         In the 2022-23 school year there were a total of **24,105** (FTE) students enrolled in BC Online schools (public and independent). **11,311 or 47%** were enrolled in BC Provincial Independent Online Schools.

**Education Data Exchange - EDX**

This is a friendly reminder that the Ministry has asked schools and authorities to identify a point person for onboarding to the new EDX platform by today – December 1st. EDX will be used as secure way for schools to directly update their contact information, simplify the submission of 1601, 1602, and 1701 data, and share student information with the Ministry. The recordings of the EDX info sessions held recently will not be publicly available. However, the Ministry will soon be adding helpful resources to the EDX webpage [here](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/data-collections/education-data-exchange-engagement#Resources). Please see the [Education Data Exchange Onboarding bulletin](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20231117/dm-bulletin-isb-attachment-templateedxonboarding.pdf) for additional information.

**2023 School-Aged Child Care Demand Survey for Parents**

The following messaging was included in the October 13th DM Bulletin and on November 22nd independent schools received a communication from A. Willock Information Systems (awinfosys). This organization is contracted by the MECC to coordinate the 2023 School-Aged Child Care Demand Survey for parents. The communication chain for the independent school sector went awry with the November 22nd email from awinfosys referencing a previous email that had not yet been distributed, but which was subsequently sent on November 23rd. Obviously, there were some human errors that took place, but FISA can confirm the legitimacy of awinfosys and recognizes the value that the data this survey will provide to child care policy makers.

***FOR INFO, INDEPENDENT SCHOOL PRINCIPALS/VICE-PRINCIPALS — Upcoming School-Aged Child Care Demand Parent Survey:****The Ministry of Education and Child Care will conduct a parent survey this November to better understand the regional and provincial demand for school-aged child care. Schools with Kindergarten to Grade 7 students will be asked to distribute the survey to parents to help inform long-term planning and policy development for child care in B.C. Principals and school administrators will be contacted in the coming weeks with further information, including survey distribution instructions. For questions, contact*[*ChildCareBC.Engagement@gov.bc.ca*](mailto:ChildCareBC.Engagement@gov.bc.ca)*.*

**Feeding Futures**

Last week schools that applied for Feeding Futures Funding received an email from FISA verifying their final allocation. By now, schools should have received a direct deposit of their first instalment, which constitutes 70% of their total funding.

Here’s a quick snapshot of the 190 independent schools in our province that are participating.

This overview highlights the geographical diversity within the independent sector, all working toward a common goal of providing nutritious food to our students and continuing support for families. Feel free to share photos, stories or ideas on how this fund is positively impacting your students to [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca)

**Mental Health & Wellness – Foundry Webinar**

FISA is pleased to partner with [Foundry](https://foundrybc.ca/) BC to host an upcoming Q&A session for all FISA schools.

·         **Tuesday, December 5th – 9:00 to 10:00 AM. Please RSVP at this**[**link**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIkdOqsrjoiE9w2RfoLgdt4xxx5WuONBIyF)**.**

This virtual conversation will be an excellent opportunity for you to directly engage with [Foundry](https://foundrybc.ca/) to learn more about what services, support, and resources they offer for students across the province. [Foundry](https://foundrybc.ca/) offers regional and virtual services aimed at supporting young people ages 12-24 with health and wellness resources, services and supports. To learn more about [Foundry](https://foundrybc.ca/) in advance of this conversation, please check out their website: <https://foundrybc.ca/>

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**Nov. 24, 2023**

The fourth Wednesday of November is always a busy day for the FISA staff and Board as we hold three consecutive meetings on that day. The first of which is our bi-annual meeting with executives from the Independent School Branch and other divisions of the MECC. This meeting provides the FISA Board with the opportunity to interact directly with the ISB team and the discussions are always informative and focused on both party’s common interest of providing safe and supportive learning environments and experiences for the students independent schools serve. FISA takes pride in serving as the voice of member schools and values our long-standing relationship with the Ministry staff which enables open dialogue and collaborative engagement. Each of our five member associations have representatives who serve as FISA Directors and who play integral roles in these meetings and others. Schools that have suggestions for advocacy efforts (including funding related concerns) should bring these to the attention of their FISA Directors to be brought forward to the Board for consideration.

The FISA Board was delighted to congratulate Grant Sheppard on his recent appointment as Executive Director, Independent Schools and International Education, and to Sophia Malczewska on her designation as Acting Director, Independent Schools and Homeschooling. These commendable promotions stem from the reassignment of Kiersten Fisher, former Executive Director, to another section of the Ministry. We are confident that Kiersten’s wealth of knowledge in the independent school sector will be a valuable asset in her new role, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with Grant and Sophia.

The 2nd meeting was our AGM which provided a chance for Ed Noot, FISA President, to do a retrospect on the year gone by. Please see the attached report for a summary of the work FISA undertakes on behalf of your school.

The final meeting was our regular monthly Board meeting. One important item of business was the election of Officers for the upcoming year. The role of FISA Officer requires additional dedication to the work of FISA and on behalf of independent schools I offer our sincere appreciation to this year’s FISA Officers:

·         President – Ed Noot (SCSBC)

·         Vice-president – Elizabeth Moore (ISABC)

·         Treasurer – Phill Hills (ACSIBC)

·         Secretary – Kent Dykstra (AMS)

·         Officer-at-large – Sandy Marshall (CISBC)

The Board meeting was also the last meeting for Art Therrien, who retired from his position as Superintendent for the Nelson Diocesan Schools at the end of the 2022 – 2023 school year. Art provided a voice for BC Catholic Independent Schools at the FISA Board table for many and his wisdom, wit and lawn bowling skills will certainly be missed. The Board also expressed thanks to Phil Hudema, who recently retired from his role the Superintendent for the Seventh Day Adventist Schools, BC Conference and resigned from his AMS/FISA Directorship. Phil was provided a thoughtful voice on the Board and had the wonderful ability to succinctly summarize complex discussions.

While bidding a fond farewell brought a tinge of melancholy, the Board welcomed two new members with anticipation: Chris van der Pauw, Principal of St. Jude's, representing CISBC, and Saima Naz, Principal of iLearn Secondary School, who will represent AMS. Their inclusion adds new perspectives and expertise to the Board, and we look forward to their valuable contributions.

**Some FISA Facts**

·         Independent school enrollment (Head Count) rose from **85,818 in 2021/22** to **87,062 in 2022/23**– a growth of **1.49%**

·         The operational grant to independent schools grew from **$504.53M in 2021/22** to **$531.07M in 2022/23** – an increase of **$26.54M or a 5.3%**

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Obviously, there were some human errors that took place that contributed to the ensuing confusion but FISA can confirm the legitimacy of awinfosys and recognizes the value that the data this survey will provide to child care policy makers.

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**Feeding Futures**

Schools that successfully applied for Feeding Futures Funding received an email from FISA this afternoon, providing details on your final allocation amount. Funds will be transferred to qualifying schools on November 30Th. We appreciate your patience and look forward to the positive impact this will have for countless independent school students and families!

**MDI 2023/24  - Deadline for registration is November 30th**

Independent schools play a pivotable role in supporting the learning and wellness journey of the students entrusted to their care. But how do you know if your specific school programming is effective? Well, if you want to answer that question for student learning you design assessments that will give you the information that will inform future practices to better support your students. But what process are you using to determine and track student wellness? Some independent schools have student wellness assessments that provide the required data to inform and effectively target future wellness programming – well done. For those schools and for the independent schools that are planning to enhance their understanding of student wellness, I encourage you to explore the value of participating in the MDI Student Survey. Many FISA schools have shared their appreciation for the school-specific data this survey provides in an easy-to-read report. They also value how their school results can be compared with broader, association or sector-wide data and that the survey is teacher-friendly and takes approximately 30 – 45 minutes to complete.

There is still time to express your interest in participating in the 2023-24 MDI and join the 126 schools that have already confirmed participation. The FISA Board has approved using a portion of the provincial mental health grant to provide access to all independent schools to have their Grade 8 students participate in this survey. Each school that participates will get a school and association-level report. For those schools who do not have Grade 8, FISA will cover the cost for your Grade 4s to participate (**only for schools that do not have Grade 8**).

**Indicate your interest in participating in the 2023/24 MDI**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MWUnhWiv3b4OWc2Gq6Ss_Jj6lpG2oqKCTDUbQQJMcSM/edit)**.**

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

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**Good News Stories**

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**Nov. 17, 2023**

FISA is preparing for our annual general meeting next week and we spend some time collecting and exploring the data that will inform the President’s report that is presented to the Board. There are large volumes of data, and therefore not all of it will make its way into the 2022 – 2023 summary report. But there are a few items that I found interesting, and I hope you do as well:

·         Level 1 Funded Special Needs enrollment in independent schools has remained stable over the past 5 years, while Level 3 enrollment has grown by 14%, and Level 2 enrollment has increased by 35%.

·         Between 2019-20 and 2020-21 Homeschool enrollment in independent brick and mortar schools increased by 243% (due primarily to COVID) but has only dropped by 34% when comparing the 2020-21 to 2022-23 enrollment figures. During that same period enrollment in independent online schools has been far more stable, with enrollment growth between 2019-20 to 2020-21 at 28% and only a slight enrollment drop post-Covid (2020-21 to 2022-23) of 7%.

·         Total K-12 sector (independent and public) FTE enrollment in online programs was at 24,105 for 2022-23. Independent online schools enrolled an FTE of 11,311 students, or 47% of the online sector enrollment.

**Feeding Futures**

Schools that have applied for Feeding Futures Funding can anticipate receiving an email from FISA next week, providing details on your final allocation amount. We appreciate your patience.

**MDI 2023/24  - Deadline for registration is November 30th**

Independent schools play a pivotal role in supporting the learning and wellness journey of the students entrusted to their care. But how do you know if your specific school programming is effective? Well, if you want to answer that question for student learning you design assessments that will give you the information that will inform future practices to better support your students. But what process are you using to determine and track student wellness? Some independent schools have student wellness assessments that provide the required data to inform and effectively target future wellness programming – well done. For those schools and for the independent schools that are planning to enhance their understanding of student wellness, I encourage you to explore the value of participating in the MDI Student Survey. Many FISA schools have shared their appreciation for the school-specific data this survey provides in an easy-to-read report. They also value how their school results can be compared with broader, association or sector-wide data and that the survey is teacher-friendly and takes approximately 30 – 45 minutes to complete.

There is still time to express your interest in participating in the 2023-24 MDI and join the 126 schools that have already confirmed participation. The FISA Board has approved using a portion of the provincial mental health grant to provide access to all independent schools to have their Grade 8 students participate in this survey. Each school that participates will get a school and association-level report. For those schools who do not have Grade 8, FISA will cover the cost for your Grade 4s to participate (**only for schools that do not have Grade 8**).

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**SET-BC – Deadline November 22nd**

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<https://www.setbc.org/services/student-applications/>

Priority is given to those students who have **complex needs requiring complex technology solutions**for whom *the school is not able to provide technology or support on its own*. For more information visit <https://www.setbc.org/>.

**Mental Health & Wellness – Foundry Webinar**

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**Sunrise Waldorf School** contributes to reconciliation efforts in the Cowichan Valley by assisting with the carving of a new totem pole by artist Rupert Scow. Read the full story [here.](https://thediscourse.ca/cowichan-valley/hub-totem-pole-rupert-scow)

**November 10, 2023**

As we embark on a solemn weekend of remembrance, FISA received some sad news. Our beloved Magda Hogewoning passed away unexpectedly earlier this week due to an illness that she only recently became aware of. Magda was our extraordinary Executive Assistant for 12 years, retiring in January 2022. She served under (or more fittingly, *trained*) three FISA Executive Directors: Fred Herfst, Peter Froese, and Shawn Chisholm. She was incredibly talented, knowledgeable, and precise. The practices and procedures she established play a significant role in enabling FISA to manage the substantial volume of work we undertake. It is not an exaggeration to say that Magda’s dedication to FISA has enriched all BC independent schools.

Her family shared that Magda passed away peacefully and expressed her fondness for her association with FISA and independent school leaders. I have offered the family sincere condolences on behalf of us all. In times like these, it is a poignant reminder to hold our loved ones close.

**Feeding Futures**

Even though the Feeding Futures application cycle has closed, FISA’s Feeding Futures Coordinator, Rocio, is as busy as ever. This week she attended a meeting with Ministry officials, district FF coordinators and three independent school representatives. She discovered that both the public districts and independent schools are struggling with similar issues: insufficient staffing for food meal programs, lack of infrastructure for on-site food preparation, difficulty in prioritizing the purchase of BC products, higher needs than what the school is capable of meeting, and uncertainty about developing stigma-free meal programs that are targeted rather than universal. It is evident that there is much work to be done as we work towards decreasing food insecurity for school-aged children and youth.

Schools that applied for Feeding Futures Funding can expect to receive an email from FISA in the next week or two regarding your final allocation amount.

**BC Pay Transparency Act**

Independent school authorities need to be aware of the obligations in place due to the Pay Transparency Act which came into effect on November 1st.

1-    Employers must specify the expected salary or wage, or salary/wage ranges, for any job publicly posted.

2-    Employers can no longer seek pay history information from job applicants.

3-    Employers are prohibited from taking any retaliatory actions against employees who inquire about their compensation, disclose pay-related information, or request that their employer adheres to the Act.

Additionally, the Act introduces pay transparency reporting obligations for employers, which will have a gradual roll-out:

Year 1 (Nov. 2023) – six Crown Corporations;

Year 2 (Nov. 2024) – employers with 1000+ employees;

Year 3 (Nov. 2025) – employers with 300+ employees;

Year 4 (Nov. 2026) – employers with 50+ employees.

Details on what must be included in the report are currently being developed along with an online reporting tool. Generally speaking, we anticipate that the report will need to show the gaps in pay for certain groups (for example, gender).

For more information on the Pay Transparency Act click [here](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/gender-equity/pay-transparency-laws-in-bc).

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**November 3, 2023**

FISA is acutely aware of the workforce challenges that the independent school sector is facing, and we are active on provincial committees that are exploring options that ensure access to high quality education sector workers. Workforce challenges are not just a BC education sector problem, many other sectors (Health Care, Child Care, Tech…) are impacted and provinces across this country are experiencing similar circumstances. With an aging Canadian population (school staff retirements are trending upwards) and a steadily increasing student enrollment forecast, FISA is working collaboratively with government and the provincial education partner groups to aggressively seek solutions to expand education worker supply to meet present and projected demand.

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**Feeding Futures**

This week FISA has been diligently examining the data schools provided through the online survey submitted with their Feeding Futures application. It has been a great experience learning more about the unique circumstances within the independent sector regarding school food programs. As schools look to refine their school food programs, we would like to share “The *Nutritious School Food: A Feeding Futures resource for school food and meal*program” resource developed by the Ministry of Health's registered dietitians. Schools are always encouraged to design menus and offer foods that best meet the needs of their unique student population.

**Teacher Certification Language Proficiency**

The TRB has recently updated the ways a person applying for teacher certification can show proficiency in English or French. Applicants which were previously denied certification due to language proficiency challenges have been contacted by the TRB and encouraged to reapply. The language proficiency requirements for both the Certificate of Qualification (COQ) and the Independent School Teacher Certificate are the same and are viewable on the [TRB website.](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/become-a-teacher)

***Erase***

As announced in this week’s Deputy Minister’s Bulletin, registration is open for in-person and virtual Behavioural and Digital Threat Assessment (BDTA™) Management *erase* training sessions. **This training meets the Digital Threat Assessment (DTA) independent school inspection requirement, but it does not meet the Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) requirement.**As a reminder, independent schools are required to *have access to an individual with DTA training.* This person could be within your school community, or schools can rely on their association-level Safe School Coordinator (SSC) to fulfill this requirement. Additionally independent schools *must ensure that their school-level primary Safe School Coordinator (i.e. the principal/head of school) has taken Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) training* within the past three school years *and that they have access to a second person with VTRA training.*This second person could be within the school community or the association-level SSC. Read more about the Safe & Caring School Communities requirements for independent schools [here](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/independent-schools/safe-caring-school-communities).

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**October 27, 2023**

I was extremely honoured to attend the Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education last night to witness the celebration of talented and dedicated BC education practitioners. Both independent and public school staff members whose efforts to make a substantial impact on the lives of young BC learners and their school communities were acknowledged. It is with great pleasure that I congratulate and report to you that 3 independent school staff members received the following awards:

·         **Craig Voskamp**, Vancouver Christian School (SCSBC) – Outstanding New Teacher

·         **Angela McLeish**, St. Patrick’s Elementary (CISDV) – Outstanding School Leadership

·         **Laura Moriarty**, Stratford Hall (ISABC) – Outstanding School Leadership

I also want to congratulate those who took the time to initiate the nomination process for well-deserved affirmation of the many independent school team members that excel at their craft. I once again encourage independent school leaders to look within your communities to identify key personnel that are worthy of broad acknowledgement, such as the Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education, and access the nomination information found at this [link](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/excellence-in-education) (the 2023-2024 nomination forms should be accessible no later than January 2024).

**Feeding Futures**

We express our sincere appreciation to the 190 independent schools who took the time and effort to apply for Feeding Futures Funding. The application period is now closed, and the information has been submitted to the MECC. Participating schools can expect to hear by mid-November regarding their final allocation for this school year. In the meantime, should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Feeding Futures Coordinator, Rocio Montenegro. We are here to assist. Thank you once again for your commitment in ensuring that no students go hungry.

**Teacher Certification Language Proficiency**

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**Provincial Resource Programs (PRP)**

The BC Ministry of Education funds a number of Provincial Resource Programs intended to support school districts, independent school authorities and First Nations schools to meet the needs of a diverse student population. PRPs are grouped into Provincial Outreach Programs (POPs) and Provincial Inter-ministerial Programs (PIPs). The PRP Catalogue of Services is available [here](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teaching-tools/inclusive/prp-catalogue-of-services.pdf). (Our apologies for the inactive link in last week’s update.)

**Mental Health and Substance Use Webinar Oct. 30th for schools in IHA**

Independent Schools **located within the Interior Health Authority** are invited to join the FISA Mental Health Coordinators (Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey) as they host Kate Harris from Interior Health to talk to us all about the services [PreVenture](https://preventureprogram.com/) provides. This session will take place virtually on:

·         **Monday, October 30th - 12:30 to 1:30 PM. Please RSVP at this**[**link**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZApfuyppj0vE9bKN08F1oMcqQUAi7tG88G6)**.**

[PreVenture](https://preventureprogram.com/) is a prevention program for youth aged 12-18 that uses personality-focused interventions to promote mental health and reduce the risk of substance use.

Come learn with us about how you can be involved with [PreVenture](https://preventureprogram.com/), and how you can take advantage of the services they provide. <https://preventureprogram.com/>

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**October 20, 2023 - FISA Update**

While FISA functions as a provincial organization, proudly serving 324 independent schools in British Columbia, we understand that our schools are not immune to global events. Tragedies and acts of violence that may seem distant on a map often hit close to home for students, families, and staff within our member schools. In last week’s FISA Update, we acknowledged the weight carried by our local Jewish schools as they assessed the credibility of threats targeting their institutions while striving to maintain a safe and peaceful learning environment for their students and staff. However, we failed to acknowledge that our local Muslim schools are also grappling with similar feelings of uncertainty, fear, and sorrow. One of FISA’s core purposes is to serve as the “united voice” for member schools. We apologize for any shortfall in offering our compassion and support to all those affected by events far from home but close to heart. In the days ahead, may we all collectively commit to peace, whether it is expressed as “salaam”, “shalom”, or in any other term, for it symbolizes a sense of belonging. We value and support all our member schools and appreciate that you choose to belong to FISA.

**Feeding Futures**  
This past week has been a whirlwind of activity for Rocio as she worked diligently to ensure that the nearly 200 Feeding Future applications have spending plans that align with funding criteria and that all the numbers are accurately entered and tallied correctly. Over 50 eligible schools decided not to seek funding this year, returning nearly $1M to be redirected to independent schools who requested additional funds to support their students in need. FISA will communicate the final notional allocation for participating schools around the middle of November, with the first payment to be deposited on or before November 30th.  
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Independent Schools located within the Interior Health Authority are invited to join the FISA Mental Health Coordinators (Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey) as they host Kate Harris from Interior Health to talk to us all about the services PreVenture provides. This session will take place virtually on:  
• Monday, October 30th - 12:30 to 1:30 PM. Please RSVP at [this link](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZApfuyppj0vE9bKN08F1oMcqQUAi7tG88G6#/registration).  
PreVenture is a prevention program for youth aged 12-18 that uses personality-focused interventions to promote mental health and reduce the risk of substance use.  
Come learn with us about how you can be involved with PreVenture, and how you can take advantages of the services they provide. <https://preventureprogram.com/>

**October 13, 2023**

One of FISA’s strengths is the diversity of member schools and how this diverse group can speak with a united voice on the key issues that impact independent schools. Of course student and staff safety is an axiomatic issue that all school communities value. Recent, tragic world events have impacted our local Jewish community and schools - creating an environment of uncertainty and fear, instead of an environment that is absent of fear and supportive of learning and wellness. FISA acknowledges the heavy burden Jewish school leaders are facing as they lead their communities through these uncertain times and we are hopeful respect, peace and compassion prevails soon for your communities.

The FISA office has been a buzz of activity (especially for Rocio) the last couple of weeks as we have prioritized supporting independent schools with their Feeding Futures applications. FISA does recognize how busy this time of year can be for school leaders, and we share with our member schools their commitment to pursue a compassionate and dignified solution to food insecurity that impacts many students and families within the independent school sector. I would also like to acknowledge the extremely benevolent actions from many independent schools that have decided not to apply for their Feeding Futures Notional Allocation, as they perceive greater need in other independent schools and/or they internally tackle food insecurity within their school community.

**Feeding Futures**

Thank you to all the school leaders that have been patiently going through the application review with Rocio. FISA will be communicate your final notional allocation around the middle of November.

**Mental Health & Wellness – Foundry Webinar**

FISA is pleased to partner with [Foundry](https://foundrybc.ca/) BC to host an upcoming Q&A session for all FISA Schools.

·         **Tuesday, December 5th – 9:00 to 10:00 AM. Please RSVP at this**[**link**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIkdOqsrjoiE9w2RfoLgdt4xxx5WuONBIyF)**.**

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The *erase* training schedule with registration links is available [HERE](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf)**.** The sessions titles have changed. The Foundations of Supporting School Safety training meets the Basic VTRA requirements and the Digital Threat Assessment DTA meets the DTA requirements. FISA anticipates that further sessions will be added in the coming months. Remember that as part of the inspection process independent schools have until March 2024 to verify that *erase*training requirements have been met. FISA anticipates that more *erase* training dates and locations will be added.

VTRA training requirements can also be met through the Level One VTRA Training course offered by the Center for Trauma Informed Practice (CTIP). This training will be offered remotely on Oct. 23rd- 24th and again on Nov. 2nd - 3rd. For more information and to register see [HERE](https://nactatr.regfox.com/bc-independent-schools-level-one-vtra-training-virtualremote). Note: Schools that choose to take training with CTIP are responsible for covering all associated costs.

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**October 6, 2023**

With World Teachers Day occurring yesterday, FISA would like to share with your school communities the acknowledgement of the hard work and dedication independent school teachers invest in the learning and wellness outcomes of the students in their care!

The FISA office team extends our warmest wishes to independent school leaders, staff members, students, and community members for the upcoming Thanksgiving celebrations. This holiday weekend is always appreciated by schools as this historically has been considered “post school start up” season, with class assignments established, completed 1701s and a concerted focus on what independent schools do best – supporting student learning. But, like in the recent past with the complexities associated with COVID, many schools within the K-12 sector are facing real challenges to fully staff their workforce to ideally meet their programming requirements. These workforce challenges are also present in other sectors, most noteworthy - health care. While this does not meet the immediate needs of independent schools facing staffing struggles, I am pleased to inform you that addressing workforce issues in the K-12 system is a priority for this government. FISA, along with the other BC education partner groups, are part of discussions with the MECC focused on pursuing a wide range potential solutions to achieving staffing quality and quantity levels that best meet the needs of BC students.

**Feeding Futures**

Thank you to all the school leaders/associations that have connected with FISA to assist with their Feeding Futures applications during this busy time. Applications will continue to be accepted up until October 9th.In situations where a school needs slightly more time to complete their application we will work with you to extend the deadline ifyou notify Rocio by October 9th with a request for an extension.

The feedback we have received from applicants is that the information sessions have been extremely helpful, allowing schools to complete the application in less than 30 minutes. Please access the following [webinar](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNzxgxWY3_Q) recording to assist with your application: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNzxgxWY3_Q>

As a reminder, **all schools seeking funding** **must apply** to confirm that allocated funds will be used in alignment with the spending criteria. You can access the Feeding Futures Funding Application here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/independent-schools>

You will need to download the application to be able to fill it out. Please note that the application consists of three sections, one of which is an online survey.

If you haven’t submitted your FF application and need some support, feel free to contact Rocio for assistance. She can be reached at [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca) or call at 604-684-6023.

**If your school has decided to not participate this year be sure to inform FISA** by Oct. 9th using this short online form <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FeedingFutures>

**POPEY Pro-D**

The Provincial Outreach Program for the Early Years (POPEY) is a Ministry initiative to with a mandate to increase K-3 educators’ capacity to support primary English literacy learners in public and independent schools. They have a number of upcoming Pro-D events including one focused on Nurturing Young Writers to be held on Oct. 11th in Surrey. See the list of POPEY Pro-D opportunities [HERE](https://www.popey.ca/workshop-resources).

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**Safe School Coordinators**

FISA emphasizes the critical importance of independent schools informing the Ministry as to who serves as their primary and secondary Safe School Coordinator. During times of crisis, it is imperative that the correct individual can be readily contacted. All schools are reminded that they must verify their designated coordinator by visiting the following webpage: <https://events.gov.bc.ca/educ-independent/event/confirm-safe-school-coordinator/> and completing the online form. Schools experiencing trouble in viewing the form should retry using a different web browser. Note: it is required that all independent schools complete the online SSC verification form even if there are no changes.

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**September 29, 2023**

The September 30th National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is an ideal time to reflect on our shared responsibilities as educators to lift up one another. All holders of BC teacher certifications (both CoQ and Independent School Restricted) have the responsibility to uphold the [professional standards](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/standards-for-educators/standards-case-studies#standards), including the 9th Standard:

*Educators respect and value the history of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada and the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute towards truth, reconciliation and healing. Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.*

As Senator Murray Sinclair often emphasizes, “Education holds the key to reconciliation. It is where our country will heal itself.” Each one of us plays a role in moving forward together.

**Feeding Futures**

The Feeding Futures applications are pouring in a brisk pace now that the October 9th deadline is near. Rocio has been busy this week meeting virtually with individual schools and FISA associations to assist with completing the application form - which generally takes less than 20 minutes.

As a reminder, **all schools seeking funding** **must apply** to confirm that allocated funds will be used in alignment with the spending criteria. You can access the Feeding Futures Funding Application here:

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**FISA Weekly Update Archive**

We have established an archive of the FISA weekly updates which is accessible through the “members only” section of the <https://fisabc.ca/> website. Please contact [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca) if you have difficulty logging in.

Kind regards, Shawn, Janet, Rocio, and Susan

**September 22, 2023**

Over the summer break one of FISA’s tasks was to create a summary report on how independent schools utilized the Student and Family Affordability Fund (SFAF) to support needy families within your communities. Thank you to all independent schools for providing me with the data and rich anecdotal comments that informed the FISA report to the MECC. The comments were especially poignant and told the story of how SFAF made an incredible impact on many families facing struggles to meet basic needs. Undoubtedly, SFAF met the intended objectives of this government within the independent school sector!

This year the government has created the Feeding Futures Fund (FFF) to support affordability struggles once again for BC families, with a specific focus on improving food security for students over the next three years. Each independent school has received communication from FISA; whether they qualified for a Notional Allocation, or whether they did not qualify based on the government’s model for this school year. I do encourage those independent schools that received a Notional Allocation to complete the required application (several schools have indicated it takes them about 20 – 30 minutes to complete if they attended or watched the recorded FISA FFF webinars). Independent schools also have access to the FISA FFF Coordinator, Rocio Montenegro who has been providing schools with the information they need to complete a successful application and support the food security needs within their school communities. Please read ahead to get the most recent updates on FFF from Rocio.

As mentioned in an earlier FISA Update, Susan Stelmack has joined the FISA office team as Janette Cholakian is on maternity leave. I’m very pleased to share with you that Janette, her husband Jean and their daughter Galina (and Auntie Marina) are delighted to announce the recent arrival of their son Louis!

**Feeding Futures**

Thank you to all the schools who have already submitted their applications and to those who attended the webinar last week. Since then, we've had the opportunity to connect with and support some independent school leaders through their application process. Listening to and reading about all the creative ways they plan to use this fund to help their families has been a joy.

If you missed the webinar, you can access to it at FISA Video Gallery <https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/>

Please find below some of the most common questions that we have received.

**1.**    **Can you give some examples of how schools are planning to distribute the food in a stigma free way?**

·       If you presently run a hot lunch program, you can provide no-cost access for targeted support children.

·       If your school runs an online hot lunch program - the school can directly purchase the lunch for those children who are in need.

·       Keep yogurt, granola bars, fruit… in an area easily accessible for students who may not have those food options at home.

·       Grocery gift cards directed specifically to families with food security challenges.

**2.**    **Can the deadline for the application be extended?**

·       Applications must be submitted by October 9th.

**3.**    **Can we have Rocio look at our plans before submitted or will there be a chance to correct it when submitted?**

·       Yes, some FISA associations are gathering a group of their school leaders to meet virtually with Rocio to go step by step through the process as they complete their applications in real time. Contact Rocio if you would like to schedule a group event.

·       Yes, you can contact Rocio any time to help you with your application. [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca) or call at 604 684 6023.

**4.**    **Does the grant need to be fully spent during the current school year?**

·       Yes, funds must be spent during 2023- 2024 school year and FISA will supply the MECC with a summary report at the end of the school year.

**5.**    **Do my answers to the online survey affect my application?**

·      No, but a complete application **must** include a completed survey. FISA will assess your application information (not your survey information) to determine if your plans meet the grant criteria, and we will share our assessments with the MECC who will process the grant allocations.

**6.**    **How do I inform FISA if my school chooses not to participate in the Feeding Futures program this year?**

·      Inform FISA using this short online form <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FeedingFutures>

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**Teacher Certification – Language Proficiency**  
The Independent School Teaching Certification Standards Committee (ISTCSC) is made up of three representatives from independent schools, appointed by the Minister of Education and Child Care. This past year the ISTCSC worked to bring the independent school teaching standards and some of the certification requirements in line with some of the recent changes to the BC Certificate of Qualification standards and requirements. Of note were changes to the language proficiency requirements for an independent school teacher certificate that can be accessed at this [link](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/become-a-teacher/types/independent-teaching-certificate/istc-requirements#proficiency).

**Sept. 15, 2023**

As we end the first full week of classes for many of our schools, our hopes are that the school year has started off well for your school teams and the students and families you serve. We also recognize that many people connected with independent school communities faced loss and elevated levels of anxiety due this year’s unprecedented wildfire devastation. It is our hope that all BC families are safe and able to experience a peaceful start to this school year.

You should have all received the updated K-12 Communicable Disease Guidelines from the MECC and you will notice little change from last year’s document (Aug. 2022) – but a great deal of change when compared to the 2021 – 2022 Guidelines. I believe this is a tribute to the work that school leaders and their communities put into resuming close to pre-COVID “normal operations” while also implementing operational practices that promote improved wellness and reflect some of the lessons learned during the pandemic (stay home when you are sick, wash your hands more frequently….).

**Feeding Futures**

The Feeding Futures applications are beginning to role in, and we have noticed there are some nuanced edits schools could make to ensure their applications accurately reflect your plans to support food security in your schools. Therefore, FISA will be hosting a [**webinar**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ucuCsrzgrEtSQWZ4EWZBwsSnAd1drcFrx)**this** **Monday, September 18, from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m.** to provide direction and support to schools completing their Feeding Futures applications. The [**webinar**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ucuCsrzgrEtSQWZ4EWZBwsSnAd1drcFrx) will facilitate completion of the entire application, with a particular focus on the **Part 2 Spending Plan** (the project spending summary, food partnerships and production, other related expenditures, etc.).

**Registration for this webinar is required:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ucuCsrzgrEtSQWZ4EWZBwsSnAd1drcFrx>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with the details on how to join the webinar.

As with the previous session this webinar will be recorded and available for viewing in the FISA Video Gallery on September 19th  <https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/>

As a reminder, all group 1, 2, and 3 schools were sent an email on August 25th informing the school of their notional allocation amount, or in some cases, their ineligibility status for this funding. If you are unable to locate this email, please contact our Rocio Montenegro, Feeding Futures Coordinator, at [Rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:Rocio@fisabc.ca) or call 604-684-6023 for assistance.

All schools seeking funding must apply to confirm that allocated funds will be used in alignment with the spending criteria. You can access the Feeding Futures Funding

Application here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/independent-schools>

You will need to download the application to be able to fill it out. Please note that the application consists of three sections, one of which is an online survey.

Parts 1 and 2: Excel Workbook

·         Download, save and rename this Excel file as "SCHOOL NAME - MINCODE -Feeding Futures Application - SY2023-24"

·         Attach the renamed/saved file to an email also entitled "SCHOOL NAME - MINCODE - Feeding Futures Application - SY2023-24"

·         Email to [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca)

Parts 3: Online Survey

·         Fill in the online survey and click "submit" once complete

It is important to complete the survey portion in a single session as it cannot be saved and resumed later. Preview copies of the application and survey questions are attached for your reference.

Eligible schools choosing not to participate in the program for the 2023-24 school year should confirm your decision to not participate via this brief form <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FeedingFutures>.

Please feel free to contact Rocio at [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca) if you have any questions.

**Erase Training**

The erase training schedule with registration links is available [**HERE**](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf)**.** The sessions titles have changed. The Foundations of Supporting School Safety training meets the Basic VTRA requirements and the Digital Threat Assessment DTA meets the DTA requirements. The other sessions will provide valuable information but cannot be used to fulfill independent school inspection requirements.

**Safe School Coordinators**

FISA emphasizes the critical importance of independent schools informing the Ministry as to who serves as their primary and secondary Safe School Coordinator. During times of crisis, it is imperative that the correct individual can be readily contacted. All schools are reminded that they must verify their designated coordinator by visiting the following webpage: <https://events.gov.bc.ca/educ-independent/event/confirm-safe-school-coordinator/> and completing the online form by Sept. 15th. Schools experiencing trouble in viewing the form should retry using a different web browser.

**MDI 2023/24**

Over 100 schools have completed the expression of interest to participate in this year’s MDI. As a reminder, the FISA Board has approved using a portion of the provincial mental health grant to provide access to all independent schools to have their Grade 8 students participate in this survey. Each school that participates will get a school and association-level report. For those schools who do not have Grade 8, FISA will cover the cost for your Grade 4s to participate (**only for schools that do not have Grade 8**).

**Indicate your interest in participating in the 2023/24 MDI**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MWUnhWiv3b4OWc2Gq6Ss_Jj6lpG2oqKCTDUbQQJMcSM/edit)**.**

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**Teacher Certification – Language Proficiency**  
The Independent School Teaching Certification Standards Committee (ISTCSC) is made up of three representatives from independent schools, appointed by the Minister of Education and Child Care. This past year the ISTCSC worked to bring the independent school teaching standards and some of the certification requirements in line with some of the recent changes to the BC Certificate of Qualification standards and requirements. Of note were changes to the language proficiency requirements for an independent school teacher certificate that can be accessed at this [link](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/become-a-teacher/types/independent-teaching-certificate/istc-requirements#proficiency) .

**Preparing for the 2023-24 Independent School Inspections?**

One of the Inspectors of Independent Schools, Heather Smith, will be offering the second of 2 inspection preparation sessions on **Tuesday, September 19th from 1:00-2:00 PM.**School leaders will be guided through the inspection catalogue and the inspection process. Schools that are not scheduled for an inspection this year may also attend.

Registration for this session is required so please RSVP to [erin.wells@gov.bc.ca](mailto:erin.wells@gov.bc.ca) indicating your desire to attend. The appropriate Zoom link will then be forwarded to the email address(es) provided. The session will not be recorded.

**September 8, 2023**

We trust that you've had a wonderful week filled with the energy and excitement that comes with a new academic year. We hope this year will be marked by new opportunities for both students and educators alike, inspiring moments, and lots of laughter. We look forward to seeing the incredible work that independent schools will continue to do in the coming months. Here's to a successful and fulfilling year ahead!

**Feeding Futures**

The Feeding Futures School Food Program application process is off to a strong start. Nearly 100 people attended the Sept. 7th webinar co-hosted by FISA and the MECC and several completed applications have been received. A few points to keep in mind:

The webinar recording is available at the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/). The slide deck is not available for distribution.

All group 1, 2, and 3 schools were sent an email on August 25th informing the school of their notional allocation amount, or in some cases, their ineligibility status for this funding. If you are unable to locate this email, please contact our Rocio F Montenegro, Feeding Futures Coordinator, at [Rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:Rocio@fisabc.ca) or call 604-684-6023 for assistance.

All schools seeking funding must apply in order to confirm that allocated funds will be used in alignment with the spending criteria. You can access the Feeding Futures Funding

Application here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/independent-schools>

You will need to download the application to be able to fill it out. Please note that the application consists of three sections, one of which is an online survey.

Parts 1 and 2: Excel Workbook

·  Download, save and rename this Excel file as "SCHOOL NAME - MINCODE -Feeding Futures Application - SY2023-24"

·  Attach the renamed/saved file to an email also entitled "SCHOOL NAME - MINCODE - Feeding Futures Application - SY2023-24"

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Part 3 - Online Survey

·  Fill in the online survey and click "submit" once complete.

It is important to complete the survey portion in a single session as it cannot be saved and resumed later.

Preview copies of the application and survey questions are attached for your reference.

Eligible schools choosing not to participate in the program for the 2023-2024 school year, should confirm your decision to not participate via this brief form <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FeedingFutures>.

Please feel free to contact Rocio at [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca) if you have any questions.

**Safe School Coordinators**

FISA emphasizes the critical importance of independent schools informing the Ministry as to who serves as their primary and secondary Safe School Coordinator. During times of crisis, it is imperative that the correct individual can be readily contacted. All schools are reminded that they must verify their designated coordinator by visiting the following webpage: <https://events.gov.bc.ca/educ-independent/event/confirm-safe-school-coordinator/> and completing the online form by Sept. 15th.

**Artist in Education (ArtStarts) Applications - Due September 12, 2023**FISA has been allocated approximately $25,000 to provide support for the 2023-24 Artist in Education (AIE) program. Independent schools (groups 1, 2, 3 and 4) are encouraged to apply to receive reimbursement of a portion of the professional artist fees for performances and workshops held in schools (in-person or virtually)- limit one per school. Details can be found in the application form which is available [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/services/schools/formsapplications/). Applications are due to the FISA office by Tuesday, September 12, 2023. FISA thanks the BC Arts Council and the Province of BC for their generosity in making these grants possible.

**MDI 2023/24**

For the 4th year in a row, FISA is covering the cost for select grade levels to participate in the MDI for 2023/24. FISA will pay for all independent schools to have their Grade 8 students participate in this survey. Each school that participates will get a school and association-level report. For those schools who do not have Grade 8, FISA will cover the cost for your Grade 4s to participate (only for schools that do not have Grade 8).

**Indicate your interest in participating in the 2023/24 MDI**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MWUnhWiv3b4OWc2Gq6Ss_Jj6lpG2oqKCTDUbQQJMcSM/edit)**.**

Schools that have participated in the previous 3 school years have reported great value in the data contained in their school level reports - that often affirm what the school is doing well and also provides research-based data to inform future school-based mental health and wellness initiatives. For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**Teacher Certification**FISA has received communication from the regarding improvements in the processing time for certification by the Teacher Regulation Branch. Generally, completed application packages from candidates with Canadian credentials are now being processed in approximately 2 weeks, while international applicants can expect a processing time of approximately 6 weeks. It is crucial to ensure that all the necessary documentation has been submitted to the TRB for evaluation. We strongly recommend that school leaders confirm the application completion status for teachers who are awaiting certification. Keep in mind that once the TRB concludes its review and confirms the applicant's eligibility for certification, the annual practice fee must be paid before the certificate can be issued.

**September 1, 2023**

Welcome back Independent School Leaders!

I hope you were all able to disconnect from your busy work lives over the summer break and enjoyed some joy-filled and peaceful times.

As foreshadowed in our July FISA Update, the August 25th DM Bulletin provided more of the logistics for the [**Feeding Futures (FF)** **initiative for independent schools**](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20230825/25360dmbulletinfeedingfuturesfundingisbaug25.pdf). A couple of the highlights are:

·       $4.5 million has been allocated for Group 1, 2 & 3 BC independent schools, including online schools (First Nations schools will be receiving similar funding but not through the FF initiative)

·       The school allocations are model driven, similar to last year’s Student and Families Assistance Fund (SFAF) but reflecting refined parameters

·       FISA notified all qualifying independent schools of their Notional FF allocation on August 25th

·       Qualifying independent schools will need to **complete and submit an application** in order to participate. The FF application form is available [HERE.](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/independent-schools)

·       I encourage all independent schools to attend a FF webinar co-facilitated by FISA and the MECC on September 7th from 4:00-5:00 pm (PST). Registration required. This webinar will be recorded and posted to the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/) for people unable to attend live.

·       The FISA FF Coordinator, Rocio Montenegro, will be collecting any questions you may have by EOD September 5th, so they can be addressed in the webinar. Please send your FF queries to [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca)

Register for the **Feeding Futures Info Session – Sept. 7th** **from 4:00-5:00 pm (PST)**

[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIqf-mgrDkoG9YiY7uE4ZtrEtwQon0y02w2**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIqf-mgrDkoG9YiY7uE4ZtrEtwQon0y02w2)

**DM Bulletin Distribution List**

The Ministry publishes a Deputy Minister’s Bulletin weekly on Friday. The distribution list is comprised of the schools’ email addresses on record - see [HERE](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/IndSchool.do?school_category=Independent%20School). School contact information can be updated via an [online form](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/SchoolUpdateForm.do) available at the top of the webpage. Note: The Deputy Minister's Bulletin is distributed to a single designated contact individual per school.

**Artist in Education (ArtStarts) Applications - Due September 12, 2023**

FISA has been allocated approximately $25,000 to provide support for the 2023-24 Artist in Education (AIE) program. Independent schools (groups 1, 2, 3 and 4) are encouraged to apply to receive reimbursement of a portion of the professional artist fees for performances and workshops held in schools (in-person or virtually)- limit one per school. Details can be found in the application form which is available [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/services/schools/formsapplications/). Applications are due to the FISA office by Tuesday, September 12, 2023. FISA thanks the BC Arts Council and the Province of BC for their generosity in making these grants possible.

**MDI 2023/24**

For the 4th year in a row, FISA is covering the cost for select grade levels to participate in the MDI for 2023/24. FISA will pay for all independent schools to have their Grade 8 students participate in this survey. Each school that participates will get a school and association-level report. For those schools who do not have Grade 8, FISA will cover the cost for your Grade 4s to participate (only for schools that do not have Grade 8).

**Indicate your interest in participating in the 2023/24 MDI**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MWUnhWiv3b4OWc2Gq6Ss_Jj6lpG2oqKCTDUbQQJMcSM/edit)**.**

Schools that have participated in the previous 3 school years have reported great value in the data contained in their school level reports - that often affirm what the school is doing well and also provides research-based data to inform future school-based mental health and wellness initiatives. For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**Teacher Certification**FISA has received communication from the regarding improvements in the processing time for certification by the Teacher Regulation Branch. Generally, completed application packages from candidates with Canadian credentials are now being processed in approximately 2 weeks, while international applicants can expect a processing time of approximately 6 weeks. It is crucial to ensure that all the necessary documentation has been submitted to the TRB for evaluation. We strongly recommend that school leaders confirm the application completion status for teachers who are awaiting certification. Keep in mind that once the TRB concludes its review and confirms the applicant's eligibility for certification, the annual practice fee must be paid before the certificate can be issued.

**August 29, 2023**

Welcome back Independent School Leaders!

I hope you were all able to disconnect from your busy work lives over the summer break and enjoyed some joy-filled and peaceful times.

As foreshadowed in our July FISA Update, the August 25th DM Bulletin provided more of the logistics for the Feeding Futures (FF) initiative for independent schools. A couple of the highlights are:

* $4.5 million has been allocated for Group 1, 2 & 3 BC independent schools, including online schools (First Nations schools will be receiving similar funding but not through the FF initiative).
* School’s notional allocations are driven by a funding model that assesses student need in schools, similar to last year’s Student and Families Assistance Fund (SFAF).
* Qualifying independent schools will be notified today of their Notional FF allocation.
* Qualifying independent schools will need to complete and submit an application, that includes an online survey (this was included in the DM Bulletin FF information for schools) by October 9, 2023.
* I encourage all independent schools that plan to submit an application to register and attend a **September 7th, 4:00 - 5:00 PM FF Information Webinar** to assist with their applications.
* Register in advance for this meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIqf-mgrDkoG9YiY7uE4ZtrEtwQon0y02w2> (After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting).
* The FISA FF Coordinator, Rocio Montenegro, will be collecting any questions you may have by EOD September 5th, so they can be addressed in the webinar. Please send your FF queries to [rocio@fisabc.ca](mailto:rocio@fisabc.ca)
* The webinar will be recorded for future reference.

**No update sent July 28, Aug. 4, 11, 18 or 25**

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| --- |
| **July 21, 2023**  I hope all independent school leaders are presently enjoying some well-deserved time away from your school duties!    It has been a busy month at the FISA office, and we are pleased to announce the following additions to our team:    ·**Susan Stelmack** has been hired as an executive assistant and will serve as the replacement for Janette Cholakian during her maternity leave. Susan brings a wealth of office experience and skills, and is quickly learning the uniqueness of the independent school sector.  ·**Rocio Montenegro** will commence her role as FISA Project Coordinator, commencing on September 1st. Rocio will be taking the lead role in supporting independent schools’ participation in the Feeding Futures Fund, a government initiative intended to specifically support food security for students and families that struggle to need this basic need. Rocio brings with her several years of independent school leadership experience and a passion for improving learning environments for kids.    **Welcome aboard Susan and Rocio!**    FISA is presently consulting with the MECC on the Feeding Futures Funding for independent schools and we anticipate further information will be shared with independent schools in the August 18th Deputy Minister’s Bulletin.      **iGroup Seminar on AI for Independent Schools**  Since the release of ChatGPT you may have heard a lot about AI in the news - but what is AI? how does it work? and what does it mean for schools?    The FISA iGroup is hosting an hour-long online seminar specifically designed for principals and administrators to learn about AI in schools. This seminar will be non-technical in nature and designed to help school leaders talk intelligently with their staff about AI and its uses.    In this hour-long session we will be covering the following topics:  1. What is AI? and why is it different from other software or tools?  2. What are the different types of AI that exist?  3. How does AI work from a non-technical perspective?  4. Things to think about when looking at potentially using AI in your schools?    This remote session will be hosted on: **August 24th   2:00-3:00 pm**.  Registration is required, so please click [here](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUscu6opzMoHNGkTJ3olbbXJoBZ0NNHqSRZ#/registration) or use the following link:    <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUscu6opzMoHNGkTJ3olbbXJoBZ0NNHqSRZ#/registration>      **English First Peoples 10-12 Virtual Pro D – August 25th**  The 2022-23 Indigenous-focused grad course requirement Pro-D sessions facilitated by Anne Tenning and Jo Chrona were well received by school offering a graduation program. FISA is happy to announce one additional EFP 10-12 session will be held via Zoom on August 25th. There is no cost to attend this virtual session but spots are limited. Express your interest to attend HERE <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EFPAug25virtual>. See the attached flyer for more information.    This same session and others are also available as part of the FNESC [August Summer Institute](https://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/) in Richmond. There are 3 Pro-D sessions being offered and attendees can choose to attend 1, 2 or all of them at a cost of $30/session. For more information and the registration link visit <https://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/>    **MDI 2023/24**  For the 4th year in a row, FISA is covering the cost for select grade levels to participate in the MDI for 2023/24. FISA will pay for all independent schools to have their Grade 8 students participate in this survey. Each school that participates will get a school and association-level report. For those schools who do not have Grade 8, FISA will cover the cost for your Grade 4s to participate (only for schools that do not have Grade 8).  **Indicate your interest in participating in the 2023/24 MDI**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MWUnhWiv3b4OWc2Gq6Ss_Jj6lpG2oqKCTDUbQQJMcSM/edit)**.**   Schools that have participated in the previous 3 school years have reported great value in the data contained in their school level reports - that often affirm what the school is doing well and also provides research-based data to inform future school-based mental health and wellness initiatives. For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).    **FISA Fees 2023-2024**  In 2023-2024 the FISA member fees will increase from $6.25 per FTE to $7.00 per FTE. This will be the first increase in FISA fees in 5-years. The Board determined that a FISA fee review should occur annually, to avoid larger, less frequent increases, and that a 3-year projection of potential fee increases would be appreciated by our member schools/associations. Therefore, the projected fee increases (which could be amended by the FISA Board as part of their yearly review of fees) for both 2024-2025 ($7.50) and 2025-2026 ($8.00) will be $0.50. As mentioned earlier, the FISA fees will now be reviewed each year in January and will be adjusted based on our projected revenues, expenses and the FISA cash reserves policy. Once approved, FISA will share this information with our member associations/schools in late-January, early-February, so they can be incorporated into your yearly budget deliberations. |

**No Update sent on July 7 or 14**

**June 30, 2023**

As a former principal, I always found it useful at this time of year to reflect on the just- completed school year, with an underlying theme of gratitude. K-12 education by its very nature is liberating, providing young learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to pursue a purposeful life. Within a pluralistic society, what a purposeful life means is often unique and a reflection of the experiences and values prioritized by individual BC families. And this is where I feel great gratitude for a K-12 education system which offers the option for families to choose an educational program that best aligns with their vision for a learning environment where their children may thrive.

On behalf of the FISA office team I offer our sincere thanks to the independent school leaders, staff members, Board members and parents for providing and supporting BC independent schools and the students they serve. May you all enjoy some peaceful time over the summer break!

**Student & Family Affordability Fund (SFAF)**

Although FISA is waiting on a handful of schools to complete their SFAF expenditure report, preliminary analysis shows that the money truly served its purpose in reducing the financial burden for needy families. The $3.8M received by independent schools was disbursed as follows:

  60% - Food Security for 20,000 students

 15% - School Supplies/Clothing for 8,000 students

  15% - Fee Relief for 8,000 students

  10% - Family Assistance for 2,600 students

This summer FISA will be in discussions with the MECC regarding independent school participation in the [Feeding Futures](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023ECC0020-000424) initiative, designed to support schools in the creation or expansion of local food programs. Look for more information in the early fall.

**ArtStarts - Artists in Education Grant (AIE)**

Reimbursement cheques totalling nearly $30,000 have been mailed to the schools which applied for an ArtStarts AIE grant and submitted their proof of payment. FISA will continue to administer the AIE on behalf of ArtStarts in 2023/24. An application form will be posted soon on the FISA website under the [Services – Forms & Applications](https://fisabc.ca/services/schools/formsapplications/) tab.

**District/Authority Scholarship (DAS)**

From April to June the FISA regional coordinators work overtime arranging for the adjudication of several hundred DAS applications in order to select 427 independent school award recipients. FISA thanks the DAS committee for their exceptional work: Máebh Carragher & Katie Larsen – Metro Vancouver; Simon Tuffin & Ruth McGhee – Vancouver Island; Chris Blesch – Fraser Valley; Mike Campbell – Northern/Interior, along with Helen Bulthuis who provides administrative support. Congratulations to all the DAS winners who have earned $1,250 to use towards their post-secondary education.

**Ready, Set, Learn 2022/23 Report due July 31st**

Independent schools that participated in the Ready, Set, Learn program this year are reminded that the Ministry’s electronic report form is accessible [HERE](https://forms.gov.bc.ca/education-training/ready-set-learn-independent-schools/). Reports must be submitted by July 31, 2023.

**MDI 2023/24**

For the 4th year in a row, FISA is covering the cost for select grade levels to participate in the MDI for 2023/24. FISA will pay for all independent schools to have their Grade 8 students participate in this survey. Each school that participates will get a school and association-level report. For those schools who do not have Grade 8, FISA will cover the cost for your Grade 4s to participate (only for schools that do not have Grade 8).

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For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**Annual Boarding School Report Due July 15th**

Independent schools that operate boarding facilities for students are reminded of the requirement to file an annual report summarizing student safety concerns related to the boarding environment. See [**here**](https://events.gov.bc.ca/educ-independent/event/annual-reporting-requirement-for-independent-schools-with-boarding-provisions/) for more information. This requirement is specific only to schools that offer boarding.

**FISA Fees 2023-2024**

In 2023-2024 the FISA member fees will increase from $6.25 per FTE to $7.00 per FTE. This will be the first increase in FISA fees in 5-years. The Board determined that a FISA fee review should occur annually, to avoid larger, less frequent increases, and that a 3-year projection of potential fee increases would be appreciated by our member schools/associations. Therefore, the projected fee increases (which could be amended by the FISA Board as part of their yearly review of fees) for both 2024-2025 ($7.50) and 2025-2026 ($8.00) will be $0.50. As mentioned earlier, the FISA fees will now be reviewed each year in January and will be adjusted based on our projected revenues, expenses and the FISA cash reserves policy. Once approved, FISA will share this information with our member associations/schools in late-January, early-February, so they can be incorporated into your yearly budget deliberations.

**Letter of Permissions (LOPs)**

Earlier this spring FISA received some communications from schools concerned that their LOP applications submitted for the 2023 – 2024 school year were denied because they were submitted too early. FISA reached out to the TRB and we are pleased to inform independent schools that your LOP submissions will now be accepted. Please review the TRB [LOP application requirements](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/employer-support/letter-of-permission#proof) to ensure your applications are complete - which helps expedite the application approval process.

**Provincial Online Learning Schools – Policy and Procedures Guide**

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has released the new [Online Learning Policy](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=12293B6D03474CC787615D08ADD8D572) and [Interim Procedures Guide](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=12293B6D03474CC787615D08ADD8D572), effective July 1, 2023, for Provincial Online Learning Schools. The new [Accountability and Quality Assurance (AQA)](https://search.onlinelearningbc.com/sites/search.onlinelearningbc.com/files/pdf/OLBC_AQA.pdf) document has also been released with the first review period in the 2024/25 school year. Together, these documents are part of the new online learning model to maximize equitable access to quality K-12 online learning experiences for all students in British Columbia. All documents are accessible from [Online Learning Information for Administrators](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=8CFBA2B99426422F8064D1037CF9969A) webpage.

The Ministry recognizes that Independent School Authorities are keen to hear about online learning with bricks and mortar schools. Direction will be forthcoming. In the meantime, it will be status quo for all independent school authorities without agreements with the Minister to operate a Provincial Online Learning School.

If you have any questions, please email the Online Learning team at [EDUC.OnlineLearning@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EDUC.OnlineLearning@gov.bc.ca).

**Learning First Peoples Summer Institute**

FNESC invites independent school educators to take part in their [August Summer Institute](https://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/) in Richmond. There are 3 Pro-D sessions being offered and attendees can choose to attend 1, 2 or all of them at a cost of $30/session. Each session begins at 9:00 am and ends at 3:00 pm. Breakfast and lunch are provided.

August 28, 2023     English First Peoples Gr. 10-12 Teacher Resource Guide

August 29, 2023     BC First Peoples 12 Teacher Resource Guide

August 30, 2023     Math & Science First Peoples Teacher Resource Guides

For more information and the registration link visit <https://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/>

**June 23, 2023**

It is FISA’s hope that the regular updates we provide support the work of independent school leaders. The weekly updates began during COVID-19, due to the dynamic nature of the pandemic and its impact on education (and everything else). The positive feedback we received encouraged us to switch from twice a year newsletter to more regular sector wide communications.

This will be one of the last planned FISA Updates to be distributed this school year, as we recognize school leaders need some “release time” for rest and rejuvenation. FISA will continue to share important, time-sensitive information as required (FISA continues to work in July and August), but our staff also hopes to enjoy some time away, and we will keep our members aware of any office closures over the summer.

**Provincial Online Learning Schools – Policy and Procedures Guide**

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has released the new [Online Learning Policy](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=12293B6D03474CC787615D08ADD8D572) and [Interim Procedures Guide](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=12293B6D03474CC787615D08ADD8D572), effective July 1, 2023, for Provincial Online Learning Schools. The new [Accountability and Quality Assurance (AQA)](https://search.onlinelearningbc.com/sites/search.onlinelearningbc.com/files/pdf/OLBC_AQA.pdf) document has also been released with the first review period in the 2024/25 school year. Together, these documents are part of the new online learning model to maximize equitable access to quality K-12 online learning experiences for all students in British Columbia. All documents are accessible from [Online Learning Information for Administrators](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=8CFBA2B99426422F8064D1037CF9969A) webpage.

The Ministry recognizes that Independent School Authorities are keen to hear about online learning with bricks and mortar schools. Direction will be forthcoming. In the meantime, it will be status quo for all independent school authorities without agreements with the Minister to operate a Provincial Online Learning School.

If you have any questions, please email the Online Learning team at [EDUC.OnlineLearning@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EDUC.OnlineLearning@gov.bc.ca).

**MDI 2023/24**

For the 4th year in a row, FISA is covering the cost for select grade levels to participate in the MDI for 2023/24. FISA will pay for all independent schools to have their Grade 8 students participate in this survey. Each school that participates will get a school and association-level report. For those schools who do not have Grade 8, FISA will cover the cost for your Grade 4s to participate (only for schools that do not have Grade 8).

**Indicate your interest in participating in the 2023/24 MDI**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MWUnhWiv3b4OWc2Gq6Ss_Jj6lpG2oqKCTDUbQQJMcSM/edit)**.**

Schools that have participated in the previous 3 school years have reported great value in the data contained in their school level reports - that often affirm what the school is doing well and also provides research-based data to inform future school-based mental health and wellness initiatives. For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**Annual Boarding School Report Due July 15**

Independent schools that operate boarding facilities for students are reminded of the requirement to file an annual report summarizing student safety concerns related to the boarding environment. See [**here**](https://events.gov.bc.ca/educ-independent/event/annual-reporting-requirement-for-independent-schools-with-boarding-provisions/) for more information. This requirement is specific only to schools that offer boarding.

**Accessible BC Act (ABCA)**

As school operations are winding down, a friendly reminder to keep an eye open for the $500 cheques FISA processed and mailed to individual independent schools to support their present and future work to meet the ABCA requirements. This is one-time funding and was made available by the Government of BC and administered through Disability Alliance BC (DABC).

Please visit the [FISA website](https://fisabc.ca/) to access the ABCA resources (under the Policy Aids tab).

**FISA is Hiring**

For those of you that may not be aware, the FISA office team (especially Janette C.) are extremely joyous for the impending arrival of her second child this summer! Consequently, FISA is looking to hire an executive assistant for the term of Janette's maternity leave. We are hoping to interview candidates over the next couple of weeks, with the successful candidate starting asap to facilitate training with Janette. If you are aware of suitable candidates within your community or network, please feel free to share the FISA EA job posting available [**here**](https://fisabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FISA-Executive-Assistant-Posting-2023-1.pdf)and encourage them to reach out to me with a cover letter and resume to: [shawn@fisabc.ca](mailto:shawn@fisabc.ca). Remember, we have a Janette and a Janet in our office. Janet is fully pleased with her four grown children and is not expecting any more blessed arrivals.

**FISA Fees 2023-2024**

In 2023-2024 the FISA member fees will increase from $6.25 per FTE to $7.00 per FTE. This will be the first increase in FISA fees in 5-years. The Board determined that a FISA fee review should occur annually, to avoid larger, less frequent increases, and that a 3-year projection of potential fee increases would be appreciated by our member schools/associations. Therefore, the projected fee increases (which could be amended by the FISA Board as part of their yearly review of fees) for both 2024-2025 ($7.50) and 2025-2026 ($8.00) will be $0.50. As mentioned earlier, the FISA fees will now be reviewed each year in January and will be adjusted based on our projected revenues, expenses and the FISA cash reserves policy. Once approved, FISA will share this information with our member associations/schools in late-January, early-February, so they can be incorporated into your yearly budget deliberations.

**Letter of Permissions (LOPs)**

Earlier this spring FISA received some communications from schools concerned that their LOP applications submitted for the 2023 – 2024 school year were denied because they were submitted too early. FISA reached out to the TRB and we are pleased to inform independent schools that your LOP submissions will now be accepted. Please review the TRB [LOP application requirements](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/employer-support/letter-of-permission#proof) to ensure your applications are complete - which helps expedite the application approval process.

**The TRB is Moving**

The TRB is moving physical locations this month and there will be some impact to service delivery. Key points to note are:

·       The Teacher Regulation Branch office will be **closed temporarily** **to the public from June 16 to June 30.**

·       During this period, **the TRB will not be able to take payments for annual practice fees in person or over the phone.**

·       TRB staff will continue to process applications and documents they receive.

·       Individual certificate holders can pay their fees through their [online account](https://teacherregulation.gov.bc.ca/LoginInfo/YourAccountLogin.aspx) or mail a cheque to the Teacher Regulation Branch. They will also be directed to Service BC for support with how to pay fees online.

·       Starting July 4, the Teacher Regulation Branch will open to the public at their new location at **201-828 West 8th Ave** in Vancouver.

The TRB finance team did their best to proactively call schools and take annual practice fee payments before the move, to mitigate schools being subject to a late charge for payments made after June 30.

**MyEd BC - Onboarding**

If you wish to start using MyEdBC in September 2023 you will need to complete these steps:

You will need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Education to commit to implementing the MyEdBC system in your school. This can be requested by emailing the Ministry of Education and Child Care: [myedbc@gov.bc.ca](mailto:myedbc@gov.bc.ca).

Once your MOU has been received, your school will need to sign up for Implementation Training. These sessions will equip your team with a deeper understanding of the system, covering setup, enrollment, attendance, scheduling, courses, reporting, and other administrative tasks. There's a one-time fee of $499 per school. To schedule training, please contact Megan at: at [megan@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:megan@bcsupportonline.com). Please note that to ensure a smooth transition in September, all MyEdBC training for new schools needs to be completed ***before the end of July 2023.***

A recording of a MyEDBC Info session is available for viewing [here](https://bcsupportonline.com/playvideo.php?file=myedbc-videos/Intro-To-New-School-2023-Mar-9th.mp4).

If you have any questions or require any further information, feel free to reach out to me directly at [andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com)

**Learning First Peoples Summer Institute**

FNESC invites independent school educators to take part in their [August Summer Institute](https://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/) in Richmond. There are 3 Pro-D sessions being offered and attendees can choose to attend 1, 2 or all of them at a cost of $30/session. Each session begins at 9:00 am and ends at 3:00 pm. Breakfast and lunch are provided.

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For more information and the registration link visit <https://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/>

**June 16, 2023**

Next week, on June 21st, Canada celebrates National Indigenous Peoples Day. This special day was established in 1996 (it was initially named National Aboriginal Day and the name was changed to National Indigenous Peoples Day in 2017) to recognize the foundational contribution Indigenous people and Nations have and will play in the identity and culture of Canada – in the past, present and in the future.

At a recent FISA Board meeting each of our FISA associations reported on the progress they are making on their pathways towards Truth and Reconciliation. The MECC was also present at this meeting, and I believe there was a collective recognition from all the participants that there is meaningful work happening throughout the independent school sector. There was also recognition that the nature of Truth and Reconciliation is necessarily ongoing and benefits greatly from the development of relationships between schools and First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nations to support our shared purpose to meet the needs of Indigenous learners.

**MDI 2023/24**

For the 4th year in a row, FISA is covering the cost for select grade levels to participate in the MDI for 2023/24. FISA will pay for all independent schools to have their Grade 8 students participate in this survey. Each school that participates will get a school and association-level report. For those schools who do not have Grade 8, FISA will cover the cost for your Grade 4s to participate (only for schools that do not have Grade 8).

**Indicate your interest in participating in the 2023/24 MDI**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MWUnhWiv3b4OWc2Gq6Ss_Jj6lpG2oqKCTDUbQQJMcSM/edit)**.**

It is our hope that independent schools will take advantage of this free access to the MDI survey. Schools that have participated in the previous 3 school years have reported great value in the data contained in their school level reports - that often affirm what the school is doing well and also provides research-based data to inform future school-based mental health and wellness initiatives. FISA thanks the Ministry of Education and Child Care for providing funding to continue independent school participation in the MDI.

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**The TRB is Moving**

The TRB is moving physical locations this month and there will be some impact to service delivery. Key points to note are:

·       The Teacher Regulation Branch office will be **closed temporarily** **to the public from June 16 to June 30.**

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·       Starting July 4, the Teacher Regulation Branch will open to the public at their new location at **201-828 West 8th Ave** in Vancouver.

Some independent schools (often smaller schools) find it easiest to call the TRB and pay their teachers’ annual practice fee by credit card over the phone. Unfortunately, the TRB finance team will not be able to take payments in person or over the phone between June 16 and June 30. The TRB finance team did their best to proactively call schools and take payments before the move, to mitigate schools being subject to a late fee charge for payments made after June 30.

**Student & Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) Special Purpose Grant**

Thank you to the 100+ schools that have completed the [**SFAF exit survey**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C35PGK2)**. The expenditure reports are now past due – please prioritize completion**. *Catholic schools should report expenditures to their Superintendent’s office, not to FISA.* Schools that recused themselves from this grant do not need to complete the exit survey.

There is no mechanism to return SFAF money and the full amount received per school must be spent by the end of the 2022/23 school year. Schools that have remaining funds should prioritize finding efficient ways to disburse the money to needy families (grocery or gas gift cards, uniform vouchers, etc.) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C35PGK2>

**Accessible BC Act (ABCA)**

FISA will be processing and distributing $500 cheques to individual independent schools to support independent schools’ present and future work to meet the ABCA requirements.

This is one-time funding and was made available by the Government of BC and administered through Disability Alliance BC (DABC).

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**MyEd BC - Onboarding**

If you wish to start using MyEdBC in September 2023 you will need to complete these steps:

You will need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Education to commit to implementing the MyEdBC system in your school. This can be requested by emailing the Ministry of Education and Child Care: [myedbc@gov.bc.ca](mailto:myedbc@gov.bc.ca).

Once your MOU has been received, your school will need to sign up for Implementation Training. These sessions will equip your team with a deeper understanding of the system, covering setup, enrollment, attendance, scheduling, courses, reporting, and other administrative tasks. There's a one-time fee of $499 per school. To schedule training, please contact Megan at: at [megan@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:megan@bcsupportonline.com). Please note that to ensure a smooth transition in September, all MyEdBC training for new schools needs to be completed ***before the end of July 2023.***

A recording of a MyEDBC Info session is available for viewing [here](https://bcsupportonline.com/playvideo.php?file=myedbc-videos/Intro-To-New-School-2023-Mar-9th.mp4).

If you have any questions or require any further information, feel free to reach out to me directly at [andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com)

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For more information and the registration link visit <https://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/>

**June 2, 2023**

When I entered the date for today’s FISA Update, it was with some disbelief that we are actually in June and quickly moving towards the end of the school year!

When I reflect on my time as a teacher and principal, I recall June as a busy month (summative assessments, report cards…) but also a fun time (graduation, Sports Day…) and some anticipation for the impending summer holiday season!

Today’s update will identify a couple of items that will require school leaders’ attention; the Student and Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) accountability survey, and a reminder about the resources available to schools/associations to meet their responsibility to have the three Accessible BC Act requirements in place by September 1, 2023.

**FISA is Hiring**

For those of you that may not be aware, the FISA office team (especially Janette) are extremely joyous for the impending arrival of her second child this summer!

Consequently, FISA is looking to hire an executive assistant for the term of Janette's maternity leave. We are hoping to interview candidates over the next couple of weeks, with the successful candidate starting asap to facilitate training with Janette.

If you are aware of suitable candidates within your community or network, please feel free to share the attached FISA EA posting and encourage them to reach out to me with a cover letter and resume to: [shawn@fisabc.ca](mailto:shawn@fisabc.ca).

Remember, we have a Janette and a Janet in our office. Janet is fully pleased with her four grown children and is not expecting any more blessed arrivals.

**Student & Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) Special Purpose Grant**

Many independent schools received a SFAF grant this year to support needy families within their community. FISA and the MECC were pleased to hear from many of the BC families that benefited from this special grant.

A requirement for receiving this funding was the commitment to distribute the funds based on the prescribed criteria and to report how these funds were allocated. FISA created a [SFAF exit survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C35PGK2) for independent schools to provide an efficient means for schools/authorities to share this information. It is reasonable to expect that independent schools have fully distributed their grants by this time and I ask that you **complete this**[**survey**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C35PGK2)**by no later than June 9th** so FISA can collate the results and report out to the MECC for the sector. There is no mechanism to return SFAF money. Schools that have remaining funds should prioritize finding efficient ways to disburse the money to needy families (grocery or gas gift cards, uniform vouchers, etc.) A pdf copy of the exit survey is attached.

***Catholic schools should report expenditures to their Superintendent’s office, not to FISA.***

Schools that recused themselves from this grant do not need to complete the exit survey. Any questions regarding this grant should be directed to FISA via email at [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca).

**Accessible BC Act (ABCA)**

FISA and our associations (and the non-member group of schools) are grateful for the ABCA resource package prepared by Jenny Williams and further assistance she provided in association specific webinars and/or liaising with the association office.

FISA will also be distributing $500 to individual independent schools to provide release time for school personnel to ensure they meet the ABCA requirements by the **September 1, 2023**deadline and any future ABCA work. This funding was made available by the Government of BC and administered through Disability Alliance BC (DABC). FISA greatly appreciates the support and direction provided by the leaders at DABC - Helaine Boyd and Mike Prescott.

Please visit the [FISA website](https://fisabc.ca/) to access the ABCA resources under the Policy Aids tab.

**MyEd BC**

A few months ago we did overview and demonstration sessions for independent schools that were interested in learning more about MyEdBC. If you missed the session you can review the recording: <https://bcsupportonline.com/playvideo.php?file=myedbc-videos/Intro-To-New-School-2023-Mar-9th.mp4>

As we gear up for the next academic year, we are offering MyEdBC implementation training to prepare your school for a September 2023 start. Please note that to ensure a smooth transition in September, all MyEdBC training for new schools needs to be completed ***before the end of July 2023.***  
  
If you wish to start using MyEdBC in September 2023 you will need to complete a few steps:

* Firstly, you will need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Education to commit to implementing the MyEdBC system in your school. This can be requested by emailing the Ministry of Education and Child Care: [myedbc@gov.bc.ca](mailto:myedbc@gov.bc.ca).
* Once your MOU has been received, your school will need to sign up for Implementation Training. These sessions will equip your team with a deeper understanding of the system, covering setup, enrollment, attendance, scheduling, courses, reporting, and other administrative tasks. There's a one-time fee of $499 per school. To schedule training, please contact Megan at: at [megan@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:megan@bcsupportonline.com)

If you have any questions or require any further information, feel free to reach out to me directly at [andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com)

**French Grant**

FISA is pleased to announce that qualifying independent schools will be receiving their French Grant cheques earlier this year, by mid-June. French Grant amounts are calculated according to the information schools provide on their 1701 submissions regarding students enrolled in Core French classes or French Immersion programs. Thank you to Smyrna Chuttoo from the French Education Branch of the MECC for supporting an earlier transfer of these funds and to Janette at the FISA office for processing these payments for the independent school sector.

**Letter of Permissions (LOPs)**

Earlier this spring FISA received some communications from schools concerned that their LOP applications submitted for the 2023 – 2024 school year were denied because they were submitted too early. FISA reached out to the TRB and we are pleased to inform independent schools that your LOP submissions will now be accepted. Please review the TRB [LOP application requirements](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/employer-support/letter-of-permission#proof) to ensure your applications are complete - which helps expedite the application approval process.

**Taking Action with the MDI Webinar – June 6th**

Schools that participated in the 2022-2023 [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi/) have received instructions on accessing their school-level MDI report. To help school communities take action using the data from their reports, the FISA Mental Health Coordinators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, will host a webinar on June 6th. They will walk you through the [Discovermdi.ca](https://discovermdi.ca/category/mdi-essentials/)website and point out the valuable resources, lesson plans, and conversation starters that you can engage with in your individual school communities. The webinar will be recorded for people unable to attend live.

**Taking Action with MDI Data**

Tuesday, June 6th 3:30-4:30 pm (PST)

**Register here** <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZErd-6urD4oG9wezZYPLP5NldmY77sU204l>

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**AMS Summer Leadership Symposium Invitation – July 5-7, 2023 Abbotsford**

The Associate Member Society of FISABC (AMS) invites current and aspiring school leaders (principals, department heads, managers, etc.) to attend their 4th annual Leadership Symposium taking place at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford on July 5, 6, and 7th. This is an excellent opportunity to network with colleagues in other independent schools as you journey together through a series of introspective and reflective activities designed by Dr. Laurie Anderson (SFU) to bring out your leadership superpowers. See the attached flyer for more information. Registration closes on June 15th. Register [HERE](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/4th-annual-ams-leadership-conference-abbotsford-july-5-7-2023-tickets-628765262827).

**Intensive Pro-D Opportunity for School Leaders**

Independent school principals and vice principals are invited to put their name forward to be part of a special provincial training opportunity being offered free of charge by the Ministry and BCSSA. As part of new pilot program, a cohort of 30 school leaders will complete modules on Governance, Finance, Planning for Impact; Evidence-Informed Decision Making; Relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples; and Working with People over the course of the 2023-24 school year. Interest candidates must be able to commit to devoting approx. 65 hours in total which includes attending an in person kick off on August 19 & 20, 2023 in Vancouver. Further classes will be delivered mostly online (both synchronous and asynchronous). This opportunity is available to both public and independent school colleagues; programming will provide material for both sectors.

The Ministry and BCSSA will cover all the costs associated with this program. However, it is expected that cohort members fully commit to this program, both in terms of completing the program and providing feedback to inform future iterations of the program.

Interested parties must complete this [**application form**](https://bcpvpa.insite.com/mvc/messages/links/click?link=be06a661-82e5-4f90-94d7-b00001433305&user=bd1c6247-aeb2-4abd-b4e2-16d4441ba4a4) before June 9, 2023. Remember to also submit a resume, letter of interest and employer reference letter to complete the application - see the form for details.

This is an exciting opportunity, and we anticipate that the**6 spots**which have been reserved for the independent school sector will be fully utilized. We encourage all current and aspiring principals and vice principals who are interested to apply as this pilot project intake will help the Ministry assess the demand for additional offerings of this program.

Should you have any questions, please contact your FISA Association Office or Andrea McComb at [andrea@bcpvpa.bc.ca](mailto:andrea@bcpvpa.bc.ca).

**Learning First Peoples Summer Institute**

FNESC invites independent school educators to take part in their [August Summer Institute](https://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/) in Richmond. There are 3 Pro-D sessions being offered and attendees can choose to attend 1, 2 or all of them at a cost of $30/session. Each session begins at 9:00 am and ends at 3:00 pm. Breakfast and lunch are provided.

**August 28, 2023     English First Peoples Gr. 10-12 Teacher Resource Guide**

**August 29, 2023     BC First Peoples 12 Teacher Resource Guide**

**August 30, 2023     Math & Science First Peoples Teacher Resource Guides**

For more information and the registration link visit <https://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/>

**May 26, 2023**

The FISA Board just spent two productive days discussing our strategic plan and connecting with the senior members of the MECC. I was quite pleased to hear from a ministry official today that the FISA Board is perceived to be high-functioning and an important and welcome voice within the K-12 sector. As a former principal and FISA Board member I was in the enviable position of being aware of the efforts and accomplishments of the FISA Board and their impact on my ability to effectively lead and manage school operations. As we approach the end of this school year the FISA office team extends our sincere appreciation to our dedicated Board members who ensure their decisions are mission driven and benefit the students and families you serve.

**MECC Appointment**

FISA would like to welcome Kiersten Fisher to her role as the Executive Director of Independent Schools and International Education with the MECC. The Board was able to spend some time with Kiersten this week and we look forward to working with her to support the independent school sector.

**FISA Fees 2023-2024**

The 2023-2024 FISA draft budget was reviewed and discussed by the Board and a decision was made to increase the FISA member fees from $6.25 per FTE to $7.00 per FTE. This will be the first increase in FISA fees in 5-years. The Board determined that a FISA fee review should occur annually, to avoid larger, less frequent increases, and that a 3-year projection of potential fee increases would be appreciated by our member schools/associations. Therefore, the projected fee increases for both 2024-2025 ($7.50) and 2025-2026 ($8.00) will be $0.50. As mentioned earlier, the FISA fees will now be reviewed each year in January and will be adjusted based on our projected revenues, expenses and the FISA cash reserves policy. Once approved, FISA will share this information with our member associations/schools in late-January, early-February, so they can be incorporated into your yearly budget deliberations.

**Taking Action with the MDI Webinar – June 6th**

Schools that participated in the 2022-2023 [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi/) have received instructions on accessing their school-level MDI report. To help school communities take action using the data from their reports, the FISA Mental Health Coordinators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, will host a webinar on June 6th. They will walk you through the [Discovermdi.ca](https://discovermdi.ca/category/mdi-essentials/) website and point out the valuable resources, lesson plans, and conversation starters that you can engage with in your individual school communities. The webinar will be recorded for people unable to attend live.  

**Taking Action with MDI Data**

Tuesday, June 6th 3:30-4:30 pm (PST)

**Register here** <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZErd-6urD4oG9wezZYPLP5NldmY77sU204l>

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**Accessible BC Act (ABCA)**

FISA associations have been provided with ABCA resources developed by SCSBC and are participating in resource review seminars, led by Jenny Williams. FISA will also be distributing $500 to individual independent schools to provide release time for school personnel to ensure they meet the ABCA requirements by the September 1, 2023 deadline. This funding has been made available by the Government of BC and administered through Disability Alliance BC (DABC). FISA greatly appreciates the support and direction provided by the leaders at DABC - Helaine Boyd and Mike Prescott.

**Intensive Pro-D Opportunity for School Leaders**

Independent school principals and vice principals are invited to put their name forward to be part of a special provincial training opportunity being offered free of charge by the Ministry and BCSSA. As part of a new pilot program, a cohort of 30 school leaders will complete modules on Governance, Finance, Planning for Impact; Evidence-Informed Decision Making; Relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples; and Working with People over the course of the 2023-24 school year. Interest candidates must be able to commit to devoting approx. 65 hours in total which includes attending an in person kick off on August 19 & 20, 2023 in Vancouver. Further classes will be delivered mostly online (both synchronous and asynchronous). This opportunity is available to both public and independent school colleagues; programming will provide material for both sectors.

The Ministry and BCSSA will cover all the costs associated with this program. However, it is expected that cohort members fully commit to this program, both in terms of completing the program and providing feedback to inform future iterations of the program.

Interested parties must complete this [**application form**](https://bcpvpa.insite.com/mvc/messages/links/click?link=be06a661-82e5-4f90-94d7-b00001433305&user=bd1c6247-aeb2-4abd-b4e2-16d4441ba4a4) before June 9, 2023. Remember to also submit a resume, letter of interest and employer reference letter to complete the application - see the form for details.

This is an exciting opportunity, and we anticipate that the**6 spots**which have been reserved for the independent school sector will be fully utilized. We encourage all current and aspiring principals and vice principals who are interested to apply as this pilot project intake will help the Ministry assess the demand for additional offerings of this program.

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[**SET-BC**](https://www.setbc.org/) **Intake Updates and Details – closes on May 31st**

The June Intake for School Requests for Student Supports for the 2023-2024 school year is open,with support beginning mid to later September.The online application form is found at <https://www.setbc.org/student-service-request> and is due by May 31, 2023.

**Indigenous Focused Grad Requirement Pro-D**

The EFP 10-12 Pro-D sessions have concluded, but there are still two BC First Peoples 12 Pro-D opportunities available. Following the completion of these final events, FISA will calculate the remaining grant amount (deducting travel reimbursement and hosting costs) and distribute checks to the schools that participated in this year’s series of Pro-D events designed to assist schools in meeting the Indigenous focused grad requirement. We thank the Ministry for supporting educators in this important curricular area.

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| BC First Peoples 12 | **Virtual** | June 17, 2023 | First come, first serve | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BCFPVirtualJune17)  Closes June 2nd |

**Student & Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) Special Purpose Grant**

Please report how funds were spent by completing the SFAF exit survey available [HERE](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C35PGK2) by June 30, 2023 **(if you have fully distributed this grant, please complete the survey asap)**. A pdf copy of the exit survey is attached. *Catholic schools should report expenditures to their Superintendent’s office, not to FISA.* Schools that recused themselves from this grant do not need to complete the exit survey. Any questions regarding this grant should be directed to FISA via email at [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca).

**May 19, 2023**

May and June are filled with special events and celebrations galore – grad events, concerts, track & field meets, theatre productions, field trips, school trips abroad, staff dinners, and retirement parties. On that note, some of the FISA Board members and staff were able to attend a very special retirement “par-tee” for Ed Noot, Executive Director of SCSBC earlier this week. It was no surprise to see how deeply the Christian school community respects and values Ed and appreciates his 37 years of service to the K-12 sector. Ed will continue to serve on the FISA Board, so we will not bid him adieu, but we do look forward to hearing about new personal bests on the golf course now that he will have more time to hone his already impressive talents in that sport.

**FISA Office Closure**

It has been a long-standing tradition for the FISA Board to meet with Ministry officials each spring and fall, usually in Vancouver. Later this month the FISA staff and Board will travel to Victoria for this important bi-annual meeting. Holding the event in Victoria allows for a robust roster of Ministry staff to participate and also provides a beautiful setting for a short Board retreat to finalize FISA’s strategic plan. The FISA office will be closed on May 24th and 25th.

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Interested parties must complete this [**application form**](https://bcpvpa.insite.com/mvc/messages/links/click?link=be06a661-82e5-4f90-94d7-b00001433305&user=bd1c6247-aeb2-4abd-b4e2-16d4441ba4a4) before June 9, 2023. Remember to also submit a resume, letter of interest and employer reference letter to complete the application - see the form for details.

NB: on the application form where it cites *School District/ Independent School Authority* you should note which FISA association your school belongs to.

This is an exciting opportunity and we anticipate that the**6 spots**which have been reserved for the independent school sector will be fully utilized.

Should you have any questions, please contact your FISA Association Office or Andrea McComb at [andrea@bcpvpa.bc.ca](mailto:andrea@bcpvpa.bc.ca).

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For more information and the registration link visit <https://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/>

**BC Children’s Hospital COVID-19 Recovery Report**

BC Children’s Hospital recently released a report: [Improving Youth Mental Health and Well-Being During the COVID-19 Recovery Phase in BC](https://bcchr.ca/sites/default/files/group-provincial-ocd-program/improving-youth-well-being-in-the-covid-19-recovery-phase-in-bc_final_april-27-2023_single-pages-1.pdf). Recommendations, key action steps, and promising practices are provided to guide schools and other MH partners in supporting youth in putting COVID-19 behind them and stepping towards a bright future. Reading this report will be time well spent.

[**SET-BC**](https://www.setbc.org/)**Intake Updates and Details**

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·         **The Student-Based Full-Service Request Application form** is found at: <https://www.setbc.org/student-service-request> .

The deadline for submission of completed Full-Service applications is **May 31, 2023**.

·         There are changes to the **Assistive Technology-Only Loan Requests**.  The intent of such requests remains the same: these loans are intended just for those district or school teams ***who have the internal capacity*** to implement the technology loaned to a student **without the need of support from SET-BC educators or specialists**. SET-BC has always intended for these loan requests to be far fewer than the Full-Service requests (Assistive Technology Loan and Education Team Support).  SET-BC wants you to be able to focus on the Full-Service requests as those are submitted on behalf of the most complex students in the province and they require the most concentrated support.

·         Based on provincial feedback, starting this fall, SET-BC will be accepting **AT-Only requests** anytime **from October 1st through to April 30th**. Information about the AT- Only Loan Application will be communicated out later this spring.

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**May  12, 2023**

As a provincial organization - with a valued diverse membership, FISA recognizes there are many similarities within the independent school sector, but also many things that make our member schools unique. We are also geographically diverse. Therefore, an independent school in the Lower Mainland likely faces some different pressures than a school in the northwest of the province (recruitment of staff, heat/cooling costs, transportation…). Of course, regional weather differences can also present challenges, especially as we experience more severe weather events. In the recent past we know that some school communities have been confronted with the impacts of flooding and forest fires and, looking forward to the warmer weather most of our province is now experiencing, it reminds us of the importance of planning for potential circumstances that could impact the health and wellbeing of students and staff members.

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**Independent School-Related/Affiliated Child Care Survey – Due May 15th**

We have now reached the milestone of 250 FISA member schools that have completed the Child Care Survey. If you have not yet completed yours, please make it a top priority. The schools that reported having unique circumstances that necessitated a customized survey (multi license holders, more than 3 locations, etc.) will receive their survey early next week and will have an extended due date for completion.

Survey Link - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FISAChildCareScan2023>

The strategy we suggest for effectively completing this survey is to **initially review the survey**(see the PDF survey copy attached)**, and then collect the information needed to complete the survey.**  A recording of the info session which explained how to complete the survey is available in the [FISA Video Gallery.](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)

**Internationally Trained Teachers Survey – closes on May 26th**

The province of BC is conducting a survey to better understand the experiences of internationally trained professionals who have gone through the foreign credential recognition process to work in B.C. Please feel free to share this with anyone you think may be interested in taking the survey.

Survey: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/engagement/foreign-credential-recognition/>

News release: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023PSFS0026-000558>

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| EFP10-12 Train-the-Trainer | **Richmond** | ~~June 10, 2023~~ | 1/school | Postponed |
| BC First Peoples 12 | **Virtual** | June 17, 2023 | 1/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BCFPVirtualJune17)  Waitlist |

**Compassionate Systems Leadership (CSL)**

CSL explores how intrapersonal, interpersonal, and system awareness competencies can be woven together to strengthen school communities. All independent school personnel are invited to take part in FISA’s free CSL webinar series with Dr. Shirley Giroux, CSL Master Practitioner. These webinars are open to all independent school personnel free of charge.

**CSL #8: May 15, 2023, 3:30-5:00 pm (PST)**[**Register HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcode-qqD4rGdED3fpkJieBYrIlN5DeebQB)

Recordings of the previous webinars are available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

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**FISA Update May 5, 2023**

This week the MECC hosted the Mental Health in Schools Conference. Both Janet and I attended and we were very pleased to see many independent school attendees amongst the 450 participants.

There were many highlights over the 2-days with presentations on resiliency, compassionate systems, kindness, social emotional learning and Dr. Bonnie Henry addressed the audience, giving praise to the sector for its meritorious efforts to keep BC schools open more than any other jurisdiction in North America during the pandemic.

A personal highlight for FISA was Jamie Morris’s participation on the panel discussion that included leaders from school districts around the province. Both Jamie and Michelle Hussey (the FISA Mental Health Coordinators) have played a key role in supporting mental wellness within independent schools. With a great deal of poise, Jamie was able to share the mental health initiatives that are taking place at the FISA, association and independent school levels. Jamie’s participation on the panel is also a reflection of the inroads FISA has made with our relationship building with our colleagues from the public school system, the MECC and the Health Authorities from around the province. As Jamie said when addressing the assembled crowd, “independent school kids are the same as public school kids, they all are BC learners and require our support”.

**Internationally Trained Teachers Survey – closes on May 26th**

FISA is participating in workforce planning discussions at the provincial level, with recognition of the challenges the K-12 sector is facing with the recruitment and retention of qualified staff. Internationally trained teachers are a potential source of qualified staff, but independent school employers have shared some frustrations faced by them and their international teacher candidates, primarily with the BC professional certification process timelines.

The province of BC is conducting a survey to better understand the experiences of internationally trained professionals who have gone through the foreign credential recognition process to work in B.C.

We are sharing this survey with independent school leaders as we think it would be valuable to gain insights from internationally trained teachers and other K-12 staff on their experiences. I’ve included a link to the survey below as well as a news release with more information. Please feel free to share this with anyone you think may be interested in taking the survey.

Survey: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/engagement/foreign-credential-recognition/>

News release: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023PSFS0026-000558>

**Hiring Foreign Workers Webinar**

Independent schools are invited to attend a free webinar on May 11th from 10:00-11:30 am (PST) on Navigating **the Provincial & Federal Government's Foreign Worker Programs hosted by**Make a Future**. Register**[**HERE**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/navigating-the-provincial-federal-governments-foreign-worker-programs-tickets-624513806607?aff=odeimcmailchimp&mc_cid=292de6b349&mc_eid=f8f711a2b5)**.**

**Make a Future Webinar Recording**  
A recording of the April 27th Recruitment & Retention webinar held with Andrew Jang and Victoria Krivtchoun from Make a Future is available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)**.**

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The results from this survey will be used by the MECC to inform their efforts in supporting child care initiatives for the K-12 sector and by FISA in order to determine whether to expand our mandate to advocate and support child care operations affiliated with independent schools.

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**Labour Settlement Funding (LSF)**

FISA was informed by several schools that they received the second draw on their LSF allocation and the amount they received was beyond what was anticipated. FISA will be sending a letter to the MECC expressing independent schools’ appreciation for this funding and the support it provides to schools as they address the inflationary pressures they are facing.

**FISA Update - April 28, 2023**

Workforce challenges are at the top of mind for many independent schools and also throughout the entire K-12 system, and for several other critical sectors within BC and across Canada. Analysis of present day data and future projections of workforce gaps are concerning. FISA will be representing independent schools at a meeting hosted by the MECC in a couple of weeks and our plan is to identify the issues that are barriers to a robust supply of education professionals, and to explore possible solutions.

In the shorter term, FISA has requested the TRB consider efficiencies with the LOP re-application process and possible other pathways that could increase the pool of independent school certificate holders. FISA will share more information as it becomes available.

**Internationally Trained Teachers**

FISA is participating in workforce planning discussions at the provincial level, with recognition of the challenges the K-12 sector is facing with the recruitment and retention of qualified staff. Internationally trained teachers are a potential source of qualified staff, but independent school employers have shared some frustrations faced by them and their international teacher candidates, primarily with the BC professional certification process timelines.

The province of BC is conducting a survey to better understand the experiences of internationally trained professionals who have gone through the foreign credential recognition process to work in B.C.

We are sharing this survey with independent school leaders as we think it would be valuable to gain insights from internationally trained teachers and other K-12 staff on their experiences. I’ve included a link to the survey below as well as a news release with more information. Please feel free to share this with anyone you think may be interested in taking the survey.

Survey: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/engagement/foreign-credential-recognition/>

News release: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023PSFS0026-000558>

**Make a Future Webinar Recording**  
On a related note, thank you to everyone who attended the Recruitment & Retention webinar held earlier this week. While the statistic that were shared paint a rather dismal picture, the tips and suggestions provided by Andrew Jang and Victoria Krivtchoun from Make a Future were well received by those in attendance. A recording of the session is available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)**.**

[**SET-BC**](https://www.setbc.org/) **Intake Updates and Details**

The June Intake for School Requests for Student Supports for the 2023-2024 school year is open,with support beginning mid to later September.SET-BC has separated the Full-Service request forms/applications and the Assistive Technology-Only request forms /applications. Presently only the Full-Service request [form](https://www.setbc.org/student-service-request) is available on the website.

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* There are changes to the **Assistive Technology-Only Loan Requests**.  The intent of such requests remains the same: these loans are intended just for those district or school teams ***who have the internal capacity*** to implement the technology loaned to a student **without the need of support from SET-BC educators or specialists**. SET-BC has always intended for these loan requests to be far fewer than our Full-Service requests (Assistive Technology Loan and Education Team Support).  SET-BC wants you to be able to focus on the Full-Service requests as those are submitted on behalf of the most complex students in the province and they require the most concentrated support.
* Based on provincial feedback, starting this fall, SET-BC will be accepting **AT-Only requests** anytime **from October 1st through to April 30th**. Information about the AT- Only Loan Application will be communicated out later this spring.

**Independent School-Related/Affiliated Child Care Survey – Due May 15th**

Thank you to the independent schools that have started the process of completing the FISA Child Care Survey that was distributed to all independent schools on Wednesday evening. Thank you as well to Susan Berdusco for hosting the two information sessions, and to those that attended. A recording of the info session is available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

Survey Link - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FISAChildCareScan2023>

We are requesting that all independent schools complete the survey. For schools without child care, it should be a fast task.

The strategy we suggest for effectively completing this survey is to **initially review the survey** (without entering responses or by reviewing the PDF survey copy that was attached to the email)**, and then collect the information needed to complete the survey.** FISA has received positive feedback on the two information sessions provided this week and may consider offering a further session if we hear from our member schools that it is needed. Schools that have successfully completed the survey have indicated that by following this strategy they were able to complete the survey in about one hour.

The results from this survey will be used by the MECC to inform their efforts in supporting child care initiatives for the K-12 sector and by FISA in order to determine whether to expand our mandate to advocate and support child care operations affiliated with independent schools.

**FISA Provincial Outreach**

Although we intended to hold one more provincial outreach Pro-D session the registration numbers for Nanaimo did not meet the minimum threshold. This means that the final session for the 2022-23 year was the Kelowna one held last week. We thank all the attendees at the 8 sessions for taking part and demonstrating that you understand the importance of building strong carrying communities. Special thanks go to Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, FISA’s extraordinarily talented Mental Health Coordinators.

**Indigenous Focused Grad Requirement Pro-D Opportunities**

We are pleased to announce **four additional Pro-D** opportunities to assist schools in meeting the Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement. The two virtual (May 6th and June 17th) and two in-person sessions hosted in Richmond (June 9th & 10th) will go forward if minimum enrollment requirements are met. Therefore, if these sessions interest you **please register asap**. See the chart below.

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**Labour Settlement Funding (LSF)**

FISA was informed by several schools that they received the second draw on their LSF allocation and the amount they received was beyond what was anticipated. FISA will be sending a letter to the MECC expressing independent schools’ appreciation for this funding and the support it provides to schools as they address the inflationary pressures they are facing.

**FISA Update April 21, 2023**

Once again the MECC has released information on the [Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/excellence-in-education) and the window to submit nominations is **April 14th – May 5th** . These prestigious awards were established by Premier Horgan in 2018, with the first presentation of the awards in October 2019.

I am fortunate to receive an invitation to attend the Premier’s Awards celebrations each year, and I am happy to applaud excellence in the K-12 sector. However, as someone who is very familiar and appreciative of the amazing accomplishments that occur in independent schools, I found it concerning that no independent school personnel have won in any of the 10 categories. In fact, of the 3 finalists announced in each of the last 3-years, in each of the 10 categories (a cumulative total of 90 finalists), only one independent school representative has been a category finalist. I reached out to the MECC to try to understand this seemingly inequitable distribution of acknowledgements. What I found out was that while independent schools represent between 13 – 14 % of the K-12 sector, they represent less than 5% of the nominations submitted for the Premier’s Excellence Awards. I think independent schools can do better and invest the time (it is not arduous) to identify the incredible people you work alongside and submit a nomination on their behalf.

While this admittedly is moon-shot thinking – I am confident that every independent school has worthy nominees in at least one of the 10 categories, and I ask that all independent schools consider submitting at least 1 nomination for the Premier’s Excellence in Education Award before the **May 5th deadline!**

Attached to this email are resources on the Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education to share with your colleagues and networks:

·        A **Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education backgrounder document**, with information on the program and key messages to share through your communications channels.

·        A**Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education poster**

·        A pdf copy of the **Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education nomination form**

The Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education is a great way to recognize the very best in the education profession in our province. Thank you for helping to promote this important project, and best of all luck to all the nominees!

Please contact [excellenceineducation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:excellenceineducation@gov.bc.ca)if you have any questions.

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To support schools in completing this survey we advise independent school leaders and their child care coordinators to **initially review the survey**(without entering responses)**, and then collect the information they need to complete it.** FISA has established two information sessions designed to assist schools with the completion of the survey and answer any questions they may have. **Please plan to attend one of these sessions before completing the survey and plan to allocate 1.5 hours to complete the survey at one sitting (if you partially complete the survey your responses will not be saved):**

**Independent School Child Care Survey Information Sessions**

·       April 27th 10:30 – 11:00 click [here](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81984315718?pwd=UXNkZ2NTS09wc2Vlc2wrbnhnVHk2QT09) for the Zoom meeting link

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**FISA Update April 14, 2023**

This week the cherry blossoms outside my office window were in full bloom – hopefully a sign of warmer weather and more opportunities for schools to engage in learning outside the classroom. I am often amazed by the creative options (field trips, sports days or schools that always use the outdoors as their primary learning space) independent schools provide for their learners. I hope the blossoms are an indication that spring, and improved weather will support your educational programming for the rest of this school year!

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**FISA Update- April 6, 2023**

Most independent schools will be experiencing two 4-day weeks in a row, due to the Christian celebrations associated with Easter. While FISA is a secular organization we feel fortunate to represent a variety of faith-affiliated schools that provide valued educational services to many BC families. During this spring there are other religious observances/celebrations of note within the FISA membership: Passover (Jewish) – April 5th -13th, Ramadan (Islamic) – March 22nd – April 21st, and Vaisakhi (Sikh) – April 14th.

The FISA office extends our best wishes for a safe and restful break to the diverse, unique roster of schools that form our organization.

**Labour Settlement Special Grant**

Group 1 & 2 independent schools welcomed the receipt of the Labour Settlement grant, which is considered part of the 2022-2023 Operating Grant. FISA is grateful for independent schools' inclusion in this grant and the MECC's recognition of the inflationary salary pressures all schools face in the K-12 sector. The grant transfer you received in late March will be followed up with an additional, but far smaller proportion of the total Labour Settlement grant allocated to your school. Independent schools can expect the remainder of this grant to be transferred to your school authority in the month ahead.

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**Chilliwack – April 14, 2023 – Cancelled (registration threshold not met)**

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**Independent School Child Care**

We appreciate your patience in receiving the child care survey. The results of the survey will be used by the Ministry to inform their efforts in supporting child care initiatives for the K-12 sector and by FISA in order to determine whether to enlarge our mandate to advocate for child care centres affiliated with independent schools. Given the importance of this sector scan we want to ensure the questions asked are comprehensive without the survey being overwhelming. Schools can expect to receive the finalized survey by mid-April at the latest.

In advance of receiving this survey, it would be wise for independent school leaders to inform their child care coordinators that they will play an important role in the completion of the survey. A suggested process would be to read the survey when it is received, gather the information you require and then schedule an hour of uninterrupted time to revisit, complete and submit the survey. For those schools that may appreciate additional clarification on some of the survey questions before they complete the survey, FISA will provide virtual information sessions for the key child care personnel at your schools. More information to follow.

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| English First Peoples 10-12 | **Virtual** | May 6, 2023 | 1/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VirtualEFP10-12) |
| BC First Peoples 12 | **Richmond** | June 9, 2023 | 1/school | Registration opening soon |
| EFP10-12 Train-the-Trainer | **Richmond** | June 10, 2023 | 1/school | Registration opening soon |
| BC First Peoples 12 | **Virtual** | June 17, 2023 | 1/school | Registration openings soon |

**Student Learning Survey (SLS)**

Independent schools may find that participating in the Ministry’s [2022/23 Student Learning Survey](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/student-learning-survey) provides valuable data which can be used to inform continuous school improvement planning.

The SLS is targeted for students in grades 4, 7, 10, and 12, but other grades can participate (e.g., grade 8 students can take the grade 7 survey). There are also parent and staff surveys. Although no Ministry questions can be deleted, schools can customize the survey by adding up to 20 additional questions. Public school SLS data is accessible to the public on a district level, however, independent school data will not be publicly accessible. Independent schools can access their results through their AWIS portal.

The SLS closes on April 28th. Act quickly if you would like to participate. Please see the [SLS Administration Manual](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/satisfaction-survey/sls-administration-manual.pdf) for more information. Contact AWIS for technical and administrative support at 1‑866‑558‑5339 or email [support@awinfosys.com](mailto:support@awinfosys.com).

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CSL explores how intrapersonal, interpersonal, and system awareness competencies can be woven together to strengthen school communities. All independent school personnel are invited to take part in FISA’s free CSL webinar series with Dr. Shirley Giroux, CSL Master Practitioner. These webinars are open to all independent school personnel free of charge.

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**March 31, 2023**

FISA rarely sends out “special updates” (although there were a few during the height of the pandemic), but we did so this week as we believed the MECC’s funding announcements were noteworthy. As a former principal, I am aware of the important planning school leaders engage in soon after the Christmas break, in preparation for the next school year. Salary levels, tuition rates, re-enrollment, new enrollment, equipment upgrades, student and teacher resource purchases, Pro D scheduling… All these items, and more, contribute to the complexity of effectively managing a school.

FISA has a mandate to pursue the rightful funding for the independent school sector, and we are pleased that this government’s funding decisions have aligned well with what FISA has advocated for.

Qualifying independent school authorities should already have received notice of the special grant amount they will receive from the Labour Settlement Funding. Please note this is one-time special funding that was put in place to support staff salary commitments. Due to the timing of the public school contract ratifications, these salary commitments were not incorporated into December 2022’s final per student operating grant amounts.

The release of the [2023 – 2024 preliminary per student grant allocations](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/independent-schools/funding) does incorporate the public salary commitments and therefore there is no expectation that future special Labour Settlement Funding will be required. However, you can expect the usual practice of receiving the final, revised per student funding allocations to be released in December 2023.

**Independent School Child Care**

Following consultation with the FISA Child Care Committee and the MECC, we are nearly done finalizing the comprehensive child care sector scan survey mentioned in past updates. We are collecting this information to determine the extent of program offerings and the support needs of child care operators connected to independent schools and appreciate your cooperation in responding.

In advance of receiving this survey, it would be wise for independent school leaders to inform their child care coordinators that they will play an important role in the completion of the survey. A suggested process would be to read the survey when it is received, gather the information you require and then schedule an hour of uninterrupted time to revisit, complete and submit the survey. For those schools that may appreciate additional clarification on some of the survey questions before they complete the survey, FISA will provide virtual information sessions for the key child care personnel at your schools. More information to follow.

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\*There is a minimum registration enrollment we must achieve to go forward with each Provincial Outreach event. At this point, the Chilliwack session has not achieved the threshold.

21 additional registrations are required by April 6th in order for the Chilliwack session to proceed.

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**MyEd BC**

FISA supports the freedom for independent schools to choose the student management system they feel will best meet their needs but, as you are aware, the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care is encouraging BC schools to use the Provincial Student Information System (MyEducationBC) for managing student records. As per the Deputy Ministers notice on January 19, 2021, all schools that elected not to enroll and use MyEd BC by September 2022 would be charged $15/student/year by the MECC. You will have noticed this deduction from your January 2023 provincial funding disbursement.

For independent schools looking to implement MyEd BC as a stand-alone SIS or alongside an existing SIS, the FISA iGroup Executive invites you to a free online introduction session to explore MyEd BC. This session offers an opportunity to see what MyEd BC can provide for your school, with time allocated to ask questions of the MyEd Project Manager for Independent Schools.

·       **April 4, 2023 @ 3pm:**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89277925688?pwd=dHNrazhGS1BCQi9jRTFXUkExbDFzUT09>

No registration is required.

If you would like to view a recording of the previous sessions from two years ago, or garner more information on MyEd BC features, or investigate the implementation process, please go to: <https://bcsupportonline.com/joining-myeducationbc-independent-schools-fisa.html>

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Independent School Project Manager, Andrew Smit at: [andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com)  or visit the FISA iGroup website for updates: <http://bcsupportonline.com/>

**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

Reminder the DAS application due dates are fast approaching **March 16th/April 5th** depending on the region. Application forms are available on the FISA website under the [Services-->Scholarships & Awards](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/) tab. Please promote this scholarship opportunity widely within your secondary school community.

**Indigenous Focused Grad Requirement Pro-D Opportunities**

The English First Peoples grade 10-12 Pro-D sessions continue to roll along. All independent schools that offer graduation programs are encouraged to have a teacher attend to take the information gained back to their colleagues. For more information see [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/professional-learning/conflict-resolution-workshop/).

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| Northern East | **Fort St. John** | Apr. 21, 2023 | **3**/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FtStJohnEFP) |
| Fraser Valley | **Harrison Hot Springs** | Apr. 22, 2023 | **3 seats left - first come, first serve** | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HarrisonApr22) |
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**March 27, 2023**

**FISA Special Update**

I know many independent schools have or will be returning to normal operations soon, and I hope your spring break was restful and rejuvenating!

I would like to bring to your attention the welcome news you would have received in the March 27th DM Bulletin, with regards to funding. One of FISA’s mandates is to advocate for rightful funding for the independent school sector and we are grateful for the opportunity to engage in these meaningful discussions with different branches of the MECC. I would like to express FISA’s sincere appreciation to the MECC for the inclusion of independent schools in the 2022-2023 “funding lift” directed to the K-12 sector to support the salary pressures during these inflationary times. Independent school authorities will receive approximately a **3.0 - 3.5%** increase to their 2022–2023 operating grant (this includes independent online schools), which will come in two payments – one targeted for the March 31, 2023, government fiscal year end and the second before June 30, 2023. This Labour Settlement Funding Lift is a one-time only Special Grant allocation and should not be expected to occur in future years.

**FOR INFORMATION ITEMS**

**FOR INFO, INDEPENDENT SCHOOL AUTHORITIES AND PRINCIPALS – Labour Settlement Funding (LSF):**

BC Public School Districts are receiving LSF as part of the 2022/23 school year operating funding. Independent Schools that are receiving operating grant funding from the Ministry for eligible students in the current school year will also be allocated funding.  LSF will be provided to School Authorities on March 31, 2023, to disburse to their eligible Group 1 or Group 2 schools.  School Authorities with more than one school will be sent an email with allocations by school, to include in their operating grant funding received by the Ministry. Questions regarding this LSF can be directed to: Tim Jah, Director of Funding and Allocation – [Tim.Jah@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Tim.Jah@gov.bc.ca).

This is also the time when independent schools anticipate receiving the preliminary per student operating grant allocations for the next school year, 2023–2024. This information is used by independent school authorities to establish staff salaries and is an important part of your budget deliberations. As is always the case, FISA does encourage schools to view these projected per student grant allocations through a conservative lens, knowing that the final grant allocations that will be published in December 2023 often sees variance (increases or decreases) in the grant due to the many variables that influence School District per student grant levels (SD enrollment changes being the most significant variable). In conversation with MECC personnel we are aware that the 2023–2024 independent school preliminary grant figures will be released soon and that the independent school sector can anticipate an increase in the per student operating grant for 2023–2024 of approximately **9 - 10%**. As mentioned, each independent school authority’s specific grant will be influenced by the allocation to the School District where their school/schools reside.

I am hopeful this overview of anticipated grant increases helps to support your work as you plan and manage the financial operations of your schools.

Kind regards, Shawn & Janet

**March 24, 2023**

No update. FISA office closed.

**March 17, 2023**

For those school leaders already on spring break, I hope you are reading this a week late, and for those just starting their break, FISA offers our best wishes for a safe and joy-filled holiday. Just a reminder the FISA office will also be taking a break and will be closed the week of **March 20 – 24, 2023**.

**Independent School Child Care**

As mentioned in past week’s updates, all independent schools will be receiving a child care survey in late March or early April that requires full participation from our sector. FISA and the MECC are collecting the information required to determine the extent of program offerings and the support needs of these organizations. FISA has consulted with the FISA Child Care Committee, the FISA association heads and the MECC to put the finishing touches on a comprehensive survey.

In advance of receiving this survey, it would be wise for independent school leaders to inform their child care coordinators that they will play an important role in the completion of the survey. A suggested process would be to read the survey when it is received, gather the information you require and then schedule an hour of uninterrupted time to revisit, complete and submit the survey. For those schools that may appreciate additional clarification on some of the survey questions before they complete the survey, FISA will provide virtual information sessions for the key child care personnel at your schools. More information to follow.

**TRAX to GRAD Transition Update**

Today’s DM Bulletin speaks of a new timeline for Phase One of the TRAX to GRAD modernization project. That means the initial changes flagged will now occur later this spring to ensure all system requirements are met and end-users are fully supported during this important first step. The MECC will communicate exact dates in advance.

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**BC Council for International Education (BCCIE)**

The BC Council for International Education (BCCIE) is conducting an [annual survey](https://www.awinfosys.com/bccie/) to measure its impact and directions and to better inform its work in and for a diverse and evolving sector. The [survey](https://www.awinfosys.com/bccie/) takes less than **5 minutes** to complete and will remain open until this **Friday, March 24.**  
   
Please complete the survey and share this email with your colleagues, as the goal is to have multiple stakeholders take part to provide a breadth and diversity of perspectives. Thank you in advance for your participation. Your feedback will help shape future programming and events. [Take survey](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.awinfosys.com%2Fbccie%2F&data=05%7C01%7Ccbarnett%40bccie.bc.ca%7Ce3db3a3319804cc16f8e08db2669367d%7C4dbbd2c7587a46789dbcb9f4bf9e4d0f%7C0%7C0%7C638146005542238338%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=txID2bENMayhnh6%2F2e7N%2FSzDNJn2umN%2FbLcRtgkSTFc%3D&reserved=0).

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**Accessible BC Act**

As mentioned in last week’s FISA Update, there are a variety of options for schools to meet the requirements of the Accessible BC Act (an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan, and a feedback mechanism). Under the guidance of the Disability Alliance BC (DABC) the 5 FISA associations are exploring ways to join together to create an independent school accessibility plan template and establishing association level accessibility committees, while also realizing that some schools may want to develop their own plans and/or committees. Expect more information from your FISA association leadership. All independent school leaders are encouraged to read the comprehensive [toolkit](https://bcaccessibilityhub.ca/plans/developing-a-plan/) produced by DABC to enhance your understanding of the requirements and deadlines.

**Provincial Truth and Reconciliation Statutory Holiday**

FISA connected with the Independent Schools Branch and with the Ministry’s legislative team to get direction on how the K – 12 sector will schedule the newly legislated Provincial Truth and Reconciliation Statutory Holiday, since September 30th falls on a Saturday in 2023. The MECC

advised FISA that most school districts (not all) will be scheduling their statutory holiday on Monday, October 2nd (the next business day after September 30th).

Independent schools are free to schedule the statutory holiday on a date that works best for their calendars. Recognizing that some independent schools access bus services through their local school district or their families may have children attending both independent and public schools, referencing your local school district calendar would be a recommended practice.

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**March 3, 2023**

This past Tuesday the provincial government presented their 2023–2024 budget. Unlike previous years, education items were not highlighted in Finance Minister Katrine Conroy’s budget speech. However, there were some education budget items that are noteworthy:

·         $212.5M in new funding for K–12 School Food Programs. Independent schools were informed in a Special Deputy Minister’s Bulletin of their inclusion in this funding and the criteria is yet to be established but will be shared soon.

·         $6.5M in new funding for Future Ready Skills Planning. This program is intended to support students in developing skills that will address anticipated workforce needs.

·         $5.4M in new funding for the Health and Care Careers Support Promotion Program. This aligns with this government’s focus on improving health care outcomes through the Health Human Resources Strategy.

Overall, the K–12 operating budget is projected to increase from $8.874B for this school year, to $9.133B for 2023 – 2024 – an increase of $259M. For independent schools, the BC Independent School Act prescribes the funding schools will receive based on their Independent School Group status. The good news is that when school district’s per student funding rates increase, independent schools within that district also proportionally increase.

Unlike this school year, the 2023 – 2024 wage settlements in the public school sector will be incorporated into next year’s per student grants. However, until the district per student funding amounts are known, it is likely prudent to use existing grant figures to inform your 2023 – 2024 budgeting process.

**Independent School Childcare**

The NDP government has shared freely their desire to expand affordable child care options for BC families, and hence the melding of child care and the K-12 sector into one ministry. The planned expansion prioritizes increasing public child care spaces and spaces provided by non-profit organizations BUT, there is a lack of knowledge of the scope of service (daycare, pre-school, before and after school care, infant care….) provided within independent schools or closely associated with independent schools (childcare spaces leased to independent operations or faith organizations connected with schools). Therefore, FISA will be working with the MECC to gather this information from the independent school sector through a sector level environmental scan. The goal of this scan is to obtain a better understanding of independent schools’ participation in child care programming and to produce a resource collection and information guide that will assist these child care providers to be better aware of the opportunities and policies within this growing sector.

In the next little while independent school leaders throughout the province should anticipate receiving a survey-like instrument from FISA to collect the information we need to better understand and inform the possible supports the MECC and FISA could provide to independent school-connected child care providers.

**FISA Provincial Outreach**

Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey have now completed 7 Provincial Outreach Pro-D sessions. If you have not yet had a chance to attend, we hope to see you at one of the 3 remaining sessions. There is no charge to attend, but a $50 “no show” fee is charged to people who register but do not attend to recoup the catering costs of unneeded and uneaten meals.

**Kelowna – April 20, 2023 -**[**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/468140820797)

**\*\*\*New – Nanaimo – May 26, 2023 –**[**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-nanaimo-friday-may-26-2023-tickets-570862393787)

To be scheduled – Chilliwack

**TRAX – GRAD Info Session Recording**

Thank you to the 100 people who attended the info session held recently with Ministry officials highlighting coming changes to TRAX. Please review the recording [available here](https://bcsupportonline.com/playvideo.php?file=myedbc-live-recordings/TRAX-GRAD-2023-Mar-2nd.mp4) if you were unable to attend.

**Compassionate Systems Leadership (CSL)**

CSL explores how intrapersonal, interpersonal, and system awareness competencies can be woven together to strengthen school communities. All independent school personnel are invited to take part in FISA’s free CSL webinar series with Dr. Shirley Giroux, CSL Master Practitioner. These webinars are open to all independent school personnel free of charge.

**CSL #7: April 3, 2023 3:30-5:00 pm (PST) Register**[**HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qdO2sqDIqGNwCuDyrHVOQEnUKDsQ9fxs5)

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Recordings of the previous webinars are available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

To help deepen the CSL learning, we have created a new Community of Reflective Educators – CORE group – which will meet online once a month to dive into the concepts introduced in Dr. Giroux’s webinars. These virtual meet ups will take place on the final Monday of each month February - June from 7:00-8:00 pm (PST). A nominal fee of $40 will be charged to join the remaining 4 CORE learning group sessions. Register for the [CSL-CORE HERE](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/compassionate-systems-leadership-core-meet-up-tickets-570042320927).

**MyEd BC**

FISA supports the freedom for independent schools to choose the student management system they feel will best meet their needs but, as you are aware, the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care is encouraging BC schools to use the Provincial Student Information System (MyEducationBC) for managing student records. As per the Deputy Ministers notice on January 19, 2021, all schools that elected not to enroll and use MyEd BC by September 2022 would be charged $15/student/year by the MECC. You will have noticed this deduction from your January 2023 provincial funding disbursement.

For independent schools looking to implement MyEd BC as a stand-alone SIS or alongside an existing SIS, the FISA iGroup Executive invites you to a free online introduction session to explore MyEd BC. These sessions are an opportunity to see what MyEd BC can provide for your school, and time will be allocated to ask questions of the MyEd Project Manager for Independent Schools.

We will be holding the following sessions:

·         **March 9, 2023 @ 3pm:**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89801439201?pwd=ajQvc3k2N3loN3ZhVXVqSEJrTnV3Zz09>

·         **April 4, 2023 @ 3pm:**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89277925688?pwd=dHNrazhGS1BCQi9jRTFXUkExbDFzUT09>

You are welcome to join any session and attend multiple sessions if desired, no registration is required.

If you would like to view a recording of the previous sessions from two years ago, or garner more information on MyEd BC features, or investigate the implementation process, please go to: <https://bcsupportonline.com/joining-myeducationbc-independent-schools-fisa.html>

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Independent School Project Manager, Andrew Smit at: [andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com)  or visit the FISA iGroup website for updates: <http://bcsupportonline.com/>

**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

Reminder the DAS application due dates are fast approaching **March 16th/April 5th** depending on the region. Application forms are available on the FISA website under the [Services-->Scholarships & Awards](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/) tab. Please promote this scholarship opportunity widely within your secondary school community.

**Erase Training**

For the remainder of the 2022-23 school year, **the Ministry will accept the Scenarios-Based training as fulfilling the Basic VTRA training requirement.**  This course does not meet the Digital Threat Assessment training requirement (i.e., It does not replace the hybrid sessions that combined both courses). Space remains available in the Scenario-Based Learning *erase* training sessions:

·         **Fort St John (Mar. 10 – limited seats available)**

·         **Kamloops (Mar. 13 – session full)**

Secondary school teachers are encouraged to have their classes participate in an ***Establishing Respectful Relationships and Consent in Our Communities***virtual session, taking place **on Mar. 8th**. An evening session for families is also being held.

Registration links for the above sessions are available[**HERE**](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf).

**Learning First Peoples Spring Institute**

FNESC and the FNSA invite independent school educators to take part in their Spring Institute taking place in Vancouver on March 20-22, 2023. The Institute is to help prepare teachers who are going to be teaching English First Peoples grades 10-12, BC First Peoples 12, and elementary/secondary Math teachers plus secondary Science teachers who want to incorporate more First Peoples learning in their courses.

Attendees can participate in all or part of these three offerings:

- English First Peoples grades 10-12 – March 20th

- BC First Peoples 12 – March 21st

- Math & Science First Peoples – March 22nd

There is a registration fee of $30 per session, which must be paid by March 10th to reserve a seat.

More information: <http://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/>

Registration: <https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/event/2023/FNESC-SpringInstitute>

**Indigenous Focused Grad Requirement Pro-D Opportunities**

The English First Peoples grade 10-12 Pro-D sessions continue to roll along. All independent schools that offer graduation programs are encouraged to have a teacher attend to take the information gained back to their colleagues. For more information see [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/professional-learning/conflict-resolution-workshop/).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Region** | **Location** | **Date** | **Attendee Limit** | **Registration** |
| Northern West | **Terrace** | Mar. 10, 2023 | **2**/school | Registration closed |
| Northern East | **Fort St. John** | Apr. 21, 2023 | **3**/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FtStJohnEFP) |
| Fraser Valley | **Harrison Hot Springs** | Apr. 22, 2023 | 1/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HarrisonApr22) |
| Northern Central | **Prince George** | Apr. 29, 2023 | **3**/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PGApr29) |
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**Student & Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) Special Purpose Grant**

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**February 24, 2023**

FISA is pleased to announce that **Arshpreet Kaur** joined our office team as an executive assistant this past Tuesday, and her second day on the job she joined Janette in skillfully hosting our FISA Board meeting. All leaders are aware of the immense value the executive assistant role plays in an organization and we are confident that our FISA office team will continue to provide a high level of service for our members.

I would like to take a few sentences to acknowledge the praiseworthy service of the independent school leaders that serve on the FISA Board of Directors. FISA is a federation of 5 member associations which each supply 3 members to the Board (however, due to the diversity of their membership, the AMS has 6 Board seats). While each Board member is assigned by their respective association, they each bring a broader, independent school sector-wide perspective to the discussions around the Board table, often producing robust, well-informed deliberations, plenty of learning and most often leading to consensus on most issues.

I believe it is important for independent school leaders from around the province to feel confident that the FISA Board functions effectively - through historical precedence, an inclusive design and with adherence to our mission.

Starting late last spring, FISA commenced a strategic planning process that has been informed by consultations with leaders throughout independent schools. The Board’s work is not yet complete, but the process continues, with a goal to have a FISA strategic plan in place for the upcoming school year. FISA is grateful for the role the Board members have played in this planning process and look forward to the pursuit of the goals the strategic plan will provide for our organization.

The FISA Board Roster 2022 – 2023:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FISA Associations** | **Officer** | **Director** | **Director** |
| Association of Christian Schools International BC  (**ACSIBC**) | Phill Hills | Stuart Morris | Vijay Manuel |
|  | | | |
| Associate Member Society of FISA  (**AMS**) | Kent Dykstra | Phil Hudema | Gabe Linder |
| Emily Greenberg | Karine Veldhoen |
| Diana Chalmers |  |
|  | | | |
| Catholic Independent Schools BC  (**CISBC**) | Sandy Marshall | Art Therrien | Chris Yuen |
|  | | | |
| Independent School Association BC  (**ISABC**) | Elizabeth Moore | Kelly Chow | Lisa Evans |
|  | | | |
| Society of Christian Schools BC  (**SCSBC**) | Ed Noot | Charles De Jager | Dave Loewen |

**Independent School Childcare**

The NDP government has shared freely their desire to expand affordable child care options for BC families, and hence the melding of child care and the K-12 sector into one ministry. The planned expansion prioritizes increasing public child care spaces and spaces provided by non-profit organizations BUT, there is a lack of knowledge of the scope of service (daycare, pre-school, before and after school care, infant care….) provided within independent schools or closely associated with independent schools (childcare spaces leased to independent operations or faith organizations connected with schools). Therefore, FISA will be working with the MECC to gather this information from the independent school sector through a sector level environmental scan. The goal of this scan is to obtain a better understanding of independent schools’ participation in child care programming and to produce a resource collection and information guide that will assist these child care providers to be better aware of the opportunities and policies within this growing sector.

In the next little while independent school leaders throughout the province should anticipate receiving a survey-like instrument from FISA to collect the information we need to better understand and inform the possible supports the MECC and FISA could provide to independent school-connected child care providers.

**Compassionate Systems Leadership (CSL)**

CSL explores how intrapersonal, interpersonal, and system awareness competencies can be woven together to strengthen school communities. All independent school personnel are invited to take part in FISA’s free CSL webinar series with Dr. Shirley Giroux, CSL Master Practitioner. These webinars are open to all independent school personnel free of charge.

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**\*\*New\*\*** To help deepen the CSL learning, we are creating a new Community of Reflective Educators – CORE – which will meet online once a month to dive into the concepts introduced in Dr. Giroux’s webinars. These virtual meet ups will take place on the final Monday of each month February - June from 7:00-8:00 pm (PST). A nominal fee of $50 will be charged to join this CORE learning group. Register for the [CSL-CORE HERE.](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/compassionate-systems-leadership-core-meet-up-tickets-554767142457) Please see the attached sheet for more information regarding how coming together in reflective communities helps to leverage change and a sample of the Iceberg Model – the topic of the Feb. 27th virtual meet up.

**MyEd BC**

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**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

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**Erase Training**

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* **Fort St John (Mar. 10)**
* **Kamloops (Mar. 13 – limited seats).**

Secondary school teachers are encouraged to have their classes participate in an ***Establishing Respectful Relationships and Consent in Our Communities*** virtual session, taking place **Feb. 27th – Mar. 8th**. Evening sessions for families are also being held.

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| Region | Location | Date | Attendee Limit | Registration |
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**February 17, 2023**

This week both Janet and I had the pleasure to attend conferences led by our member associations. One of these events was in-person, with over 1,600 attendees, and the other was virtual, with over 1,200 participants. The common thread between these events was the relevance of the sessions they provided. I am often amazed at the support independent school leadership provides to their colleagues, with limited resources, to support their pursuit to be the best professional educator they can be. Countless educational studies point to the direct and premier impact adults have on positive learning and wellbeing outcomes for students. Focused professional development opportunities are just one important way to engage educators in expanding their skill set and therefore, their efficacy in supporting BC learners.

Wishing you all a peaceful and enjoyable Family Day long weekend!

**Compassionate Systems Leadership (CSL)**

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**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

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Secondary school teachers are encouraged to have their classes participate in an *Establishing Respectful Relationships and Consent in Our Communities* virtual session, taking place Feb. 27th – Mar. 8th. Evening sessions for families are also being held.

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Registration: <https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/event/2023/FNESC-SpringInstitute>

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Region** | **Location** | **Date** | **Attendee Limit** | **Registration** |
| Metro Vancouver | **New Westminster** | Feb. 25, 2023 | 1/school | Session Full |
| Northern West | **Terrace** | Mar. 10, 2023 | **2**/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TerraceEFP) |
| Northern East | **Fort St. John** | Apr. 21, 2023 | **2**/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FtStJohnEFP) |
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**February 10, 2023**

Early this week, Lieutenant-Governor, Janet Austin, delivered an optimistic [Throne Speech](https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/legislation-debates-proceedings/42nd-parliament/4th-session/throne-speech) promising British Columbians that even in the face of difficult times, but with a substantial budget surplus from this fiscal year, the government is committed to investing in a stronger future. The planned expansion of K-12 and childcare spaces was reiterated and the challenge of recruiting K-12 teachers and child care workers was touched upon, an area of concern for independent schools as they assess staffing needs for the upcoming school year. The government continues to prioritize greater inclusion through [Truth and Reconciliation](http://chrome-extension/efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https:/www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/ways-to-learn/aboriginal-education/trc-calls-to-action.pdf) initiatives and the [K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan](http://chrome-extension/efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https:/www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/erase/documents/k-12-anti-racism-strategy.pdf).

**Truth and Reconciliation Day**

September 30th is now a BC statutory holiday created to honour the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This year, September 30th falls on a Saturday. At this time, there has been no guidance as to whether schools should be closed on the Friday or the Monday. We await further instruction. The minimum hours of instruction for independent schools remain unchanged: 450 hours for half day K and 850 hours for all other students.

**ArtStarts**

The ArtStarts Artist in Education grant confirmation notices have been emailed to participating schools. If your school submitted an application prior to the Sept. 16, 2022 due date but did not receive a confirmation notice (sent on Feb. 8th) please email [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca). Staff turnover in the FISA office may have resulted in your application being overlooked.

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**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

The provincial DAS program recognizes high school graduates who excel in seven overarching areas: ADST, Community Service, Fine Arts, Indigenous Languages & Cultures, Languages, Physical Activity & Health, and Technical & Trades Training. DAS applications are available on the FISA website under the [Scholarship & Awards tab](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/). Due dates vary by region (March 16th/April 5th). Students graduating from Independent Online Schools should apply in the region where the school is located. Please promote this scholarship opportunity widely within your secondary school community.

**Erase Training**

Space remains available in for the Scenario-Based Learning *erase* training sessions: Chilliwack (Feb. 21), Cranbrook (Feb. 24), Fort St John (Mar. 10), and Kamloops (Mar. 13 – only a couple spots remain).

Secondary school teachers are encouraged to have their classes participate in an *Establishing Respectful Relationships and Consent in Our Communities* virtual session, taking place Feb. 27th – Mar. 8th. Evening sessions for families are also being held.

Registration links for the above sessions are available[**HERE**](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf).

**Learning First Peoples Spring Institute**

FNESC and the FNSA invite independent school educators to take part in their Spring Institute taking place in Vancouver on March 20-22, 2023. The Institute is to help prepare teachers who are going to be teaching English First Peoples grades 10-12, BC First Peoples 12, and elementary/secondary Math teachers plus secondary Science teachers who want to incorporate more First Peoples learning in their courses.

Attendees can participate in all or part of these three offerings:

- English First Peoples grades 10-12 – March 20th

- BC First Peoples 12 – March 21st

- Math & Science First Peoples – March 22nd

There is a registration fee of $30 per session, which must be paid by March 10th to reserve a seat.

More information: <http://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/>

Registration: <https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/event/2023/FNESC-SpringInstitute>

**Indigenous Focused Grad Requirement Pro-D Opportunities**

The English First Peoples grade 10-12 Pro-D sessions continue to roll along. All independent schools that offer graduation programs are encouraged to have a teacher attend to take the information gained back to their colleagues. For more information see [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/professional-learning/conflict-resolution-workshop/).

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| Metro Vancouver | **New Westminster** | Feb. 25, 2023 | 1/school | Session Full |
| Northern West | **Terrace** | Mar. 10, 2023 | **2**/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TerraceEFP) |
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**Student & Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) Special Purpose Grant**

Please report how funds were spent by completing this [SFAF exit survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C35PGK2) by June 30, 2023.  Catholic schools should report expenditures to their Superintendent’s office, not to FISA. Any questions regarding this grant should be directed to FISA via email at [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca).

**February 3, 2023**

FISA had a birthday - as of January 19th FISA turned 57 years old. Way back in 1966 a collection of insightful and aspirational independent school leaders formed FISA. Their trials and successes are chronicled in the book **Justice Achieved** that speaks to their veracity:

*They* (the early leaders) *defied the odds by integrating schools and people with often diametrically opposed convictions into a workable and representative alliance*. (p.88)

Over the years FISA has continued to pride itself in its ability to hold to our mission and act proactively to address both internal and external challenges. As a federation, we have benefited greatly from the work of our founders. Over the years FISA has become even more diverse, which has only added to the strength of our alliance. It is through the dedicated and committed FISA member Board members and the associations and schools they represent, that FISA continues to be an effective voice for BC independent schools - advocating for parental choice, rightful funding and a greater understanding of our school’s contribution to the public good.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FISA!

**ArtStarts**

Although it took longer than usual, FISA received the Artist in Education (AIE) funding from ArtStarts earlier this week. The grant amount received is less than the total eligible expenses submitted by the participating schools. Therefore, the reimbursement rate for 2023-24 will be 61%, instead of the maximum rate of 70%. Participating schools can expect to receive confirmation by Feb. 8th as to their AIE grant amount.

**Compassionate Systems Leadership (CSL)**

It was a treat to reconnect with Dr. Shirley Giroux on Wednesday as part of FISA’s CSL webinar series. Shirley introduced more foundational components of CSL, including the idea of Creative Tension: the space between vision and reality. Attendees were invited to imagine building the education system from scratch. What would it look like? Where might movement towards this vision be happening? Questions worth pondering. A recording of the webinar, along with the previous ones from last year, are available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/). The slide deck will be posted there soon.

FISA will host three more CSL webinars. They are suitable for all school personnel regardless of the role they play in the school community and are offered free of charge. Each webinar is a “stand alone”, so feel free to join the upcoming ones even if you were not able to participate previously.

**CSL #6: March 2, 2023 3:30-5:00 pm (PST) Register**[**HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAldu2przwuHdT272F4Yqiy00DRr_GJAFwi)

**CSL #7: April 3, 2023 3:30-5:00 pm (PST) Register**[**HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qdO2sqDIqGNwCuDyrHVOQEnUKDsQ9fxs5)

**CSL #8: May 16, 2023 3:30-5:00 pm (PST) Register**[**HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcode-qqD4rGdED3fpkJieBYrIlN5DeebQB)

**Learning First Peoples Spring Institute**

FNESC and the FNSA invite independent school educators to take part in their Spring Institute taking place in Vancouver on March 20-22, 2023. The Institute is to help prepare teachers who are going to be teaching English First Peoples grades 10-12, BC First Peoples 12, and elementary/secondary Math teachers plus secondary Science teachers who want to incorporate more First Peoples learning in their courses.

Attendees can participate in all or part of these three offerings:

- English First Peoples grades 10-12 – March 20th

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- Math & Science First Peoples – March 22nd

There is a registration fee of $30 per session, which must be paid by March 10th to reserve a seat.

More information: <http://www.fnesc.ca/lfp-institute/>

Registration: <https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/event/2023/FNESC-SpringInstitute>

**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

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**Erase Training**

Space remains available for the Scenario-Based Learning *erase* training sessions: Courtenay (Feb. 9), Nanaimo (Feb. 10), Chilliwack (Feb. 21), Cranbrook (Feb. 24), Fort St John (Mar. 10), and Kamloops Mar. 13).

Secondary school teachers are encouraged to have their classes participate in an *Establishing Respectful Relationships and Consent in Our Communities* virtual session, taking place Feb. 7th – Mar. 8th. Evening sessions for families are also being held.

Registration links for the above sessions are available[**HERE**](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf).

**Indigenous Focused Grad Requirement Pro-D Opportunities**

The English First Peoples grade 10-12 Pro-D sessions continue to roll along. All independent schools that offer graduation programs are encouraged to have a teacher attend to take the information gained back to their colleagues. For more information see [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/professional-learning/conflict-resolution-workshop/).

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**January 27, 2023**

This past Monday and Tuesday, representatives from each of the FISA associations and key personnel from the Independent Schools Branch of the MECC met to discuss student learning. By necessity, many of the conversations between FISA and the MECC deal with policy and funding issues, and it was refreshing to focus on the essence of why independent schools exist – to enhance the learning experience for the students you serve.

Early this week the MECC also released the [K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/erase/documents/k-12-anti-racism-strategy.pdf). Independent schools in BC serve a diverse population of students and pride themselves in creating a supportive environment for all students. This is a multi-year plan and will bring greater focus and resources to support our duty of care for all children that attend BC K-12 schools.

**Dry Grad 2022-23 Applications due Feb. 1, 2023**

We have recently been notified that the Dry Grad annual fundraising campaign sponsored by the BC Liquor Distribution Branch will take place this year. Independent schools with Grade 12 students (Group 1, 2, 3, and 4) that wish to receive funds from the Dry Grad campaign must complete this short [**application form**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/drygradJan2023) **no later than February 1st 4:00 p.m. (PST).** No further action is needed from schools that have already submitted a tentative Dry Grad application form. If you are unsure whether your tentative form was submitted, please complete the online form as a failsafe. Donated funds will be divided by the number of graduating students from the participating schools (public and independent) within the local region where the funds were collected. FISA thanks the BCLDB for continuing to support school efforts in arranging alcohol-free graduation celebrations.

**Compassionate Systems Leadership (CSL)**

We are looking forward to reconnecting with Dr. Shirley Giroux on Feb. 1st to resume our CLS webinar series. These webinars are suitable for all school personnel regardless of the role they play in the school community and are offered free of charge. The session will be recorded for those unable to attend live and posted on the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

**Compassionate Systems Leadership webinar Feb. 1, 2023, 3:30-5:00 pm (PST)** **Register** [**HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0rcOyoqz8uGNTtq-DweDa1mLJFP0IXhdUG)**.**

**Learning First Peoples Spring Institute**

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- Math & Science First Peoples – March 22nd

There is a registration fee of $30 per session, which must be paid by March 10th to reserve a seat.

Register at <https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/event/2023/FNESC-SpringInstitute>

**FISA Provincial Outreach**

As we write this, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, FISA Mental Health Coordinators, are wrapping up the 6th Provincial Outreach session with the wonderful people in Cranbrook. Despite some travel challenges, which included an overnight stay in the Calgary airport for Michelle, we are happy to be touring the province and meeting people in-person to advance the cause of caring for each other. If you have not yet had a chance to attend a Provincial Outreach, we hope to see you at one of the 4 remaining sessions. There is no charge to attend, but a $50 “no show” fee is charged to people who register but do not attend to recoup the catering costs of unneeded and uneaten meals.

**Kamloops – February 17, 2023** – **session full**

**Kelowna – April 20, 2023 -** [**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/468140820797)

To be scheduled – Chilliwack & Nanaimo

**Accessible BC Act**

Independent schools are classified as “Accessible Organizations” under the [Accessible BC Act](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019). There are 3 main requirements that accessible organizations must fulfill: 1) Establish an Accessibility Committee, 2) Develop an Accessibility Plan/Resources, 3) Create Feedback Mechanisms. There is a great amount of flexibility in how best to meet these requirements, including joining with other organizations to maximize efforts. The five FISA Associations will be working with the BC Disability Alliance to co-develop templates and guidance with more information forthcoming.

**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

The provincial DAS program recognizes high school graduates who excel in seven overarching areas: ADST, Community Service, Fine Arts, Indigenous Languages & Cultures, Languages, Physical Activity & Health, and Technical & Trades Training. DAS applications are available on the FISA website under the [Scholarship & Awards tab](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/). Due dates vary by region (March 16th/April 5th). Students graduating for Independent Online Schools should apply in the region where the school is located. Please promote this scholarship opportunity widely within your secondary school community.

**Student & Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) Special Purpose Grant**

Please report how funds were spent by completing this [**SFAF exit survey**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C35PGK2)by June 30, 2023. Catholic schools should report expenditures to their Superintendent’s office, not to FISA.Any questions regarding this grant should be directed to FISA via email at [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca)

**Erase Training**

Space remains available in each one of the 8 upcoming *erase* Scenario-Based Learning series scheduled to run from Jan. 26th to Mar. 13th. Sessions will be held in Vancouver, Delta, Courtenay, Nanaimo, Chilliwack, Cranbrook, Fort St John, and Kamloops. These full-day in-person training sessions explore best practices when responding to threat related behaviour and other school safety related matters through tabletop learning using real cases.

The MECC is also hosting virtual one-hour sessions for grade 8-12 students on the topic of Establishing Respectful Relationships and Consent in Our Communities. There are 10 dates/times to choose from between Feb. 2nd – Mar. 8th. Teachers may register on behalf of their class and stream the event for the students to view together.

The full *erase* training schedule and registration links for the above sessions is available[**HERE**](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf).

**Indigenous Focused Grad Requirement Pro-D Opportunities**

The in-person workshops designed to supports schools in implementing the [Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/indigenous-focused-graduation-requirements) have been met with rave reviews thus far. Given the demand for this training, from both public and independent school educators, seating is limited, and registration is managed. Online Learning Schools are included in the allocation based on the region where the school is located. Educators whose residency differs from the school’s location may join the waitlist in the region where they reside.

FISA has received a $68K grant to be used for printing resources, assisting with hosting costs and to partially subsidizing travel. Remaining grant money will be distributed in early June 2023 among the participating independent schools to offset TOC costs or to people who attend outside of normal school hours. It is impossible to know the exact amount schools will receive for each attendee, but we estimate it will be around $150/person.

For more information see [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/professional-learning/conflict-resolution-workshop/).

**Schools are only allowed to attend a workshop in the region where the school is located.** Request to attend out of region will be allowed if space permits (waitlisted).

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| **Region** | **Location** | **Date** | **Attendee Limit** | **Registration** |
| Metro Vancouver\* (Including Surrey) | **New Westminster** (choice of dates – duplicate content) | Jan. 28, 2023    Feb. 25, 2023 | 1/school | Session full    [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NewWestFeb25) |
| Vancouver Island North | **Courtenay** | Feb. 10, 2023 | 1/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/courtenayEFP) |
| Vancouver Island South | **Victoria** | Feb. 13, 2023 | 1/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VictoriaEFP) |
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| Northern Central | **Prince George** | Apr. 29, 2023 | **2**/school | [Registration Link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PGApr29) |
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**FISA Weekly Update Archive**

We have established an archive of the FISA weekly updates which is accessible through the “members only” section of the <https://fisabc.ca/> website. Please contact [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca) if you have difficulty logging in.

**FISA Update** **January 20, 2023**

By mid-January, it seems that the memories of Winter Break are already tucked away, and the busyness of school has resumed, especially in secondary schools with Provincial Assessments taking place next week, term end rushing up (accompanied by the swell of last-minute assignment submissions), and course selection angst spreading among friend groups as they attempt to coordinate schedules. The FISA office is also facing a burst of activity as we delve into understanding the full effect of the inclusion of child care into the Ministry of Education, work to optimize accessibility in the independent school sector (see below) and finalize our strategic plan during an upcoming retreat in Victoria, where we also anticipate having a number of meetings between Ministry officials and the FISA Board. No matter how pressing your to-do list or how many people are waiting at your door for a “quick chat” we remind everyone of the power of breath. You are exactly where you are meant to be, surrounded by good people doing their best. Plus, Spring Break is on its way.

**Accessible BC Act**

Independent schools are classified as “Accessible Organizations” under the [Accessible BC Act](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019) which received Royal Assent in June 2021 to be enacted by Sept. 2023. There are 3 main requirements that accessible organizations must fulfill: 1) Establish an Accessibility Committee, 2) Develop an Accessibility Plan/Resources, 3) Create Feedback Mechanisms. However, there is a great amount of flexibility in how best to meet these requirements, including joining with other organizations to maximize efforts. The five FISA Associations will be working with the BC Disability Alliance to co-develop templates and guidance so that independent schools can create environments that optimize accessibility without each school authority “recreating the wheel”. More information forthcoming.

**Student & Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) Special Purpose Grant**

Depending on the SFAF amount received, determining the nature and scope of the needs faced by school families can be a daunting task. Participating schools are reminded that they have until June 30, 2023 to disburse the funds, and that it may take some schools longer than others to coordinate support plans. Please remember to report how funds were spent by completing this [**SFAF exit survey**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C35PGK2)**.** **Note: Catholic schools should report expenditures to their Superintendent’s office, not to FISA.**  Any questions regarding this grant should be directed to FISA via email at [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca)

**FISA Is Hiring**

The search for an Executive Assistant to join the small but mighty FISA office staff continues. We would appreciate referrals of any quality candidates that independent school leaders may be aware of. Please see the job posting on the [FISA Employment webpage](https://fisabc.ca/employment/) for more details.

**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

FISA manages the District/Authority Scholarship adjudication process for the independent school sector. This year 427 awards, in the amount of $1,250 each, are available for grade 12 students graduating from Group 1, 2 and 4 schools. DAS applications are available on the FISA website under the [Scholarship & Awards tab](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/). Due dates vary by region (March 16th/April 5th). Students graduating for Independent Online Schools should apply in the region where the school is located.

**Compassionate Systems Leadership (CSL)**

FISA (along with the 58 people who have already registered) is excited to resume our Compassionate Systems Leadership (CLS) webinar series with Dr. Shirley Giroux. The first session for this year will take place on **Wed., Feb. 1st from 3:30 - 5:00 pm (PST) via Zoom.** This webinar is offered to FISA member schools at no charge and will be recorded for people unable to attend live.

CSL is premised on the notion that in order to support student well-being, adults must have the tools and practices to support their own well-being. CLS interweaves self-leadership, leading relationally, and systems thinking. Dr. Giroux introduces some of the main tools of CLS and shows how they can be used in a personal and professional context. These webinars are suitable for all school personnel regardless of the role they play in the school community. Recordings of last year’s webinars are available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

**Compassionate Systems Leadership webinar Feb. 1st from 3:30-5:00 Register** [**HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0rcOyoqz8uGNTtq-DweDa1mLJFP0IXhdUG)**.**

**FISA Provincial Outreach**

The Victoria Provincial Outreach session held earlier this week marked the half-way point as it was our 5th out of 10 planned Pro-D events. FISA is proud to be a provincial organization and traveling through the province affirms that no matter where a school is located everyone is committed to making sure students and staff are supported in their mental health and wellness. If you have not yet had a chance to attend a Provincial Outreach, we hope to see you at one of the 5 remaining sessions. There is no charge to attend a Provincial Outreach, but a $50 “no show” fee is charged to people who register but do not attend to recoup the catering costs of unneeded and uneaten meals.

**Cranbrook – January 27, 2023** – session full

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The full *erase* training schedule and registration links for the above events is available[**HERE**](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf).

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**FISA Update** **January 13, 2023**

On behalf of Jamie Morris and Michell Hussey I would like to thank our independent school colleagues that have participated in our Provincial Outreach this school year. This past week we were in Cloverdale (thank you to Traditional Learning Academy Online for graciously hosting the event) and next week we are taking the show on the road to Victoria. It is truly a pleasure to gather as learning professionals to participate in our own personal learning. An added benefit of our Provincial Outreaches is that they bring together educators from our diverse and unique membership of schools, to share perspectives and best practices that promote the Imperative of Care for your school communities.

For those attending the FISA Forum that follows the Provincial Outreach session in Victoria, there will be a slight change to the schedule, with the Forum starting at **3:30 instead of 4:00 PM**. I encourage school leaders to attend the Forum and bring any questions they may have regarding independent schools or FISA advocacy initiatives.

We look forward to spending time with other independent school colleagues from around the province so please check out and register (below) for an upcoming Provincial Outreach session near you!

**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

FISA manages the District/Authority Scholarship adjudication process for the independent school sector. This year 427 awards, in the amount of $1,250 each, are available for grade 12 students graduating from Group 1, 2 and 4 independent schools. DAS applications are available on the FISA website under the [Scholarship & Awards tab](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/). Due dates vary by region. Students graduating from Independent Online Schools should apply in the region where the school is located.

**Student & Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) Special Purpose Grant**

Many independent schools were able to provide a bit of additional cheer over the holidays to families in need through the Student & Family Assistance Fund. As a reminder, schools must expend the funds by June 30, 2023. Participating schools must report how their funds were dispersed by completing this [SFAF exit survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C35PGK2). **Note: Catholic schools should report expenditures to their Superintendent’s office, not to FISA.**

If you are unsure about the receipt of the funds for your school, please be aware that the Ministry combined the SFAF amount with the fall Supplemental Special Needs payment. A confirmation of deposit would have been sent to your school authority on or around Nov. 30th (see [here](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/IndSchoolAuthority.do) to see the email address on file for your authority.) The deposit confirmation will have a line item identifying the SFAF funding amount deposited. Any questions regarding this grant should be directed to FISA via email at [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca)

**FISA Is Hiring**

As mentioned in the December 16th Update, Marina, one of our executive assistants, has left her position to pursue other career opportunities. Therefore, FISA has begun the search ([posted on Indeed](https://ca.indeed.com/Executive-Assistant-jobs-in-Vancouver,-BC?vjk=80d6ceb5fce3f21c&advn=680939513401884)) for a new executive assistant and would appreciate referrals of any quality candidates that independent school leaders may be aware of. Please direct any enquiries to me at [shawn@fisabc.ca](mailto:shawn@fisabc.ca).

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FISA is excited to resume our Compassionate Systems Leadership (CLS) webinar series with Dr. Shirley Giroux. The first session for this year will take place on **Wed., Feb. 1st from 3:30 - 5:00 pm (PST) via Zoom.** This webinar is offered to FISA member schools at no charge and will be recorded for people unable to attend live.

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The Ministry has introduced a new *erase* Scenario-Based Learning series which will take place in-person at 8 locations across the province in January – March. These full-day in-person training sessions explore best practices when responding to threat related behaviour and other school safety related matters through tabletop learning using real cases. The full *erase* training schedule and registration links for the Scenario-based Learning sessions is available [HERE](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf).

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The in-person workshops designed to supports schools in implementing the [Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/indigenous-focused-graduation-requirements) have been met with rave reviews thus far. Given the demand for this training, from both public and independent school educators, seating is limited, and registration is managed. Online Learning Schools are included in the allocation based on the region where the school is located. Online educators whose residency differs from the school’s location may join the waitlist in the region where they reside.

FISA has received a $68K grant to be used for printing resources, assisting with hosting costs and to partially subsidizing travel. Remaining grant money will be distributed in early June 2023 among the participating independent schools to offset TOC costs or to people who attend outside of normal school hours. It is impossible to know the exact amount schools will receive for each attendee, but we estimate it will be around $150/person.

For more information see [**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/professional-learning/conflict-resolution-workshop/)**.**

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**FISA Update  January 6, 2023**

Happy New Year!

Most of our member schools returned this week after what I hope was a restful and joyous winter break. Though I hesitate to do so, I recall how last year at this time the Omicron variant required a 4-day delayed return to school – as public health and K-12 guidelines were being updated and refined. Needless to say, I believe everyone would agree that we are in a far better place this year than we were in January 2022!

As is the usual practice, the MECC released the recalculated/final per student grant allocations just before the break. FISA subsequently produced a summary comparing the preliminary and final 2022 – 2023 grants for distribution to our member schools. While a vast majority of school districts (and therefore the independent schools within their catchment) will receive an increase in their per student grants for this year, I was anticipating a greater increase based on recent contract settlements between the BC Public School Employers Association and the unions that represent the public school workforce. FISA has reached out to the MECC asking for clarification on whether these wage increases were factored into the final per student grant amounts – and the answer is no. Moving forward, FISA will continue to receive updates from the MECC with regards to this apparent “gap” in funding and will continue to advocate for independent schools’ proportional inclusion if additional funding is directed to the K-12 sector.

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**Erase Training**

The Ministry has introduced a new *erase* Scenario-Based Learning series which will take place in-person at 8 locations across the province in January – March. These full-day in-person training sessions explore best practices when responding to threat related behaviour and other school safety related matters through tabletop learning using real cases. Although this erase training does **not** meet compliance requirements for independent school inspection purposes, we encourage schools to participate. The full *erase* training schedule and registration links for the Scenario-based Learning sessions is available [HERE](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf).

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**FISA Update December 16, 2022**

I know many of you will be reading this message after a hectic pre-holiday break week – so our goal is to keep this week’s update more human-focused and less business-like.

As this is the last FISA update of 2022 I would like to offer our appreciation for the immense service our sector provided to your families and our province, through some challenging times. Early last year the Omicron strain of COVID-19 saw substantial increases in respiratory illness that impacted attendance of students and staff members. In hindsight it is incredible the extent to which independent schools were able to weather this storm (with uncountable sacrifices) to provide continuity of learning in their communities. Many school leaders also had to navigate the divergent views within their communities – on issues like vaccination status and mask wearing, which had the potential to be or the actuality of being polarizing, taking energies away from our common purpose to provide holistic support for all learners. Thank you all for your meritorious service in 2022!

I would also like to acknowledge Bev Pulyk who ended her position on the FISA Board in November. Bev served as a CIS representative on the Board for the past 12 years and provided commendable service as a Board executive, embracing the Treasurer’s role and offering thoughtful, well-informed contributions to the Board discussions. On behalf of independent schools and the FISA Board, I offer Bev our best wishes as she now embraces retirement!

It is with mixed feelings that I announce that Marina Cholakian will be leaving our FISA office team to pursue other career opportunities. As many of you who have had the pleasure to work with Marina will know, this is a big loss for us. Her generous and pleasant nature, tremendous work ethic, curiosity and sense of humour were greatly appreciated during her 3+ years with our organization. FISA wishes Marina great success and our best wishes as she continues are her life’s journey – she will be dearly missed by her FISA family!

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**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

The application period for the Child Care New Spaces grant ends January 2023. If you have been considering applying, now is the time to move on it! More information is available [**HERE**](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/space-creation-funding/childcare-new-spaces-fund)**.**

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Warm holidays wishes, Shawn & Janet

**FISA Update December 9, 2022**

This week Premier Eby announced his new Cabinet which resulted in the appointment of a new Education Minister – The Honourable Rachna Singh. FISA sent a congratulatory welcome note to Minister Singh and look forward to a face-to-face meeting with her in the near future.

The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside will continue to be a part of this government’s Cabinet, serving as the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. Minister Whiteside served as the Minister of Education since her election in October 2020. I offer my sincere appreciation for the work that Minister Whiteside completed during her tenure as the Minister of Education. Her mandate letter from former Premier Horgan was ambitious; expanding child care services to include before and after school care on school grounds, advancing the government’s plans for Truth and Reconciliation, revising and improving online learning, prioritizing investments in mental health and wellness for students and staff…. all while our planet was dealing with a very intrusive pandemic. FISA offers our best wishes to Minister Whiteside as she provides leadership to her new portfolio.

FISA would also like to express our sincere appreciation to Lucas Corwin, who will be leaving his post as Executive Director of BC Independent Schools to join the MECC’s Governance and Analytics branch. Lucas deserves our praise for his appetite to become quickly and totally immersed in the independent school sector and for the thoughtful and insightful voice he brought to FISA and MECC discussions. Grant Sheppard and Alan Schroeder will serve as the Acting Executive Director, ISB (Grant until mid-January, followed by Alan who will serve until the position is filled).

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**Fraser Health Town Hall**

Schools in all regions may find it beneficial to watch the recording of the recent Fraser Health Authority Town Hall with Dr. Zbar as the [BCCDC provincial surveillance data](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/data-reports/respiratory-diseases) which she reviewed is applicable to all. The data shows that while clinical indicators of acute respiratory illness (seasonal influenza, RSV) in children continue to increase in BC, the rate of growth has slowed recently and that the share of visits for COVID-19 related symptoms remains stable. Changes to the [August 25th Communicable Disease Guidelines](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-safe-schools) are not anticipate and schools should continue to follow their plans (proper respiratory etiquette, mask friendly environments, staying home when ill, etc.).The recording of the Town Hall is available in the FISA Video Gallery [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

**Student & Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) Special Purpose Grant**

FISA is receiving some very inspirational stories of how independent schools are using the SFAF to support K-12 students and families and reduce some portion of the stress associated with their financial struggles brought on by abnormally high inflation.

Just a reminder to track how your school allocates these targeted funds. This data is required for the accountability report that will be submitted to the MECC before the school year-end. An outline of the spending criteria is attached along with a sample of the report template. The [SFAF exit survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C35PGK2) is open for school authorities that have finished dispersing their allocation. **Note: Catholic schools should report expenditures to their Superintendent’s office, not to FISA.**

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For more information see [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/professional-learning/conflict-resolution-workshop/).

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**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

The application period for the Child Care New Spaces grant ends January 2023. If you have been considering applying, now is the time to move on it! More information is available [**HERE**](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/space-creation-funding/childcare-new-spaces-fund)**.**

**FISA Update December 2, 2022**

It’s official, the Lower Mainland does not do snow well!

This came to the fore at the BCSTA conference that FISA President, Ed Noot and I attended last night. In speaking to a trustee from a northern district they were shocked that 10-20cm of snow could cause such havoc in the Vancouver area. It reminded me of the uniqueness and importance of a localized, regional perspective. Snowfall has a different impact in areas where 10cm or more of snow is a reality for 5-months of the year, versus coastal communities that may see a handful of days where snow hits the ground (and roads) and stays.

FISA often speaks of the richness bestowed on our organization due to the diversity of our schools (faith-based schools, First Nations schools, pedagogically focused schools, online schools…) but we don’t as often speak to our regional diversity. Unlike public school districts that are assigned a certain geographical region, FISA proudly advocates for independent schools from all corners of our province. This geographical diversity broadens our knowledge of the concerns that are common and those that are unique to certain regions of the province. Transportation issues are certainly different for schools that face few weather challenges and have a 10km daily route when compared to a school that experiences more harsh weather and a 100Km daily route. Teacher and staff recruitment challenges can also be unique. Northern, more remote and smaller communities (with no Costco within 200km) have different recruitment challenges than schools from Metro areas where living costs may be a deterrent for staff, especially younger workers entering the education field. Heating costs, access to Pro D, internet connectivity and many other issues may have unique geographical contexts.

FISA truly values our broad geographical membership and believes that our regional diversity is one of our strengths and allows us to advocate effectively for independent schools with an informed, provincial lens.

**Student & Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) Special Purpose Grant**

Just in time to add some cheer to the upcoming holiday season, the SFAF amounts have been electronically deposited into the bank accounts of the participating School Authorities (Authorities that operate Group 3 schools should watch their mail for a cheque from the Ministry). Although this grant generated a fair amount of work for the FISA office and our associations, we know that schools will be putting this money to good use to support families having a difficult time making ends meet during these inflationary times – making all the effort worth it. Questions on this grant should be directed to FISA via email at [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca).

**FISA Provincial Outreach**

The FISA Mental Health coordinators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey are hosting professional development opportunities on mental health and wellness throughout the province this school year. Join us to explore how to center school mental health education and supports around the concept of "care" without overburdening staff.

**Schedule of Provincial Outreach**

**Pro-D Sessions 9:00 am – 3:30 pm**

**Surrey – January 12, 2023**[**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-surrey-thursday-january-12-2023-tickets-445785234637)

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**Kamloops – February 17, 2023 (more information to follow)**

**Kelowna – April 20, 2023**[**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/468140820797)

These sessions will be held in-person, lunch will be served, and they are free to attend.

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The first of the planned ten in-person workshops designed to support schools in implementing the [Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/indigenous-focused-graduation-requirements) was a great success. Given the demand for this training, from both public and independent school educators, seating is limited, and registration is managed. Online Learning Schools are included in the allocation based on the region where the school is located. Online educators whose residency differs from the school’s location may join the waitlist in the region where they reside.

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**Building Better Practices for Schools: Protecting Children**

Harris & Co has provided FISA with the following resources which schools may find informative.

·         [Building Better Practices for Schools: Protecting Children](https://sites-harrisco.vuturevx.com/19/446/_uploads/Child%20Sexual%20Abuse%20and%20Victimization%20by%20K-12%20School%20Personnel%20in%20Canada%202nd%20edition%20(2017-2022).pdf)

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**FISA Update - November 25, 2022**

Wednesday, November 23rd was a very busy day for FISA - the office staff and Board members (and some invited association guests). The day started with our semi-annual meeting with the executives from the Independent Schools Branch and other divisions of the MECC. This meeting is always informative as the agenda is co-created and addresses the topical issues concerning the K-12 sector and specifically independent schools. The FISA Board and the MECC honour the respectful relationships that have been nurtured for over 50 years, which allows both parties to sometimes share differing perspectives and rationales on educational matters with an understanding that we are united in pursuing what is best for BC learners.

One of the items on the agenda addressed a question that many school leaders within the independent sector have been asking with regards to the [draft K-12 Student Reporting Policy](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2021/09/Draft-K-12-Student-Reporting-Policy.pdf), and its implications for independent schools. The MECC announced that independent schools will not be mandated to adhere to the revised policy, with the proviso that independent schools with assessment and reporting practices that do not align with the Reporting Order, will follow the spirit of the Ministry’s researched-based direction (meaningful and regular communication with learners and parents, assessments that focus on proficiency in relation to learning standards, and to improve learner engagement through self-assessment). While presently many independent schools follow the existing reporting policy, FISA is pleased that independent school authorities will have the freedom to incorporate sound assessment practices that reflect the ministry’s revised assessment, evaluation and reporting foundational principles, while also honouring the school’s unique context and assessment practices.

You should anticipate an update on the K-12 Reporting Policy and supplemental school and parent resources coming from the MECC over the next couple of months.

**FISA Annual General Meeting**

FISA hosted our AGM this week (November 23rd) and each year the 5 association delegates vote on the election of Officers for the upcoming year. The role of FISA Officer requires additional dedication to the work of FISA and on behalf of independent schools I offer our sincere appreciation to this year’s FISA Officers:

·         President – Ed Noot (SCSBC)

·         Vice-president – Elizabeth Moore (ISABC)

·         Treasurer – Phill Hills (ACSIBC)

·         Secretary – Kent Dykstra (AMS)

·         Officer-at-large – Sandy Marshall (CISBC)

**Student & Family Assistance Fund (SFAF) Special Purpose Grant**

Independent school authorities who choose to participate in the Student & Family Assistance fund (previously referred to as the Affordability Grant) can expect to receive a MECC bank deposit on or before November 30th. Each participating school will also receive from FISA, or their Association Office, an email notification stating the school’s final grant amount. By accepting the grant, schools and authorities agree to expend the funds in alignment with eligible spending criteria and agree to complete a summary report identifying how the funds were spent (e.g., total amount used per category -food security, access to school programs, school supplies, transportation, etc.) Questions on this grant should be directed to FISA via email at [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca).

FISA thanks the MECC for including independent schools in this special initiative to reduce the burden on families struggling to make ends meet during this economic downturn.

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***erase* Pro-D – Fundamentals of Digital Threat Assessment – One-day, in-person training**

Fundamentals of Digital Threat Assessment® (DTA) is for participants who are new to the digital world and introduces them to the concept of DTA to help build an understanding of its importance within the practice of Threat Assessment. Participants will have the opportunity to apply DTA Fundamentals to case scenarios currently relevant in BC schools.

**Date: November 30, 2022**

**Time**: 9:00 am – 3:30 pm (PST)

**Venue**: Education Learning Centre – 1080 Winslow Ave. **Coquitlam**

**Register**[**HERE**](https://event-wizard.com/FundamentalsofDTANov3020222/0/register/?r=)

Note: This course does **not**meet Basic DTA independent school inspection requirements. It is ideal for people who are interested in learning more about the DTA process but are do not hold the role of Safe School Coordinator at their school. People who are identified as SSCs should attend the Overview of the Provincial Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol and Digital Threat Assessment (DTA) training to fulfill inspection requirements.

Access the 2022-23 **erase training schedule**[**HERE**](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf)**.**

Slides from the recent Safe School Coordinators Conference are available on the *erase* site[**HERE**](https://www.bcedextranet.gov.bc.ca/erase/)**.**

username: erasetraining / password: safeschools2018

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**Youth Development Instrument (YDI)**

The [YDI](http://chartlab.ca/about-ydi/) is a self-reported questionnaire completed online by students in Grades 10 - 12. It provides a school-level report that offers insights into the health and well-being of young people with an emphasis on childhood experiences and mental health. The YDI report provides schools with research-based data to help inform policies and practices that

support health development for youth. Participating in the YDI is free. Contact [ydi@sfu.ca](mailto:ydi@sfu.ca). for more information or to register your school.

To view a recording of the YDI information webinar hosted by SCSBC, click [here](https://sfu.zoom.us/rec/share/eHe36Yi7xaiMdkHfrpCOEDRWu5sLl9O_e6zKfGmvrhLYkEJEQzdtaFvcONV5ajcR.G2KSQMvRtzV-UmRo) and use the PW: **sP0.cd**

**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

Funds remain available for the Child Care New Spaces grant. More information is available [**HERE**](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/space-creation-funding/childcare-new-spaces-fund)**.**

**FISA Update - November 18, 2022**

In certain areas of our province we are hearing from some schools that absence levels are higher than normal, and primarily due to respiratory infections and the flu. A robust flu season (when compared to the last two years) was anticipated by BC health officials, based on the flu season experience in the southern hemisphere. The public health recommendations remain the same for individuals and school communities; be aware of any symptoms, wash your hands regularly and stay home when you are ill. As was established last spring, mask or non-mask usage is a personal choice that will be made without any stigma attached. There is no requirement to report absenteeism levels to the Health Authorities, FISA or the MECC.

**SET-BC Student Applications for Winter 2022**

Due Wednesday, November 23rd, 2022 @ 4:00 pm. (\*Note applications are time-stamped)

**Please see the following message from SET-BC regarding the Winter intake cycle.**

**Note there have been significant changes in the process.**

·  **Assistive Technology Loan and SETBC Educator Support**

·  **Assistive Technology Loan Only**

**On-line application**[**https://www.setbc.org/student-service-request/**](https://www.setbc.org/student-service-request/)

There are no hard copy submissions, but ensure all supporting documents are uploaded to the on-line application before submitting.

**Indicate DISTRICT 100 – Independent Schools** Do not indicate the public school district where your school is located or your application may be misdirected and therefore not included for adjudication by the independent school committee.

**District Partners:** Doug Stam [dstam@timothychristian.ca](mailto:dstam@timothychristian.ca)  [(604) 794-7114](https://www.google.com/search?gs_ssp=eJwNyEsOQDAUAMDYcgmJWHv90HIEt6jq56WliTbB7Znl1M3gBlJcgPnOUC09PCOXfFI745QIYBtb4NGTkcJaYpmkYjbb2hU8UvFvq_2FuaA626x9SvEPjBFvpcMHjo4cbw&q=timothy+christian+school+chilliwack&rlz=1C1GCEA_enCA1015CA1015&oq=timothy+christian+school+&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j46i175i199i512j0i512j46i175i199i512l2j0i512l2j46i175i199i512j0i512.5624j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&safe=active&ssui=on) / Nicole Regush [nregush@cisva.bc.ca](mailto:nregush@cisva.bc.ca) (604) 683 9331

**Application Information:**

·         All Student Applications (Service Requests) are created and submitted [**online this year**](https://www.setbc.org/student-service-request/)**.** Supporting documents for Student Applications must be uploaded to the actual application while it was being completed online.

·         An IEP MUST be included

·         If you need to add more info to an application, you will need to resubmit everything again. Wait until you have a complete package before starting submission.

·         Has the district/school team had a chance to fully assess the student’s needs (i.e., if the student is just starting Kindergarten, how well are this child’s needs known)?

·         Please ensure the applications are filled out with as much detail as possible. If key details are missing, the application could be rejected.

**Last Call! MDI**

The deadline for schools to sign up to take part in the 2022/23 [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](https://earlylearning.ubc.ca/monitoring-system/mdi/mdi-overview/) is **Friday, November 25th**. Remember, FISA is covering the cost for all grade 8s to participate in the MDI this year. Schools may also arrange to have other grades (4 – 7) participate for a nominal fee of $550/grade level. The MDI can serve as an important source of data for schools to consider as part of their continuous improvement planning. **Indicate your interest in participating in the 2022/23 MDI**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQUQDpyMlpYDjknU2FUXfDrytrd0DbFToN8RWmGLXitek1YQ/viewform)**.**

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

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These sessions will be held in-person, lunch will be served, and they are free to attend.

In the past, a Regional Tour, with FISA and Ministry representatives, has accompanied the Provincial Outreach. Unfortunately, Ministry personnel were unable to free up time this year to participate. In lieu of the usual evening Regional Tour, we will hold a short FISA Forum immediately following the Pro-D event at each of the host schools. At the Forum, Shawn Chisholm, Executive Director will provide a sector update and overview of FISA advocacy efforts. No registration is required to attend the Forum.

**Indigenous Focused Grad Requirement Pro-D Opportunities**

Over the past couple of months, FISA has been working alongside the MECC, BCSSA, and FNESC to develop regional Pro-D workshops to assist schools in preparing to meet the new [Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/indigenous-focused-graduation-requirements). We are pleased to announce that ten in-person Pro-D workshops focused on teaching English First Peoples 10-12 will be held around the province.

Space is limited and waitlist will be maintained. We request Principals and HOS assist in determining who is best suited to attend. Online Learning Schools are included in the allocation based on the region where the school is located. Online educators whose residency differs from the school’s location may join the waitlist in the region where they reside.

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***erase* Pro-D – Fundamentals of Digital Threat Assessment – One-day, in-person training**

Fundamentals of Digital Threat Assessment® (DTA) is for participants who are new to the digital world and introduces them to the concept of DTA to help build an understanding of its importance within the practice of Threat Assessment. Participants will have the opportunity to apply DTA Fundamentals to case scenarios currently relevant in BC schools.

**Date: November 30, 2022**

**Time**: 9:00 am – 3:30 pm (PST)

**Venue**: Education Learning Centre – 1080 Winslow Ave. **Coquitlam**

**Register**[**HERE**](https://event-wizard.com/FundamentalsofDTANov3020222/0/register/?r=)

Note: This course does **not**meet Basic DTA independent school inspection requirements. It is ideal for people who are interested in learning more about the DTA process but do not hold the role of Safe School Coordinator at their school. People who are identified as SSCs should attend the Overview of the Provincial Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol and Digital Threat Assessment (DTA) training to fulfill inspection requirements.

Access the 2022-23 **erase training schedule**[**HERE**](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf)**.**

Slides from the recent Safe School Coordinators Conference are available on the *erase* site[**HERE**](https://www.bcedextranet.gov.bc.ca/erase/)**.**

username: erasetraining / password: safeschools2018

**Building Better Practices for Schools: Protecting Children**

Harris & Co has provided FISA with the following resources which schools may find informative.

·         [Building Better Practices for Schools: Protecting Children](https://sites-harrisco.vuturevx.com/19/446/_uploads/Child%20Sexual%20Abuse%20and%20Victimization%20by%20K-12%20School%20Personnel%20in%20Canada%202nd%20edition%20(2017-2022).pdf)

·         [Harris & Co Education Law Conference 2021 Resource Guide](https://sites-harrisco.vuturevx.com/19/446/_uploads/2021%20Education%20Conference%20Resource%20Guide.pdf)

**Youth Development Instrument (YDI)**

The [YDI](http://chartlab.ca/about-ydi/) is a self-reported questionnaire completed online by students in Grades 10 - 12. It provides a school-level report that offers insights into the health and well-being of young people with an emphasis on childhood experiences and mental health. The YDI report provides schools with research-based data to help inform policies and practices that support health development for youth. Participating in the YDI is free. Contact [ydi@sfu.ca](mailto:ydi@sfu.ca). for more information or to register your school.

To view a recording of the YDI information webinar hosted by SCSBC, click [here](https://sfu.zoom.us/rec/share/eHe36Yi7xaiMdkHfrpCOEDRWu5sLl9O_e6zKfGmvrhLYkEJEQzdtaFvcONV5ajcR.G2KSQMvRtzV-UmRo) and use the PW: **sP0.cd**

**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

Funds remain available for the Child Care New Spaces grant. More information is available [**HERE**](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/space-creation-funding/childcare-new-spaces-fund)**.**

**FISA Update - November 10, 2022**

This is a short week due to the time-honoured commitment where Canadian citizens remember the sacrifices of those who served, volunteered, fought, and died to secure freedom for future generations. Since I no longer work in a school, I miss witnessing the impactful assemblies I was previously fortunate to attend.

To all independent schools, thank you for your efforts to ensure your communities remember those who valiantly sacrificed and served the citizens of Canada.

**SET-BC Student Applications for Winter 2022**Due Wednesday, November 23rd, 2022 @ 4:00 pm. (\*Note applications are time-stamped)

**Please see the following message from SET-BC regarding the Winter intake cycle.**

**Note there have been significant changes in the process.**

**SET-BC Student Based-Services Available**

·  **Assistive Technology Loan and SETBC Educator Support**

·  **Assistive Technology Loan Only**

**Where do I find the on-line application?**[**https://www.setbc.org/student-service-request/**](https://www.setbc.org/student-service-request/)

Submit your application on-line here with all documents uploaded: **There are no hard copy submissions, but ensure all supporting documents are uploaded to the on-line application before submitting**.

Be sure to **indicate DISTRICT 100** **– Independent Schools.** Do not indicate the public school district where your school is located or your application may be misdirected and therefore not included for adjudication by the independent school committee.

**District Partners:** Doug Stam [dstam@timothychristian.ca](mailto:dstam@timothychristian.ca)  [(604) 794-7114](https://www.google.com/search?gs_ssp=eJwNyEsOQDAUAMDYcgmJWHv90HIEt6jq56WliTbB7Znl1M3gBlJcgPnOUC09PCOXfFI745QIYBtb4NGTkcJaYpmkYjbb2hU8UvFvq_2FuaA626x9SvEPjBFvpcMHjo4cbw&q=timothy+christian+school+chilliwack&rlz=1C1GCEA_enCA1015CA1015&oq=timothy+christian+school+&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j46i175i199i512j0i512j46i175i199i512l2j0i512l2j46i175i199i512j0i512.5624j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&safe=active&ssui=on) / Nicole Regush [nregush@cisva.bc.ca](mailto:nregush@cisva.bc.ca) (604) 683 9331

**Application Information:**

·         All Student Applications (Service Requests) are created and submitted online this year. Supporting documents for Student Applications must be uploaded to the actual application while it is being completed online.

·         An IEP MUST be included

·         If you need to add more info to an application, you will need to resubmit everything again. Wait until you have complete package before starting submission.

·         Has the district/school team had a chance to fully assess the student’s needs (i.e., if the student is just starting Kindergarten, how well are this child’s needs known)?

·         Please ensure the applications are filled out with as much detail as possible. If key details are missing, the application could be rejected.

**Student & Family Affordability Special Purpose Grant**

FISA has submitted the final grant allocation amounts, as determined by the socio-economic status formula, to the MECC. Participating independent schools can expect to receive a transfer of funds in the coming weeks. Special thanks go to the Association Heads for coordinating the “opt in/out” aspect of this grant. Slightly over $600K was returned by schools choosing to recuse themselves in order for the money to reach the families with the greatest needs. We look forward to hearing the stories of how these funds lighten the burden on families and enliven the students’ school experiences.

**FISA Provincial Outreach**

The FISA Mental Health coordinators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey are hosting professional development opportunities on mental health and wellness throughout the province this school year. Join us to explore how to center school mental health education and supports around the concept of "care" without overburdening staff.

**Schedule of Provincial Outreach**

**Pro-D Sessions 9:00 am – 3:30 pm**

**Chilliwack - November 30, 2022**[**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-chilliwack-wednesday-november-30-2022-tickets-445793098157)

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**Kelowna – April, 2023 (exact date to be determined)**

These sessions will be held in-person, lunch will be served, and they are free to attend.

In the past, a Regional Tour, with FISA and Ministry representatives, has accompanied the Provincial Outreach. Unfortunately, Ministry personnel were unable to free up time this year to participate. In lieu of the usual evening Regional Tour, we will hold a short FISA Forum immediately following the Pro-D event at each of the host schools. At the Forum, Shawn Chisholm, Executive Director will provide a sector update and overview FISA advocacy efforts. No registration is required to attend the Forum.

**Indigenous Focused Grad Requirement Pro-D Opportunities**

Over the past couple of months, FISA has been working alongside the MECC, BCSSA, and FNESC to develop regional Pro-D workshops to assist schools in preparing to meet the new [Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/indigenous-focused-graduation-requirements). We are pleased to announce that ten in-person Pro-D workshops focused on teaching English First Peoples 10-12 will be held around the province.

Space is limited and a waitlist will be maintained. We request Principals and HOS assist in determining who is best suited to attend. Online Learning Schools are included in the allocation based on the region where the school is located. Online educators whose residency differs from the school’s location may join the waitlist in the region where they reside.

FISA has received a $68K grant to be used for printing resources, assisting with hosting costs and to partially subsidizing travel. Remaining grant money will be distributed in early June 2023 among the participating independent schools to offset TOC costs or to people who attend outside of normal school hours. It is impossible to know the exact amount schools will receive for each attendee, but we estimate it will be around $150/person.

For more information see [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/professional-learning/conflict-resolution-workshop/).

**Due to the limited seats, schools are only allowed to attend the workshop in the region where the school is located.**Requests to attend out of the region will be allowed only if space permits (waitlisted).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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**MDI**

Time is running out to sign up to participate in the 2022/23 [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](https://earlylearning.ubc.ca/monitoring-system/mdi/mdi-overview/). Remember, FISA is covering the cost for all grade 8s to participate in the MDI this year. Schools may also arrange to have other grades (4 – 7) participate for a nominal fee of $550/grade level. The MDI can serve as an important source of data for schools to consider as part of their continuous improvement planning. **Indicate your interest in participating in the 2022/23 MDI**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQUQDpyMlpYDjknU2FUXfDrytrd0DbFToN8RWmGLXitek1YQ/viewform)**.**

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

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**FISA Update - November 4, 2022**

What a difference a year makes. When I look back at my weekly calendar from November 2021, I had 16 meetings scheduled and 14 of those were held virtually. This week both Janet and I were able to attend several meetings or conferences in-person. Being able to meet directly with one of the School Medical Health Officers (Dr. Choi) from a local Health Authority to share our appreciation for their incredible support for independent schools, attending the BC School Superintendents Conference to discuss prominent educational issues with thought leaders within the BC K – 12 sector, or taking part in the POPEY District Partners Conference where early literacy intervention success stories were shared, or meeting with leaders from one of our member associations to take a deep dive on a topical issue – all of these events were enhanced because people were able to engage in person.

In hindsight, I believe we can all be proud of the level of learner contact BC was able to maintain during the past 2-school years. When compared to other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world, BC prioritized minimal disruption to the learning mode BC families chose to pursue, whether it was in-person learning or through the robust learning opportunities made available from independent online schools or a mix of both!

**Student & Family Affordability Special Purpose Grant**

As mentioned in last week’s Update, FISA allotted this one-time, $3.8M special purpose grant using a formula based on the socio-economic status (SES) profile of each of the 332 eligible independent schools within BC (Group 4 schools are excluded). By now your FISA association head should have connected with you, or your CIS superintendent, to verify whether your school will participate in the Affordability grant or choose to opt out of this targeted funding.

FISA recognizes that all independent schools have protocols in place to serve struggling families within their communities, to differing degrees and drawing upon multiple sources of support. Nearly 90 schools have chosen to redirect their grant allocation towards schools with greater needs. We were surprised at the level of generosity and heartened at this practical demonstration of the independent school sector looking beyond their own doors to ensure that all students have access to food security, school supplies, and that school course/extracurricular/activity fees will not be a barrier to student participation.

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**Submit a design for the Premier’s Holiday Greeting Card**

Tis’ the season to get creative! The Premier invites Kindergarten to Grade 7 students to submit a design for a festive greeting card that he will send out this holiday season.

Please submit your students’ artwork (e.g. drawing, collage, painting, digital creation) **by hard copy** to the following address: *Premier's Office, PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC, V8W 9E1.*

All entries must be received by **Thursday, November 10th**.

* One design per student.
* Maximum 8.5 x 11 inches (landscape or portrait orientation).
* Single-sided design only.
* Each hardcopy submission needs to include the student’s name/grade/age/school district or independent school name on the back. If the submission needs to be returned, please indicate this on the back and include a return address.

**MDI**

The [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](https://earlylearning.ubc.ca/monitoring-system/mdi/mdi-overview/) is scheduled to take place in schools between January 10th – March 3rd, 2023. FISA is covering the cost for all grade 8s to participate in the MDI this year. Schools may also arrange to have other grades (4 – 7) participate for a nominal fee of $550/grade level. The MDI can serve as an important source of data for schools to consider as part of their continuous improvement planning. **Indicate your interest in participating in the 2022/23 MDI** [**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQUQDpyMlpYDjknU2FUXfDrytrd0DbFToN8RWmGLXitek1YQ/viewform)**.**

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

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**FISA Update - October 28, 2022**

I cannot comment on all the regions of our beautiful province, but this past week in the Lower Mainland we are definitely mourning the loss of the extended warm and dry summer-like weather we experienced this fall.

Each fall BC schools are asked to provide data that reflects their new enrollment and changes in school leadership. The 1701s provide the ministry with the data they need to ensure independent schools receive their rightful funding and the SOPSOC audited reports confirm the appropriate funding category for your schools. FISA also requests data from our member schools to supply us with information to support our advocacy efforts with government. While this can be a very busy time for school leaders, FISA greatly appreciates that you take the time to provide us with this valuable data by returning your FISA Fact Sheet.

**Student & Family Affordability Special Purpose Grant**

FISA continues to work with our association heads and the MECC to determine the most efficient and effective way to allocate and distribute the Student and Family Affordability grant to independent schools while also meeting the intent of this one-time, special purpose grant.

Drawing on the MECC for source data, FISA partnered with the technical experts at the ministry to use socio-economic data associated with the postal codes of families enrolled in independent schools (this data is masked so no specific families can be identified). Janet and David (from the MECC) have done an incredible amount of work to fine tune this data, so FISA and our association leads have a good understanding of the socio-economic status (SES) profile of each of the independent schools within BC. The resultant information has been extremely valuable for FISA, our associations and individual schools – not only for the possible allocation of this grant but it provides a better understanding of the SES profile of the entire independent school sector, and discredits some of the misinformation that independent schools only provide educational services to families with well above the provincial average SES. Some of the key findings from this data analysis (an info-graphic is attached for your review) are:

(A total of 332 Group 1, 2 & 3 independent schools enrolling over 85,000 students were included in this analysis)

· BC independent schools serve families across the entire spectrum of SES groups

· 36 independent schools have 100% of their families living below the province’s average SES

· 171 independent schools have at least 50% of their families living below the province’s average SES

· 161 independent schools have at least 50% of their families living above the province’s average SES

· 49 independent schools have at least 90% of their families living above the province’s average SES

FISA recognizes that all independent schools have protocols in place to serve struggling families within their communities, to differing degrees. Schools with higher average SES often incorporate affordability supports within their budgets, while other schools may receive support through faith-based affiliations or community fundraising efforts. The intent of this grant is not to replace these established benevolent initiatives – but instead it is to be targeted to expanding existing programs as appropriate. Some independent schools have reviewed the needs within their communities and have decided to decline the grant (in full or part) that would have been allocated to them based on the SES formula. These schools have determined their present student/family supports are sufficient and they feel there are other independent schools that have a greater need. In these instances, the grant funds these schools have declined will be distributed, using the SES formula, to the participating independent schools.

While the SES distribution formula is robust, the FISA Board recognizes it is imperfect. The Board also recognizes the importance of the alignment between the foundational principles that inform this allocation formula and the objectives of this government’s Student and Family Affordability grant to help ensure students are fed, have school supplies, and are able to participate in school activities.

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These sessions will be held in-person, lunch will be served, and they are free to attend.

In the past, a Regional Tour, with FISA and Ministry representatives, has accompanied the Provincial Outreach. Unfortunately, Ministry personnel were unable to free up time this year to participate. In lieu of the usual evening Regional Tour, we will hold a short FISA Forum immediately following the Pro-D event at each of the host schools. At the Forum, Shawn Chisholm, Executive Director will provide a sector update and overview FISA advocacy efforts. No registration is required to attend the Forum.

**Enabling Accessibility Fund Application**

The application period for the federal [**Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) [canada.ca]**](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/enabling-accessibility-fund.html__;!!G4oVokrRG-Im!-2QqBJ4fAtf5aU2vNShYbiYp_c9HcUGhg6p1EARaZsrhXGp59jE59TpFuCHdYPxaoB_4yZZB2cgt$)**Small Projects Component**closes on **Nov. 1, 202**2. Up to approximately $64 million is available to support infrastructure improvements. This includes nearly $58 million that will be allocated to support about 580 small projects in workplaces and communities, and up to $6.5 million towards approximately projects in early learning and childcare facilities. Organizations can apply for up to $100,000 for projects such as: ramps, accessible doors, accessible washrooms, elevators, multi-sensory rooms and stations, accessible playgrounds, accessibility equipment.

**Indigenous Focused Grad Requirement Pro-D Opportunities**

Over the past couple of months, FISA has been working alongside the MECC, BCSSA, and FNESC to develop regional Pro-D workshops to assist schools in preparing to meet the new [Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/indigenous-focused-graduation-requirements). We are pleased to announce that ten in-person Pro-D workshops focused on teaching English First Peoples 10-12 will be held around the province.

Space is limited and waitlist will be maintained. We request Principals and HOS assist in determining who is best suited to attend. Online Learning Schools are included in the allocation based on the region where the school is located. Online educators whose residency differs from the school’s location may join the waitlist in the region where they reside.

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For more information see [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/professional-learning/conflict-resolution-workshop/).

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Please submit your students’ artwork (e.g. drawing, collage, painting, digital creation) **by hard copy** to the following address: *Premier's Office, PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC, V8W 9E1.*

All entries must be received by **Thursday, November 10th**.

·  One design per student.

·  Maximum 8.5 x 11 inches (landscape or portrait orientation).

·  Single-sided design only.

·  Each hardcopy submission needs to include the student’s name/grade/age/school district or independent school name on the back. If the submission needs to be returned, please indicate this on the back and include a return address.

**Ventilation Grant**

Thank you to the 39 schools who received a Ventilation Grant and completed the required exit survey. We will process your cheques shortly. If your school received notice of being approved for the Ventilation Grant and you have not yet completed the [**exit survey**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Vent2022)**,** please do so **as soon as possible** as the due date has passed (Oct. 25th). Schools with completed projects should report actual improvement and costs. Schools with projects not yet completed should report planned improvements and anticipated costs.

**MDI**

The [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](https://earlylearning.ubc.ca/monitoring-system/mdi/mdi-overview/) is scheduled to take place in schools between January 10th – March 3rd, 2023. FISA is covering the cost for all grade 8s to participate in the MDI this year. Schools may also arrange to have other grades (4 – 7) participate for a nominal fee of $550/grade level. The MDI can serve as an important source of data for schools to consider as part of their continuous improvement planning. **Indicate your interest in participating in the 2022/23 MDI**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQUQDpyMlpYDjknU2FUXfDrytrd0DbFToN8RWmGLXitek1YQ/viewform)**.**

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**Youth Development Instrument (YDI)**

The [YDI](http://chartlab.ca/about-ydi/) is a self-reported questionnaire completed online by students in Grades 10 - 12. It provides a school-level report that offers insights into the health and well-being of young people with an emphasis on childhood experiences and mental health. The YDI report provides schools with research-based data to help inform policies and practices that

support health development for youth. Participating in the YDI is free.

To view a recording of the YDI information webinar hosted by SCSBC, click [here](https://sfu.zoom.us/rec/share/eHe36Yi7xaiMdkHfrpCOEDRWu5sLl9O_e6zKfGmvrhLYkEJEQzdtaFvcONV5ajcR.G2KSQMvRtzV-UmRo) and use the PW: **sP0.cd**

A YDI information flyer is attached to this email and includes how schools can register to participate this school year.

**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

Funds remain available for the Child Care New Spaces grant. More information is available [**HERE**](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/space-creation-funding/childcare-new-spaces-fund)**.**

**October 21, 2022**

Yesterday FISA hosted a virtual session on the [Draft Student Reporting Policy](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2021/09/Background-Rationale-Draft-K-12-Student-Reporting-Policy.pdf) with Renee Jordan and Nick Poeschek form the Curriculum and Classroom Assessment branch of the MECC. Renee and Nick provided a comprehensive review of the policy and the rationale that informed the draft policy. They also made an attempt to answer the many questions the independent school participants presented. The presentation slide deck and a recording of the session is available in the FISA Video Gallery [**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)**.**

Looking to the future, there will continue to be engagement on this policy through FISA and the independent school representatives that serve on the committees that have informed this draft policy. We also are looking for clarity on the scope of this policy and its implications on the flexibility independent schools will have to determine reporting procedures at the school level.

Both FISA and the MECC were extremely pleased with the participation level (well over 250 educators) and with the quality of questions provided at yesterday’s session.

**FISA Provincial Outreach**

The FISA Mental Health coordinators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey are hosting professional development opportunities on mental health and wellness throughout the province this school year. Join us to explore how to center school mental health education and supports around the concept of "care" without overburdening staff.

**Schedule of Provincial Outreach**

Pro-D Sessions 9:00 am – 3:30 pm

**Nanaimo – November 9, 2022** [**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-nanaimo-wednesday-november-9-2022-tickets-436220486217)\*

**Chilliwack - November 30, 2022** [**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-chilliwack-wednesday-november-30-2022-tickets-445793098157)

**Surrey – January 12, 2023** [**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-surrey-thursday-january-12-2023-tickets-445785234637)

**Victoria – January 17, 2023** [**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-victoria-tuesday-january-17-2023-tickets-445836056647)

**Cranbrook – January 27, 2023** [**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-cranbrook-friday-january-27-2023-tickets-445806969647)

**Kelowna – April, 2023 (exact date to be determined)**

\*There is a minimum registration enrollment we must achieve to go forward with each Provincial Outreach event. At this point, the Nanaimo session has not achieved the threshold. 15 additional registrations are required by Oct. 18th in order for the Nanaimo session to proceed.

These sessions will be held in-person, lunch will be served, and they are free to attend.

In the past, a Regional Tour, with FISA and Ministry representatives, has accompanied the Provincial Outreach. Unfortunately, Ministry personnel were unable to free up time this year to participate. In lieu of the usual evening Regional Tour, we will hold a short FISA Forum immediately following the Pro-D event at each of the host schools. At the Forum, Shawn Chisholm, Executive Director will provide a sector update and overview FISA advocacy efforts. No registration is required to attend the Forum.

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**Ventilation Grant**

Schools which were approved for a Ventilation Grant are reminded to submit the project verification [**exit survey**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Vent2022) as soon as possible and no later than 1:00 p.m. on Oct. 25th. Schools with completed projects should report actual improvement and costs. Schools with projects not yet completed should report planned improvements and anticipated costs. Cheques will be processed upon review of the participating schools’ survey responses.

**FSA Administration**

The Ministry will provide a set of **Provincial Exemplars** using the 2022/23 student responses for the written-response questions in literacy and numeracy by the end of day on **October 21, 2022**. The exemplars will be available on the password-protected Score Entry web page: [*bced.vretta.com/#/en/school-admin/bc-fsa/score-entry*](https://bced.vretta.com/#/en/school-admin/bc-fsa/score-entry). More instructions on accessing the exemplars from the web are detailed in Section 4 of the [2022/23 *FSA Administration Manual*](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/assessment/fsa-administration-manual.pdf)*.*

Information to access the secure Score Entry web page has been sent previously to administrators and FSA district contacts from [bced-support@vretta.com](mailto:bced-support@vretta.com). Please contact Vretta Technical Support at 1-888-887-3882 (toll free) for assistance.

Detailed instructions on navigating the Score Entry system can be found in the [*2022/23 FSA Administration Manual*](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/assessment/fsa-administration-manual.pdf), Section 4.

If you have questions, please contact Denise Philadelphia at [educ.fsascore@gov.bc.ca](mailto:educ.fsascore@gov.bc.ca).

**MDI**

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support health development for youth. Participating in the YDI is free.

To find out more information please join this upcoming webinar hosted by SCSBC, one of the five FISA associations.

**YDI information webinar**

Date: **Wednesday, October 26th from 3:30 – 4:00 p.m. (pst)**

Hear from the SFU researchers and principal, Chris Steenhof, from Bulkley Valley Christian School about their participation in the YDI last year.

<https://sfu.zoom.us/j/61015441355?pwd=dkFGTVNvbkFBTndqN3VsTXRJRXBmZz09>

Meeting ID: 610 1544 1355 Password: 407924

**FISA Fact Sheets**

Recently, FISA emailed all BC independent schools the 2022-2023 FISA Fact Sheet information request form. Thank you to the nearly 200 schools which have returned their completed Fact Sheet. If your school has not submitted your form please do so by November 11, 2022. Three associations (CISVA, SCSBC, ACSIBC) pay the FISA fees on behalf of their member schools. Two associations (ISABC and AMS) have schools pay directly to FISA. We congratulate Collingwood School for being the first school to submit their fee payment. Yay, Collingwood!

**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

Funds remain available for the Child Care New Spaces grant. More information is available [**HERE**](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/space-creation-funding/childcare-new-spaces-fund)**.**

**October 14, 2022**

This evening I am in Victoria attending the Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education. This event, like many others, was put on hold over the last couple of years due to the pandemic. Being able to attend the Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education in person is truly an honour, as attendees get to witness the amazing things that amazing people are doing to support learners, educators and communities in BC. However, this year’s ceremony (unlike previous year’s) is unique in that no independent school personnel have qualified as top-three finalists in any of the 10 categories.

I am fully confident that both independent and public schools have countless people that would be rightly honoured in all of these categories (except District Leadership) but I am obviously partial to independent school personnel receiving honours such as these. Therefore, I encourage our independent school leaders to visit the Premier’s Award for Excellence in Education website to become familiar with the categories for recognition and the simple process to nominate at least one worthy independent school candidate from your school community this year.

**FISA Provincial Outreach**

The FISA Mental Health coordinators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey are hosting professional development opportunities on mental health and wellness throughout the province this school year. Join us to explore how to center school mental health education and support around the concept of "care" without overburdening staff.

The next event scheduled thus far is:

**October 21 – Vancouver**[**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-vancouver-friday-october-21-2022-tickets-420795359247)**\*\*limited seats available\*\***

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The Provincial Outreach sessions will be held in-person, lunch will be served, and they are free to attend. Dates are being finalized for Cranbrook, Kelowna, Surrey, Chilliwack and Victoria.

**Student and Family Affordability Fund**

The FISA Board has approved a process for determining the allocation of the $3.8M Student and Family Support Grant to independent schools that aligns with the criteria for this special purpose grant. FISA will be sharing our proposed allocation with the MECC and will rely on them to provide the required 2022 – 2023 data (available in mid-November) to finalize the school allocations.

School grant allocations will be received as transfers from the MECC (much like your operating grant transfers) to the appropriate authority, and FISA will communicate the amount schools will receive in advance of this transfer.

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Meeting ID: 610 1544 1355 Password: 407924

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**October 7, 2022**

This past week I had the pleasure of traveling in the northern half of our beautiful province with the FISA Mental Health Coordinators – Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, as part of our regional Provincial Outreach Pro D. These outreaches really reinforce the provincial nature of the FISA organization and provides us with an opportunity to connect with educators, support relationship building and to learn of their successes and challenges, with a regional context.

I would like to extend my appreciation for those independent school educators that were able to attend and participate in the Provincial Outreach events in Smithers and Prince George. A very special thank you to the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School and Cedar’s Christian School communities for hosting these events and providing our team with exceptional levels of hospitality.

At the Provincial Steering Committee meeting this week it was determined that future meetings would only occur on an ad hoc, as needed basis. This speaks to the stability the K-12 sector is experiencing at the start of this school year. Having said that, public health continues to monitor key indicators and there is an anticipation that the respiratory infection season this year could be more robust than in the previous two years (based on the experiences in the southern hemisphere this year). More information will be coming on the province’s public health vaccine offerings in the near future.

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The Provincial Outreach sessions will be held in-person, lunch will be served, and they are free to attend. Dates are being finalized for Cranbrook, Kelowna, Surrey, Chilliwack and Victoria.

**Student and Family Affordability Fund**

The FISA Board continues to consider the best way this grant can be distributed to support needy families and meet the MECC’s grant criteria. More information will be forthcoming soon.

**MDI**

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***erase* Training Schedule**

The *erase* Training Schedule is available [**here**](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf). The Overview of the Provincial Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol and Digital Threat Assessment (DTA) meets compliance requirements. Independent school educators may register for any of the Overview sessions scheduled. *erase* training remains current for 3 school years. Training taken in the 2019-20 will need to be refreshed this school year.

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Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving!

**September 30, 2022**

No update. FISA office closed to Honour Truth and Reconciliation Day

**September 23, 2022**

With the addition, or melding of child care into the Ministry of Education, there has been a flurry of activity at the MECC as they formulate policies to support the government’s ambitious plans to enhance access to child care in BC. Recognizing many independent schools provide services in this space, FISA has played an initial role in gathering representatives from each of our associations to share experiences, successes, aspirations and concerns. FISA greatly appreciates the facilitator/chair role Diana Chalmers has assumed with this group. Both Janet and I have enjoyed being a part of these sessions and our knowledge and understanding of this sector continues to grow.

FISA is also appreciative of the collaboration we have engaged in with the MECC, FNESC and the BC School Superintendents Association (BCSSA) to plan for further Pro-D support for the Indigenous Education Grad Requirement. The logistics for these regional events are getting closer to being resolved and you can anticipate further information soon.

**FISA Provincial Outreach**

The FISA Mental Health coordinators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, will be hosting professional development opportunities on mental health and wellness throughout the province this school year. Join us to explore how to center school mental health education and supports around the concept of "care" without overburdening staff.

The events scheduled thus far are:

**October 4 – Smithers**[**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-smithers-tuesday-october-4-2022-tickets-372265655597)

**October 6 – Dawson Creek Cancelled**

**October 7 – Prince George**[**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-pro-d-prince-george-friday-october-7-2022-tickets-372288142857)**October 21 – Vancouver**[**register here**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/provincial-outreach-vancouver-friday-october-21-2022-tickets-420795359247)**– \*\*newly added\*\***

The Provincial Outreach sessions will be held in-person, lunch will be served, and they are free to attend. Dates are being finalized for Cranbrook, Kelowna, Surrey, Chilliwack, Nanaimo and Victoria.If you are interested in hosting a Provincial Outreach session, please contact Janet at [Janet@fisabc.ca](mailto:Janet@fisabc.ca).

**MDI**

The [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](https://earlylearning.ubc.ca/monitoring-system/mdi/mdi-overview/) is scheduled to take place in schools between January 10th – March 3rd, 2023. FISA is covering the cost for all grade 8s to participate in the MDI this year. Schools may also arrange to have other grades (4 – 7) participate for a nominal fee. The MDI can serve as an important source of data for schools to consider as part of their continuous improvement planning. **Indicate your interest in participating in the 2022/23 MDI**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQUQDpyMlpYDjknU2FUXfDrytrd0DbFToN8RWmGLXitek1YQ/viewform)**.**

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

***erase* Training Schedule**

The much-anticipated *erase* Training Schedule has been released and is available [**here**](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf). There are two sessions of the Overview of the Provincial Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol and Digital Threat Assessment (DTA) trainings reserved for the independent school sector. Priority registration for these Nov. 23rd and Jan. 10th Overview sessions is given to schools scheduled for an inspection. Independent school personnel are eligible to register for the public district Overview sessions on Oct. 18th and Dec. 6th (the public district and independent school Overview sessions are identical in content). **Note:** The Overview course meets compliance requirements for both Basic VTRA and Basic DTA and replaces the “Hybrid” course. e*rase* training remains current for 3 school years. Training taken in the 2019-20 will need to be refreshed this school year.

**Student and Family Affordability Fund**

This grant will be discussed at next week’s first FISA Board meeting of the 2022-23 school year, to determine the appropriate allocation of this targeted, special purposes grant. FISA will continue to partner with the MECC on the logistics of distributing this allocation. More information will be forthcoming.

**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

As [announced this morning](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022ECC0076-001408) the BC government continues to enhance the child care sector through directly funding child care centres. In addition to increasing affordability for families there are ongoing efforts to increase capacity through the New Spaces funding program. The intake cycle for this grant remains open with applicants encouraged to apply by January 2023. Nearly $300M has been reserved for the creation of new space, including spaces on school grounds for before/after school care programs for children birth to 12 years old. More information is available [**HERE**](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/space-creation-funding/childcare-new-spaces-fund)**.**

**FISA Fact Sheets**

Please watch your email inbox during the week of Oct. 3rd for the FISA Fact Sheet. We appreciate it when schools update and return this important document in a timely manner.

**Truth and Reconciliation Day**

We are heartened to hear about the many ways in which independent schools are honouring the September 30th Truth and Reconciliation Day (special lessons, activities, Indigenous speakers, etc.). One example comes from Meadow Montessori School where the students created a child-friendly abridged version of the TRC 94 Calls to Action. Hear more about their 9-month long project in this [clip from CBC Radio](https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-91-the-early-edition/clip/15936690-helping-kids-understand-truth-reconciliation-day). Schools interested in doing a similar initiative are invited to connect with Kristine Lande, Executive Director, Meadow Montessori at [**admin@meadowmontessori.ca**](mailto:admin@meadowmontessori.ca)**.**

**The FISA office will be closed on September 30th.**

**September 16, 2022**

For the first time in a couple of years (since we started to provide weekly updates) there is no pressing need to share any COVID-19 updates! In fact, the next Steering Committee meeting Janet and I will attend is not scheduled till October 6th and we do not anticipate the need to share any COVID-19 related items before that time – fingers crossed!

There are a couple of items that I ask you to pay particular attention to; the registration for the FISA Provincial Outreach and registration for the Grade 8 MDI survey. Both of these initiatives are directed at helping schools to enhance their ability and capacity to support mental health and wellness within their communities. The FISA Mental Health Coordinators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, look forward to connecting face to face with independent school personnel at the regional Provincial Outreach events (more information to come as we add more events) and/or to support your school’s participation in the MDI survey (all independent school Grade 8 students may participate at no cost to the school). It is our hope that independent schools will take advantage of this free access to the MDI survey. Schools that have participated in the previous 2 school years have reported great value in the data contained in their school level reports - that often affirm what the school is doing well and also provides research-based data to inform future school-based mental health and wellness initiatives.

**MDI**

FISA is covering the cost for all grade 8s to participate in the MDI again for 2022/2023. Even if your schools did not participate this past year, you can still jump in on this opportunity for 2022/2023. **Indicate your interest** [**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQUQDpyMlpYDjknU2FUXfDrytrd0DbFToN8RWmGLXitek1YQ/viewform)**.**

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**Ventilation/Air Quality Funding Application**

FISA is pleased that we have received an increased number of applications this week for the Air Quality Improvement Grant – over 60 in total. Applications will be reviewed as quickly as possible with schools informed of the status of their application by October 3rd.

**erase Training Schedule**

The much-anticipated erase Training Schedule has been released and is available [**here**](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf). There are two sessions of the Overview of the Provincial Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol and Digital Threat Assessment (DTA) trainings reserved for the independent school sector. Priority registration for these Nov. 23rd and Jan. 10th Overview sessions will be given to schools scheduled for an inspection this year. Independent school personnel are eligible to register for the public district Overview sessions on Oct. 18th and Dec. 6th (the public district and independent school Overview sessions are identical in content). **Note:** The Overview course meets compliance requirements for both Basic VTRA and Basic DTA and replaces the “Hybrid” course. Erase training remains current for 3 school years. Training taken in the 2019-20 will need to be refreshed this school year.

**Student and Family Affordability Fund**

The announcement of an allocation of $3.8M in funding for the independent school sector as part of the [Student and Family Affordability Fund](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022ECC0057-001290) has generated a large degree of interest. This grant will be used in line with hardship policies already in place or created to support areas such as enhancing food/meal programs; providing school supplies that would be otherwise purchased by the parents/guardians; offsetting costs of clothing for school sports participation or other school activities; waiving educational-related fees (e.g. additional supplies for shop, culinary and craft classes, workbooks, camps, field trips, student society meetings, and instrument and equipment fees or other fees charged by schools). This funding is not to be used to subsidize tuition fees or to provide direct payments to parents.

FISA continues to work with the MECC and our member associations in determining how this grant will be allocated and when the funds will be disbursed. More information will be forthcoming.

**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

In a recent meeting with the Hon. Katrina Chen, Minister of Child Care, she mentioned that several independent schools have submitted applications for the Child Care New Spaces Funding and emphasized her hope that many more independent schools will apply. Nearly $300M has been reserved for the creation of new space, including spaces on school grounds for before/after school care programs for children birth to 12 years old. More information is available [**HERE**](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/space-creation-funding/childcare-new-spaces-fund)**.**

**FISA Fact Sheets**

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**FISA Update – September 9, 2022**

To Independent School Leaders,

As we come to the end of the first week of the return to school, reports to our office from independent schools express a very positive and enthusiastic outlook for the 2022-2023 school year.

This week FISA also received some very good news that all 16 of the independent online schools have been invited to continue to serve as a provincial service providers, commencing in 2023-2024. Since the passing of [**Bill 8 -2020, EDUCATION STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT, 2020**](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/bills/billsprevious/5th41st:gov08-3)independent online schools have been in a tenuous position, uncertain if they would be able to continue to provide services to the BC families that choose this mode of education delivery to best meet the learning needs of their children.

My sincere thanks to the independent online school leaders, their staff members, their students and families and to Gabe Linder who represented the independent online school community on several committees that worked on the creation of online policies/regulations that will support the implementation of Bill 8. Your collaboration, support and advocacy led to this rightful outcome!  

I also want to acknowledge the key MECC personnel that worked on this portfolio. In particular Eleanor Liddy, Marnie Mayhew, Grant Shepard and Sophia Palahicky for their engagement and openness to discuss a wide array of possible policy/regulation options that would best serve BC learners.

**COVID Items**

By all accounts independent schools are implementing the [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220825/communicable-disease-update.pdf) with ease. As a reminder, please ensure that your communicable disease plans are readily accessible to your community members (e.g., post on school/school district websites, on a bulletin board at the school, etc.).

**Student and Family Affordability Fund**

The announcement of an allocation of $3.8M in funding for the independent school sector as part of the [Student and Family Affordability Fund](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022ECC0057-001290) has generated a large degree of interest. FISA continues to work with the MECC and our member associations in determining who will receive this funding and the logistics of how and when the funds will be disbursed. The funds should be used in line with hardship policies already in place or created to support areas such as enhancing food/meal programs; providing school supplies that would be otherwise purchased by the parents/guardians; offsetting costs of clothing for school sports participation or other school activities; waiving educational-related fees (e.g. additional supplies for shop, culinary and craft classes, workbooks, camps, field trips, student society meetings, and instrument and equipment fees or other fees charged by schools). This funding is not to be used to subsidize tuition fees or to provide direct payments to parents. More information will be forthcoming.

**Ventilation/Air Quality Funding Application**  - Due Sept. 16, 2022

Just a friendly reminder of the upcoming deadline for applications for the Air Quality Improvement Grant - **4:00 PM, September 16, 2022.**  Theventilation grant documents, which include a [**link** to the application](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BCISVentilation), are attached to this email.

In an earlier FISA Update we provided the following message: *Expenses already incurred by schools due to prior ventilation upgrading efforts are ineligible to be reimbursed through this grant*. **In subsequent conversations with the MECC, FISA received approval to allow schools to apply for this grant for ventilation upgrade expenses they incurred since December 15th, 2021**. The priority criteria for grant assistance still applies but **the dates for expense inclusions have been expanded**.

**ArtStarts – Artists in Education (AIE) Grant** - Due Sept. 16, 2022

AIE 2022-23 Grant applications are due to the FISA office by Friday, September 16, 2022 at 1:00 PM. Group 1, 2, 3, and 4 schools are encouraged to apply to receive reimbursement of a portion of the professional artist fees for performances and workshops held in schools (in-person or virtually). Details can be found in the application form which is **available**[**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/services/schools/formsapplications/)**.** FISA thanks the BC Arts Council and the Province of BC for their generosity in making these grants possible.

**FISA Provincial Outreach**

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around the concept of "care" without overburdening staff.

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**To ensure these events will take place, please register soon (and a minimum of two weeks in advance of the event). There is a minimum registration enrollment we must achieve to go forward with each Provincial Outreach event (Smithers has already met this threshold – Yay Smithers!!).**

The Provincial Outreach sessions will be held in-person, lunch will be served, and they are free to attend. Further information on additional sessions for other areas of the province will be forthcoming. If you are interested in hosting a Provincial Outreach session at your school, please contact Janet at [Janet@fisabc.ca](mailto:Janet@fisabc.ca).

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**MDI**

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For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**FISA Update – September 2, 2022**

I know some independent schools have already invited students back, but a majority of schools have spent this past week preparing for students to arrive next week. Certainly, the tone for this year’s school start up is appropriately different and school leaders are optimistic and looking forward to school operations that will be more like pre-pandemic practices.

I hope you all have an opportunity to enjoy a good portion of this Labour Day long weekend and I also encourage you to reflect upon your labours, and those of your colleagues, that provide a lasting impact on the learning and health and wellbeing of the many students that attend your independent schools throughout BC.

**COVID Items**

With last week’s release of the [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220825/communicable-disease-update.pdf) the FISA office has received several queries from school leaders looking for clarification on the following topics:

Independent schools must have a communicable disease plan in place that focuses on reducing the transmission of communicable diseases, and these plans should be readily accessible to your community members.

The K-12 Guidelines are filled with recommendations from the BCCDC that schools should consider and incorporate into their communicable disease plans.

Schools should return to their regular cleaning practices, with recognition of the impact cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces have on the spread of communicable diseases.

Independent schools that enroll Indigenous students living on reserve should continue to communicate and collaborate with First Nation leaders to plan for supports for students that may not be able to consistently participate in in-person learning.

Space/crowd configurations for your buildings and busses are managed by the school and can revert to your normal practices.

**Student and Family Affordability Fund**

The Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) announced this week that the independent school sector has been allotted $3.8M of the [Student and Family Affordability Fund](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022ECC0057-001290). This is a grant to support students/families that are experiencing financial struggles with tenuous family budgets exacerbated by these inflationary times. This funding can be used to support food security, access to school supplies and other programming fees for those suffering through financial hardship. This funding is not to be used to subsidize tuition fees or to provide direct payments to parents.

FISA will be working with the MECC and consulting with our member associations’ leadership to determine who will receive this funding support and the logistics of how and when qualifying schools will receive this funding.

**Ventilation/Air Quality Funding Application**

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Theventilation grant documents, which include a [link to the application](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BCISVentilation), are attached to this email.

**(Expenses already incurred by schools due to prior ventilation upgrading efforts are ineligible to be reimbursed through this grant).**

**FISA Provincial Outreach**

The FISA Mental Health coordinators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, will be hosting professional development opportunities on mental health and wellness throughout the province this school year. The events scheduled thus far are:

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The Provincial Outreach sessions will be held in-person and lunch will be served. They are offered free of charge, however a $50 “no show” fee is assessed for people who register but do not attend. Further information on additional sessions for other areas of the province will be forthcoming. If you are interested in hosting a Provincial Outreach session at your school, please contact Janet at [Janet@fisabc.ca](mailto:Janet@fisabc.ca).

**Ukrainian Students**

Many independent schools are presented with the opportunity to support families that have fled the Ukraine during the Russian invasion. The Ministry of Education and Child Care (MCC) considers school age students who were born in the Ukraine and are residing in B.C. as *refugees* for funding purposes, rather than as international students. This is the case despite the variety of documentation that Immigration Canada provides. Students who are eligible for provincial funding, as these students are, do not need to meet the requirements of the International Student Graduation Credit Policy.  The definition of “International Students” for the purpose of the International Student Graduation Credit Policy, found in the [Legislation and Policy Glossary](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/glossary#international_students) on the Ministry website, makes this clear. As a result, no waiver is required; the policy is simply not applicable to those students.

It is inspiring the way our government, the MCC and independent schools have embraced and supported Ukrainian refugees.

**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

A recording of the July 13, 2022 Child Care New Spaces Funding webinar is available for viewing in the FISA Video Gallery [**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/). The presentation slide deck is posted underneath the video. The MoECC has designated nearly $300M towards the creation of new spaces, including spaces on school grounds for before/after school care programs for children birth to 12 years old. Independent schools are encouraged to apply. More information is available [**HERE**](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/space-creation-funding/childcare-new-spaces-fund)**.**

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**FISA Update – August 26, 2022**

I hope this FISA Update is received by independent school leaders that have experienced a well-deserved, restful and rejuvenating summer break. As the 2022-2023 school year is quickly approaching, I would also like to acknowledge the work the FISA team and the Ministry of Education and Child Care achieved over the summer. There is a welcome change in tone to the start of this school year (when compared to the past two school start-ups) anticipating a renewed focus on student learning, while continuing to provide safe environments for your school communities.

**COVID Items**

The provincial Steering Committee met over the summer break to review the latest [data](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/data-trends) from the BCCDC and to discuss the MoECC document [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220825/communicable-disease-update.pdf) which were released yesterday. Recognizing that COVID-19 will continue to be prevalent for the foreseeable future, and that public health data indicates relative stability in the severity of health outcomes - unless otherwise notified, the management of COVID-19 will be similar to other respiratory infections and rely primarily on self-management. This document consolidates the information previously contained in three documents and provides recommendations to support schools with their communicable disease planning.

Although the Rapid Response Teams have been disbanded, FISA greatly values the relationships that were established with the regional Medical Health Officers. They continue to be available to assist schools with health-related issues. To help put the guidelines into perspective given the current COVID-19 situation, FISA hosted two recent Town Halls with Dr. Choi (VCH) and Dr. Zbar (FHA). A recording of the FHA webinar is available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/) and the [slide deck from Dr. Choi](https://www.dropbox.com/s/0xmynk4q9bn0hhc/2022.08.25%20Indep%20Schools%20VCH.pdf?dl=0) is attached. An invitation has been distributed to schools in IHA for a Town Hall with Dr. Sabet on Sept. 1st. At this time, no Town Hall is scheduled for VIHA or NHA. Schools in those regions may wish to view the FHA webinar or refer to the VCH slide deck.

It is also anticipated that the Ministry of Health will soon announce its plans for the Fall COVID-19 booster vaccination program. Stay tuned!

**Ventilation/Air Quality Funding Application**

FISA released information last week on the application process for independent schools looking to access the Air Quality Improvement Grant. **I apologize for not including in the messaging the deadline for receiving applications for this grant – which will be 4:00 PM, September 16, 2022**. I have made the appropriate changes to the [ventilation grant documents](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/44cs2qqqzf7n2qcmdjmtw/FISA-Ventilation-Grant-Application.docx?dl=0&rlkey=3ba8e7mbyywq7d6o1m4mbngwt) that are attached to this email. Expenses already incurred by schools due to prior ventilation upgrading efforts are ineligible to be reimbursed through this grant. Access the Ventilation Grant online application form [HERE.](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BCISVentilation)

**Community Service Resource List**

Schools may find the attached [list of support services](https://www.dropbox.com/s/3e3uvxewmay3jgq/Aug%2026%20Comm%20Agency%20Service%20List.pdf?dl=0) provided by community agencies throughout the province useful. This list was composed by Lilly Chisholm (yes, she is my daughter) as part of a project to assist new immigrants and refugees to BC and we appreciate her sharing her findings with the independent school sector.

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The Provincial Outreach sessions will be held in-person and lunch will be served. They are offered free of charge, however a $50 “no show” fee is assessed for people who register but do not attend. Further information on additional sessions for other areas of the province will be forthcoming. If you are interested in hosting a Provincial Outreach session at your school, please contact Janet at [Janet@fisabc.ca](mailto:Janet@fisabc.ca). Download the Provincial Outreach Northern Schools flyer [HERE](https://www.dropbox.com/s/stnsdqdd8qufnlr/Prov-Outreach-Northern-BC-flyer-final.pdf?dl=0).

**Ukrainian Students**

Many independent schools are presented with the opportunity to support families that have fled the Ukraine during the Russian invasion. The Ministry of Education and Child Care (MCC) considers school age students who were born in the Ukraine and are residing in B.C. as *refugees* for funding purposes, rather than as international students. This is the case despite the variety of documentation that Immigration Canada provides. Students who are eligible for provincial funding, as these students are, do not need to meet the requirements of the International Student Graduation Credit Policy.  The definition of “International Students” for the purpose of the International Student Graduation Credit Policy, found in the [Legislation and Policy Glossary](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/glossary#international_students) on the Ministry website, makes this clear. As a result, no waiver is required; the policy is simply not applicable to those students.

It is inspiring the way our government, the MCC and independent schools have embraced and supported Ukrainian refugees.

**Condolences**

It is with great sadness that I inform you that Dr. Jennifer Tong passed away on August 24th, after a courageous battle with cancer. Jennifer was a passionate independent school educator who provided FISA, the MCC and many independent school colleagues with leadership and support on how to best serve Special Needs students.

Our sincere condolences to Jennifer’s family and friends.

**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

A recording of the July 13, 2022 Child Care New Spaces Funding webinar is available for viewing in the FISA Video Gallery [**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/). The presentation slide deck is posted underneath the video. The MoECC has designated nearly $300M towards the creation of new spaces, including spaces on school grounds for before/after school care programs for children birth to 12 years old. Independent schools are encouraged to apply. More information is available [**HERE**](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/space-creation-funding/childcare-new-spaces-fund)**.**

**MDI**

FISA is covering the cost for all grade 8s to participate in the MDI again for 2022/2023. Even if your schools did not participate this past year, you can still jump in on this opportunity for 2022/2023. **Indicate your interest**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQUQDpyMlpYDjknU2FUXfDrytrd0DbFToN8RWmGLXitek1YQ/viewform)**.**

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**FISA Update – July 22, 2022**

Last week FISA was informed once again that there was to be some personnel changes at the senior management of the Ministry of Education and Child Care. Assistant Deputy Minister, Keith Godin, will be taking on an expanded senior role within the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Keith is an accomplished and inquisitive public service leader and I very much appreciated his pursuit of greater understanding of K-12 educational issues within the context of independent schools.

FISA greatly appreciates the broad scope of work Keith has done to support the BC K-12 system and BC learners.

**Ventilation/Air Quality Funding**

I do apologize for the delay in information on this grant. FISA will be administering this $800,000 federal grant for independent schools and we have an application process in place that can be activated once we have received the required agreement documents from government. Due to capacity issues at the MoECC, this process has been delayed. There is, however, recognition that deadlines must be adjusted to ensure schools can access this grant and meet the work completion accountability measures in a reasonable time frame.

In my conversations this week with the MoECC it seems reasonable to expect that FISA will be able to distribute the Air Quality Grant application to independent schools around the middle of August. As mentioned in earlier updates, the adjudication process will **prioritize projects for schools with the greatest need and highest urgency to improve their air quality** - a priority will be given for schools that presently operate with no mechanical ventilation systems (this will be expanded upon with the application package you will receive).

FISA and the MoECC are aware independent school leaders have expended a great deal of patience awaiting further information on this grant - and we are grateful for it. Ultimately, we are also thankful that the overall air quality within independent schools will improve this year due to government’s investment in this initiative.

**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

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**FISA Update – June 24, 2022**

A core principle that guides FISA’s advocacy mission is the establishment of meaningful and respectful relationships with key players within the K-12 sector. This of course includes independent school leadership at the FISA association and school levels, our education partner colleagues, BC politicians and the public servants that facilitate and ensure that the Legislation, Acts, Orders and Policies that govern independent schools are manifested in schools. During my time as Executive Director of FISA I have worked quite extensively with many of the bureaucrats that serve in the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MoECC) and have appreciated our shared focus on supporting independent schools to best serve the needs of BC students.

Over the past 3-years one of my primary contacts with the Independent Schools Branch of the MoECC has been Marnie Mayhew, the Executive Director of the Sector Performance. On June 6th Marnie left the MoECC to take on a key role with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). FISA wishes Marnie much success in her new role, and we offer our sincere appreciation for her deep understanding of the independent school sector, her willingness to consult and engage with independent school leaders and her sharp wit and caring nature.

I am pleased to inform independent schools of the appointment of Lucas Corwin as the new Executive Director of the Sector Performance Branch. Lucas joins the MoECC with two decades worth of experience in the BC Public Service as a senior leader across a number of ministries and portfolios. Most recently he has been the Executive Director of the Workers' Advisers Office at the Ministry of Labour, leading a program that supports injured workers throughout the province.  He has held leadership positions at the Ministry of Finance, Forests, Health, and the Attorney General, including two years as Acting Assistant Deputy Minister with the Public Sector Employers Council Secretariat at the Ministry of Finance.

BC independent schools are diverse and provide BC families with the opportunity to choose the education that best meets the needs of their children. FISA welcomes Lucas to his new role and looks forward to working with him to support the work of BC independent schools.

**FISA Fast Facts**

During the past decade, over 66,000 students have graduated from BC independent schools. To hold a reunion of the graduates both BC Place and Nat Bailey Stadium would be needed for everyone to have a seat. FISA wishes the 6,973 independent school students in the class of 2022 the utmost success as they embark on their next adventures.

**COVID Update**

As members of the Steering Committee, FISA has previewed a draft of the 2022/23 Provincial Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Settings. As expected, the guidance does not vary significantly from the health and safety practices currently in place. The SC will continue to work over the summer with the intention of providing updated and aligned MoECC and BCCDC guidance to the sector by mid-August.

**Leadership Symposium – July 4-6, 2022, Kelowna**

A few seats remain available for the AMS Leadership Conference with Dr. Laurie Anderson. Independent school leaders, and aspiring leaders, from any of the FISA associations are invited to attend.

Cost: **$250/person for all 3 days**

Location: UBC-Okanagan, Kelowna, BC

Dates: July 4 – 6, 2022

**Register**[**HERE**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/ams-leadership-conference-july-4-6-2022-tickets-314949019997)

**CAPSLE Bursary**

CAPSLE is offering a $1000 bursary to a student who has been accepted to a Canadian university program, or will be continuing in such a program, in a recognized Faculty of Education and/or Faculty of Law in the 2022/23 academic Year. Submission deadline is June 30th.

**Application**[**HERE**](https://www.capsle.ca/bursary/)

**Barriers for Chinese International Students traveling to Canada in Summer 2022**

International students from China continue to face barriers in accessing study permits and flights. Independent schools should be aware of these difficulties and make plans to accommodate and support these students who may not be able to arrive in time for the start of the fall semester. The difficulties faced by these students could further reduce the flow of Chinese international students to Canada. IRCC (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada) data indicates that in 2020 and 2021 there was a 30% decline in international study permits becoming effective.

**Ventilation/Air Quality Funding**

As a follow up to last week’s messaging on independent school access to the BC Ventilation Grant, FISA has created an application process that is presently under review by the MoECC. Once approved it will be distributed to independent schools.

As a reminder, the adjudication process will **prioritize projects for schools with the greatest need and highest urgency to improve their air quality**. Schools may want to begin initial consultations with their heating/HVAC professional to determine potential projects and purchases that will make the greatest impact on air quality for their school.

**Child Care Capital Funding Grant**

Applications are being accepted for the 2022/23 Child Care BC New Spaces Fund. Prioritized this year is the creation or expansion of before- and after-school care spaces on school grounds through building projects, renovations, and/or the purchase of equipment. More information is available [**HERE**](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/space-creation-funding/childcare-new-spaces-fund)**.**

**MDI**

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**FISA Update – June 17, 2022**

**FISA Fast Facts**

BC has 22 Group 3 independent schools, 9 of which are FISA members. These schools may choose to implement a curriculum of their own design and set their own teacher qualification standards. Group 3 schools are inspected at least once every two years and must uphold the health and safety standards expected of all independent schools (ex., appointing a child abuse reporting official, conducting water quality testing regularly, implementing a harassment and bullying prevention policy in line with the H&BP Order, etc.). Group 3 schools do not receive Ministry of Education and Child Care (MoECC) operating grant funding.

**COVID Updates**

The latest information from the MoECC remains consistent - K-12 schools can expect revised and streamlined public health guidelines in mid to late August. For independent schools that provide operations over the summer, the present guidelines will continue to apply.

**Leadership Symposium – July 4-6, 2022, Kelowna**

The Associate Member Society of FISABC (AMS) extends a warm **invitation to all independent school leaders**to attend their summer leadership symposium – *Leading with Courage, Insight, Purpose, and Heart* with Dr. Laurie Anderson (SFU). Laurie brings a wealth of leadership experience, excellent facilitation skills, and a passion for creating thriving, resilient school communities to this 3-day in-person event. You may remember Laurie from FISA’s January Mental Health Session – Educator Well-Being in Uncertain Times (viewable [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)).

Cost: **$250/person for all 3 days**

Location: 3333 University Way, UBC-Okanagan, Kelowna, BC

Dates: July 4 – 6, 2022

Space is available on a first come, first serve basis. **Register**[**HERE.**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/ams-leadership-conference-july-4-6-2022-tickets-314949019997)

Accommodations are available on the UBC-Okanagan campus. To reserve a room, complete this [**SURVEY.**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TWYTYBX)

**FSA Results**

Historically many independent schools used the aggregate school assessment item analysis provided by Edudata (UBC) as a formative assessment tool to support student learning. This item- level FSA data is now available on the MoECC’s FSA Reports [website](https://studentsuccess.gov.bc.ca/fsa/index.html#/) for schools to review. Presently the most recent data is from 2020-21 but we anticipate the 2021-22 data to be available reasonably soon.

**Barriers for Chinese International Students traveling to Canada in Summer 2022**

Chinese international students attempting to come to Canada during the summer of 2022 are facing several hurdles that have the potential to delay their arrival for the fall semester. Lockdowns in Shanghai and Beijing prevented study permit applicants from accessing a Visa Application Centre (VAC) to complete their biometrics until a few days ago. Flights remain at a fraction of pre-COVID volumes and are subject to cancellation with little notice. In addition, China has introduced a policy of restrictive exit controls to discourage citizens from traveling abroad, though travel abroad to study is designated as essential travel and not targeted at this time.

Independent schools should be aware of these difficulties and make plans to accommodate and support these students who may not be able to arrive in time for the start of the fall semester. The difficulties faced by these students could further reduce the flow of Chinese international students to Canada. IRCC (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada) data indicates that in 2020 and 2021 there was a 30% decline in international study permits becoming effective.

The China Education Network, in collaboration with IRCC and Public Affairs, will be increasing their digital communication outreach to provide the most up to date information.

**Ventilation/Air Quality Funding**

As a follow up to last week’s messaging on independent school access to the BC Ventilation Grant, FISA has created an application process that is presently under review by the MoECC. Once approved it will be distributed to independent schools.

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For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**FISA Update – June 10, 2022**

**FISA Fast Facts**

One of the former FISA Board members represented Canada in two Summer Olympics. Find out who at the end of this week’s update.

**COVID Updates**

Today’s DM Bulletin confirmed that the September return to class protocols are anticipated to be similar to the ones currently in place, which emphasize self-management of personal health choices. FISA will participate in the summer meetings with the MoECC and Public Health to create streamlined guidance documents to be released in mid-August.

**Barriers for Chinese International Students traveling to Canada in Summer 2022**

Chinese international students attempting to come to Canada during the summer of 2022 are facing several hurdles that have the potential to delay their arrival for the fall semester. Lockdowns in Shanghai and Beijing prevented study permit applicants from accessing a Visa Application Centre (VAC) to complete their biometrics until a few days ago. Flights remain at a fraction of pre-COVID volumes and are subject to cancellation with little notice. In addition, China has introduced a policy of restrictive exit controls to discourage citizens from traveling abroad, though travel abroad to study is designated as essential travel and not targeted at this time.

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The China Education Network, in collaboration with IRCC and Public Affairs, will be increasing their digital communication outreach to provide the most up to date information.

**Ventilation/Air Quality Funding**

Early in 2022, FISA became aware of a federal grant that was being distributed to provinces to support air quality in schools. FISA advocated for independent school participation in this grant, as we feel this addresses the health and wellbeing issues that are applicable to all BC schools. FISA was informed that independent schools will receive approximately $800K. FISA is very appreciative for this grant but also recognizes that if this grant was to be equally allocated to the 365 independent schools in BC, the amount each school would receive would be insufficient to make substantive air quality improvements for our sector. Therefore, following the recommendations of the K-12 Schools Ventilation Panel and in consultation with the FISA Board, FISA will soon engage independent schools in an application process that will **prioritize projects for schools with the greatest need and highest urgency to improve their air quality**. These will likely be older school buildings that do not operate mechanical ventilation systems or have fresh air exchange capabilities (their only access to fresh air is through functioning windows or doors to the outside). It is highly recommended that applicant schools consult with their heating/HVAC professional to assist with their application and determine projects and purchases that will make the greatest impact on air quality for their school.

**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

The FISA DAS committee has concluded the adjudication process for this school year. The full allotment of 427 awards has been distributed proportionally within the four DAS regions. The FISA committee reports the conditional recipients to the MoECC. School principals do need to take any action on this matter.

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16 childcare facilities operated by independent school authorities, or located on independent school grounds, have received $10M through the New Spaces Grant. If your school has successfully or unsuccessfully applied for this grant, we would like to hear from you. Please contact us at [Janet@fisabc.ca](mailto:Janet@fisabc.ca). Our intention is to hold a webinar where previous applicants can share their experiences and lessons learnt with schools interested in pursuing this opportunity. Thank you to the schools that have already connected with us on this issue.

**Leadership Symposium – July 4-6, 2022, Kelowna**

The Associate Member Society of FISABC (AMS) extends a warm **invitation to all independent school leaders**to attend their summer leadership symposium – *Leading with Courage, Insight, Purpose, and Heart* with Dr. Laurie Anderson (SFU). Laurie brings a wealth of leadership experience, excellent facilitation skills, and a passion for creating thriving, resilient school communities to this 3-day in-person event. You may remember Laurie from FISA’s January Mental Health Session – Educator Well-Being in Uncertain Times (viewable [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)).

Cost: **$250/person for all 3 days**

Location: 3333 University Way, UBC-Okanagan, Kelowna, BC

Dates: July 4 – 6, 2022

Space is available on a first come, first serve basis. **Register**[**HERE.**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/ams-leadership-conference-july-4-6-2022-tickets-314949019997)

Accommodations are available on the UBC-Okanagan campus. To reserve a room, complete this [**SURVEY.**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TWYTYBX)

**RISE Grants for Children and Youth in and out of Care**

Children and youth who are currently or previously in Care are encouraged to apply for a RISE Grant of $1,000/annually to offset the costs of participating in sports, recreational activities, and/or cultural programs. Grants of $10,000 for organizations that offer sports, recreational and cultural programs to children and youth in and out of Care are also available. More information can be found on the ISPARC website [HERE](https://isparc.ca/rise-grants/).

Please [register **HERE**](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=KKZyI5zKMUOwGgfVSe0-hqIcC0OdWn5FuT5RxOjQ_fJUOTJZTlNRQ0lFME5JOTFET0g3WUxETVNKTi4u)and indicate which workshop date you would like to attend. Zoom details will be sent to registrants the week of the training.

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**FISA Fun Facts Answer: Phil Graham.**Phil represented the ISABC on the FISA Board (2015-2016) and represented Canada as a rower in the 1996 (Atlanta) and the 2000 (Sydney) Summer Olympics.

**FISA Update – June 3, 2022**

What a difference a year makes - a lot has transpired over this past school year!

Last year independent high schools were working feverishly and creatively to provide graduation celebrations that were both meaningful and compliant with the prevailing public health guidelines. With this year’s less restrictive guidelines, it is a pleasure to witness schools organizing community grad events, field trips, Sports Days, concerts and performances which bring joy, hope and life to school communities.

**FISA Fast Facts**

[One million job openings](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022AEST0004-000172) are forecasted for BC over the next decade, with the largest number of opportunities expected to be in the healthcare, social assistance, and education sectors. FISA recently met with MoECC officials to provide suggestions on how to minimize challenges to the education workforce. We look forward to viewing the Future Ready: Skills and Jobs of Tomorrow Plan, scheduled for release in the fall of 2022.

**COVID Updates**

The latest word from Public Health is one of encouragement with COVID-19 hospitalization rates steadily declining. We anticipate that the September return to class protocols will be similar to the ones currently in place, which emphasize self-management of personal health choices. Preliminary messaging to this effect is expected in the coming days with streamlined guidelines available in August.

**FISA Fees**

At the May 2022 FISA Board meeting the Directors agreed to maintain membership fees at a rate of $6.25/FTE for the 5th year in a row. FISA diligently strives to keep our operating costs low and fees reasonable so that independent school authorities can focus their financial resources on student learning. Thank you for your continued membership and support.

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**Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre**

Earlier this week BC Children Hospital’s School Mental Health Spotlight newsletter featured the FISA  [wellbeingbc.ca](https://www.wellbeingbc.ca/) website and specifically the [Assessment and Growth Plan Toolkit](https://www.wellbeingbc.ca/school-toolkit).  FISA greatly appreciates the leadership Jenny Williams (SCSBC) has provided, in consultation with mental health researchers, to make this resource a reality and widely available and a highlighted resource with the [Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre](https://keltymentalhealth.ca/). This resource is designed to support the implementation of effective mental health and wellbeing initiatives in schools.

We encourage you to view the 12-minute [video interview](https://keltymentalhealth.ca/school-professionals/school-mental-health-spotlight/schoolwide-assessment-and-growth-plan-toolkit?utm_source=Cyberimpact&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Kelty-Centre-Newsletter-for-School-Professionals--May-2022) with Jenny and Grace Voo (Vancouver Christian School) on the assessment and growth plan toolkit.

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**K-12 Anti-Racism Collaborative Learning Opportunity - Authentic Youth Engagement**

This training addresses the question of how to engage youth meaningfully to increase their participation. We will look at different forms of authentic participation and discuss “do’s and don’ts” to create safe spaces where youth feel heard.

By the end of this training participants should be able to:

·      Identify key strategies to increase meaningful youth participation

·      Design spaces in which young people feel safe and empowered to engage in policy discussions and challenging conversations

There are two options to attend this workshop:

**Friday June 10th** 10:30am to 12:00pm  **OR**

**Thursday June 16th** 10:30am to 12:00pm

Please [register **HERE**](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=KKZyI5zKMUOwGgfVSe0-hqIcC0OdWn5FuT5RxOjQ_fJUOTJZTlNRQ0lFME5JOTFET0g3WUxETVNKTi4u)and indicate which workshop date you would like to attend. Zoom details will be sent to registrants the week of the training.

**MDI**

A recording of the *Taking Action with MDI Data Webinar* is available for viewing in the FISA [Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

FISA is covering the cost for all grade 8s to participate in the MDI again for 2022/2023. Even if your schools did not participate this past year, you can still jump in on this opportunity for 2022/2023. **Indicate your interest**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQUQDpyMlpYDjknU2FUXfDrytrd0DbFToN8RWmGLXitek1YQ/viewform)**.**

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**Compassionate Systems Leadership with Dr. Shirley Giroux**

FISA thanks Dr. Shirley Giroux for deepening our understanding of CLS through her engaging and thought-provoking sessions.  Dr. Giroux’s 4-part webinar seriesis available for viewing in the FISA video gallery [**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)**.**

**FISA Update – May 27, 2022**  
  
Earlier this week the FISA Board of Directors and FISA staff gathered to engage in a strategic planning exercise, facilitated by the Berlineaton consulting firm. My sincere thanks to our Board members for taking time away from their families and their regular day jobs to fully engage in charting the future course for the FISA organization. Further work and consultation are required before the final document will be completed but, and I believe I can speak for the Board when I state that FISA feels confident that our member associations’ voices (through the member school and association-level research data and feedback from the association directors) are the foundation of this impending strategic plan.

**FISA Fast Facts**

The [BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) Action Plan](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/indigenous-relations-reconciliation/declaration_act_action_plan.pdf) outlines the commitments the province is making over the next 5 years to address Indigenous-specific racism and establish new foundations of respect. Of the 89 action items 13 are specific to the Ministry of Education and Child Care. FISA is confident that the independent school sector will respond to the calls for action with warm hearts and ready hands.

**COVID Updates**

Early indicators suggest that health and safety protocols for the 2022/23 school year will parallel the ones currently in place (self-management of illness, individual choice for personal health protection, no restrictions on gatherings, etc.). We anticipate that the MoECC will make a statement to this effect in mid-June. The Steering Committee will work with Public Health over the summer to streamline the existing documents with the goal of being as least prescriptive as possible, while promoting healthy school environments.

**Leadership Symposium – July 4-6, 2022, Kelowna**

The Associate Member Society of FISABC (AMS) extends a warm invitation to all independent school leaders to attend their summer leadership symposium – *Leading with Courage, Insight, Purpose, and Heart* with Dr. Laurie Anderson (SFU). Laurie brings a wealth of leadership experience, excellent facilitation skills, and a passion for creating thriving, resilient school communities to this 3-day in-person event. You may remember Laurie from FISA’s January Mental Health Session – Educator Well-Being in Uncertain Times (viewable [HERE](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)).

Cost: $250/person

Location: 3333 University Way, UBC-Okanagan, Kelowna, BC

Dates: July 4 – 6, 2022

Space is available on a first come, first serve basis. **Register**[**HERE.**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/ams-leadership-conference-july-4-6-2022-tickets-314949019997)

Accommodations are available on the UBC-Okanagan campus. To reserve a room, complete this [**SURVEY.**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TWYTYBX)

**K-12 Anti-Racism Collaborative Learning Opportunity - Authentic Youth Engagement**

This training addresses the question of how to engage youth meaningfully to increase their participation. We will look at different forms of authentic participation and discuss “do’s and don’ts” to create safe spaces where youth feel heard.

By the end of this training participants should be able to:

·      Identify key strategies to increase meaningful youth participation

·      Design spaces in which young people feel safe and empowered to engage in policy discussions and challenging conversations

There are two options to attend this workshop:

**Friday June 10th** 10:30am to 12:00pm  **OR**

**Thursday June 16th** 10:30am to 12:00pm

Please [register **HERE**](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=KKZyI5zKMUOwGgfVSe0-hqIcC0OdWn5FuT5RxOjQ_fJUOTJZTlNRQ0lFME5JOTFET0g3WUxETVNKTi4u)and indicate which workshop date you would like to attend. Zoom details will be sent to registrants the week of the training.

**MDI**

A recording of the *Taking Action with MDI Data Webinar* is available for viewing in the FISA [Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

FISA is covering the cost for all grade 8s to participate in the MDI again for 2022/2023. Even if your schools did not participate this past year, you can still jump in on this opportunity for 2022/2023. **Indicate your interest**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQUQDpyMlpYDjknU2FUXfDrytrd0DbFToN8RWmGLXitek1YQ/viewform)**.**

For questions regarding the MDI please contact Michelle at [michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca) or Jamie at [jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca).

**Compassionate Systems Leadership with Dr. Shirley Giroux**

FISA thanks Dr. Shirley Giroux for deepening our understanding of CLS through her engaging and thought-provoking sessions.  Dr. Giroux’s 4-part webinar seriesis available for viewing in the FISA video gallery [**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)**.**

**FISA Update – May 20, 2022**

This past Wednesday the FISA Board and key personnel from the Ministry of Education and Child Care (the Assistant Deputy Minister, 7 MoE Branch Executive Directors, 4 MoE Branch Directors and the Inspector and Deputy Inspector of Independent Schools) were able to gather (some in person and some virtually) to discuss issues of importance to independent schools and the K-12 sector. We offer our sincere appreciation to the Independent School Branch for working with FISA to facilitate these very informative and meaningful discussions.

**FISA Fast Facts**

Fifty-four years ago this week, FISA made a presentation to the BC Commission for the International Year on Human Rights. At the time, independent schools were without basis in the law, unrecognized and unaided by the government. The fledgling organization of FISA took the bold stance that parental choice in education is a human right, one that government has an obligation to support. This has been a foundational position of FISA ever since. We invite you to read the [presentation brief.](https://www.dropbox.com/s/0i5angytu29gk65/May%2020%2C%202022%20enclosure%201968%20May%20Legal%20Recognition%20and%20Funding.pdf?dl=0)

**COVID Updates**

Continuing down a nostalgic path, we remind school leaders that two years ago this week most of you were busy completing your Stage 3 Restart Plans in order to resume in-person learning on June 1st. We hope you take a moment to applaud yourself for staying steady while the world swayed. The BC education sector has been a beacon of stability of which we can all be proud. We recognize that COVID-19 has not vanished and that some schools continue to face staffing challenges and dips in attendance. The ISRRT continues to stand at the ready. Please connect with your Association Head or email [ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca](mailto:ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca) if assistance is needed.

**K-12 Anti-Racism Collaborative Learning Opportunity - Authentic Youth Engagement**

This training addresses the question of how to engage youth meaningfully to increase their participation. We will look at different forms of authentic participation, and discuss “do’s and don’ts” to create safe spaces where youth feel heard.

By the end of this training participants should be able to:

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**SET-BC Intake Cycle**

The application for the [SET-BC](https://www.setbc.org/) Spring intake cycle closes on **Friday, May 27th at 4:00 p.m**. Independent schools requesting SET-BC support for a student with complex needs should complete a [Student Profile Form](https://fisabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/SET-BC-2022-2023-Student-Profile-Fillable-1-27-2022.pdf) and submit it along with the student's current IEP, specialist reports, etc. to the FISA office.

Completed applications and supporting documents can be submitted to the FISA office via email to: [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca) or

by mail to: FISA BC

                  4885 St John Paul II Way

                  Vancouver, BC V5Z 0G3

**MDI**

A recording of the *Taking Action with MDI Data Webinar* will be available for viewing in the FISA [Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/) soon.

FISA is covering the cost for all grade 8s to participate in the MDI again for 2022/2023. Even if your schools did not participate this past year, you can still jump in on this opportunity for 2022/2023. **Indicate your interest**[**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQUQDpyMlpYDjknU2FUXfDrytrd0DbFToN8RWmGLXitek1YQ/viewform)**.**

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**For Independent Schools using MyEdBC for IEP's**  
As previously announced, all independent schools using the MyEdBC platform will be accessing the Competency Based IEP format on June 8, 2022. If your school plans to transition to the CP IEP format, please familiarize yourself with the Test Environment <https://sdt.myeducation.gov.bc.ca/aspen/home.do> and the supporting resources available here <https://bcsupportonline.com/ciep-training-resources.html>.

If you have any questions, please feel free to submit a helpdesk ticket or email Andrew Smit (Independent School MyEdBC Project Manager) [andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com)  with your questions.

**Compassionate Systems Leadership with Dr. Shirley Giroux**

FISA will hold the 4th and final CLS webinar with Dr. Giroux next week. We encourage all independent schools to have at least one staff member attend.

Friday, May 27, 2022, 9:00-10:30 a.m. (PST)

**Register**[**HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUlf--grTMjG9SsHuNVC619mobm6PVBZsD5)

Recordings of CLS **webinars 1-3**are available for viewing in the FISA video gallery [**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)**.**

**FISA Office Closed May 24-25**

The FISA Board and staff will be taking part in a Strategic Planning Retreat on May 24 & 25, 2022. The office will be closed on these days and email access will be limited. We will return energized and ready for action on May 26th.

**FISA Update – May 13, 2022**

On behalf of the FISA Directors I would like to thank and commend our member schools for their level of participation in our strategic planning survey. As the FISA Board charts the organization’s future course, the information and feedback provided by key stakeholders will be invaluable.

**FISA Fast Facts**

The BC independent school sector plays an important role in providing learning opportunities for a diverse population of students. As this chart demonstrates, BC parents are increasingly choosing independent schools to provide programming for children with identified and funded Special Needs.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **School Year** | **Funded Special Needs Headcount** | **Total Independent Schools Special Needs Grant Allocation** |
| **2017 - 18** | **5,765** | **$87,149,417** |
| **2018 – 19** | **6,2232.5** | **$95,625,950** |
| **2019 – 20** | **6,680** | **$108,573,625** |
| **2020 - 21** | **7,194** | **$120,327,500** |

**COVID Updates**

Although COVID-19 continues to circulate independent schools have entered a phase where it is minimally disruptive. If your school encounters a situation where a functional closure is considered due to staffing challenges, or your attendance level is significantly impacted please reach out to the IS Rapid Response Team by connecting with your association head or emailing [ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca](mailto:ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca). While no news is good news in this regard, the RRT is standing by to assist if needed.

**ES Audit**

FISA has received several enquiries from independent schools asking how they should code student attendance for the 4-days K-12 schools were mandated to not operate after the Christmas break (January 4-7). Schools should code these days as **excused absences** as this is a true reflection of the circumstances and it will not negatively impact the qualifying student days required for funding on your ES Audit report.

**PISA**

The May 13th DM Bulletin included a reminder about the [Programme for International Student Assessment](https://www.oecd.org/pisa/) (PISA). A sampling of public and independent schools is randomly selected to take part in the PISA. Schools that have been selected to participate in 2022 have been directly notified by the Ministry. No action is needed by schools which were not selected.

**SET-BC Intake Cycle**

The application for the [SET-BC](https://www.setbc.org/) Spring intake cycle is now open. Independent schools requesting SET-BC support for a student(s) with complex needs should complete the attached Student Profile Form and submit it along with the student's current IEP, specialist reports, etc. to the FISA office.

NOTE: The application form has changed, therefore forms from previous years will not be accepted. Applicants must use the 2022-2023 version.

The application deadline is ***Friday, May 27, 2022, at 4:00 p.m***.

Completed applications and supporting documents can be submitted to the FISA office via email to: [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca) or

by mail to: FISA BC

4885 St John Paul II Way

Vancouver, BC V5Z 0G3

The fillable Student Profile Form is attached and can also be found on the FISA website [**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/services/schools/formsapplications/)**.**

**MDI**

Schools that participated in the 2021-2022 [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi/) have received instructions on accessing their school-level MDI report. To help school communities determine their next steps, FISA will host a webinar (repeated twice for ease of access). Join to explore the valuable resources, lesson plans, and conversation prompts found on the [Discovermdi.ca](https://discovermdi.ca/category/mdi-essentials/) website.

**Taking Action with MDI Data Webinar**

Monday, May 16th 3:00-4:00 p.m. (PST) [**LINK**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qf-2rpjkiGNWwnVlrJwdhW9PkPEQ9gXrz)

Thursday, May 19th 10:30-11:30 a.m. (PST) [**LINK**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pce-vrT0vGdN8S0fUvMni17tC0yeI_rln)

FISA is covering the cost for all grade 8s to participate in the MDI again for 2022/2023. Even if your schools did not participate this past year, you can still jump in on this opportunity for 2022/2023. **Indicate your interest** [**HERE**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQUQDpyMlpYDjknU2FUXfDrytrd0DbFToN8RWmGLXitek1YQ/viewform)**.**

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**For Independent Schools using MyEdBC for IEP's**  
As previously announced, ALL independent schools using the MyEdBC platform will be accessing the Competency Based IEP format on June 8, 2022.

Please note:

* you will continue to be able to edit and print existing, traditionally formatted IEP's in MyEdBC after June 8th.
* you will **NOT** be able to create new IEP's for students using the traditional format in MyEdBC after June 8th (all new IEP's will use the competency based IEP format).
* If your school currently uses MyEdBC for student IEP's, please review this video to discover how this will impact your IEP practice: <https://bcsupportonline.com/playvideo.php?file=myedbc-ciep/2022/MyEdBC-Switching-CBIEP.mp4>
* The use of the MyEDBC IEP function is optional. Schools can choose to use alternative formats for IEP creation and storage.

MyEDBC users can test the creation of IEP’s using the CB IEP format or see what your IEP environment will look like after the June 8th switch to CB IEP , by logging into the SD Test Environment: <https://sdt.myeducation.gov.bc.ca/aspen/home.do> (if your account is disabled please submit a helpdesk ticket to get it enabled).

Andrew Smit and his team have put together a number of resources, with the assistance from personnel on the CB IEP working group, to help your school become more familiar with the new CB IEP format: <https://bcsupportonline.com/ciep-training-resources.html>

If you have any questions, please feel free to submit a helpdesk ticket or email Andrew Smit (Independent School MyEdBC Project Manager) [andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com) with your questions.

**Compassionate Systems Leadership with Dr. Shirley Giroux**

The MoE has partnered with UBC HELP to create CLS capacity building opportunities for independent schools. Each of the five FISA Associations have been invited to submit a proposal specific to the needs of their member schools. Please watch for more information to be released in the coming months. In the meantime, we encourage all independent schools to share the following link to the fourth CLS webinar with Dr. Giroux widely among your school staff.

CLS webinar #4 – Friday, May 27, 2022, 9:00-10:30 a.m. (PST)

**Register** [**HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUlf--grTMjG9SsHuNVC619mobm6PVBZsD5)

Recordings of CLS **webinars 1-3** are available for viewing in the FISA video gallery [**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)**.**

**FISA Office Closed May 24-25**

The FISA Board and staff will be taking part in a Strategic Planning Retreat on May 24 & 25, 2022. The office will be closed on these days and email access will be limited. We will return energized and ready for action on May 26th.

**FISA Update – May 6, 2022**

**FISA Fast Facts**

Through efforts to establish meaningful relationships with the Ministry of Education, BC Education Partners and government, FISA, and representatives from independent schools, serve on over 20 provincial K-12 committees. FISA believes our advocacy role is enhanced when we provide an independent school voice to inform K-12 policy and regulation discussions.

**COVID Updates**

Although COVID-19 continues to circulate independent schools have entered a phase where it is minimally disruptive. If your school encounters a situation where a functional closure is considered due to staffing challenges, or your attendance level is significantly impacted please reach out to the IS Rapid Response Team by connecting with your association head or emailing [ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca](mailto:ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca). While no news is good news in this regard, the RRT is standing by to assist if needed.

As we approach the end of the school year, we anticipate the BCCDC will be releasing a public health survey for the K-12 sector. Our hope is that the independent school voice will be proportionally represented in the survey results. FISA will make our schools aware of when and how your school communities can participate in the upcoming survey. View the survey results from rounds 1 and 2 [HERE](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/data-reports/bc-covid-19-speak-dashboard).

**SET-BC Intake Cycle**

The application for the [SET-BC](https://www.setbc.org/) Spring intake cycle is now open. Independent schools requesting SET-BC support for a student(s) with complex needs should complete the attached Student Profile Form and submit it along with the student's current IEP, specialist reports, etc. to the FISA office. NOTE: The application form has changed, therefore forms from previous years will not be accepted. Applicants must use the 2022-2023 version.

The application deadline is ***Friday, May 27, 2022, at 4:00 p.m***.

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                  4885 St John Paul II Way

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The fillable Student Profile Form is attached and can also be found on the FISA website [**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/services/schools/formsapplications/)**.**

**MDI**

Schools that participated in the 2021-2022 [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi/) have received instructions on accessing their school-level MDI report. To help school communities take action using the data from their reports, the FISA Mental Health Coordinators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, will host a webinar (repeated twice for ease of access). They will walk you through the [Discovermdi.ca](https://discovermdi.ca/category/mdi-essentials/)website and point out the valuable resources, lesson plans, and conversation starters that you can engage with in your individual school communities.

**Taking Action with MDI Data**

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Thursday, May 19th 10:30-11:30 am [LINK](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pce-vrT0vGdN8S0fUvMni17tC0yeI_rln)

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We are pleased to announce, based on demand from independent schools and the competency-based emphasis of the BC curriculum, that **ALL independent schools using the MyEdBC platform will be accessing the Competency Based IEP format on June 8, 2022.**

Please note:

·         you will continue to be able to edit and print existing, traditionally formatted IEP's in MyEdBC after June 8th.

·         you will **NOT** be able to create new IEP's for students using the traditional format in MyEdBC after June 8th (all new IEP's will use the competency based IEP format).

·         If your school currently uses MyEdBC for student IEP's, please review this video to discover how this will impact your IEP practice: <https://bcsupportonline.com/playvideo.php?file=myedbc-ciep/2022/MyEdBC-Switching-CBIEP.mp4>

Furthermore, you can test the creation of IEP’s using the CB IEP format or see what your IEP environment will look like after the June 8th switch to CB IEP , by logging into the SD Test Environment:  <https://sdt.myeducation.gov.bc.ca/aspen/home.do> (if your account is disabled please submit a helpdesk ticket to get it enabled).

Andrew Smit and his team have put together a number of resources, with the assistance from personnel on the CB IEP working group, to help your school become more familiar with the new CB IEP format: <https://bcsupportonline.com/ciep-training-resources.html>

In addition, FISA will host a**CB IEP training session for MyEdBC schools on May 11, 2022 at 3:00 PM.** It is open to all independent schools intending to use the MyEdBC CB IEP format:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83834222106?pwd=ZGVjQzNSaDc3bE9GZkxnNWF5b0hYUT09>

*Note: There is no longer a capacity limit for this training session. Schools may choose to have multiple staff members register and attend. There will be lots of opportunity to ask questions during the session, but we anticipate many of your questions may be answered through a pre-session review of this document:*[*https://bcsupportonline.com/ciep-training-resources.html*](https://bcsupportonline.com/ciep-training-resources.html)

If you have any questions, please feel free to submit a helpdesk ticket or email Andrew Smit (Independent School MyEdBC Project Manager) [andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com)  with your questions.

**Compassionate Systems Leadership with Dr. Shirley Giroux**

The Mental Health in Schools conference wrapped up earlier today. Among the esteemed panel of speakers was the familiar face of Dr. Shirley Giroux, who spoke on Compassionate Systems Leadership (CSL). If you are new to the world of CLS we encourage you to attend the fourth and final (for this year anyway) FISA webinar with Dr. Giroux.

**CLS webinar #4 – May 27, 2022, 9:00 -10:30 a.m. (PST)**

**Register**[**HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUlf--grTMjG9SsHuNVC619mobm6PVBZsD5)

These webinars are suitable for all school personnel regardless of the role they play in the school community. It is suggested, but not required, that people unable to attend the first webinars live watch recordings of the previous sessions to build a basic level of understanding. Recordings of CLS **webinars 1-3**are available for viewing in the FISA video gallery [**HERE**](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)**.**

**National Child and Youth Mental Health Day**

May 7th is about building caring connections between young people and the caring adults in their lives.  We know having caring, connected conversations can have a big impact on the mental health of children and youth.

As Founders of National Child & Youth Mental Health Day in 2007, FamilySmart has been leading May 7th and creating opportunities for home, schools, communities and organizations to connect around our "I care about you" message.  We hope you will join us this year.

See: [Family Smart Resources for Educators](https://may7icare.ca/)

For information on virtual events on May 2-4 see: [Virtual Events for Parents & Caring Adults](https://may7icare.ca/events/?utm_source=FamilySmart+Primary+List&utm_campaign=dc36be70e8-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2022_04_07_08_24&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6c9ba9ce41-dc36be70e8-510793104)

**FISA Update – April 29, 2022**

**FISA Fast Facts**

As an indicator of how COVID influenced student choice for different learning delivery models, in the 2019 - 20 school year there were a total of **2,455** registered homeschoolers in the province. In the 2020 – 21 school year that number more than doubled to **5,548** students.

**COVID Updates**

At the most recent Steering Committee meeting the update from the BCCDC confirmed there is a measured upward trend in COVID cases but the lagging indicators (hospitalizations) are not trending to the same magnitude. As expected, versions of Omicron are the prevalent variant and in general are presenting with less severe health outcomes for most of the population – but special care and attention continues to be recommended for those vulnerable to respiratory diseases.

As we approach the end of the school year, we anticipate the BCCDC will be releasing a public health survey for the K-12 sector. Our hope is that the independent school voice will be proportionally represented in the survey results. FISA will make our schools aware of when and how your school communities can participate in the upcoming survey.

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Please note:

·         you will continue to be able to edit and print existing, traditionally formatted IEP's in MyEdBC after June 8th.

·         you will **NOT** be able to create new IEP's for students using the traditional format in MyEdBC after June 8th (all new IEP's will use the competency based IEP format).

·         If your school currently uses MyEdBC for student IEP's, please review this video to discover how this will impact your IEP practice: <https://bcsupportonline.com/playvideo.php?file=myedbc-ciep/2022/MyEdBC-Switching-CBIEP.mp4>

Furthermore, you can test the creation of IEP’s using the CB IEP format or see what your IEP environment will look like after the June 8th switch to CB IEP , by logging into the SD Test Environment:  <https://sdt.myeducation.gov.bc.ca/aspen/home.do> (if your account is disabled please submit a helpdesk ticket to get it enabled).

Andrew Smit and his team have put together a number of resources, with the assistance from personnel on the CB IEP working group, to help your school become more familiar with the new CB IEP format: <https://bcsupportonline.com/ciep-training-resources.html>

In addition, FISA will host a**CB IEP training session for MyEdBC schools on May 11, 2022 at 3:00 PM.** It is open to all independent schools intending to use the MyEdBC CB IEP format:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83834222106?pwd=ZGVjQzNSaDc3bE9GZkxnNWF5b0hYUT09>

*There is only capacity for 100 seats in our Zoom room, so if each school could limit their registrations to****ONE****that would be helpful. For larger school audiences, consider sharing the feed (a larger screen or projector) as this will allow the maximum number of schools to participate. There will be lots of opportunity to ask questions during the session, but we anticipate many of your questions may be answered through a pre-session review of this document:*[*https://bcsupportonline.com/ciep-training-resources.html*](https://bcsupportonline.com/ciep-training-resources.html)

If you have any questions, please feel free to submit a help-desk ticket or email Andrew Smit (Independent School MyEdBC Project Manager) [andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com](mailto:andrewsmit@bcsupportonline.com)  with your questions.

**Make a Future (MaF)**For the independent schools that have accessed [Make a Future](https://www.makeafuture.ca/?gclid=CjwKCAjwxZqSBhAHEiwASr9n9HQH7KdLjCkfs20utmshj4PpXD1r0S5HM4Zapyp37aIWUO-OrVP1fBoCgsIQAvD_BwE) to support their staff recruitment efforts, the original 3-year contract expired as of April 1, 2022. FISA has engaged with MaF to provide an additional 3-year agreement for independent schools that choose to use their services. FISA has negotiated a one-time 4.5% increase in the MaF fee, to provide fee rate security for the duration of the 3-year agreement. Attached to this email is the Website License and Service Agreement, Schedule A.

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**Register**[**HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIoc-mrqj0oE9zRh3qxhU2d6p4J-L5EIIwu)

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***Erase*Training Sessions**

Space remains available for the May *Overview of the VTRA & DTA Protocols* virtual training sessions. This is the erase session that meets independent school inspection requirements.

·         [Overview of the Provincial VTRA & DTA - May 5, 2022](https://event-wizard.com/OverviewVTRADTAOnlineMay52022/0/register/)

·         [Overview of the Provincial VTRA & DTA - May 31, 2022](https://event-wizard.com/OverviewDTAVTRAOnlineMay312022/0/register/)

There are several optional *erase*opportunities listed in the trainingschedule available [HERE](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf).

**BC School Sports**  
BC School Sports is pleased to provide over $30,000 in scholarships available to student-athletes this year.  Please pass this on to whoever at your school assists students with scholarships. The application **deadline is** **Monday, May 2nd, 2022 at 4PM**. The Scholarship package can be found [**HERE**](https://www.bcschoolsports.ca/member-services/scholarships).

**FISA Update – April 22, 2022**

**FISA Fast Facts**

In the 1986 - 87 school year there were a total of **301** independent schools in BC and **171** (over half) of these schools were not FISA members. In the 2020 – 21 school year there were **378** independent schools with only **50** non-FISA member schools.

**COVID Updates**

A 4-day work week followed by another 4-day work week has been a welcome experience for independent schools. While we have heard of isolated COVID cases in very few independent schools, they seem to be concentrated regionally and they are not triggering concerns from public health.

I am also pleased to know that some school communities and FISA associations are now planning and scheduling more face-to-face events – when they deem it prudent and safe to do so. Personally, over the last couple of weeks, I have had the great pleasure to attend meetings and conferences in person and look forward to more of these opportunities in the future as our province manages the transition from a pandemic to an endemic response to COVID.

Today the Government of Canada announced [updated easing of certain border measures](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2022/04/government-of-canada-announces-additional-easing-of-border-measures-effective-april-25.html), which come into effect this **Monday April 25, 2022**. This includes a number of changes, such as - **all fully vaccinated travellers will no longer be required to provide a quarantine plan upon entry or be required to** **wear a mask while in public spaces (including schools) for 14 days after arrival.**

**School Leader Survey**

On Tuesday, April 19th each FISA member school received an email requesting your response to a short survey to assist our organization by providing data that will inform the upcoming FISA Strategic Planning process. We are encouraged by the initial survey response thus far, but for those school leaders that have yet to complete the 5-minute survey, please do so before the April 29th deadline for responses (a further reminder with the survey link will be sent out early next week).

**Make a Future (MaF)**For the independent schools that have accessed [Make a Future](https://www.makeafuture.ca/?gclid=CjwKCAjwxZqSBhAHEiwASr9n9HQH7KdLjCkfs20utmshj4PpXD1r0S5HM4Zapyp37aIWUO-OrVP1fBoCgsIQAvD_BwE) to support their staff recruitment efforts, the original 3-year contract expired as of April 1, 2022. FISA has engaged with MaF to provide an additional 3-year agreement for independent schools that choose to use their services. FISA has negotiated a one-time 4.5% increase in the MaF fee, to provide fee rate security for the duration of the 3-year agreement. Attached to this email is the Website License and Service Agreement, Schedule A.

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**Register**[**HERE**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIoc-mrqj0oE9zRh3qxhU2d6p4J-L5EIIwu)

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**REMINDER: ArtStarts – Artists in Education (AIE) Grant**

FISA manages the AIE grant on behalf of ArtStarts. We are in the enviable position of having an excess of grant funds this year. Therefore, we are opening up a second application cycle. Group 1, 2, 3, and 4 schools are encouraged to apply to receive reimbursement of a portion of the professional artist fees (up to 70%) for performances and workshops held in schools (in-person or virtually). Applications can be submitted for performances that have already occurred or upcoming events that will take place prior to the end of this school year. Details can be found on the [application form](https://fisabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2021-2022-Application-for-AIE-Funds-FILLABLE.pdf). Independent schools which have already received an AIE grant this school year are eligible to apply for a second grant. The remaining grant funds will be awarded to eligible schools on a first come, first served basis with a final deadline of **April 29, 2022**.

FISA thanks the BC Arts Council and the Province of BC for their generosity in making these grants possible.

**FSA 2022 – 2023 Update**

The 2022 - 2023 FSA administration in schools will take place between **October 3 –** **November 11, 2022**. The FSA [website](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/assessment/foundation-skills-assessment) has been updated to reflect these dates.

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**Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement**To support initial planning for the new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement the Ministry has published the following documents which schools may find helpful:

* [New Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/736/2022/03/FNESC-EDUC-Grad-Requirement-Two-Pager-March-4.pdf) (two-page summary) PDF
* [New Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/736/2022/03/fr-FNESC-EDUC-Grad-Requirement.pdf)(PDF) (French)
* [Detailed Overview](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/736/2022/03/fr-Indigenous-Grad-Requirement-Detailed-Overview.pdf) (PDF) (French)

School communities are encouraged to provide responses through the online [feedback form](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/indigenousgradrequirement/), which is open until **April 22, 2022**. Schools should distribute the feedback form link to students, parents/caregivers and employees.

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**FISA “Happy Easter” Update – April 14, 2022**

**FISA Fast Facts**

There are 13 Designated Special Education Schools (SES) in BC. These are Group 1 or 2 independent brick and mortar schools that provide highly specialized educational programs and a tailored learning environment for a unique group of students with a range of special educational needs, who require services and supports above and beyond what is available in a regular classroom setting.

**COVID Updates**

This being a short week, following a week when the revised K-12 guidelines were released and positively received by school communities throughout the province - there is not much to update on the COVID front!

Work continues on COVID-related provincial committees, with local health authorities and with the Rapid Response Teams. As items of interest arise FISA will keep you informed.

·         FISA has advocated for the reduction of the collection frequency or the rescinding of the requirement for independent schools to submit daily staff and student attendance data – when the data no longer serves to support public health objectives. The Ministry of Education has foreshadowed that next week’s DM Bulletin will address this issue and we anticipate a reduction in these requirements for independent schools in the near future.

·         The BCCDC released their March 2022 [British Columbia COVID-19 Situation Report for K-12 Schools](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_sitrep/K12_Situation_Report/SitRep_K-12_March2022.pdf) report for last week that summarizes the COVID-related data collected by their organization.

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FISA thanks the BC Arts Council and the Province of BC for their generosity in making these grants possible.

**BCPVPA Webinar**

FISA greatly appreciates the BCPVPA’s generous offer to provide independent school leaders the opportunity to attend this **April 20th** webinar offering:

Have you ever wondered why some school leaders are far more successful than others?  How is it that when faced with a relatively common set of challenges, some school leaders are able to not only meet the administrative demands of the system but also transform their school in ways that enrich the lives of staff and students? What is ***IT*** these extraordinarily successful leaders draw upon to drive the transformation?

In this BCPVPA workshop, be prepared to examine more deeply the roots of your beliefs and the life experiences that are the underpinnings of your leadership potential.

[**Register HERE**](https://bcpvpa.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_C-RaNe5vR1GO3G7jh-rk-w)

*John Morrison is a Canadian bestselling author, conference presenter, and nationally recognized leader in education.*

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There are a number of optional *erase*opportunities listed in the trainingschedule available [HERE](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf).

**Social Emotional Learning with a Cultural Lens Webinar**

Independent school educators are invited to attend a free SEL webinar on **April 20th** at 3:30 p.m. (PST) hosted by the [Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre](https://keltymentalhealth.ca/). **Register**[**HERE**](https://phsa.zoom.us/webinar/register/u5EldOGopjMpGNOPuIgE4bskDpgTKb5eQNGh/success?user_id=k0eHyyZCRnaoSsdDOKeoMw&timezone_id=America%2FVancouver)

**Indigenous Education Gathering**

The Annual Indigenous Education Spring Provincial Gathering, will be held virtually on **May 26th & 27th** from 9:00 am to 12:00 PM. You are welcome to register [**HERE**](https://event-wizard.com/springprovincialgathering2022/0/register/).

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**Christian Principals Association of British Columbia**

The CPABC invites all school leaders to their annual spring conference to be held on **April 20-22, 2022**, in Whistler. More information is found on the [CPABC website](http://www.cpabc.ca/conferences/).

**BC School Sports**  
Reminder about upcoming Spring Deadlines:

•        Wednesday, **April 20th, 2022**– Roster Registration Deadline – Final day to add students to your Spring teams. When adding students to STARS and submitting transfer forms please allow for a minimum of two business days for approval.

·         BC School Sports is pleased to provide over $30,000 in scholarships available to student-athletes this year.  Please pass this on to whoever at your school assists students with scholarships. The application **deadline is** **Monday, May 2nd, 2022 at 4PM**. The Scholarship package can be found [here](https://www.bcschoolsports.ca/member-services/scholarships).

**FISA Update – April 8, 2022**

**FISA Fast Facts**

In the 2020-2021 school year, funded special needs students represented **8.25%** of the total independent school enrollment. For that same year, funded special needs students represented **6.02%** of the total BC public school enrollment.

**COVID Updates**

The revised [K-12 Communicable Disease Guidelines](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidlines.pdf) were released today (and come into effect on April 16th) and reflect the confidence public health officials have in the K-12 sector’s ability to respond effectively to communicable disease matters in a purposeful, safe and respectful manner. This was predictable, as reports to the Steering Committee from the sector, regarding schools’ experience with the move to personal choice for PPE use, was overwhelmingly positive. I must direct the deserved credit to independent school leaders for your depth of understanding of your school communities that has allowed you to manage these, and future changes - with respect, compassion and grace.

·         A reminder: Schools with excess Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits may reallocate them in the manner the school determines is best (within their school community, to another school that requires more RATs, or connect with your local health authority for suggestions). Shipping surplus RATs back to the Ministry of Education is **not** an option.

**Norovirus – Stomach Flu**

Some independent schools are noticing a norovirus/stomach flu circulating in their communities. Symptoms of norovirus include: an upset stomach, vomiting, and/or diarrhea. This illness usually begins suddenly and lasts for 1 to 3 days. To help reduce the spread of noroviruses schools should continue to follow their Communicable Disease Plans. Norovirus cases do not need to be reported to health authorities. For more information on noroviruses visit [HealthLinkBC](https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/norovirus) or see page 46 of the [VCH Sneezes and Diseases Guide](https://sneezesdiseases.com/).

**BCPVPA Webinar**

FISA greatly appreciates the BCPVPA’s generous offer to provide independent school leaders the opportunity to attend their webinar offerings:

Have you ever wondered why some school leaders are far more successful than others?  How is it that when faced with a relatively common set of challenges, some school leaders are able to not only meet the administrative demands of the system but also transform their school in ways that enrich the lives of staff and students? What is ***IT*** these extraordinarily successful leaders draw upon to drive the transformation?

In this BCPVPA workshop, be prepared to examine more deeply the roots of your beliefs and the life experiences that are the underpinnings of your leadership potential.

[**Register HERE**](https://bcpvpa.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_C-RaNe5vR1GO3G7jh-rk-w)

*John Morrison is a Canadian bestselling author, conference presenter, and nationally recognized leader in education.*

***Erase*Training Sessions**

Space remains available for the May *Overview of the VTRA & DTA Protocols* virtual training sessions. This is the erase session that meets independent school inspection requirements.

·         [Overview of the Provincial VTRA & DTA - May 5, 2022](https://event-wizard.com/OverviewVTRADTAOnlineMay52022/0/register/)

·         [Overview of the Provincial VTRA & DTA - May 31, 2022](https://event-wizard.com/OverviewDTAVTRAOnlineMay312022/0/register/)

There are a number of additional *erase*training opportunities, which are optional but highly recommended:

·         [Application of the Provincial Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol through Case Studies – May 6, 2022](https://event-wizard.com/ApplicationProvincialVTRACaseStudiesMay62022/0/register/). This workshop will be held in-person in Kelowna.

·         [Trauma Informed Safe and Caring School Communities – May 13, 2022](https://event-wizard.com/TraumaInformedOnlineMay132022/0/register/). Virtual

·         [Fundamentals of Digital Threat Assessment (DTA) \*This training precedes Basic DTA – May 25, 2022](https://event-wizard.com/FundamentalsofDTAMay252022/0/register/). Virtual

·         [Grade 8-12 Student Online Safety Sessions](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf). Virtual

-        [May 6, 2022 – 10:20-11:20 a.m. (PST)](https://event-wizard.com/SocialMediaAwarenessStudentSessionMay62022/0/register/)

-        [May 11, 2022 – 12:25-1:25 p.m. (PST)](https://event-wizard.com/SocialMediaAwarenessStudentMay112022/0/register/)

-        [May 24, 2022 – 9:40-10:40 a.m. (PST)](https://event-wizard.com/SocialMediaAwarenessStudentMay242022/0/register/)

-        [May 24, 2022 – 6:30-7:30 p.m. (PST)](https://event-wizard.com/SocialMediaAwarenessStudentMay242022pm/0/register/)

For sessions which are during school hours, teachers may register on behalf of their class. For the 6:30pm session, parents and caregivers are encouraged to watch with their youth.

**Social Emotional Learning with a Cultural Lens Webinar**

Independent school educators are invited to attend a free SEL webinar on April 20th at 3:30 p.m. (PST) hosted by the [Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre](https://keltymentalhealth.ca/). **Register**[**HERE**](https://phsa.zoom.us/webinar/register/u5EldOGopjMpGNOPuIgE4bskDpgTKb5eQNGh/success?user_id=k0eHyyZCRnaoSsdDOKeoMw&timezone_id=America%2FVancouver)

**Free Teacher Evening at the Museum of Anthropology - UBC**

Join the MOA Education team on Thursday, April 14th from 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. for an after-hours, teachers-only evening and learn how to make the most of your MOA Field Trip. Learn more about MOA’s Native Youth Program and our upcoming exhibition [***Xicanx:***](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001DkqWWLbrtwzJYatxEOxFRCXC_BB4zM1Kz7TKTcQ64DQSnMw_EeosqQYYJXmVpXVV7Kr38H5IV-qNJglSRfJMsFhdqRMoCfTYuMRmyHtEMfoXPbGjdO5LDWbynjtTadygo3vEawN7Nji6p_2AqXacb_zdqPu3H71ZEDZs7glAEDM=&c=fYQkjnagtVz8e7G5VCYfssr3R9HCGf1Vl39prNYYCsfnk2LmMAVbQw==&ch=HWjH-8fzSYAEfFdvteNnxec_rHvcwv5C7hIki_OZnxcRYlTRA_J_Yw==) [***Dreamers + Changemakers***](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001DkqWWLbrtwzJYatxEOxFRCXC_BB4zM1Kz7TKTcQ64DQSnMw_EeosqQYYJXmVpXVV7Kr38H5IV-qNJglSRfJMsFhdqRMoCfTYuMRmyHtEMfoXPbGjdO5LDWbynjtTadygo3vEawN7Nji6p_2AqXacb_zdqPu3H71ZEDZs7glAEDM=&c=fYQkjnagtVz8e7G5VCYfssr3R9HCGf1Vl39prNYYCsfnk2LmMAVbQw==&ch=HWjH-8fzSYAEfFdvteNnxec_rHvcwv5C7hIki_OZnxcRYlTRA_J_Yw==). Admission is free, but advanced registration is required. **Register**[**HERE**](https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8GoJg6GSBZPJcz4)

**Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement**To support initial planning for the new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement the Ministry has published the following documents which schools may find helpful:

* [New Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/736/2022/03/FNESC-EDUC-Grad-Requirement-Two-Pager-March-4.pdf) (two-page summary) PDF
* [Detailed Overview](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/736/2022/03/Indigenous-Grad-Requirement-Detailed-Overview-March-4.pdf) (PDF)
* [New Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/736/2022/03/fr-FNESC-EDUC-Grad-Requirement.pdf)(PDF) (French)
* [Detailed Overview](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/736/2022/03/fr-Indigenous-Grad-Requirement-Detailed-Overview.pdf) (PDF) (French)

School communities are encouraged to provide responses through the online [feedback form](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/indigenousgradrequirement/), which is open until April 22, 2022. Schools should distribute the feedback form link to students, parents/caregivers and employees.

**Make a Future (MaF)**For the independent schools that have accessed [Make a Future](https://www.makeafuture.ca/?gclid=CjwKCAjwxZqSBhAHEiwASr9n9HQH7KdLjCkfs20utmshj4PpXD1r0S5HM4Zapyp37aIWUO-OrVP1fBoCgsIQAvD_BwE) to support their staff recruitment efforts, the original 3-year contract expired as of April 1, 2022. FISA has engaged with MaF to provide an additional 3-year agreement for independent schools that choose to use their services. FISA has negotiated a one-time 4.5% increase in the MaF fee, to provide fee rate security for the duration of the 3-year agreement.

Independent schools will receive further information on MaF services and costs next week.

**BCCIE International Education Awards**  
Nominations are open for the 13th annual BCCIE International Education Awards. These awards recognize the professionalism, dedication, and efforts of an exemplary group of experts and practitioners in the field of international education in British Columbia. The deadline to submit a nomination is April 15, 2022. More information is found on the [BCCIE website](https://www.bccieevents.ca/bciew22/awards).

**Christian Principals Association of British Columbia**

The CPABC invites all school leaders to their annual spring conference to be held on April 20-22, 2022, in Whistler. More information is found on the [CPABC website](http://www.cpabc.ca/conferences/).

**BC School Sports**  
BC School Sports is pleased to provide over $30,000 in scholarships available to student-athletes this year.  Please pass this on to whoever at your school assists students with scholarships. The application **deadline is** **Monday, May 2nd, 2022 at 4:00 PM**. The Scholarship package can be found [HERE](https://www.bcschoolsports.ca/member-services/scholarships).

**FISA Update – April 1, 2022**

**FISA Fast Facts**

Independent schools are scattered throughout BC. There is at least one independent school located within the boundaries of 90% of BC’s regional school districts. The only areas devoid of a brick & mortar independent school are in SD#10 – Arrow Lakes, SD#19 – Revelstoke, SD#46 – Sunshine Coast, SD#51 – Boundary, SD#84 – Vancouver Island West, SD#92 – Nisga’a.

Thankfully, the 16 Provincial Independent Online Schools operate province-wide, offering BC families’ educational choice, regardless of their place of residence.

**COVID Updates**The anecdotal feedback FISA has received from school leaders on their post-spring break return to school experiences has been quite positive. In general, the shift to self-management of COVID-type symptoms and individual choice for personal health protection, has been well received. This is welcome news and I believe this is in large part due to the respectful environments independent school leaders have established within their communities!

·         Today’s update to the [PHO website](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions#changes) hints that K-12 schools should anticipate more temporary communicable disease measures being rescinded next week. The K-12 sector will receive revised Ministry of Education guidelines soon after Dr. Henry revises her public health orders.

·         The province is experiencing a general reduction in severe illness due to COVID-19, with anticipated fluctuations that align with experiences in other jurisdictions. The BCCDC reports that the province has a high level of immunity due to impressive vaccination rates. Public Health’s focus will continue to be the promotion of vaccinations and effective treatments for those more severely impacted by a COVID-19 infection.

·         FISA has received calls from some independent schools that have a surplus supply of Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) packages. The Ministry of Education has advised FISA that independent schools should reallocate any surplus supply of RATs within their school community, to another school that requires more RATs, or connect with your local health authority for suggestions on where they could be best utilized within your area (hospitals, care facilities, pharmacies…). Shipping surplus RATs back to the Ministry of Education is **not** one of your options.

***Erase*Training Sessions**[Registration](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf) is now open for several*erase* training sessions taking place in May 2022. While all of these virtual training sessions are highly recommended the only training that meets the independent school compliance requirements is the “Overview of the Provincial Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol and Digital Threat Assessment (DTA)”.

·         [Overview of the Provincial VTRA & DTA May 5, 2022](https://event-wizard.com/OverviewVTRADTAOnlineMay52022/0/register/)

·         [Overview of the Provincial VTRA & DTA May 31, 2022](https://event-wizard.com/OverviewDTAVTRAOnlineMay312022/0/register/)

*Erase* training is current for 3 school years. Training completed in 2019/20 will expire at the conclusion of this school year – June 30, 2022.

**National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**The March 24th [Special DM Bulletin](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220324/DM_Ind_School_Special_Bulletin_March_24_2022.pdf) asked independent schools to plan to not be in operation on September 30, 2022, in honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The BC government is presently in consultation with Indigenous leaders to determine how September 30th could best support Truth and Reconciliation (Statutory Holiday, Day of Study…) and FISA will continue to engage with the Ministry of Education on this topic and share any updates with our member schools.

**Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement**To support initial planning for the new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement the Ministry has published the following documents which schools may find helpful:

* [New Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/736/2022/03/FNESC-EDUC-Grad-Requirement-Two-Pager-March-4.pdf) (two-page summary) PDF
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* [New Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/736/2022/03/fr-FNESC-EDUC-Grad-Requirement.pdf)(PDF) (French)
* [Detailed Overview](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/736/2022/03/fr-Indigenous-Grad-Requirement-Detailed-Overview.pdf) (PDF) (French)

The online [feedback form](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/indigenousgradrequirement/) is open until April 22, 2022. Schools are encouraged to distribute the feedback form link to students, parents/caregivers and employees.

**Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) for Registered Homeschooled Students**Thank you to everyone who responded to our survey regarding RAT kits for homeschooling students. Schools that requested kits for their homeschoolers will have their kits shipped out soon. Schools that indicated they already have sufficient supply on hand to meet the needs of their homeschoolers should proceed with distributing test kits to the families who requested them.

Independent schools will not be responsible for the mailing of these packages to their registered homeschool families (although you may choose to do so). Schools will determine the procedures the homeschool families must follow to receive their RAT packages (pick up at the school, pay for shipping…).

**Hours of Instruction**

Due to the PHO-imposed delayed post-Christmas school restart in January (4 days), FISA requested that the required hours of instruction be reduced to reflect this unforeseen closure. In response, the Ministry has amended the [Educational Standards Order MO 41/91](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/independent-schools/educational-standards-for-independent-schools#:~:text=General%20Curriculum%20Requirements&text=450%20hours%20of%20instruction%20for,for%20Grades%201%20to%209.) as follows:

(2.1) For the 2021/2022 school year, an authority must provide not fewer than the following hours of instruction to students enrolled in an educational program in an independent school operated by the authority:

(a) to students in half day kindergarten, 435 hours of instruction;

(a.1) to students in full day kindergarten, 820 hours of instruction; and

(b) to all other students, 820 hours of instruction.

FISA thanks the Ministry for this amendment which should allow all independent schools to fulfill their obligation in providing the required instructional hours without having to adjust their calendars.

**Make a Future (MaF)**For the independent schools that have accessed [Make a Future](https://www.makeafuture.ca/?gclid=CjwKCAjwxZqSBhAHEiwASr9n9HQH7KdLjCkfs20utmshj4PpXD1r0S5HM4Zapyp37aIWUO-OrVP1fBoCgsIQAvD_BwE) to support their staff recruitment efforts, the original 3-year contract expired as of April 1, 2022. FISA has engaged with MaF to provide an additional 3-year agreement for independent schools that choose to use their services. FISA has negotiated a one-time 4.5% increase in the MaF fee, to provide fee rate security for the duration of the 3-year agreement.

Independent schools will receive further information on MaF next week and schools interested in continuing their relationship with MaF, or schools that are looking to initiate MaF services, will have until April 29th to sign a new agreement without a late sign up charge.

**BCCIE International Education Awards**  
Nominations are open for the 13th annual BCCIE International Education Awards. These awards recognize the professionalism, dedication, and efforts of an exemplary group of experts and practitioners in the field of international education in British Columbia. The deadline to submit a nomination is April 15, 2022. More information is found on the [BCCIE website](https://www.bccieevents.ca/bciew22/awards).

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**Coast Capital Youth Education Awards**  
FISA manages the distribution of the Coast Capital Youth Education Award on behalf of Coast Capital Savings. This year FISA has been provided with 2 awards in the amount of $3,500 each. Please see the FISA [Scholarship and Awards](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/) page for more information and the application form. Youth Education Award **submissions are due April 8, 2022**. Please email the completed application form to [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca). Note: FISA will complete the section on page 6 where it asks for the name and signature of the School District Representative.

**BC School Sports**BC School Sports is pleased to provide over $30,000 in scholarships available to student-athletes this year.  Please pass this on to whoever at your school assists students with scholarships. The application **deadline is** **Monday, May 2nd, 2022 at 4PM**. The Scholarship package can be found [here](https://www.bcschoolsports.ca/member-services/scholarships).

**FISA Update – March 25, 2022**

**FISA Fascinating Facts**

From 1977-78 to the 2021-22 school year, total enrollment for the BC K-12 sector has grown by **22.2%**(551,462 to 668,708). During that same period, independent school enrollment has increased by **279.2%**(23,691 to 89,825).

**COVID Updates**

* Students and staff members throughout the province will be returning from spring break with some noticeable changes to the COVID requirements school leaders have managed for the past couple of years.
* Mask use will be a personal choice and school leaders will promote respect for the choices staff and students will make.
* Social distancing is still suggested as a valuable public health tool that schools may want to consider in circumstances where crowding may occur, but capacity restrictions and class configurations can be adjusted to meet the school’s needs.
* With the anticipated removal of proof of vaccination status for most events and venues in early April, this should provide schools with greater opportunity to access field trips and plan important school community events like Grad or school performances.
* Visitors to schools will now be welcomed and schools can resume their pre-pandemic practices for visitors entering your school.
* It is recommended that schools continue to take a trauma informed approach when managing these changes to the COVID-19 practices and procedures.

***Erase*Training Sessions**[Registration](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf) is now open for several*erase* training sessions taking place in May 2022. While all of these virtual training sessions are highly recommended the only training that meets the independent school compliance requirements is the “Overview of the Provincial Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol and Digital Threat Assessment (DTA)”.

·         [Overview of the Provincial VTRA & DTA May 5, 2022](https://event-wizard.com/OverviewVTRADTAOnlineMay52022/0/register/)

·         [Overview of the Provincial VTRA & DTA May 31, 2022](https://event-wizard.com/OverviewDTAVTRAOnlineMay312022/0/register/)

*Erase* training is current for 3 school years. Training completed in 2019/20 will expire at the conclusion of this school year – June 30, 2022.

**National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**Yesterday’s [Special DM Bulletin](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220324/DM_Ind_School_Special_Bulletin_March_24_2022.pdf) asked independent schools to plan to not be in operation on September 30, 2022, in honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The BC government is presently in consultation with Indigenous leaders to determine how September 30th could best support Truth and Reconciliation (Statutory Holiday, Day of Study…) and FISA will continue to engage with the Ministry of Education on this topic and share any updates with our member schools.

**Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) for Registered Homeschooled Students**

The next phase of the RAT distribution is to focus on distribution to BC homeschool students. In consultation with the MoE we have agreed on the following procedures.

·           If your school registers homeschool students, you should communicate with them to determine if they are interested in receiving a RAT package (please provide at least 3 days for these families to respond to this offer).

·           FISA then asks that **all independent schools complete a short survey** that will identify if you register homeschool students and, if so, the number of RAT kits required for the homeschooled students registered at your school that have requested a RAT package. For schools that register homeschoolers if you already have a sufficient number of kits on hand through previous deliveries to accommodate the homeschoolers' requests, please indicate a 0 on the survey. **If your school has not yet responded, please complete this**[**2-minute survey**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HSRATRequest)**no later than March 29th.**

·           FISA will forward this information to the MoE and they will arrange for the shipping to your site.

·           Independent schools will not be responsible for the mailing of these packages to their registered homeschool families (although you may choose to do so). Schools will determine the procedures the homeschool families must follow to receive their RAT packages (pick up at the school, pay for shipping…).

**Hours of Instruction**

Due to the PHO-imposed delayed post-Christmas school restart in January (4 days), FISA requested that the required hours of instruction be reduced to reflect this unforeseen closure. FISA received confirmation this week that the MoE will make the appropriate internal actions to make these adjustments (i.e. amend the [Educational Standards Order MO 41/91](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/independent-schools/educational-standards-for-independent-schools#:~:text=General%20Curriculum%20Requirements&text=450%20hours%20of%20instruction%20for,for%20Grades%201%20to%209.)). This is an important action, as independent schools’ per student funding (ES Audit) is dependent on minimum hours of instruction each year. **Resources**The Métis Nation BC is providing access for the K-12 sector to learning resources **(see attached flyer)** that will provide direct access to the Métis culture.

**Invitation to Participate in a Youth Substance-Use Professional Learning Community**

You’re invited to attend a new, K-12 virtual Professional Learning Community (PLC) where you will learn about and share school-centred approaches to prevent, delay and reduce substance-related harms for youth.

This PLC will provide a safe space to explore your practice, share strategies and receive web-based resources to support your work to prevent, delay and reduce substance-related harms for youth.

These one hour sessions every two months will be co-facilitated by [Art Steinmann and Cindy Andrew](https://drive.google.com/file/d/14efhs19ZtzueEUjVsg5uw9dAT8oE41kT/view?usp=sharing) who have decades of experience in comprehensive, school-based health and substance use related efforts.

**Who can Join?**

Anyone working in the BC K-12 education system who has a responsibility or interest in promoting and supporting the health and well-being of students including preventing, delaying and reducing substance use harms.

**What’s the Commitment?**

None. Attend if and when you can. We appreciate that people have multiple commitments and limited time, so it’s up to you how often you join. Members will help to shape our meetings to help ensure they meet the collective needs of participants.

**Details**

The first PLC will take place virtually on **Thursday April 7, 2022.**

Please share your availability when you register.

Once registered, you will receive a ZOOM link. **Register**[**HERE**](https://forms.gle/9Pm6KMDu7pYLx6Vu7)

**School Bus Purchases**Independent schools that are considering a new bus purchase should read the **attached message** from the Association of School Transportation Services of BC. The ASTSBC has secured standing offer prices for school buses from March 21, 2022 to June 10, 2022. The prices are “Free on Board” for each purchaser’s receiving location and includes delivery, packaging, crating, and unloading costs anywhere in BC.

**Coast Capital Youth Education Awards**

FISA manages the distribution of the Coast Capital Youth Education Award on behalf of Coast Capital Savings. This year FISA has been provided with 2 awards in the amount of $3,500 each. Please see the FISA [Scholarship and Awards](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/) page for more information and the application form. Youth Education Award submissions are due April 8, 2022. Please email the completed application form to [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca).

**BC School Sports**BC School Sports is pleased to provide over $30,000 in scholarships available to student-athletes this year.  Please pass this on to whoever at your school assists students with scholarships. The application **deadline is** **Monday, May 2nd, 2022 at 4PM**. The Scholarship package can be found [here](https://www.bcschoolsports.ca/member-services/scholarships).

**FISA Update – March 18, 2022**

**COVID Updates**

·         As a reminder for schools with non-traditional spring breaks,these independent schools can rescind mandatory mask use, based on the start date of spring break for the public school district in which their school resides.

·         Mask use for K-12 students, staff, and visitors now aligns with the individual’s personal health choices. Schools should support and respect individual choices. The VCHRRT team has developed mask signage which may assist in efforts to create a supportive environment **(attached message)**.

·         Schools are recommended to continue to take a trauma informed approach when managing shifts in COVID-19 practices and procedures. Many independent school personnel will recall that the 2019 FISA Provincial Outreach Pro-D series featured Dr. Linda O’Neill’s work on Trauma Informed Classrooms. The resources provided by Dr. O’Neill continue to be of relevance and can be downloaded from the [Pro-D section of the FISA website](https://fisabc.ca/professional-learning/provincial-outreach/). The Ministry also has developed a series of online [Trauma Informed Practice workshop packages](https://mytrainingbc.ca/traumainformedpractice/) which can be used to facilitate individual or staff Pro-D.

·         We also encourage independent school leaders and educators to reacquaint themselves with FISA's [WellBeingBC website](https://www.wellbeingbc.ca/). This website has a plethora of classroom tested strategies and approaches to promote mental health and social emotional learning. The [Schoolwide Assessment & Growth Plan Toolkit](https://www.wellbeingbc.ca/school-toolkit) may be of particular interest to schools that are seeking a way to assess their school’s climate and culture as part of their COVID-19 recovery plans.

·         The Ministry of Education has confirmed that the work of the 6 Rapid Response Teams will continue to the end of this school year. At this point the RRTs are still awaiting specific details on the RRT deliverables but we anticipate a greater focus on proactive, recovery related initiatives.  
FISA is presently crafting a survey for independent schools to determine the areas where the ISRRT can best serve the needs of our sector.

**Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) for Registered Homeschooled Students**

The BC government has committed to providing each student in the K-12 system with a package of 5 RATs. FISA greatly appreciates the efforts independent schools have provided to make this public health initiative possible. Brick and mortar schools managed the initial distribution phase and the Provincial Independent Online Schools (PIOS) have been managing the second phase of this distribution, with the unique challenges inherent with enrolling students from throughout the province.

The next phase of the RAT distribution is to focus on distribution to BC homeschool students. In consultation with the MoE we have agreed on the following procedures.

·           If your school registers homeschool students, you should communicate with them to determine if they are interested in receiving a RAT package (please provide at least 3 days for these families to respond to this offer).

·           FISA then asks that all independent schools complete a short survey that will identify if you register homeschool students and, if so, the number of RAT kits required for the homeschooled students registered at your school that have requested a RAT package. **If your school has not yet responded, please complete this**[**2-minute survey**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HSRATRequest)**no later than March 29th.**

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**BC School Sports**BC School Sports is pleased to provide over $30,000 in scholarships available to student-athletes this year.  Please pass this on to whoever at your school assists students with scholarships. The application **deadline is** **Monday, May 2nd, 2022 at 4PM**. The Scholarship package can be found [here](https://www.bcschoolsports.ca/member-services/scholarships).

**FISA Update – March 11, 2022**

**In addition to the weekly update information, please see the attached March 2022 edition of the FISA Newsletter and Bulletin.**

Many independent schools were anxiously awaiting the news that [Dr. Bonnie Henry](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022HLTH0081-000324) and the [Ministry of Education](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220310/march-2022-summary-of-changes---communicable-disease-guidelines.pdf) delivered yesterday. I am sure you are all up to date with these announcements but there are a couple of questions that have come FISA’s way that may require some clarification.

* **Independent Schools with Non-traditional Spring Breaks:** Dr. Henry’s announcement yesterday rescinded the requirement for mask use in most public spaces as of today. The move towards optional mask use for staff and students in the K-12 sector will align with the start of their spring break, which varies for independent schools and school districts around the province. FISA recognized there are independent schools that do not schedule traditional March spring breaks and engaged with the Ministry of Education and the PHO to provide direction for these schools.  
    
  The directive for these independent schools that do not have a scheduled March break is that they can rescind mandatory mask use, based on the start date of spring break in the public school district where they reside.   
  Therefore, if your school is located in a SD where their spring break commences at the end of the school day on March 11th - school staff and students can make their personal mask wearing decisions when they return to school on Monday, March 14th. If your school is located in a SD where their spring break commences at the end of the school day on March 18th - school staff and students can make their personal mask wearing decisions when they return to school on Monday, March 21st.
* **School Transportation:** Once the mask mandate has been rescinded for your school (when spring break commences) mask use is no longer required on school busses.
* **Spring Break programming:** For schools holding camps, practices, tutorial sessions, etc. during spring break mask use for attendees and staff is optional.
* Schools are recommended to continue to take a trauma informed approach when managing shifts in COVID-19 practices and procedures. Many independent school personnel will recall that the 2019 FISA Provincial Outreach Pro-D series featured Dr. Linda O’Neill’s work on Trauma Informed Classrooms. The resources provided by Dr. O’Neill continue to be of relevance and can be downloaded from the Pro-D section of the [FISA website](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).
* We also encourage independent school leaders and educators to reacquaint themselves with FISA's [WellBeingBC](https://www.wellbeingbc.ca/) website. This website has a plethora of classroom tested strategies and approaches to promote mental health and social emotional learning. The [Schoolwide Assessment & Growth Plan Toolkit](https://www.wellbeingbc.ca/school-toolkit) may be of particular interest to schools that are seeking a way to assess their school’s climate and culture as part of their COVID-19 recovery plans.

**Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) for Registered Homeschooled Students**

The BC government has committed to providing each student in the K-12 system with 5 RATs. FISA greatly appreciates the efforts independent schools have provided to make this public health initiative possible. Brick and mortar schools managed the initial distribution phase and the Provincial Independent Online Schools (PIOS) have been managing the second phase of this distribution, with the unique challenges inherent with enrolling students from throughout the province.

The next phase of the RAT distribution is to focus on distribution to BC homeschool students. In consultation with the MoE we have agreed on the following procedures.

* If your school registers homeschool students you should communicate with them to determine if they are interested in receiving a RAT package (please provide at least 3 days for these families to respond to this offer).
* FISA then asks that **all** independent schools complete a very [short survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HSRATRequest) that will identify the number of RAT kits required for the homeschooled students registered at your school – if any.
* FISA will forward this information to the MoE and they will arrange for the shipping to your site.
* Independent schools will not be responsible for the mailing of these packages to their registered homeschool families (although you may choose to do so). Schools will determine the procedures the homeschool families must follow to receive their RAT packages (pick up at the school, pay for shipping…).

**Independent Schools with Childcare Centres**

As anticipated, the accountability for childcare will transition to the MoE in April 2022. While there will be no immediate change for childcare operators as the result of this move of accountability from one ministerial agency to another, the government is seeking feedback regarding ways to improve and enhance BC’s childcare sector. Independent schools that have affiliated childcare programs are strongly encouraged to participate in the [virtual Focus Groups](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/childcarebc-engagement/focus-group-registration) and/or complete the [online Feedback Form](https://feedback.engage.gov.bc.ca/727126?lang=en) (accessible until March 17th). FISA will continue to meet with MoE officials to assist in creating policies and programs that take into account the wide variety of fulsome early learning and care opportunities provided within independent school communities. To assist FISA in the objective, an ad hoc Childcare Committee has been created with representatives selected by the Association Heads.

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**FISA Update – March 4, 2022**

**COVID Updates**

·         Once again this week we are hearing from public health officials that the COVID-related metrics that inform public health policy are improving. Senior PHO and BC political officials are also hinting at the inevitability of upcoming changes to community and school guidelines. I think it is also fair to say that BC has historically taken a more measured approach to the relaxing of public health restrictions.

·         I greatly appreciate the discussions at the Steering Committee (SC) that give a voice to medical experts, Ministry personnel and the K-12 stakeholders. As Dr. Henry prepares to make possible revisions, there is strong support for school and community guidelines to align as closely as possible. There is also consensus that there is great value in providing comprehensive rationales for any upcoming revisions to school-related guidelines.

·         Dr. Henry has established March 15th and April 12th as the dates when existing orders will be reviewed and possibly amended.

·         With spring break occurring soon, schools should share with their families the recent changes to the [entry requirements](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2022/02/government-of-canada-lightens-border-measures-as-part-of-transition-of-the-pandemic-response.html) for those that return to Canada after travelling abroad - effective February 28th. Of particular interest for independent schools is the change to the requirement restricting student school attendance for 14 days after their return to Canada:

o   Children under 12 years old, travelling with fully vaccinated adults, will continue to be exempt from quarantine, without any prescribed conditions limiting their activities. This means, for example, they no longer need to wait 14 days before attending school, camp or daycare.

·         The province continues to promote vaccinations as one of the most effective ways to mitigate negative public health outcomes. Health Canada authorized the use of the [Novavax](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine/vaccines-for-covid-19) protein-based vaccine on February 17, 2022. This vaccine is available to people aged 18 and older. Having access to a variety of COVID-19 vaccine options may assist people in managing their personal health choices and contribute to increasing COVID-19 community immunity.

·         Schools are recommended to continue to take a trauma informed approach when managing shifts in COVID-19 practices and procedures. Many independent school personnel will recall that the 2019 FISA Provincial Outreach Pro-D series featured Dr. Linda O’Neill’s work on Trauma Informed Classrooms. The resources provided by Dr. O’Neill continue to be of relevance and can be downloaded from the [Pro-D section](https://fisabc.ca/professional-learning/provincial-outreach/) of the FISA website.

·         We also encourage independent school leaders and educators to reacquaint themselves with FISA's [WellBeingBC](https://www.wellbeingbc.ca/) website. This website has a plethora of classroom tested strategies and approaches to promote mental health and social emotional learning. The [Schoolwide Assessment & Growth Plan Toolkit](https://www.wellbeingbc.ca/school-toolkit) may be of particular interest to schools that are seeking a way to assess their school’s climate and culture as part of their COVID-19 recovery plans.

**Independent Online Education**

As a result of the Funding Model Review (FMR 2019), which did not include consultations with independent schools, changes were proposed for online education in BC. Subsequently Bill 8 was passed (March 2020). This Bill provides the opportunity for public and independent brick and mortar schools to provide online course programming for students. In public schools this opportunity is restricted to students within the boundaries of their district. Since independent brick and mortar schools do not have a defined “district” or “geographical catchment”, an MoE policy will need to be created and FISA is actively advocating for a policy that meets the needs of our schools and their respective enrollment catchments.

For existing online schools, they operate under an agreement with the Minister of Education and have historically had the opportunity to enroll students throughout the province. Many public online schools did not exercise this option and focused their online programming to serve students within their district. This is not the case for the 16 Provincial Independent Online Schools (PIOS). Throughout their existence, PIOS have enrolled and provided educational services to students from all corners of the province – providing quality learning program accessibility, relevance, and choice to BC families.

One of the post-Bill 8 online policy initiatives the MoE is progressing with is the creation of approved provincial online learning schools. For online schools that would like to continue to offer accessibility to their programming for students from around the province, they will need to apply and receive Minister approval to operate as a provincial service provider. BC public online schools have recently gone through this application process and many BC education stakeholders are awaiting the announcement of which public online schools were successful in their bid to be designated a provincial public online learning school, starting in the 2022 – 2023 school year.

PIOS are awaiting a similar application process for independent online schools, even though PIOS have always been designated provincial online learning schools. FISA advocates for the continuation of this opportunity for all the PIOS interested in keeping this designation, due to the foundational principles of online learning (accessibility, relevance and choice) and the uniqueness of independent online school programming that is inclusive of BC’s pluralistic society and its diverse student population.

FISA is appreciative of the inclusive consultation the MoE has facilitated, post the FMR and Bill 8. An integral part of this consultation occurred earlier this school year when online parent focus group sessions were hosted by SFU’s Wosk Centre for Dialogue. [A summary report “What We Heard”](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/online-learning/what_we_heard_report-_ol_learning_parent_forums.pdf) is now public and I encourage you to review this document to get a sense of the value PIOS play in supporting BC families and the diverse student learning needs within the K-12 sector.

**Independent Schools with Childcare Centres**

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**FISA Mental Health & Wellness Coordinators Update**

Earlier this morning, FISA’s Mental Health Coordinators, Jamie Morris & Michelle Hussey, facilitated a webinar with [Foundry BC](https://foundrybc.ca/). A recording of this webinar is available for viewing in the [Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/) on the FISA website. The attendees expressed astonishment of the wealth of free mental health services provided by Foundry BC for young people ages 12-24 and their parents/guardians. Please promote Foundry BC within your school community.

**Provincial Assessments**

As part of the February 11th DM Bulletin the Ministry provided further information as to steps to take for students who are on track to graduate prior to the next Provincial Assessment administration period in April 2022. Please read the [FAQ sheet](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/exams/graduation-assessments.pdf) for details. Additional questions can be directed to [exams@gov.bc.ca](mailto:exams@gov.bc.ca)

**District Authority Scholarships (DAS) and Coast Capital Youth Education Awards**

The application due date for submitting the online application form for the DAS award is fast approaching for most regions of the province (the Vancouver Island region deadline has already past. Please see the [Scholarship and Awards](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/) page on the FISA website for more information and application forms.

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**FISA Update – February 25, 2022**

This week marked the first time the FISA Board was able to meet face to face since January 2020. There was a palpable sense of joy and relief that our dedicated Board members could engage in face to face conversations and not have to respond to “sorry, we can’t hear you, you’re muted” – even though we have all become much better at navigating the virtual meeting conventions since 2020.

This meeting also provided the Board with an opportunity to meet the new Deputy Minister of Education & Childcare, Christina Zacharuk (she joined the meeting virtually). The introductory meeting was friendly, and I was impressed with the DM’s thoughtful responses to the issues the Board identified as requiring further/future engagement with the Ministry. FISA looks forward to future independent school advocacy opportunities with DM Zacharuk.

**COVID Updates**

* We are happy to state that the BCCDC is reporting a positive trajectory in the key pandemic indicators they monitor (cases and hospitalizations). The Ministry of Education (MoE) is also reporting a return to near normal attendance rates for students and staff in most of the province. It is very positive news that no independent schools reported a school or class functional closure this week.
* The Steering Committee (SC) is presently reviewing potential communication to the K-12 sector that will reflect the inevitable changes to the existing PHO orders and the BCCDC and MoE guidelines. There is acknowledgement that there are both sustainable (hand washing, stay home when you are sick) and unsustainable (Proof of Vaccination, mandatory mask use) public health practices that are included in these orders and guidelines. The unsustainable practices have a lifespan contingent upon being effective in meeting public health objectives. The sustainable practices can live on as positive public health legacies from COVID. Therefore, we can be confident that gathering restrictions, mask use requirements and POVs will cease – but when?
  + Dr. Henry has established March 15th and April 12th as the dates when her orders may be revised, informed by a review of the prevailing public health data. There is also a strong commitment on the SC to move towards greater alignment between community and K-12 orders and guidelines. To promote this alignment, an announcement of potential changes to the K-12 guidelines must align with the aforementioned dates.
* FISA requested a review of the requirement for schools to track and report daily staff and student attendance. The MoE reported on who receives this data (shared with the MoE and the regional School Medical Health Officers) and what it is used for (to provide a profile of illness prevalence to inform regional public health supports). There was an expressed desire to cease the collection of this data once it is determined it no longer provides the information health officials need to effectively deal with COVID issues.
* With spring break occurring soon, schools may want to share with their families the recent changes to the [entry requirements](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2022/02/government-of-canada-lightens-border-measures-as-part-of-transition-of-the-pandemic-response.html) for those that return to Canada after travelling abroad - effective February 28th. Of particular interest for independent schools is the change to the requirement restricting student school attendance for 14 days after their return to Canada:
  + Children under 12 years old, travelling with fully vaccinated adults, will continue to be exempt from quarantine, without any prescribed conditions limiting their activities. This means, for example, they no longer need to wait 14 days before attending school, camp or daycare.
* The distribution of the **Rapid Antigen Test**(RAT) kits for students is proceeding at a swifter pace than originally forecasted. Many rural and remote schools have reported receiving their allotment along with a handful of schools in metro areas. As explained in a February 15th Special DM Update, each student is to be provided a 5-pack box of tests to have at home to use if needed. Schools are requested to distribute the [MoE’s Letter to Families](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220215/rapid-test---letter-to-famlies20220215.pdf) when sending the kits home with the students.
* **Personal Protective Equipment** (PPE). The MoE has received a large donation of PPE (disposable masks, gloves, face shields, gowns, sanitizers) which will be made available to schools and districts upon request. Look for an announcement soon with details as how to order PPE through this offering. Note: the PPE will be distributed free of charge on a first come, first served basis. Participating schools are responsible for paying the shipping costs.

**BC Budget Highlights**

The BC budget was released on Tuesday, February 22nd and the most notable change for the K-12 sector was the inclusion of Childcare into the MoE budget. Of particular interest to independent schools:

* The total budget for the Ministry of Education and Childcare for 2022/23 is **$8.2 Billion**
* Independent schools are projected to receive **$490,795,000** in 2022/23
* This represents a **$17,483,000** increase for independent schools in 2022/23
* Independent schools are projected to receive **6.76%** of the K-12 total operating grant (in 2021/22 independent schools accounted for **13.3%** of BC student enrollment)

**FISA Mental Health & Wellness Coordinators Update**

The FISA Mental Health coordinators, Jamie Morris & Michelle Hussey, are pleased to facilitate the following webinar event for independent schools:

**Introduction to Foundry Health & Wellness Supports**

**When: Mar 4, 2022 at 9:30-10:30 AM Pacific Time**

FISA is pleased to partner with [Foundry BC](https://foundrybc.ca/)to host an upcoming Q & A session for all independent schools. This virtual conversation will be an excellent opportunity for you to directly engage with Foundry to learn more about what services, support, and resources they offer students across the province. Foundry offers regional and virtual services aimed at supporting young people ages 12 - 24 with health and wellness resources, services and supports. To learn more about Foundry in advance of this conversation, please check out their website: <https://foundrybc.ca/>

Register in advance for this meeting:

[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUuf--srjopHNRlUKJjVP1uihX-anz2kgHy**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUuf--srjopHNRlUKJjVP1uihX-anz2kgHy)(After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting).

**Independent Schools with Childcare Centres**

As anticipated, the accountability for childcare will transition to the MoE in April 2022. There will be no immediate change for childcare operators as the result of this move of accountability from one government jurisdiction to another. FISA met with personnel from the MoE and MCFD to discuss possible implications for independent schools that provide a wide variety of fulsome early learning and care opportunities (pre-school, daycare, before & after school care) for BC families.

The FISA Board approved the creation of an **Ad Hoc Childcare Committee**,  comprised of representatives from each of the five associations, in order to ensure that our interactions with government in this area match the needs and expectations from the field. The Association Heads will provide further information as to committee membership.

On February 7th the government announced that licensed childcare providers will receive a special [Health and Safety Grant of $160 per space](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022CFD0003-000171). These funds can be used by childcare operators to buy cleaning supplies, sanitizers or masks, to hire an external company to clean, or additional staff to cover absences due to illness.

**District Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

The independent school sector has been allotted 427 DAS awards for 2021/22. These awards are managed through the four regional DAS committees. Each region has a multi-step process, of which the first step is to complete an online application form prior to Spring Break and thereafter submit evidence of achievement in April.

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**FISA Update – February 18, 2022**

**COVID Updates**

·       Dr. Henry’s February 15th announcement, lifting most of the restrictions contained in the [Gathering and Events Order](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-gatherings-events.pdf) was met with good cheer by many, and the subsequent cancellation of the MoE and BCCDC Addendums provide even more heartening news. Schools should now revert to the practices and procedures which were in place prior to Winter Break as detailed in the [MoE’s Guidelines for K-12 Settings](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidlines.pdf) and the [BCCDC’s Guidance for K-12 Schools](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf). These documents are under review by the Steering Committee with an eye towards removing references to contract tracing and aligning with community protocols as much as possible.

·       The federal government has announced changes to the [entry requirements](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2022/02/government-of-canada-lightens-border-measures-as-part-of-transition-of-the-pandemic-response.html) for those that return to Canada after travelling abroad effective February 28th. Of particular interest for schools is the change to the requirement restricting student school attendance for 14 days after their return to Canada:

o   Children under 12 years old, travelling with fully vaccinated adults, will continue to be exempt from quarantine, without any prescribed conditions limiting their activities. This means, for example, they no longer need to wait 14 days before attending school, camp or daycare.

·       This past week no independent school reported staffing challenges severe enough to warrant a functional closure and only a couple of schools experienced low student attendance rates. This is certainly a trend we hope will continue.

·       The January 21st DM Bulletin mentioned a BCPSEA guidance document on suggested protocols for the collection of vaccination status information. FISA thanks the BCPSEA for sharing this document with the IS sector – attached. Note: the BCPSEA guidance is written for public employers which are under FIPPA regulations. Independent school employers are under PIPA regulations. Schools choosing to use the guidance will need to revise it per PIPA standards. To be clear, independent school authorities have not been tasked with collecting vaccination status information, although they may do so if the school authority determines that a policy of such nature is beneficial to their school context.

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On February 7th the government announced that licensed childcare providers will receive a special [Health and Safety Grant of $160 per space](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022CFD0003-000171). These funds can be used by childcare operators to buy cleaning supplies, sanitizers or masks, to hire an external company to clean, or additional staff to cover absences due to illness.

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FISA is pleased to partner with [Foundry BC](https://foundrybc.ca/)to host an upcoming Q & A session for all independent schools. This virtual conversation will be an excellent opportunity for you to directly engage with Foundry to learn more about what services, support, and resources they offer students across the province. Foundry offers regional and virtual services aimed at supporting young people ages 12 - 24 with health and wellness resources, services and supports. To learn more about Foundry in advance of this conversation, please check out their website: <https://foundrybc.ca/>

Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUuf--srjopHNRlUKJjVP1uihX-anz2kgHy**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUuf--srjopHNRlUKJjVP1uihX-anz2kgHy)(After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting).

**FISA Update – February 11, 2022**

**COVID Updates**

This past week the independent school sector reported a miniscule number of functional closures and student absenteeism concerns due to illness. This encouraging trend is welcomed as we approach the end of what is historically considered the respiratory illness season (cold & flu).

Next Tuesday, February 15th, Dr. Henry will provide an update on the status of the existing public health orders that were in response to the Omicron variant. This information will inform the work of the Provincial Steering Committee (SC) and the application and duration of the public health and MoE addendums. This information will also be used by the SC to determine future revisions to the K-12 guidelines.

While recognizing we are in a very different place now regarding COVID-19 case management, it may be of interest to look back at the confirmed exposures and cases experienced by independent schools from Sept. to Dec. 2021. The attached report provides a quick overview as to how we fared as a system.

·         The Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits intended for distribution to school staff (2 tests/employee) have been received by the school districts, who have connected with independent schools in their region with pick up details. If your school has not received instructions as to how to retrieve your allotment, please contact [ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca](mailto:ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca) for assistance.

·         The deployment of RAT kits for K-12 students attending rural and remote schools is scheduled to commence next week. Each student will be allocated 1 box (containing 5 tests) and Independent schools located in the [17 prioritized districts](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220201/rapid-antigen-test-deployment-is.pdf) will receive their shipments directly and are not required to collect their allotments from their local school district.

·         The Ministry is coordinating the distribution of the RAT kits for First Nations schools through FNESC. The kits will be shipped directly to the First Nations schools and contain sufficient kits for the distribution of 2 tests per staff member and a 5-pack box of tests to each family enrolled.

·         The Ministry of Children and Families (MCFD) has begun distributing [250,000 RAT kits to the childcare operators](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022CFD0002-000119). This has caused some confusion among independent schools that operate childcare facilities in addition to K-12 programs. For RAT kits delivered directly to the school or to an authority office this past week, or arriving in the upcoming week, please check to see who is listed on the address label. It is likely that these kits are intended for the childcare program.

**Independent Schools with Childcare Centres**

As anticipated, the accountability for childcare will transition to the MoE in April 2022. There will be no immediate change for childcare operators as the result of this move of accountability from one government jurisdiction to another. FISA has been invited to meet with personnel from the MoE and MCFD to discuss how independent schools contribute to ensuring a wide variety of fulsome early learning and care opportunities (pre-school, daycare, before & after school care) for BC families.

On February 7th the government announced that licensed childcare providers will receive a special [Health and Safety Grant of $160 per space](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022CFD0003-000171). These funds can be used by childcare operators to buy cleaning supplies, sanitizers or masks, to hire an external company to clean, or additional staff to cover absences due to illness.

**Make a Future**

Many independent schools have contracted with [Make a Future](https://www.makeafuture.ca/) (MaF) to support them with their human resources recruiting. We are approaching the end of a 3-year agreement (March 31, 2022) between independent schools and MaF that provided consistent fees for the duration of the agreement. FISA is working with MaF to establish a new 3-year agreement for independent school employers that would like to continue their relationship with MaF. We anticipate a marginal fee increase to the 2019 – 2022 costs and we are pursuing fee consistency for the next 3-years.

You can expect more information soon.

**FISA Mental Health & Wellness Coordinators Update**

The FISA Mental Health coordinators, Jamie Morris & Michelle Hussey, are pleased to facilitate the following two webinar events for independent schools:

**1)**   **Compassionate Systems Leadership #2 with Dr. Shirley Giroux**  
**When: Feb 18, 2022 1:30 - 3:00 PM Pacific Time**

Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtcuytrzsqGdGaZSVcMWf6VU5sxy6XC4op**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtcuytrzsqGdGaZSVcMWf6VU5sxy6XC4op)

FISA will host our 2nd CLS webinar with Dr. Shirley Giroux. CLS encourages a deliberate focus on creating and nourishing a school culture where everyone feels safe, connected, and respected. A recording of the Dec. 7th session is available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/). Learn more about Dr. Giroux’s [work with CSL here](https://systemsawareness.digication.com/shirley-giroux-project/about).

**2)**   **Introduction to Foundry Health & Wellness Supports**

**When: Mar 4, 2022 at 9:30-10:30 AM Pacific Time**

FISA is pleased to partner with [Foundry BC](https://foundrybc.ca/)to host an upcoming Q & A session for all independent schools. This virtual conversation will be an excellent opportunity for you to directly engage with Foundry to learn more about what services, support, and resources they offer students across the province. Foundry offers regional and virtual services aimed at supporting young people ages 12 - 24 with health and wellness resources, services and supports. To learn more about Foundry in advance of this conversation, please check out their website: <https://foundrybc.ca/>  
Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUuf--srjopHNRlUKJjVP1uihX-anz2kgHy**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUuf--srjopHNRlUKJjVP1uihX-anz2kgHy)(After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting).

**FISA Update – February 4, 2022**

**COVID Updates**

FISA is happy to report that BC independent schools have not experienced a functional closure for nearly two weeks. We report this knowing that the Omicron variant is still quite active in BC communities and independent schools have experienced staff absences due to illness. Therefore, I would like to make a special acknowledgement for the efforts by independent school leaders, teachers, EAs and support staff members who have gone above and beyond, often taking on non-traditional roles, to ensure their schools could continue to provide uninterrupted learning for their students.

·       FISA was pleased to see the Ministry of Education (MoE) revised their regulations to allow schools to host and participate in sports tournaments. FISA continues to advocate for alignment between PHO orders and the K–12 guidelines, when it makes sense to do so.

·       The Rapid Antigen Tests (R.A.T.) targeted for distribution to independent school staff members have been shipped but, as of today, we are aware some school districts have yet to receive their orders (that include the independent school orders within their district). The latest update from the MoE is that most school districts have received their allotment of tests, but some are still in transit.

·       These R.A.T. kits will come with [deployment instructions](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220114/rapid-test-deployment-information.pdf) (2 per staff member) and this [letter](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220114/rapid-test-letter-to-school-staff.pdf) should be distributed to staff before the distribution of the tests. School employees should be encouraged to follow the BCCDC “[When to get a COVID-19 test](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing/when-to-get-a-covid-19-test)” guidance, which includes the recommendation that people with mild symptoms do not need to take a test. Mild symptoms are those that can be managed at home. The BCCDC advises that people with mild symptoms should stay home and away from others until they feel well enough to return to regular activities and they no longer have a fever.

·       The Ministry is coordinating the distribution of the R.A.T. kits for First Nations schools through FNESC. The kits will be shipped directly to the First Nations schools and contain sufficient kits for the distribution of 2 tests per staff member and a 5-pack box of tests to each family enroled.

·       Independent schools are dutifully monitoring their daily student attendance/absenteeism and monitoring for “activity signals”. What we have learned over the last couple of weeks is that your local Health Authority (HA) has their own recommended protocols for determining baseline attendance rates and that few schools reach a threshold of concern. Please continue to reach out to your respective Association Leads when you believe you may have reached an activity signal threshold so they can review your data and determine if further action is needed.

Reaching an activity signal does not result in a class or school closure. Your local HA reviews absenteeism data, when brought forward after schools have consulted with their Association Lead and FISA, and may provide a letter to be distributed which notifies your school community as to elevated absenteeism due to illness.

**Middle Years Development Index (MDI)**

The FISA Mental Health Coordinators want to remind schools that are not yet signed up to complete the [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](https://discovermdi.ca/) survey with their grade 4 and 8 students that **it is not too late to participate!**

We recognize and appreciate that there is a lot to juggle these days, however the data that schools, associations, and FISA get from engaging with the MDI surveys is immensely valuable (and thanks to funding from the Ministry of Education, this is a free opportunity). Engaging in the MDI involves only 4 steps schools:

1.    Sign and return 2 forms (the Information Sharing Agreement-ISA, and the Memorandum of Understanding- MOU)

2.    Send out a Passive Informed Consent letter to families (at least 4 weeks before engaging in the MDI survey)

3.    Upload your class lists to a secure link sent by UBC

4.    Engage in the MDI survey with your students! (Usually takes about 45minutes for students to complete the survey)

The MDI closes on March 11, 2022. So as long as schools send out their Passive Informed Consent letters (step 2) before February 10, 2022, they can still participate.

Your FISA Mental Health Coordinators, Michelle Hussey ([michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca)) and Jamie Morris ([jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca)), are available to answer any questions schools and get you onboarded in time to participate in this year's cycle.

**FISA Mental Health & Wellness Update**

**Compassionate Systems Leadership (CLS) Pro-D**

From 1:30-3:00 pm (PST) on Feb. 18th FISA will hold our 2nd CLS webinar with Dr. Shirley Giroux. CLS encourages a deliberate focus on creating and nourishing a school culture where everyone feels safe, connected, and respected. A recording of the Dec. 7th session is available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/). Learn more about Dr. Giroux’s [work with CSL here](https://systemsawareness.digication.com/shirley-giroux-project/about).

**Compassionate Systems Leadership #2 with Dr. Shirley Giroux**  
**Feb 18, 2022 01:30 - 3:00 PM Pacific Time**  
Register using this link  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtcuytrzsqGdGaZSVcMWf6VU5sxy6XC4op**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtcuytrzsqGdGaZSVcMWf6VU5sxy6XC4op)

**Make a Future**

Many independent schools have contracted with [Make a Future (MaF)](https://www.makeafuture.ca/) to support them with their human resources recruiting. We are approaching the end of a 3-year agreement (March 31, 2022) between independent schools and MaF. FISA is working with MaF to establish a new agreement for independent school employers that would like to continue their relationship with MaF. You can expect more information in the near future.

**Renewal of COVID Mitigation Agreement for 2021/22 School Year**

On August 17, 2020 the Ministry sent out a communication advising that it had reached an agreement with School District No. 73 Business Company (SD73BC) that will temporarily allow international students, who are residing outside the province but registered with authorities and school boards and who have confirmed their intention to come to BC when it is safe and practicable to do so, to take a limited number of BC Curriculum courses by means of online learning through SD73BC.

This allowed schools to provide a bridge for some international students until they were able to come to the province.  Course credits were to be assigned by the board/authority who enrols the student upon their arrival in BC, following completion of an equivalency review by the board/authority.

Given the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the international education sector, this Agreement has been renewed for the 2021/22 school year with an expiry date of June 30, 2022.

As with the 2020/21 Agreement, independent school authorities and school districts who wish to have students enrolled in BC Curriculum courses while they are temporarily prevented from coming to BC will still need to enter into separate agreements with SD73BC.

Contact Information for SD73BC:

Kristin Engleson

Director of Distributed Learning

Global Education - SD73 Business Company

[kengleson@sd73.bc.ca](mailto:kengleson@sd73.bc.ca)

**The following requirement was added for the 2021/22 school year:** Students must have an in-progress study permit application to be eligible to take courses under the COVID Mitigation Agreement, in addition to confirming their intention to come to BC as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so.

**FISA Updates – January 28, 2022**

**FISA Mental Health & Wellness Update**

The FISA Mental Health Coordinators want to remind schools that are not yet signed up to complete the [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](https://discovermdi.ca/) with their grade 4 and 8 students that **it is not too late to participate!**

We recognize and appreciate that there is a lot to juggle these days, however the data that schools, associations, and FISA get from engaging with the MDI surveys is immensely valuable (and thanks to funding from the Ministry of Education, this is a free opportunity). Engaging in the MDI may, at first, seem like a lot of work, but in reality, the only steps schools need to take are:

1.    Sign and return 2 forms (the Information Sharing Agreement-ISA, and the Memorandum Of Understanding- MOU)

2.    Send out a Passive Informed Consent letter to families (at least 4 weeks before engaging in the MDI survey)

3.    Upload your class lists to a secure link sent by UBC

4.    Engage in the MDI survey with your students! (Usually takes about 45minutes for students to complete the survey)

These four simple steps pave the way for your schools to receive invaluable data and hear the voice of your students on their own perceived well-being.

The MDI survey closes on March 11, 2022. So as long as schools send out their Passive Informed Consent letters (step 2) before February 7, 2022 (at the latest), they can still participate.

Your FISA Mental Health Coordinators, Michelle Hussey ([michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca)) and Jamie Morris ([jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca)), are available to answer any questions schools have and are excited to continue working with all of you on this important project. Remember, **it is not too late to participate!**

**Compassionate Systems Leadership (CLS) Pro-D**

From 1:30-3:00 pm (PST) on Feb. 18th FISA will hold our 2nd CLS webinar with Dr. Shirley Giroux. CLS encourages a deliberate focus on creating and nourishing a school culture where everyone feels safe, connected, and respected. A recording of the Dec. 7th session is available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/). Learn more about Dr. Giroux’s [work with CSL here](https://systemsawareness.digication.com/shirley-giroux-project/about).

**Compassionate Systems Leadership #2 with Dr. Shirley Giroux**  
**Feb 18, 2022 01:30 - 3:00 PM Pacific Time**  
Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtcuytrzsqGdGaZSVcMWf6VU5sxy6XC4op**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtcuytrzsqGdGaZSVcMWf6VU5sxy6XC4op)

**COVID Updates**

FISA acknowledges the efforts school leaders are making to ensure their schools can remain open to provide face to face instruction for their students. As anticipated, due to the Omicron variant and being in the midst of cold and flu season, both staff and student absenteeism may be higher than the norm. FISA is pleased to report that this week independent school functional closures were rare, and we are hopeful this trend will continue going forward.

Individual Health Authorities are finalizing protocols they would like schools in their region  to use to identify potential attendance activity signals. We expect the protocols for each HA to be similar but also expect some variation based on the public health context in their respective regions (vaccination rates, access to testing, HA capacity for data analysis, historic illness rate baselines…). Further information should be coming from HAs next week.

School leaders know their school communities – and probably have a very good idea which absences are due to illness and which are due to other factors and should not be included in the data used to identify potential attendance activity signals. As mentioned in last week’s FISA Update, please connect with your FISA association head if you believe your school or a class has passed an absenteeism threshold of concern. They can review your data with you and determine if communication with your local HA is required. Some encouraging news is that provincial aggregate data indicates the K-12 sector has experienced a steady decrease in student absences this week.

Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) targeted for distribution to independent school staff members have been shipped and some districts have received their orders and the orders for the independent schools within their district. FISA greatly appreciates the commitment from our public school district colleagues to receive the independent school shipments and we have let all the districts know we are able to provide them with any support they may require ensuring efficient pick up from our schools.

These tests will come with distribution instructions (2 per staff member) and are intended to be used by staff members that may develop symptoms. The updated BCCDC guidelines provide clear direction for staff members who are experiencing COVID-like symptoms. School employers should not require staff members to use these tests to confirm they are fit to return to work.

**Renewal of COVID Mitigation Agreement for 2021/22 School Year**

On August 17, 2020 the Ministry sent out a communication advising that it had reached an agreement with School District No. 73 Business Company (SD73BC) that will temporarily allow international students, who are residing outside the province but registered with authorities and school boards and who have confirmed their intention to come to BC when it is safe and practicable to do so, to take a limited number of BC Curriculum courses by means of online learning through SD73BC.

This allowed schools to provide a bridge for some international students until they were able to come to the province.  Course credits were to be assigned by the board/authority who enrols the student upon their arrival in BC, following completion of an equivalency review by the board/authority.

This temporary agreement with SD73BC was initially set to expire on June 30, 2021. However, given the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the international education sector, this Agreement has been renewed for the 2021/22 school year with an expiry date of June 30, 2022.

As with the 2020/21 Agreement, independent school authorities and school districts who wish to have students enrolled in BC Curriculum courses while they are temporarily prevented from coming to BC will still need to enter into separate agreements with SD73BC.

Contact Information for SD73BC:

Kristin Engleson

Director of Distributed Learning

Global Education - SD73 Business Company

[kengleson@sd73.bc.ca](mailto:kengleson@sd73.bc.ca)

**The following requirement was added for the 2021/22 school year:** Students must have an in-progress study permit application to be eligible to take courses under the COVID Mitigation Agreement, in addition to confirming their intention to come to BC as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so.

**Access to PPE**

Elections BC has hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes that they are making available to independent school authorities. The product is free but each school has to pay for shipping (courier from Victoria). This offer is only available until Monday January 31, 2022.

·  Hand sanitizer 1L bottles – 144 cases (16 bottles per case) [Canpalm 1000mL Gel hand sanitizer — CANPALM](https://www.canpalm.com/canpalm-1000-ml-hand-sanitizer-1-1-1-1)

·  Hand sanitizer 250 ml – 268 cases (25 bottles per case) [Canpalm 250mL Gel hand sanitizer — CANPALM](https://www.canpalm.com/canpalm-250-ml-hand-sanitizer)

·  Maxill disinfectant wipes tubs, 160 wipes per tub (item 61164) & refills (item 61164R) - 410 cases (6 per case) [hx2 Hard Surface Disinfectant (maxill.com)](https://www.maxill.com/ca/hx2-hard-surface-disinfectant.html)

To order free hand sanitizer and wipes for your school please email [educ.srsd@gov.bc.ca](mailto:educ.srsd@gov.bc.ca) with your order and contact info by 9 am on Monday, January 31. The email should contain:

o    Quantity of hand sanitizer/wipes you wish to order (number of cases)

o    Shipping address

o    Contact phone number and email

o    Any other specialized delivery instructions

**Placing the order via email means that your school accepts responsibility for the delivery costs.**Should orders exceed the available supply, all orders will be proportionately scaled.

Elections BC will deliver the hand sanitizer to you and will invoice the Ministry for the delivery costs. The Ministry of Education will recover the delivery costs through CDS.

Should you have any questions about this offer please contact [educ.srsd@gov.bc.ca](mailto:educ.srsd@gov.bc.ca).

**FISA Update – January 21, 2022**

This continues to be a dynamic time for schools and public health. As you will have noticed, changes are happening frequently as medical professionals review the most up to date Omicron data and create regulations that meet public health goals and are the least intrusive actions to meet these goals.

Some medical health professionals now believe that BC has hit the peak of cases for the Omicron variant but recognize that more severe outcomes (hospitalizations and ICU admissions) often lag cases of infection, and these are monitored closely. BC is also a large province and therefore the public health context (vaccination rates, access to testing, medical service capacity…) for each health region must be considered when creating province-wide regulations.

In recent days the BCCDC, the PHO, local health authority MHOs and the Ministry of education have made incremental improvements in providing consistency in messaging on COVID-19 symptoms, testing protocols, when it is safe to return to school or work, functional closures, and potential attendance activity signals.

·      The Ministry is preparing materials for distribution that outline the latest BCCDC regulations for COVID symptoms, testing, and return to school regulations.

·      Functional closures are implemented when schools do not have the staff required to provide their complete, normal programming. There is recognition that most independent schools (IS) may not have access to a large pool of TOCs that may be available to public school districts. IS leaders know their communities, but when considering a functional closure should **consult with their FISA association lead** **or superintendent** (for Catholic schools or others with a superintendent structure – IS leaders do not consult with the public school superintendent). Our experience over these last 2 weeks is that IS prioritize continuity of learning but in some exceptional circumstances a partial or full functional closure due to a lack of staff availability is required.

·   The Independent School Branch has notified FISA that the Jan. 21st DM Bulletin may provide inaccurate information regarding the functional closure process for the independent school sector. The ISB is working on a correction, but if they are not able to “stop the presses” they request that school leaders do **not** notify their MHO and the Ministry of Education when considering a functional closure. Independent schools should follow the process outlined above and work with their FISA association lead or superintendent, who will in turn connect with the MHO and Ministry on behalf of the school.

·      The [Jan. 7th DM Bulletin](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/covid-19-protocols-for-administrators.pdf) provided initial guidance on potential attendance “activity signals”. This process is being refined to assist school leaders in determining when attendance patterns indicate that a consultation with Public Health may be needed. After factoring in baseline data, school leaders that feel an activity signal has been met should connect with their FISA association lead or superintendent for further analysis. Please provide at least 3-5 days of data to assist in identifying trends. When warranted, the association lead/superintendent will connect the school with the local Health Authority who may engage in further analysis. The Health Authority may choose to issue a notification letter to the class(es) involved. Activity signals are**not** an indication that a class or school should be closed to in-person instruction. “Circuit breaker” closures and self-isolation of school contacts are **not**seen as effective measures against the Omicron variant.

·      The COVID-19 Exposure Report Form is no longer due as this form was to be submitted when a Health Authority confirmed that a school was an exposure site. With the move to self-management, the Health Authorities are no longer contacting schools to confirm an exposure.

·      On January 17, the PHO released an [Order](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-school-staff.pdf) relating to collecting of vaccination status for K-12 staff members. This did cause quite a bit of confusion until a subsequent DM Bulletin provided clarification on the intent and possible impact of the PHO Order. What we know is:

o   The PHO made this Order to empower regional MHOs to provide direction that they feel is most important for their region.

o   Dr. Henry states “Recognizing that the risk differs in different regions of the Province, and that medical health officers are in the best position to assess local circumstances with respect to the risk of the transmission of communicable diseases in school settings” – she then goes on to empower local MHOs by stating “A medical health officer may implement this Order by way of a direction with respect to a board of education, independent school authority and francophone education authority in the geographic area of the Province for which the medical health officer is designated;”

o   This is not one Provincial Order for all K-12 schools in the province.

o   This order lays the foundation for the local MHOs to implement a collection of staff vaccination status where they deem it necessary.

o   FISA will continue to work with the health authority MHO's and the MOE to understand what this means for independent schools.

o   At this point, there are no local health authority orders directing independent school authorities to request proof of vaccine status from your employees.

o   If your local MHO deems it is necessary, they will direct independent school authority employers to do so, as empowered by the PHO Order.

o   Local MHO orders directed at a school district do not include independent schools located within the boundaries of a district unless the order explicitly states that the independent schools are included.

·         The MoE appreciates the timely submission of daily staff and student attendance data from independent schools. This information is monitored by local health authorities to inform them of schools that may need additional supports.

·         Provincial Independent Online Schools (PIOS) are **not** required to complete and submit their daily staff and student attendance data due to their unique learning structures.

·         The Rapid Antigen Tests targeted for IS should have arrived or will be arriving soon to all independent schools that replied to FISA’s survey last week. Independent schools located within 50km of their public district board office will need to pick up their kits from the district. Please contact the person identified as the Rapid Antigen Test Distribution Lead for your district found on this[list](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/iplj4ue1w00dbxkrm1mau/school-district-contact-info-for-rapidtestdelivery-Jan2022.xls?dl=0&rlkey=u2x2b2egv9q66mar47t27x2wp). First Nations Schools should connect with FNESC for information as to the process for FN Schools. FISA expresses our appreciation to the 60 public districts for their cooperation with assisting to get kits into the hands of school employees within both the public and independent sector as quickly as possible.

**MDI Updates**

Students in Grade 4 and 8 across the province are now participating in the [Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)](https://discovermdi.ca/). The MDI survey opened on January 11th and the close date has just been extended to end on March 11th, 2022.  While a number of our FISA schools have already begun the survey with their students, it is not too late to sign up to participate! Like last year, the results of the survey will give our independent schools valuable data and insight into the overall well-being of our Grade 4 and Grade 8 students. As well, each school will have the added benefit of comparing their school-level reports with their respective association-level reports.

Thanks to funding from the BC Ministry of Education, engagement with the MDI is free for all independent schools. We encourage you to take part in this very valuable opportunity as the results from the MDI will help inform and affirm individual schools on what is working well, and identify areas where further growth is required to support the continued positive development of our schools and our students.  Click [here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T6V0ue9wVAUTUjIYLMC3YqwlKUOIHyaA/view) to watch a testimonial from one of our FISA school educators on the value of the MDI. As well, please check out the attached document all about what schools can do with their MDI data.

Your FISA Mental Health Coordinators, Michelle Hussey ([michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca)) and Jamie Morris ([jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca)), are available to answer any questions schools have and are excited to continue working with all of you on this important project. Remember, **it is not too late to participate!**

**Compassionate Systems Leadership Pro-D**

On Dec. 7th, 2021, FISA held the first of a two-part series introducing independent school staff to the key components of Compassionate Systems Leadership (CSL). The 2nd session will be held on Feb. 18th from 1:30-3:00 pm. This session is open to all school personnel. CLS encourages a deliberate focus on creating and nourishing a school culture where everyone feels safe, connected, and respected. During this session participants will go deeper into ways to apply CLS in their own lives and in their school communities. Participants who were not able to attend the Dec. session are encouraged to view the recording in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

Dr. Giroux is a Registered Clinical Counsellor with many years of experience working in independent schools. She is a certified CSL Master Practitioner (one of eight in Canada). Learn more about Dr. Giroux’s [work with CSL here](https://systemsawareness.digication.com/shirley-giroux-project/about).

**Compassionate Systems Leadership #2 with Dr. Shirely Giroux**  
**Feb 18, 2022 01:30 - 3:00 PM Pacific Time**  
Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtcuytrzsqGdGaZSVcMWf6VU5sxy6XC4op**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtcuytrzsqGdGaZSVcMWf6VU5sxy6XC4op)After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Provincial Graduation Assessments**

The angst felt by secondary school administrators, teachers, students, and parents over the cancellation of the January administration session of the grade 10 and 12 provincial graduation assessments has not gone unnoticed. A great deal of time is spent in preparing for these assessments – time which could have been spent in other valuable endeavours. FISA is confident that the Ministry weighed all the options before taking this action to forego the January session. As indicated in the Jan. 20th announcement more information will be provided, including the process schools should follow for students scheduled to graduate following the completion of term one courses.

**2021-2022 Recalculated Grants**

As communicated earlier this week, here is the link to the recently published 2021-2022 [Recalculated Grants](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/independent-schools/funding).

**FISA Update – January 14, 2022**

**COVID Updates**

The K-12 sector is in the midst of what many have called a “messy” time, as the Omicron virus requires changing and evolving management strategies to support public health while new information on this variant is emerging. As school leaders - staff, students and families look to you for direction and leadership. During this “messy” time, and without clear cut or sometimes conflicting messaging in the guidelines that you are responsible for implementing, it requires effort not to become frustrated or overwhelmed by not being able to provide the “right” answer. I can ensure you that a great deal of effort is going into aligning messaging that will bring consistency to the school and public health guidelines as more information becomes available – but it requires time and I ask for your patience (which is a valuable virtue at this time!) as this prioritized work continues.

·      This first week after the delayed K-12 restart has reinforced that BC schools play an important role in the health and wellness of the communities we serve. The Omicron virus is prevalent in communities and is far more infectious than previous COVID-19 variants. However, transmission of the virus in controlled settings, with established communicable disease plans in place, continues to be low when compared with the broader community.

·      You can anticipate updated information coming from the Ministry of Education (MoE), the BCCDC and your local health authorities within the next week.

·      As public health shifts to managing COVID-19 as an endemic, there is acknowledgment that “COVID-ZERO” is not, and has never been, a realistic public health outcome. Ongoing adherence to your communicable disease plans, amending and adjusting as directed by public health and the MoE, will ensure independent schools continue to contribute to the overall wellness of our students, staff and communities.

·      I want to relay the MoE’s appreciation for completing the daily [staffing survey](https://www.bcedextranet.gov.bc.ca/educ_forms_service/daily-independent-staffing-survey.html). This information is aggregated and used to provide the Ministry with a sense of how staff illness is impacting K-12 schools.

·      Starting on January 17th daily student attendance will be collected, and this information will be monitored by local health authorities to inform them of schools that may need additional supports. For student attendance reporting, schools that use MyED will have their attendance data pulled automatically from the system. Schools that do not use MyED should report attendance daily by 11:00 a.m. via [Ministry’s online survey](https://www.bcedextranet.gov.bc.ca/educ_forms_service/daily-independent-student-survey.html).

·      Due to their unique recording of student program engagement, Provincial Independent Online Schools (PIOS) should not complete the daily student attendance report. PIOS schools should complete the staffing survey and report any staff members who are unable to fulfill their regular duties.

·      These data collections are temporary and will cease once public health no longer requires this information to support their work.

·      Rapid antigen tests will be made available to public and independent schools. FISA thanks the 300+ schools who responded to our request to provide employee headcount data with less than a 24-hr. turnaround time! For schools that did not respond we provided the Ministry with an estimated headcount. The anticipated arrival of these tests to their destination (local public school district offices or directly to your school if you are further than 50 km from that location) is next week. More information will be forthcoming regarding pickup details. Today’s DM Bulletin identifies how the tests are to be distributed to staff members and when and how they should be used as another tool to support continuity of learning at your school.

·      For FISA member schools if a student attendance “activity signal” is met or a functional closure is being considered (class, grade, or school) contact the Rapid Response Team (RRT) before taking further action. ACSIBC, SCSBC, and ISABC schools should connect via your Association Head. CISBC schools should connect via your Superintendent’s Office. AMS schools should connect via Janet at [ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca](mailto:ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca).

**2021-2022 Recalculated Grants**

As communicated earlier this week, here is the link to the recently published 2021-2022 [Recalculated Grants](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/independent-schools/funding).

**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

The 2021-22 DAS application forms are available under the “[Services](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/)” tab on the FISA website. For independent schools the province is divided into 4 DAS regions:

1)    Metro Vancouver - Chairs: Máebh Carragher & Katie Larson, [metrovandas@gmail.com](mailto:metrovandas@gmail.com)

2)    Fraser Valley – Chair: Chris Blesch, [cblesch@holycross.bc.ca](mailto:cblesch@holycross.bc.ca)

3)    Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands – Chair: Simon Tuffin, [vidascomm@gmail.com](mailto:vidascomm@gmail.com)

4)    Interior & North – Chair: Mike Campbell, [mike.campbell@kcschool.ca](mailto:mike.campbell@kcschool.ca)

Please ensure that your students follow the instructions for your region as the process and the due dates vary. Independent Online Schools should instruct their students to apply in the region where the school is located.

**FISA Update – January 11, 2022**

I hope this update finds you well as most independent schools have welcomed back students after the delayed restart. The K-12 sector, along with other sectors in BC, are dealing with the dynamic nature of the Omicron variant. There is a paradigm shift in the public health response to this variant that presents as more infectious but with likely less severe symptoms. The prevalence of Omicron means that a more effective and sustainable public health policy is to focus on self-management of illness and a move away from mass testing of all people that experience symptoms of a COVID-type respiratory illness.

FISA continues to participate in the many meetings that include representation from all the stakeholder groups in the K-12 sector and representatives from BC’s health sector. The one thing that has become very apparent is that during this time - change is inevitable. As more information is revealed through studies of Omicron, public health and BC school initiatives and guidelines will require adjustments.

FISA is aware that school leadership in these changing times is challenging, but imperative. So too is the health and wellness of independent school leaders and the students and staff they work alongside. I know many independent schools took time last week to explore and institute supports and routines that ensure individual and community wellness is prioritized as schools reopened to an unpredictable but hopeful future.

**COVID Updates**

The release of the [COVID-19 Protocols for School & District Administrators and Staff: Management of School-Associated Activity](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/covid-19-protocols-for-administrators.pdf" \t "_blank) document on January 7th provides directions for schools as the public health management of COVID has changed in BC. FISA has received many inquiries looking for clarification on some items from this document. FISA will attempt to answer some of these questions and others we are awaiting clarification from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and/or Public Health (PH).

·      BC schools are open because they are an essential service and support health and wellness for a large segment of our society. The Omicron variant is highly transmissible and will exist within schools and within the wider community. Most, if not all, people will be exposed at some point to Omicron, and public health has identified strategies that are aimed at reducing the speed of its spread and the severity of its health outcomes (vaccinations, daily health checks, stay home when sick, wash your hands, wear a mask…).

·      Public health is moving towards managing the Omicron virus as they would other similar viral illnesses (the flu). Therefore, testing to confirm an Omicron infection provides little public health benefit, as does contact tracing of each confirmed case. This means schools will no longer be receiving exposure notifications from your local health authority or requests for additional information to support contact tracing.

·      Potential “activity signals” related to student attendance have historically been used by both schools and health authorities to identify potential public health concerns. The recent guidelines have asked schools to monitor illness-related absences, comparing them to a previous absenteeism data baseline. In discussions with some School Medical Health Officers, they have advised that schools use this week to strictly monitor absenteeism. It is unlikely there will be value in reporting to Health absenteeism that surpass the thresholds suggested in the Ministry document this week.

·      When schools do experience illness-related absenteeism that they may judge to be a potential activity signal, their initial consultation and reporting should be to the Head/Executive Director/Superintendent of their respective FISA association who will help them assess the situation and provide guidance as to next steps.

·      It is reasonable to anticipate that independent schools will experience an increase staff illness and the resultant staff shortages that do not support the safe operation of the school. Independent school leaders that are considering a Functional Closure due to staffing challenges should consult with your FISA association leadership and the FISA COVID Lead before finalizing your decision. FISA is presently trying to establish with the Ministry of Education any reporting requirements for Functional Closures.

·      The Independent Schools Rapid Response Team (ISRRT) will continue to serve independent schools until at least March 31, 2022. Janet Dhanani will continue to serve as the ISRRT Lead and each FISA association will have a COVID Lead and each health region will have representation as well. Recognizing the importance mental health and wellbeing play in a thriving education system, and especially during these pandemic times, the ISRRT will include personnel focused on providing this support for schools. The ISRRT can be reached at [ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca](mailto:ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca).

·      FISA is presently working with the MoE on developing an efficient method to collect daily student attendance reporting for both MyEd and non-MyEd independent schools. Information will be shared soon.

·      The MoE and PH are meeting this week to establish the role Rapid Antigen Tests may play within BC schools. I expect the K-12 sector will receive more information on these tests soon.

·      The MoE and PH are aware that differing guidance is being provided on official channels (Thrive App, BCCDC, news conferences) regarding self-isolation instructions for people who are close/intimate contacts. Synchronization is underway.

·      The Ministry’s [COVID-19 Protocols for School & District Administrators and Staff: Management of School-Associated Activity](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/covid-19-protocols-for-administrators.pdf) document has a letter (Appendix B) that schools could use to inform parents of a potential activity signal at their school. In discussions with some of the RHA School Health Officers they are not encouraging schools to use this letter for the next week or two, as it may cause unproductive speculation within your school community.

**District/Authority Scholarships (DAS)**

The 2021-22 DAS application forms are available under the “[Services](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/)” tab on the FISA website. For independent schools the province is divided into 4 DAS regions:

1)    Metro Vancouver - Chairs: Máebh Carragher & Katie Larson, [metrovandas@gmail.com](mailto:metrovandas@gmail.com)

2)    Fraser Valley – Chair: Chris Blesch, [cblesch@holycross.bc.ca](mailto:cblesch@holycross.bc.ca)

3)    Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands – Chair: Simon Tuffin, [vidascomm@gmail.com](mailto:vidascomm@gmail.com)

4)    Interior & North – Chair: Mike Campbell, [mike.campbell@kcschool.ca](mailto:mike.campbell@kcschool.ca)

Please ensure that your students follow the instructions for your region as the process and the due dates vary. Independent Online Schools should instruct their students to apply in the region where the school is located.

**2021-2022 Recalculated Grants**

Historically the Ministry of Education releases the recalculated per student grant allocations during the last week before the Christmas break, however, this year the release of this information has been delayed till the end of January 2022.

Happy New Year, Shawn

**FISA Update – January 6, 2022**

Dear Independent School Leaders,

I know you are all working diligently to ensure that your schools are prepared for the return of students next week - during a time of great uncertainty. I also know you are awaiting needed information and updated guidelines from the Ministry of Education concerning the effective management of the anticipated increase in staff and student absenteeism due to COVID-19, and the Omicron variant in particular.

I can report that the Steering Committee (with representatives from the MoE, BCCDC, WorkSafe, FISA and the other education partner groups) has been meeting regularly to finalize a COVID-19 Protocols for School & District Administrators and Staff document that should be made available to schools tomorrow. Thank you for your patience and I ask that you please recognize that this will be a living document that will require change in response to changes to the prevailing public health environment in BC.

**School Mask Supplies**

The emergence of the more transmissible Omicron variant of COVID 19 necessitates that we continue to reinforce the safety measures/tools in place to reduce its impact; this includes masks. The Ministry is informing the K-12 sector that there is an expectation that any student or employee that wants a 3-ply disposable mask should have access to them on request, and so they should be readily available. As such school authorities should ensure that they have an adequate supply of these masks. Please refer to the Focused Educational Resources [bulletin on Tuesday, January 4th](https://us3.campaign-archive.com/?e=__test_email__&u=0984bae2b3c2e600765133706&id=eba7298ef1) . Should you need procurement support related to masks or other safety supplies, please contact them at supplies@focusedresources.ca .

**FISA Update – December 31, 2021**

Happy New Year!

While a lot of work has been going on behind the scenes during the holiday break, I truly hope all independent school leaders have had an opportunity to enjoy their time off and feel rejuvenated as we approach a return to school.

FISA’s intent was to keep to a minimum our communication out to schools during this break but the K-12 sector is facing dynamic times. Next week FISA will shift to providing updates and information we believe you need to support your role as school leaders, as it becomes available. You should also anticipate more information coming from the Ministry of Education next week, including a revised FAQ document.

**COVID Updates**

As you are aware Dr. Henry announced at a [news conference](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021HLTH0079-002460) on December 29th, a **Public Health Order**for the K-12 sector that will delay the return to school for most students until January 10th. School staff are expected to return to school in accordance with their school calendar and the intent of the delay in face to face learning is to allow time for schools incorporate [the addendums to the K-12 COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines-addendum.pdf) and to prepare plans in the event that schools are required to exercise a functional school closure due to staff or student absence due to illness. The delayed start will also allow time for health authorities to amend their operations and create protocols to support schools within this changing pandemic environment.

The message we are receiving from BC health experts is that:

·      The Omicron virus seems to be more infectious with a corresponding short incubation period.

·      Case counts are anticipated to grow but the experience in BC and in other jurisdictions around the world is that the severity of illness is diminished and hospitalization and ICU admission rates are holding flat.

·      With the large number of cases, PCR tests are being reserved for people associated with high-risk settings (health care) and the use of Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) will expand over the next month.

·      Health authorities no longer have the capacity to complete vigorous contact tracing, as was done for the Delta variant, and a more effective public health response is to shift to the self-management of cases (more information on the protocols for reporting and communicating cases for schools will be coming from your local health authorities next week).

·      Schools should anticipate greater student and staff absenteeism due to illness for the next little while. Your planning next week should focus on how you will manage functional class, division or school closures due to illness and opportunities for continuity of learning.

Operationally, school staffs will resume work next week and schools must provide services for the children of essential service workers, with a priority for health care workers and first responders. Schools will need to determine how they define essential service workers beyond this priority group, based on capacity and anticipated subscription for this service at your schools. Schools must also prioritize in-school services for Unique Needs learners during the first week of January. For schools with an extended Winter Break (i.e. schools not scheduled to be in session during the week of Jan. 3rd) there is no expectation that these schools will provide services to ESWs' children or Unique Needs Learners during their break.

**Staff Wellness and Professional Growth Opportunity**

Recognizing independent schools may have capacity next week to support staff professional growth and wellbeing, FISA will be offering a session with Dr. Laurie Anderson from the SFU Faculty of Education. School leaders, teachers and support staff are welcome to join this timely session to explore ways to remain hopeful, grounded and resolute within the prevailing uncertain and unpredictable educational environment.

FISA has expanded its Zoom license to accommodate 1,000 participants for this session. We anticipate that Dr. Anderson will give permission for the session to be recorded and available for viewing for a limited time.

**Educator Well-Being in Uncertain Times - FISA Mental Health Mini Session**

Thursday, January 6, 20221:00 – 3:00PM

Please connect via the following Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87971516855?pwd=cVk0WDg1TlNndFUzQm9zeUVZcTE3UT09>

**BC Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education**

I would like to encourage independent schools from around the province to invest some time and review the [Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education page](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/excellence-in-education). Historically independent school nominations have only represented ~ 5% of the total nominations received (independent schools represent 13.3% of the K-12 sector enrollment) and this is certainly not reflective of the exceptional work being done in independent schools by staff members who are deserving of this recognition.

Please make an effort to identify people within your community that should be acknowledged and affirmed by submitting a nomination for these awards.

**The deadline for completed nominations is January 7, 2022.**

**Childcare BC Information Session Recording**

A recording of the Dec. 1st Childcare Information Session is available for viewing [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQSmm4mW1xY). This session provided preliminary information regarding the move of the Childcare portfolio to the Ministry of Education. Many questions remain as to how the change in ministerial jurisdiction may impact childcare providers. FISA will continue to engage with MoE officials to ensure that the quality childcare and early learning programs offered through independent school authorities are taken into consideration.

**FISA Update – December 29, 2021**

I hope your holiday break is going well and providing you with some much needed down time! I was reluctant in sending this message your way now  – but we are in unusual times.

Dr. Henry and Minister Whiteside will provide a COVID update at 3:00 PM today (Dec. 29th) that will include important information for the K-12 sector. FISA and the other BC education partner groups have been meeting with the Ministry of Education, the PHO and the BCCDC over this holiday break to plan for a post-break return to school amidst growing Omicron exposures. These meetings will continue, and as plans and protocols are finalized you can anticipate information updates later in the week and early next week shared via DM Bulletins, FISA Updates and through your local associations.

**FISA Update – December 21, 2021**

Today Dr. Henry announced some additional [public health restrictions](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021HLTH0234-002431) that are intended to slow down the spread of the Omicron variant.

The Steering Committee also met this afternoon to discuss public health implications for the K-12 sector. The key takeaways were:

·        Case counts are anticipated to rise, however the most significant metric for public health officials is the hospitalization and ICU rates.

·        January 2022 is far different than January 2021. A vast majority of British Columbians have been double vaccinated and the 5 -11 age group are now eligible for vaccines.

·        Schools have managed the pandemic well and they play a key role in the province’s public health plan. Keeping schools open remains a priority.

·        The Ministry of Education, the PHO and the BCCDC will be meeting over the Winter Break to consider possible addendums to school K-12 guidelines.

·        Draft amendments will be reviewed by the Steering Committee over the holidays. The SC’s aim is to have communication out to schools on or around December 30th.

·        Consideration is given to actions that provide a high level of public health benefit, with the least amount of impact to school operations and student learning. Possible operational changes for the K-12 sector may include gathering restrictions, (i.e., no assemblies for a prescribed period of time).

·        A return to a cohort model is **not**anticipated.

·        [BC School Sport issued a memorandum](https://www.bcschoolsports.ca/news/update-pho-orders-december-17th) on Dec. 17th. Tournaments are canceled for the time being, but competitions with only 2-teams present may proceed under the current guidelines.

FISA will continue to provide an independent school voice to these ongoing discussions. Our hope is that independent school leaders and their communities will continue to enjoy a restful and joyous holiday break, with the knowledge that any January restart information will not be coming your way until late in December.

**FISA Update – December 17, 2021**

With the 2021 Christmas break upon us I have been reflecting on how different things were two short years ago. There was no question that I would be gathering with my family to enjoy holiday celebrations. Zero thought was put into the number of people who would attend – the more, the merrier! The only restrictions for my travels to visit my children and friends was the need for a good set of snow tires (my car sports studded snow tires – which are not essential in Vancouver) that would allow me to safely travel the Coquihalla Highway.

A lot has changed since then, and this year especially, with the recent emergence of a new COVID variant and the extensive damage experienced on our major intra-provincial travel corridors. But, as has been the case over these last 20 or so months, the resiliency of the people of BC has been tested and the response has been heroic! This is especially true within the independent school sector. Your efforts as school leaders to facilitate learning environments that are safe and engaging for learners, while honouring the provincial guidelines and the diverse opinions/beliefs that may exist within your school communities - has not only benefited the children and families you serve, but it has contributed to the wellbeing of your communities and to the public good.

On behalf of the FISA team (Janet, Magda, Marina and Janette) I wish you all a holiday break filled with fun and much needed rest and a release from the obligations of leadership during these unprecedented and challenging times. Our hope is that this winter break provides you all with a chance to gather with loved ones and friends to celebrate events during this season that are personally significant and bring you joy!

**BC Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education**

I would like to encourage independent schools from around the province to invest some time and review the [Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education page](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/excellence-in-education). Historically independent school nominations have only represented ~ 5% of the total nominations received (independent schools represent 13.3% of the K-12 sector enrollment) and this is certainly not reflective of the exceptional work being done in independent schools by staff members who are deserving of this recognition.

Please make an effort to identify people within your community that should be acknowledged and affirmed by submitting a nomination for these awards.

**The deadline for completed nominations is January 7, 2022.**

**COVID Updates**

·         The Omicron variant has been dominating the news lately and the discussions at the Steering Committee table. The representatives from the PHO and BCCDC continue to monitor and learn more about this COVID variant and closely monitor the experiences and research happening around the globe. At this point researchers believe Omicron is likely more infectious than the Delta variant (which is still the predominant variant seen in BC cases) and the health outcomes may be less severe, especially for those that are fully vaccinated. Therefore, as experienced in other jurisdictions, case counts are anticipated to rise but rates of hospitalizations and critical care cases may rise at a much more stable rate.

·         Over the course of the winter break the PHO, BCCDC and the Ministry of Education will continue to monitor public health indicators to inform guidelines for the January return to school.

·         Both the federal and provincial governments are discouraging international travel over the Christmas break. The requirements for travelers returning to Canada can be found [here](https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid?utm_campaign=gac-amc-travelborder-part2-21-22&utm_medium=sem&utm_source=ggl&utm_content=ad-text-en&utm_term=canada%20travel%20restrictions%20covid&adv=2122-147654&id_campaign=14643232225&id_source=125810504863&id_content=545679435736&gclid=CjwKCAiAksyNBhAPEiwAlDBeLI-Rkd5ZlQULLnbnIb-9L2jA2_6cTUHASTsex39jy7wbxUctrCLnxBoCQycQAvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds) and the Ministry is working on guidelines to support schools in their communications with staff and students that choose to travel abroad during the break.

·         International students travelling outside of Canada during the holidays should be made fully aware of the most up to date [requirements](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19/students.html#exemptions) for re-entry to Canada.

·         As outlined in the [Dec. 16th DM Bulletin](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20211216/covid-2.pdf) if a school becomes aware of a person in attendance who is thought to be required to quarantine or restricted from attending school, the school should keep that individual separated from others until arrangements can be made for the person to go home.

·         Schools that receive confirmation of a school exposure from a Health Authority during the break should continue to complete an [Exposure Report](https://fisabc.ca/independent-school-covid-19-exposure-report-form/) and submit it to [ISCovidLead@fisabc.ca](mailto:ISCovidLead@fisabc.ca).

**The FISA/Ministry of Education****Virtual Regional Tour**

FISA and the MoE were grateful for the number of independent school leaders that were able to attend one of the three Virtual Regional Tour events. Special thanks to Theo Vandeweg, Grant Sheppard and Marnie Mayhew for their Ministry presentation and to Marina from the FISA office for managing the Zoom sessions.

While the feedback we received from attendees was very positive, they also shared a desire for future in-person sessions, when it is safe to do so.

The Virtual Regional Tour powerpoint slides are attached for your review.

**Childcare BC Information Session Recording**A recording of the Dec. 1st Childcare Information Session is available for viewing [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQSmm4mW1xY). This session provided preliminary information regarding the move of the Childcare portfolio to the Ministry of Education. Many questions remain as to how the change in ministerial jurisdiction may impact childcare providers. FISA will continue to engage with MoE officials to ensure that the quality childcare and early learning programs offered through independent school authorities are taken into consideration.

**FISA Update – December 10, 2021**

**Ministry of Education - Deputy Minister**

Scott MacDonald announced today that he will be retiring from his role as Deputy Minister of Education on January 4, 2022. FISA wishes to acknowledge the incredible leadership Scott has provided to the K-12 sector over many years. I have always appreciated Scott’s focus on initiatives that support a world class education system. He recognized the important role school leaders, teachers, support staff and parents played in the quality of learning BC students receive. Scott also valued the use of quality education research and data analysis to inform best practices in learning. But my favourite quote that Scott often used (and he used it today when he informed me of his announcement) is, “We are not a public and independent school system – we are a K-12 education system that works together to produce the best possible outcomes for BC learners.”

Christina Zacharuk has been appointed the new Deputy Minister of Education and FISA looks forward to meeting and working with her - starting in the new year.

**COVID Updates**

·         It is encouraging to see provincial COVID cases trending downward and it is anticipated this trend will continue as more 5 – 11 year olds become vaccinated.

·         With the upcoming holidays and families considering travelling outside the country, please make sure your community is aware of the [Canadian port of entry requirements](https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid?utm_campaign=gac-amc-travelborder-part2-21-22&utm_medium=sem&utm_source=ggl&utm_content=ad-text-en&utm_term=canada%20travel%20restrictions%20covid&adv=2122-147654&id_campaign=14643232225&id_source=125810504863&id_content=545679435736&gclid=CjwKCAiAksyNBhAPEiwAlDBeLI-Rkd5ZlQULLnbnIb-9L2jA2_6cTUHASTsex39jy7wbxUctrCLnxBoCQycQAvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds).

·         International students travelling outside of Canada during the holidays should be made fully aware of the most up to date [requirements](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19/students.html#exemptions) for re-entry to Canada.

·         The FHA RRT has designed a one-page handout that schools may wish to distribute regarding unvaccinated children under 12 years old having their activities restricted, including not being allowed to attend school for 14 days following a return to Canada. See attached.

**The FISA/Ministry of Education Virtual Regional Tour**

FISA and the Ministry of Education are pleased to present an opportunity for independent school leaders and Board members to attend a virtual version of the Regional Tour. The first two sessions occurred this past week and the third and final session will be held on December 14th.

The Regional Tour includes a presentation by the Ministry of Education on ministerial policies, pertinent statistics, and educational updates. The FISA presentation will focus on the advocacy issues and supports we are working on and providing for independent schools.

The last virtual session is scheduled for 90 minutes (if you are able, please set aside 120 minutes as the first two sessions went longer to accommodate some valuable Q & A).

**Dec 14, 2021** **\_ 6:00 - 7:30 PM Pacific Time**

Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMudu6gqTIuE9S12iuFmOhMausNArPWExyG**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMudu6gqTIuE9S12iuFmOhMausNArPWExyG)After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Childcare BC Information Session Recording**A recording of the Dec. 1st Childcare Information Session is available for viewing [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQSmm4mW1xY). This session provided preliminary information regarding the move of the Childcare portfolio to the Ministry of Education. Many questions remain as to how the change in ministerial jurisdiction may impact childcare providers. FISA will continue to engage with MoE officials to ensure that the quality childcare and early learning programs offered through independent school authorities are taken into consideration.

**Dry Grad 2021-22**

We are pleased to inform you that independent schools with Grade 12 students (Group 1, 2, 3, and 4) are invited to apply for the Dry Grad grant offered by the BC Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB). The deadline for sending an application form to the FISA office is **Wednesday, December 15, 2021**.  You can submit the application by completing this short [survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DG2021-22).

Please note that this year marks the 22nd annual fundraising campaign to support alcohol-free graduation celebrations in communities throughout British Columbia. The campaign will run from March 6 to March 31, 2022. The funds collected will be divided by the number of graduating students and allocated based on number of students. All funds collected will remain in the geographic area (by school district) where the funds are collected, to help fund dry grad celebrations for the class of 2022.

Please also note that the Dry Grad grant will be directed only towards graduation celebrations (after grad activity) for independent school graduates that are alcohol-free in 2022.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/drygradJan2023

**BC Provincial Scholarship Program Recording**

A recording of the Provincial Scholarship Program: What You Need to Know webinar hosted by the BCPVPA is available for viewing [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC5ebtCDI6U). The presentation slide deck and a FAQ sheet is attached.

**BC Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education**

FISA encourages independent school leaders to review the [Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education page](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/excellence-in-education) and I am sure you will recognize that there are many people within your independent school community that are deserving of a nomination in several of the categories. Independent school representatives have previously won awards but the nominations from our sector are proportionally low and do not reflect the high quality of people and accomplishments that exist within independent schools.

**The deadline for completed nominations is January 7, 2022.**

**FISA Update – December 3, 2021**

**Severe Weather and Flooding**

Independent schools, like much of the province, have welcomed the end of the atmospheric river and the severe effects it has had on schools, homes, roads, farms, businesses, and most of all, the impact it has had on the wellbeing of individuals and families that have directly suffered loss due to flooding.

FISA was updated today on the situation in the Fraser Valley and the outlook is skeptically optimistic. There is the possibility of snow or rain this weekend (1-5 cm) but not at the record setting precipitation amounts experienced over the last two weeks. Hwy 1 is open to travel between Abbotsford and Hope with some delays; Hwy 7 remains open with the travel order still in place; Hwy 3 is open for essential travel only with expected delays and Hwy 11 is closed due to road damage, but detour routes are available.

**Vaccines for Students aged 5 – 11**

Vaccinations for children aged 5 – 11 commenced this week, with approximately 2,000 BC children in this age range being vaccinated each day. Here are the information resources provided by BC government agencies:

BC COVID-19 Situation Report for K-12 Schools [posted November 23, 2021]

* [BC COVID-19 Situation Report for K-12 Schools](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_sitrep/K12_Situation_Report/SitRep_K-12_November_2021.pdf)

November 23rd slide presentation, COVID-19 Update: Immunization of children 5 to 11:

* <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Immunization_of_Children.pdf>

November 23rd announcement on COVID-19 pediatric vaccine for children aged 5-11:

* <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021HLTH0209-002245>

Please feel free to share these links with your wider school community.

**The FISA/Ministry of Education Virtual Regional Tour**

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The Regional Tour includes a presentation by the Ministry of Education on ministerial policies, pertinent statistics, and educational updates. The FISA presentation will focus on the advocacy issues and supports we are working on and providing for independent schools.

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**Dec 14, 2021** **\_ 6:00 - 7:30 PM Pacific Time**

Register in advance for this meeting:  
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**International Education and Travel**

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) issued [a news release](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2021/11/government-of-canada-introduces-additional-measures-to-address-covid-19-omicron-variant-of-concern.html) on Tuesday, November 30th regarding new border measures in response to concerns over the new Omicron variant. A quick summary of the salient points follows:

* Effective Dec 1, foreign nationals who have been in any of the following countries within the previous 14 days will not be permitted entry into Canada: Botswana, Egypt, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.
* All fully vaccinated travellers arriving by air from departure points other than the United States will be subject to arrival testing.
* Fully vaccinated travellers will be required to quarantine while they await the results of their arrival test.

·         Unvaccinated travellers, with right of entry to Canada, will continue to be tested on arrival and at day 8, and quarantined for 14 days. However, those arriving by air will now be required to stay in a designated quarantine facility or other suitable location while they await the result of their on-arrival test.

FISA has reached out to the MoE to seek further clarification on the full implications and protocols for students/staff returning from out of country travel.

**Access to Services (COVID-19) Act**

This week’s DM Bulletin provides a very informative [Q&A document](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20211203/access2.pdf) related to the Access to Services Act. FISA applauds the efforts of this government and the Ministry of Education for their timely response to the safety concerns some BC schools faced earlier in this school year. As you notice in the documentation, virtually all BC schools are protected through this Act and FISA is aware and appreciative of all the work the Ministry staff put into ensuring independent schools were included in this legislation.

**FISA Mental Health and Wellness Webinar Series**

The FISA Mental Health Coordinators, Michelle Hussey and Jamie Morris, are pleased to partner with Dr. Shirley Giroux to provide an introduction to Compassionate Systems Leadership (CSL) through a two-part webinar series. The first of which will take place on Dec. 7th from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (PST) with the date of the second webinar to be scheduled after Winter Break. CSL is one of the featured strategies in the MoE’s [Key Principles and Strategies for K-12 Mental Health Promotion in Schools 2021](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/key-principles-and-strategies-for-k-12-mental-health-promotion.pdf). CLS encourages a deliberate focus on creating and nourishing a school culture where everyone feels safe, connected, and respected. As part of the Dec. 7th webinar participants will be introduced to the core leadership principles of CLS, experience firsthand two of the foundational practices, and explore ways to apply CLS in their own lives and in their school communities. Dr. Giroux is a Registered Clinical Counsellor with many years of experience working in independent schools. She is a certified CSL Master Practitioner (one of eight in Canada). Learn more about Dr. Giroux’s [work with CSL here](https://systemsawareness.digication.com/shirley-giroux-project/about).  Both webinars will be recorded and available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

**You are invited to a Zoom meeting.  
When: Dec 7, 2021 11:30 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada)**

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://ca01web.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5Ytf-ipqz0iHNYVWQf-A9hB5wvIshB0p9zT>

**BCPVPA Webinar: Moral Distress**

FISA greatly appreciates the BCPVPA’s offers for independent school leaders to join their public school colleagues in webinars that address topical issues.

In this time of uncertainty caused by the pandemic, Principals may be contending with Moral Distress emerging from increased public scrutiny and constantly changing provincial mandates on how to deal with COVID in their schools.

In this webinar hosted by BCPVPA, we invite Lee Smith to share his doctoral research on Moral Distress with our members. He will define Moral Distress, differentiate it from other ethical dilemmas, and speak about the possible implications of Moral Distress that educators and leaders face. This webinar will offer information and context to school leaders who may feel they are facing greater public scrutiny and stress regarding the administration of COVID-19 guidelines in schools while provincial mandates are constantly evolving.

**Tuesday December 7, 2021 @ 3:30 PM**

[**Register**](https://bcpvpa.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Eb_jViGCQNWkwJI-3BW68w)

**Dry Grad 2021-22**

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**The deadline for completed nominations is January 7, 2022.**

**FISA Update – November 26, 2021**

**Severe Weather and Flooding**

The weather events of the past couple of weeks have caused a great deal of damage, many problematic travel restrictions and heightened anxiety and loss for many residents in BC. This has certainly been the case for many independent school communities who have had to make major adjustments to their regular school operations. I am very heartened by the many stories that come my way of how independent school leaders and their communities have rallied during these challenging times to support others and for the resiliency they display in prioritizing safety and learning continuity.

In the most recent update I received this afternoon from the Ministries of Education and Transportation they shared:

·        The forecast for Saturday and Sunday once again calls for large amounts of rain to fall on the southern BC coast. This is to be followed by another large rainfall on Tuesday and Wednesday.

·        Hwy 1 is now open between Abbotsford and Hope but without normal conditions (construction, slower speed requirements).

·        Hwy 7 remains open and the traffic congestion has reduced. The regulations, updated yesterday, continue to apply for Hwy 7 travel with checkpoints set up to ensure there is no discretionary travel on this road.

·        The [DriveBC website](https://www.drivebc.ca/#listView) is updated regularly and is a good source for up to date travel information. You can also have updates sent directly to you by registering at <https://email.drivebc.ca/choose.php>

With the uncertainty of how the upcoming weather will impact your school, I encourage you to use the available information and consult with your association leadership, as you arrive at the decision that is best for your community. The option to switch to remote learning until you deem it safe and prudent to return to regular operations does not require Ministry approval. Please inform the FISA office if your school temporarily closes for in-person learning due to travel restrictions or conditions caused by the heavy rainfall/flooding so that we can keep apprised of the situation faced by schools.

Independent schools in flood impacted areas are encouraged to continue to track any emergency-specific expenses your school is incurring (TTOC costs, hotel rooms, bus rentals…) as FISA and the affected public-school districts will pursue emergency funding support.

**COVID-19 Exposure Reports**

Schools that receive confirmation from their Health Authority of a COVID-19 case within their school community are to submit an [Exposure Report](https://fisabc.ca/independent-school-covid-19-exposure-report-form/) to the [ISCovidLead@fisabc.ca](mailto:ISCovidLead@fisabc.ca) on the day of the exposure or the following morning if the notification from Health is received after hours. Self-disclosure of a positive COVID-19 test result does not necessitate the completion of an exposure report form until the time that the Health Authority verifies that the school is considered an exposure site. Health Authority verification of the school being confirmed an exposure site varies and includes the following:

-       a school receives self-isolation or self-monitoring letters to distribute behalf of Health,

-       a school receives an email from Health saying that the case investigation is complete, and no further action is needed

-       a school is listed on the Health Authority’s website listing school exposures

In each of the scenarios above an Exposure Report form is due. First Nations schools are welcome to submit a report or to request assistance from the FISA Rapid Response Team, but are not required to do so.

**Vaccines for Students aged 5 – 11**

Here are the latest BCCDC data links from the November 23rd PHO briefing:

BC COVID-19 Situation Report for K-12 Schools [posted November 23, 2021]

* [BC COVID-19 Situation Report for K-12 Schools](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_sitrep/K12_Situation_Report/SitRep_K-12_November_2021.pdf)

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The three virtual sessions are scheduled for 90 minutes, with time allotted for Q & A’s.

**Nov 30, 2021 \_ 6:00 - 7:30 PM Pacific Time**  
Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckde6rpzwiH9XqW5YOf646eDEY\_iUNVJgT**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckde6rpzwiH9XqW5YOf646eDEY_iUNVJgT)After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Dec 1, 2021 \_ 6:00 - 7:30 PM Pacific Time**

Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIvd-6hrjsiGdRlYFDSfIdneLG3cf8ejvy-**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIvd-6hrjsiGdRlYFDSfIdneLG3cf8ejvy-)After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Dec 14, 2021** **\_ 6:00 - 7:30 PM Pacific Time**

Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMudu6gqTIuE9S12iuFmOhMausNArPWExyG**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMudu6gqTIuE9S12iuFmOhMausNArPWExyG)After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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Both webinars will be recorded and available for viewing in the [FISA Video Gallery](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

**Collaborative Systems Leadership Dec. 7, 2021, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm (pst)**

Register in advance:

[**https://ca01web.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5Ytf-ipqz0iHNYVWQf-A9hB5wvIshB0p9zT**](https://ca01web.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5Ytf-ipqz0iHNYVWQf-A9hB5wvIshB0p9zT)

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**Tuesday December 7, 2021**

**03:30 pm**

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**The deadline for completed nominations is January 7, 2022.**

**FISA Update – November 19, 2021**

**Severe Weather and Flooding**

If dealing with a pandemic wasn’t bad enough – many independent schools had to respond to some severe challenges this week due to flooding, landslides and the associated travel impediments. Independent school leaders rose to the occasion, as did their school communities, and there are many inspiring stories of how independent schools provided much needed and timely support during some very traumatic times. Including hosting a pig roast for evacuees and truck drivers!

**Vaccines for Students aged 5 – 11**

Earlier today the federal government released information that they have approved a COVID-19 vaccine that “may be offered” to 5 – 11 year olds. BC is anticipating this vaccine will be made available towards the end of November or early December. You can anticipate more information on vaccines in next week’s DM Bulletin.

Dr. Ballem, Exec. Lead for BC’s COVID-19 Immunization Efforts, told the Steering Committee yesterday that BC feels that the most effective way to enhance vaccination rates is to primarily use community clinics (in some situations schools may consult with their local health authority to possibly host vaccinations on-site). The PHO is working on messaging for parents to encourage vaccine uptake (shared on health websites and through social media) and schools will be asked to share information with their communities.

Parent consent is required for vaccine access for 5 – 11 year olds and mature minor consent will not apply for this vaccine and this age group.

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**District Authority Scholarship (DAS)**

FISA manages the District Authority Scholarship process for independent schools on behalf of the Ministry of Education. Last year 435 awards in the amount of $1,250 each were distributed to graduates from independent schools across BC. New this year is the subdivision of the mega Fraser Valley/Interior/North DAS region into a 1) Fraser Valley (Coquitlam to Hope) and 2) Interior/North (using the Northern and Interior Health Authority boundaries). The Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Island/Gulf Island DAS regions will remain the same as in previous years. Students with an independent online school as their school of record should submit DAS applications to the region where the school is located.

DAS Information Sessions for school counselors and administrators will be held as follows:

**Metro Vancouver Schools: Nov. 23rd 9:00-10:00 a.m.**

Chairperson:Máebh Carragher, Assistant Chairperson: Katie Larson

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86794420461?pwd=WmJ4aGJETmpEWDhqdGplc0duUHVDUT09>

Meeting ID: 867 9442 0461

Passcode: 502643

**Fraser Valley Schools: Nov. 25 from 9:30-10:30 a.m.**

Chairperson: Chris Blesch

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88160194804?pwd=dVVwWDRaUm4rZHNnS2Nhcy91bjViUT09>

Meeting ID: 881 6019 4804

Passcode: 637626

**Interior & North: Nov. 26 from 9:30-10:30 a.m.**

Chairperson: Mike Campbell

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83096226970?pwd=bGJuWjdMZGhQUUk5MUhIRERZWHdWUT09>

Meeting ID: 830 9622 6970

Passcode: 705780

**Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands** will not have an info session. Instead, Simon Tuffin, Chairperson, will reach out to schools in this region via email.

The info sessions will be recorded and available for viewing on the FISA website [here](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/).

DAS application forms will be posted in mid-December to the FISA website [here](https://fisabc.ca/scholarships-awards/).

If your school has not already done so, please identify a DAS Lead to receive future correspondence by completing [**this survey**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DAS2021-22)**.**

**The Provincial Scholarships Program: 'What You Need to Know' Webinar**

The BC Principals and Vice-Principals Association (BCPVPA) has graciously offered the opportunity for independent school scholarship administrators and counsellors to register for the webinar they are hosting on provincial scholarships on November 24th, 2021.

The webinar will include an introduction by Rob Hicks, the Ministry of Education’s Director of Student Transitions, overseeing the Provincial Scholarship Program in addition to dual credit policy and post-secondary partner relations. The webinar includes a presentation by Shona Perron, Program and Policy Lead, and Lescia Raagner, Provincial Scholarships Administrator.

[Register](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fprotect-us.mimecast.com%2Fs%2FHDtzCjRN9gTnDM1iW4pMh%3Fdomain%3Dbcpvpa.insite.com&data=04%7C01%7Ckevin%40bcpvpa.bc.ca%7Ca717e842381e462dda1208d9a39a7533%7Cd2d64be1ffd740919e56436738f2af8d%7C0%7C0%7C637720706052618225%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=JqNFbL0OXZfRtGdSaokRyUJTiJOexpv%2BojougnbbyzY%3D&reserved=0)  
**November 24, 2021 3:30 - 4:30 PM**

**BC Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education**

FISA encourages independent school leaders to review the [Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education page](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/excellence-in-education) and I am sure you will recognize that there are many people within your independent school community that are deserving of a nomination in several of the categories. Independent school representatives have previously won awards but the nominations from our sector are proportionally low and do not reflect the high quality of people and accomplishments that exist within independent schools.

**The deadline for completed nominations is January 7, 2022.**

**FISA Update – November 12, 2021**

**COVID Updates – International Travel**

The opening of the U.S./Canada border and the upcoming Winter Break may have families considering international travel. Schools should be aware of the [federal travel guidance around COVID-19,](https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/exemptions#unvaccinated) especially the restriction in attending school for unvaccinated students for 14 days following the international travel, including travel to the U.S.  Unvaccinated students ages 12-17 are required to follow all quarantine requirements. Unvaccinated students under the age of 12 who are accompanied by someone who qualifies for the fully vaccinated traveler exemption are not required to quarantine, however, these students have the [following restrictions](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-conditions/fully-vaccinated-travellers-without-covid-19-symptoms-returning-canada/fully-vaccinated-en.pdf):

For the next 14 days, the children must:

·         not attend school, camp or daycare

·         not attend large or crowded settings, indoors or outdoors, such as an amusement park or sporting event

·         not take buses, subways, trains or other crowded transportation

·         not attend a setting where they may have contact with vulnerable people (e.g. long term care facility)

·         stay in a place that allows the child to avoid all contact with any person that:

·         has an underlying medical condition that makes the person susceptible to complications related to COVID-19

·         has a compromised immune system from a medical condition or treatment; or

·         is 65 years of age or older

·         limit contact with others:

·         remain with their fully vaccinated parent or guardian, as much as possible

·         wear a mask and physically distance when in contact with non-household members

There is no allowance for unvaccinated students to return to school within 14 days following international travel, regardless of who they travel with or if they receive a negative PCR test result. Schools may wish to inform parents/guardians as to these federal regulations and to communicate school procedures for students who will be absent due to international travel.

In addition, schools which have not already done so are advised to create procedures as to the steps the school will take if a student, who has been instructed to self-isolate by Public Health or due to international travel, attempts to attend school during the self-isolation period.

**The FISA/Ministry of Education Virtual Regional Tour**

FISA and the Ministry of Education are pleased to present an opportunity for independent school leaders and Board members to attend a virtual version of the Regional Tours that were historically hosted in person throughout the province. The sessions will include a presentation by the Ministry of Education on ministerial policies, pertinent statistics, and educational updates. The FISA presentation will focus on the advocacy issues and supports we are working on and providing for independent schools.

The three virtual sessions are scheduled for 90 minutes, with time allotted for Q & A’s.

**Nov 30, 2021 \_ 6:00 - 7:30 PM Pacific Time**  
Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckde6rpzwiH9XqW5YOf646eDEY\_iUNVJgT**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckde6rpzwiH9XqW5YOf646eDEY_iUNVJgT)After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Dec 1, 2021 \_ 6:00 - 7:30 PM Pacific Time**

Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIvd-6hrjsiGdRlYFDSfIdneLG3cf8ejvy-**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIvd-6hrjsiGdRlYFDSfIdneLG3cf8ejvy-)After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Dec 14, 2021** **\_ 6:00 - 7:30 PM Pacific Time**

Register in advance for this meeting:  
[**https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMudu6gqTIuE9S12iuFmOhMausNArPWExyG**](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMudu6gqTIuE9S12iuFmOhMausNArPWExyG)After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**The Provincial Scholarships Program: 'What You Need to Know' Webinar**

The BC Principals and Vice-Principals Association (BCPVPA) has graciously offered the opportunity for independent school scholarship administrators and counsellors to register for the webinar they are hosting on provincial scholarships on November 24th, 2021.

The webinar will include an introduction by Rob Hicks, the Ministry of Education’s Director of Student Transitions, overseeing the Provincial Scholarship Program in addition to dual credit policy and post-secondary partner relations. The webinar includes a presentation by Shona Perron, Program and Policy Lead, and Lescia Raagner, Provincial Scholarships Administrator.

[Register](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fprotect-us.mimecast.com%2Fs%2FHDtzCjRN9gTnDM1iW4pMh%3Fdomain%3Dbcpvpa.insite.com&data=04%7C01%7Ckevin%40bcpvpa.bc.ca%7Ca717e842381e462dda1208d9a39a7533%7Cd2d64be1ffd740919e56436738f2af8d%7C0%7C0%7C637720706052618225%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=JqNFbL0OXZfRtGdSaokRyUJTiJOexpv%2BojougnbbyzY%3D&reserved=0)  
**November 24, 2021 3:30 - 4:30 PM**

**BC Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education**

FISA encourages independent school leaders to review the [Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education page](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/excellence-in-education) and I am sure you will recognize that there are many people within your independent school community that are deserving of a nomination in several of the categories. Independent school representatives have previously won awards but the nominations from our sector are proportionally low and do not reflect the high quality of people and accomplishments that exist within independent schools.

**The deadline for completed nominations is January 7, 2022.**

**FISA Update – November 5, 2021**

**FISA/Independent Schools Branch (ISB) Regional Tour**

FISA is presently working with the ISB to establish dates for a virtual Regional Tour. Historically (pre-pandemic) FISA and the ISB travelled around the province to meet with local independent school leaders and Board members to share independent school data, Ministry policy considerations and updates and to review the focus of FISA’s advocacy and school support initiatives. Both parties are looking forward to once again visiting the different regions within BC in person when it is safe and prudent to do so.

You can expect to see the scheduled dates announced next week and we are anticipating three evening events to occur in late November and early December.

**COVID Updates**

To assist schools which may be considering offering overnight trips for students (such as traveling to participate in provincial sport tournaments) the VCH RRT and the FHA RRT have developed COVID-19 overnight trip guidance documents. The two guides are similar to each other with slight variations. These guides are provided as a resource and schools are welcome to modify them to suit their own context or to choose not to use the guides and to develop their own process to ensure health and safety when offering overnight trips. The VCH RRT has also developed a sample informed consent form which can be adapted as needed. The consent form and a copy of each of the guides are attached to this email. FISA thanks the VCH and FHA RRTs for the effort that went into creating such extensive resources and for their openness in sharing them with independent schools.

**Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)**

As part of our accountability to the Ministry, each year FISA provides a summary report on the mental health and wellness initiatives facilitated at the school, authority, association and FISA levels. A key requirement of this grant is that decisions on mental health and wellbeing supports are research based, targeted and informed by data.

The FISA Mental Health Committee (FMHC) explored research instruments that could supply the data that independent school organizations could use to inform their mental health supports and meet the grant accountability requirements. The FMHC proposed to the FISA Board that a partnership with UBC, and the use of the MDI survey would best meet this need. Therefore, last school year the FISA Board approved funding for all grade 4 independent school students to participate in the MDI survey. For this school year the Board approved MDI survey access for all grade 4 and grade 8 independent school students. Schools that engage in the MDI in more than one school year also have the benefit of being able to compare their results over time. This ongoing data collection can help schools recognize areas of growth and make informed decisions about where to focus their efforts for improvement.

All of the schools that participated in the MDI last year received a school level report and the 5 FISA associations received an association report and FISA received an independent school sector report. The FISA mental health coordinators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey recently provided a virtual session, **MDI data: Now What? How schools can make use of their MDI**and the recording of this session is available [here](https://fisabc.ca/media/video-gallery/)**.**

FISA encourages all independent schools to register their grade 4 and grade 8 students to participate in the MDI survey this year. Last year independent schools reported the grade 4 MDI survey was easy to administer for teachers and took about 60 minutes of class time to complete. Our hope is that all schools will use their no-cost access to MDI to provide them with the required data to meet their requirement to provide the targeted and tailored mental health and wellness supports for their school communities.

Please complete the following survey at your earliest convenience to indicate your interest in participating and to let the team know if you have any questions : [Link to survey](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19R53izm5BbS4qdNRZPkMpvTxmwbm_iy4zlHdMbzQgaU/edit)

Please connect with Michelle Hussey ([michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca)) and/or Jamie Morris ([jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca)) if you have any questions or concerns.

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**The deadline for completed nominations is January 7, 2022.**

**FISA Update – October 29, 2021**

**COVID Updates**

The recently revised [PHO Gatherings & Events Order](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions#pho-order) requires adults that lead/coach, assist or supervise a program for children or youth must provide evidence that they have received two doses of vaccine. The Ministry of Education has confirmed ([DM Bulletin COVID Update](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20211029/covid-update-oct-29is.pdf)) this does not apply to K-12 school educational activities, extracurricular events and before and after-school programs. Schools must continue to follow any pertinent Regional Health Orders.

**FISA Survey Request**

FISA has requested all independent schools to participate in a survey that will provide FISA with data to effectively support our advocacy efforts with upcoming policy decisions flowing from Bill 8 -2020. To date FISA has received 105 school responses from the over 300 FISA member schools.

The survey will remain active until Wednesday, November 3rd. The survey takes no more than 5 minutes to complete and responses received before the deadline will be included in our advocacy discussions. Click here for the[**survey link**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GBB820)**.**

**Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)**

FISA was pleased to secure equitable and proportional funding for independent schools so they could fully participate in the Ministry of Education’s Early Initiative Grant to support BC student mental health and wellness. Independent schools have received over $1M in funding over the past 3-years to support this important work.

As part of our accountability to the Ministry, each year FISA provides a summary report on the mental health and wellness initiatives facilitated at the school, authority, association and FISA levels. A key requirement of this grant is that decisions on mental health and wellbeing supports are research based, targeted and informed by data.

The FISA Mental Health Committee (FMHC) explored research instruments that could supply the data that independent school organizations could use to inform their mental health supports and meet the grant accountability requirements. The FMHC proposed to the FISA Board that a partnership with UBC, and the use of the MDI survey would best meet this need. Therefore, last school year the FISA Board approved funding for all grade 4 independent school students to participate in the MDI survey. For this school year the Board approved MDI survey access for all grade 4 and grade 8 independent school students. Schools that engage in the MDI in more than one school year also have the benefit of being able to compare their results over time. This ongoing data collection can help schools recognize areas of growth and make informed decisions about where to focus their efforts for improvement.

All of the schools that participated in the MDI last year received a school level report and the 5 FISA associations received an association report and FISA received an independent school sector report. To assist schools in understanding their reports and determining how they can effectively use this research data to enhance the mental health and wellness of their community, Jamie and Michelle, FISA’s Mental Health Coordinators, will host some webinars, the first one on Nov. 5th. In these sessions Michelle and Jamie will also share resources and provide ideas for actions that schools can apply to their unique school settings.

**MDI data: Now What? How schools can make use of their MDI reports**

**Friday, November 5th at 9:00 – 10:00AM**

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85933150304?pwd=UzNlMFRzeTNxVU4wMFduMTYrQm5JZz09](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85933150304?pwd%3DUzNlMFRzeTNxVU4wMFduMTYrQm5JZz09&sa=D&source=calendar&ust=1635981470170488&usg=AOvVaw3BZPsokwmMH3ttIg9Xacj_) Meeting ID: 859 3315 0304 Passcode: 684332

Feel free to submit any MDI related [questions in advance of the webinar through this link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G6V7LCX), in order to give Jamie and Michelle an opportunity to prepare fulsome answers. The session will be recorded and available for later viewing.

FISA encourages all independent schools to register their grade 4 and grade 8 students to participate in the MDI survey this year. I recognize that last year there was a challenge for some schools to participate due to a conflict with the changed administration dates for FSA testing. As the FSA schedule was not amended this year, our hope is that all schools will use the MDI to provide them with the required data to meet their requirement to provide the targeted and tailored mental health and wellness supports for their school communities.

Please complete the following survey at your earliest convenience to indicate your interest in participating and to let the team know if you have any questions : [Link to survey](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19R53izm5BbS4qdNRZPkMpvTxmwbm_iy4zlHdMbzQgaU/edit)

Please connect with Michelle Hussey ([michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca)) and/or Jamie Morris ([jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca)) if you have any questions or concerns.

**Confirmation of Safe School Coordinator Information**

This is an item you will find in the [October 22nd DM Bulletin](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm&ogbl#label/DM/FMfcgzGlkXvwBPsBzLjTQStzbXtfMbKm) and the deadline for the submissions was today. **I encourage all independent schools to complete the response form asap. Every school must complete and submit a response form - even if the information on the Safe School Coordinators list is still accurate and does not require edits.**

You can access the fillable response form as an attachment to this email.

**Provincial Independent Online Schools (PIOS)**

The Ministry of Education and FISA recently facilitated two parent focus group sessions, hosted by the J Wosk Centre for Dialogue. The feedback from the dialogue facilitators reflected the passion and commitment PIOS parents have for the online education they receive from their school. While there were thousands of parents that desired to share their stories directly with the Ministry, they can be confident the selected parent delegates represented them well.

FISA applauds the work the Ministry personnel did to make these parent focus groups a reality. Eleanor Liddy, Marnie Mayhew, Grant Sheppard, Erin Kelly and Zamiha Premji worked behind the scenes to ensure the independent online school parent delegates’ voices were heard. Gabe Linder, as the Chair of the FISA Online School Committee, also played a key role in ensuring the selection of parent delegates was equitable and fair.

Amidst the uncertainty of future online learning policies in BC, FISA will continue to work with the 16 PIOS to advocate for choice and accessibility within the online education sector.

**Active School Travel Pilot Program**

The goal of this pilot program is to promote community health and support more students walking, biking and scooting to and from school.

Please review the [program](http://bchealthycommunities.ca/active-school-travel/) details and consider joining the information session on Thursday, November 4th from 10:00–11:00am (registration available through the program link).

**Draft K-12 Student Reporting Policy**

The Ministry has recently made available the [draft K-12 Student Reporting Policy](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2021/09/Draft-K-12-Student-Reporting-Policy.pdf). This policy references only the School Act, and therefore is not binding on independent schools. However, the Ministry welcomes all perspectives and independent school leaders would be well suited to provide thoughtful and insightful comments through the survey available here <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/studentreporting/>. **The deadline for feedback is November 5, 2021.**

**BC Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education**

FISA encourages independent school leaders to review the [Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education page](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/excellence-in-education) and I am sure you will recognize that there are many people within your independent school community that are deserving of a nomination in several of the categories. Independent school representatives have previously won awards but the nominations from our sector are proportionally low and do not reflect the high quality of people and accomplishments that exist within independent schools.

**The deadline for completed nominations is January 7, 2022.**

**FISA Update – October 22, 2021**

**Employer Vaccination Policies**

The FISA president, Ed Noot, serves on the provincial ad hoc committee that was tasked with creating the draft [K-12 Sector Guidelines for Vaccination policies](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20211022/vaccinepolicyguidelinedraftoct222021.pdf). The intent of this resource is to provide a coordinated approach for employers that may be considering implementing an employee vaccine policy. The guidelines will provide K-12 employers with incremental steps through a process that identifies factors employers should consider in their decision-making process.

Independent school authorities/employers have the ability to establish the terms of employment, which may include reasonable health and safety measures. FISA strongly encourages independent school employers to review this document and the “[A Human Rights Approach to Proof of Vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic](https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19-vaccine-guidance-Oct.-2021-update.pdf)” as part of your due diligence as an employer contemplating a potential employee vaccine policy.

**COVID Updates**

On Tuesday, October 19th Dr. Henry announced the provincial health officer order restricting capacity limits to 50% for inside organized events and gatherings will be revised to allow 100% capacity in those settings where the BC Vaccine Card is in place and proof of vaccination status is checked.

Today the Ministry of Education announced that K-12 schools will continue to comply with the existing [guidelines for gatherings and events](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20211022/october-22-covid-19-update-is.pdf) with indoor events restricted to 50 spectators or 50% of capacity and outdoor events can have up to 5,000 spectators or 50% of capacity – whichever is greater.

As a reminder, the September 24th [DM Bulletin FAQs](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20210924/2021-09-24---covid-update-isb.pdf) confirmed that all K-12 school activities are excluded from proof of vaccination requirements. This applies to any person involved or attending a K-12 school activity - educational or extracurricular. Schools should follow any additional Regional Health restrictions that may apply.

The BCCDC released its [BC COVID-19 Situation Report for K-12 Schools](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_sitrep/K12_Situation_Report/SitRep_K-12_October_2021.pdf) which provides an in-depth review of COVID-related K-12 matters. You are encouraged to review this report and share the information with your school communities.

**FISA Survey Request**

In last week’s FISA Update there was a request for all independent schools to participate in a survey that would provide FISA with data to effectively support our advocacy efforts with upcoming policy decisions flowing from Bill 8 -2020. To date FISA has received fewer than 50 school responses from the over 300 FISA member schools.

The survey should take no more than 5 minutes and asks independent schools to provide the one-way distance traveled (in kilometers) by the student that travels the furthest to your school site (I.E. FISA High School – 45km). Click here for the[**survey link**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GBB820)**.**

**Active School Travel Pilot Program**

The goal of this pilot program is to promote community health and support more students walking, biking and scooting to and from school.

Please review the [program](http://bchealthycommunities.ca/active-school-travel/) details and consider joining the information session on Thursday, November 4th from 10:00–11:00am (registration available through the program link).

**Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)**

In conjunction with the Ministry of Education, FISA BC is pleased to offer the opportunity to all independent schools to be able to have your **Grade 4** and **Grade 8** students participate at no cost to your school. Like last year, this initiative is courtesy of a special grant for mental well-being in schools provided by the Province of BC through the Ministry of Education.

Please complete the following survey at your earliest convenience to indicate your interest in participating: [**Link to survey**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19R53izm5BbS4qdNRZPkMpvTxmwbm_iy4zlHdMbzQgaU/edit)

Please connect with Michelle Hussey ([michelle\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:michelle_mhc@fisabc.ca)) and/or Jamie Morris ([jamie\_mhc@fisabc.ca](mailto:jamie_mhc@fisabc.ca)) if you have any questions or concerns.

**Confirmation of Safe School Coordinator Information**

This is an item you will find in today’s DM Bulletin and FISA would like to reinforce that **all independent schools must complete the response form – even if the information on the Safe School Coordinators list is still accurate and does not require edits.**

You may have also noticed that the response form link was not functional. The Ministry has been made aware of this. You can access the fillable form as an attachment to this email.

**Draft K-12 Student Reporting Policy**

The Ministry has recently made available the [draft K-12 Student Reporting Policy](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2021/09/Draft-K-12-Student-Reporting-Policy.pdf). This policy references only the School Act, and therefore is not binding on independent schools. However, the Ministry welcomes all perspectives and independent school leaders would be well suited to provide thoughtful and insightful comments through the survey available here <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/studentreporting/>. **The deadline for feedback is November 5, 2021.**

**BC Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education**

FISA encourages independent school leaders to review the [Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education page](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/excellence-in-education) and I am sure you will recognize that there are many people within your independent school community that are deserving of a nomination in several of the categories. Independent school representatives have previously won awards but the nominations from our sector are proportionally low and do not reflect the high quality of people and accomplishments that exist within independent schools.

**The deadline for completed nominations is January 7, 2022.**

**FISA Update – October 15, 2021**

**Addition to the FISA Team**

I am very pleased to inform you that FISA has successfully completed our search for a new executive assistant. Janette Cholakian has joined our organization and we look forward to her sharing her gifts and talents in support of our member schools. If the last name sounds familiar, it should - Janette is the sister of Marina Cholakian, FISA’s other executive assistant.

This also means that Magda will actually be able to retire. I cannot express how fortunate FISA was to have Magda agree to return to our office after her short-lived retirement. Her vast institutional knowledge and the relationships Magda has developed with independent schools during her time with FISA has greatly contributed to our organization’s success and the accomplishment of our mission. Magda has graciously agreed to continue to support the work of FISA and foster the transition of Janette and Marina over the next 3-months.

**Employer Vaccination Policies**

As mentioned in last week’s FISA Update, the Ministry of Education (MoE) created an Ad Hoc Committee (AHC), with representation from the provincial education partners (FISA President, Ed Noot, represents independent schools on this committee), to produce a guidelines document for Independent School Authorities and School Districts that may consider a vaccine policy for their employees. Here is some salient information that a K-12 employer should be aware of when considering a potential employment vaccine policy:

·         The MoE is not the employer for public or independent schools. Independent School Authorities and Public School District Boards are the employers in the K–12 sector.

·         Decisions regarding any potential employer vaccine policy are not covered by a PHO Order.

·         FISA advocates for K-12 employers to have the right to determine if an employee vaccination policy would be appropriate, considering the context of their school/school district.

·         K-12 employers must consider the possible impacts an employee vaccine policy may have on the operations of their school and the continuity of student learning.

·         K-12 employers will need to consider legal precedent, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, employment law, reasonable policy accommodations and privacy laws.

·         K-12 employers should investigate potential costs associated with legal due diligence and potential employee accommodations they may consider.

·         The AHC’s goal is to produce a document for Independent School Authorities and School Districts that will provide guidelines for K-12 employers that may consider an employee vaccine policy.

·         FISA strongly recommends that independent schools that may be considering instituting an employee vaccination policy, await the release of the AHC’s guidelines, as they could prove to be valuable in your decision-making process.

It is FISA’s hope that these guidelines will supply valuable information and support for all K-12 employers as they consider important human resource policy decisions.

**COVID-19 School Exposure Webinar**

Many independent school leaders have reached out to members of the FISA Rapid Response Team (RRT) with COVID-19 related questions or for assistance with a school exposure. To serve schools in a proactive manner, the RRT will host a webinar on October 20th from 1:30-2:30 pm (PST) to go through the steps a school should take when they experience a COVID-19 exposure.

**Topic: Navigating a COVID-19 School Exposure 2021-2022**Time: Wed., Oct. 20, 2021 from 1:30-2:30 pm (PST)

[**https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84024454538?pwd=cHl4QlpXMGZyZnBnWkQydUdSTGlGdz09**](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84024454538?pwd=cHl4QlpXMGZyZnBnWkQydUdSTGlGdz09)

**Meeting ID: 840 2445 4538  
Passcode: 741216**

Dial by your location   +1 647 558 0588   +1 778 907 2071   +1 204 272 7920   Meeting ID: 840 2445 4538Passcode: 741216

**Independent School Funding**

BC independent schools received supplemental funding from two sources this year.

·         **$1.2M** was allocated in this year’s provincial budget to support **COVID Health and Safety** expenses. This grant was distributed to all Group 1, 2, and 3 schools and Provincial Independent Online Schools based on last year’s student FTE enrolment. The per student grant amount was approximately $15/student.

·         The one-time**$650K COVID Recovery Plan**grant.This grant is to be specifically used to support mental health and wellness initiatives in schools and should align with the [Key Principles and Strategies for K-12 Mental Health Promotion in Schools](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/key-principles-and-strategies-for-k-12-mental-health-promotion.pdf) document released in late July, 2021. This grant was also distributed to all Group 1, 2, and 3 schools and Provincial Independent Online Schools based on last year’s student FTE enrolment. The per student grant was approximately $8/student.

**Draft K-12 Student Reporting Policy**

The Ministry has recently made available the [draft K-12 Student Reporting Policy](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2021/09/Draft-K-12-Student-Reporting-Policy.pdf). This policy references only the School Act, and therefore is not binding on independent schools. However, the Ministry welcomes all perspectives and independent school leaders would be well suited to provide thoughtful and insightful comments through the survey available here <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/studentreporting/>.

**BCTC**

The BC Teachers Council will be conducting a survey for teachers that completed their teacher education program within the last 5 years and are now teaching within the BC K-12 system. FISA encourages those certificate holders that receive a request to participate in the survey to do so. The data collected helps to enhance teacher preparation programs, the profession and ultimately the learning experience for BC learners.

**BC Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education**

FISA encourages independent school leaders to review the [Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education page](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/excellence-in-education) and I am sure you will recognize that there are many people within your independent school community that are deserving of a nomination in several of the categories. Independent school representatives have previously won awards but the nominations from our sector are proportionally low and do not reflect the high quality of people and accomplishments that exist within independent schools.

The deadline for completed nominations is January 7, 2022.

**Survey Request**

Bill 8 – 2020 grants the opportunity for independent school authorities and public school district brick-and-mortar schools to deliver all or part of an educational program to their students through online learning (offering an online program to students outside your authority or district requires an agreement with the Minister. The 16 Provincial Independent Online Schools (PIOS) operate under an agreement with the Minister).

BC School Districts have well defined geographic boundaries for their brick-and-mortar schools that determine the students that can be provided an online program by their district. Independent school authorities are not bound by geographic boundaries and FISA would like to get a sense of the furthest distance a student travels to each of our member schools. This data will be used by FISA to inform anticipated discussions with the Ministry to determine a range independent brick-and-mortar schools will be allotted to provide online programming for their students.

For each independent brick-and-mortar school, I ask that you provide the one-way distance (in kilometers) that the student that travels the furthest to your school site travels each day (I.E. FISA High School – 45km). Click [here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GBB820) for the [survey link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GBB820).

**FISA Update – October 8, 2021**

As we enter the Thanksgiving long weekend, I would like to share FISA’s sincere appreciation to the people that ensure independent schools operate well, especially within a pandemic environment filled with the pressures brought on by uncertainty, misinformation, fear and high levels of emotion and change. I recognize the complexity that school leaders face as they navigate their communities through the maze of provincial guidelines, COVID exposures and passionate parents with strong ideological beliefs. It is well known that our young people thrive within the school communities you lead.

Despite the message that is often portrayed in the media, schools are safe, kids and families are happy to be learning with their peers and research indicates that schools play an integral role in the health and wellbeing of the children and families. I know I will be joined by many others this weekend in giving thanks for the commendable service independent schools are providing during this pandemic to support students and the public good in BC.

**Employer Vaccination Policies**  
The provincial government announced on Tuesday, October 5th that BC public service employees (~ 30,000) will be required to be vaccinated by November 22nd. This requirement does not apply to government agencies, Boards and Crown Corporations, or the K-12 sector. The Ministry has no authority to mandate or require employee vaccinations in the K-12 sector. Independent School Authorities and School District Boards are the employers and will need to perform due diligence if they consider pursuing a vaccination requirement for their employees.

The PHO does have the authority to mandate a vaccine requirement, as they did with the health sector, but there is presently no indication that Dr. Henry will do so.

The Ministry has created an ad hoc committee to review this matter and FISA is representing independent schools on this committee. The committee’s goal is to provide school employers with guidelines that outline factors employers should consider as part of their employee vaccination requirement decision making process. The committee will not be providing legal advice for school employers. We encourage independent school authorities to wait for the committee’s findings to be released before finalizing any employee vaccination policies, should the authority wish to implement such a policy.

**COVID-19 School Exposures**  
Many independent school leaders have reached out to members of the FISA Rapid Response Team (RRT) with COVID-19 related questions or for assistance with a school exposure. To serve schools in a proactive manner, the RRT will host a webinar on October 20th from 1:30-2:30 pm (PST) to go through the steps a school should take when they experience a COVID-19 exposure.

**Topic: Navigating a COVID-19 School Exposure 2021-2022**Time: Wed., Oct. 20, 2021 from 1:30-2:30 pm (PST)[**https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84024454538?pwd=cHl4QlpXMGZyZnBnWkQydUdSTGlGdz09**](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84024454538?pwd=cHl4QlpXMGZyZnBnWkQydUdSTGlGdz09) **Meeting ID: 840 2445 4538  
Passcode: 741216**Dial by your location   +1 647 558 0588   +1 778 907 2071   +1 204 272 7920   Meeting ID: 840 2445 4538Passcode: 741216

**Student Online Safety Sessions**  
Schools are encouraged to have students in grades 8-12 take part in the Ministry’s student online safety sessions which will explore practices of digital citizenship and the consequences of cyberbullying. Teachers may register on behalf of their class and stream the event for the students to view together. These sessions are offered as part of the*erase* training series.

·         Nov. 22, 2021 10:30-11:30 am (PST)  
<https://event-wizard.com/SocialMediaAwarenessStudentNov222021/0/register/>

·         Nov. 22, 2021 1:30-2:30 pm (PST)  
<https://event-wizard.com/SocialMediaAwarenessStudentNov222021pm/0/register/>

To view the full *erase* schedule visit <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule.pdf>.

**School Trespassers**  
Due to some recent occurrences where schools have experienced unwelcomed guests or protesters in or near schools, the BC government is considering options that would offer a level of protection for schools.

One available remedy for independent schools facing such situations would be to access the [BC Trespass Act](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/18003#section2).

Notice requirement:

·         Signs must be posted and visible at ordinary points of access to the property

·         Notice of trespass can also be given orally or in writing

Contact a peace officer to enforce a trespass prohibited order.

**Draft K-12 Student Reporting Policy**  
The Ministry has recently made available the [draft K-12 Student Reporting Policy](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2021/09/Draft-K-12-Student-Reporting-Policy.pdf). This policy references only the School Act, and therefore is not binding on independent schools. However, the Ministry welcomes all perspectives and independent school leaders would be well suited to provide thoughtful and insightful comments through the survey available here <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/studentreporting/>.

**BCTC**  
The BC Teachers Council will be conducting a survey for teachers that completed their teacher education program within the last 5 years and are now teaching within the BC K-12 system. FISA encourages those certificate holders that receive a request to participate in the survey to do so. The data collected helps to enhance teacher preparation programs, the profession and ultimately the learning experience for BC learners.

**BC Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education**  
FISA encourages independent school leaders to review the [Premier’s Awards for Excellence in Education page](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/excellence-in-education) and I am sure you will recognize that there are many people within your independent school community that are deserving of a nomination in several of the categories. Independent school representatives have previously won awards but the nomination numbers from our sector are low and not indicative of the high quality of people and accomplishments that exist in independent schools.

**FISA Update – October 1, 2021**

**Health and Safety**

* Recent decisions by the Vancouver and Surrey School Boards to impose mask regulations that were out of alignment with the K-12 provincial guidelines initiated some inquiries from independent schools to the FISA office. The most recent [public health order](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-face-coverings.pdf)on face coverings (Section 13 - September 28, 2021) states:

**13***Nothing in this order prevents an operator, school or post-secondary*

*institution from having additional requirements in relation to face coverings.*

Earlier today Minister Whiteside and Dr. Henry announced that the [K-12 Guidelines](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidlines.pdf) have been amended and will require mask use for K-12 students starting on October 4, 2021.

In advance of the announcement, Dr. Rika Gustafson shared the following message with K-12 school leaders:

* + As anticipated, K-12 case counts are increasing, as those under the age of 12 are not yet eligible to receive a vaccination.
  + The volume of testing for K-12 students has increased dramatically but the 5 -11 age group has the lowest percentage of positive diagnoses among the unvaccinated population.
  + Transmission continues to be primarily from home or community gatherings/activities outside of school.
  + The Delta variant is more infectious but young people are experiencing milder symptoms and illness.
  + Getting vaccinated when accessible, staying home when you are sick, proper hand cleaning protocols and mask use are all effective ways to control the spread of COVID-19.

This information is supported by [Dr. Henry’s analysis](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20210929/briefingcovid192021092816.pdf) contained in today’s DM Bulletin.

* The BCCDC posted a [document](http://www.bccdc.ca/schools/Documents/Contact_tracing_schools_2021.pdf) on September 28th that reviews the contact tracing and notification process health authorities are to be using.

**Rapid Response Team**

FISA continues to provide support to independent schools experiencing a COVID-19 exposure event through our Rapid Response Team (RRT). As BC is a large province, we have a large team!

        FISA Association Leads

o   Elizabeth Moore – ISABC

o Ed Noot – SCSBC

o   Phil Hills – ACSIBC

o   Kent Dykstra – AMS

o   Sandy Marshall & Lesya Balsevich – CISBC

·         Regional Health Liaisons

o   Edgar Veldman – Northern Health

o   Peter Terpstra – Island Health

o   Art Therrien – Interior Health

o   Andrew Shirkoff – Vancouver Coastal Health

o   Stuart Morris – Fraser Health

·         Mental Health Coordinators

o   Michelle Hussey

o   Jamie Morris

·         FISA Office

o   Janet Dhanani

o   Shawn Chisholm

The [ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca](mailto:ISCOVIDLead@fisabc.ca) email address is monitored daily, including on weekends, by Janet and it is the main way to access RRT support when needed.

Independent school authorities that operate brick and mortar schools which are considering temporarily closing all or part of their school to in-person learning programs due to a COVID-19 situation **must consult with their local health authority and the FISA RRT in advance of making the decision** **to close** (including moving all or part of your school to online learning platforms). The final decision will remain with the school authority, but the health authority official and RRT will assist in assessing the situation. If a school is unsure of how to connect with their health authority, the FISA RRT will assist in making the connection.

First Nations Schools are welcome to contact the FISA RRT for support as needed. However, First Nation Schools are not required to submit COVID-19 exposure reports or to consult with the RRT when determining whether to close their school due to a COVID-19 situation.

**FSA Update**

When a user inputs a PEN for a student who is already enrolled at another school in the **“PEN”** field of the **“Add or Re-enroll Student(s)”** screen, a message similar to “This PEN is currently enrolled in Sample School 11-A” will be displayed. This is not an error message. It is for informational purposes only.

The user can continue to input information in the **“Legal Last Name, Legal First Name and Grade”** fields and select the **Save**button at the bottom of the page to enroll the student.

If you have questions, please contact [Denise.Philadelphia@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Denise.Philadelphia@gov.bc.ca).

**FISA Update – September 24, 2021**

**COVID-19 Additional Funding**

Earlier this week, the Ministry provided notification to school authorities outlining the authority’s Recovery Plan funding amount. FISA is appreciative of the provincial government’s efforts to provide one-time additional funding to assist Group 1, 2, and 3 independent schools with costs incurred in support of health and safety compliance measures. However, we have expressed our disappointment with the government’s allocation process. Independent schools will receive 7.7 % of the $15.6M allocated to BC K-12 schools, yet independent schools serve over 13% of the student population. FISA continues to advocate for the fair and equitable funding distribution of supplemental grants that target public health initiatives for all BC children.

We take solace in the fact that the $650K provincial grant to support mental health in schools funding was allocated in an equitable and proportional manner. The Ministry requested FISA’s assistance in determining how best to use these funds. The FISA Directors voted to distribute the grant directly to independent school authorities based on FTE enrollment to use in support of local initiatives aligned with the [Key Principles and Strategies for K-12 Mental Health Promotion in Schools](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/key-principles-and-strategies-for-k-12-mental-health-promotion.pdf). The Ministry will inform school authorities in the coming days as to their mental health funding amount. Each of the FISA associations will provide a report to the Ministry as to grant usage among their member schools.

**COVID-19 Health and Safety Update**

Today’s DM Bulletin included a much-anticipated [Q & A](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20210924/2021-09-24---covid-update-isb.pdf)document that addresses topics such as proof of vaccination requirements, temporary school closure procedures, and symptoms of illness/return to school guidelines. This guidance is sure to be well received by the K-12 sector as it provides sought after clarity to some of the most pressing COVID-19 related concerns.

FISA anticipates that the Ministry will provide further guidance in addressing mask exemptions for students, staff, and visitors shortly. In the meantime, we remind schools that the [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidlines.pdf) state that all K-12 staff and students in Grades 4-12 are required to wear a mask indoors and on school buses, with specific exceptions allowed. School leaders can use [BCCDC mask use](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks) messaging when communicating with their school communities as to the role that mask usage plays as one of the many layers of protection to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, especially as members of the school community may be immune-compromised or have other health sensitivities and these conditions may not necessarily be disclosed widely.

**Provincial Truth and Reconciliation Day**

One of the privileges of working in the FISA office is witnessing the good work happening in independent schools across the province. We are humbled in hearing about the various ways schools are honouring the Sept. 30th Truth and Reconciliation Day. Whether it is through connecting with a local First Nations band, listening to the wisdom of an Elder in-person or virtually, holding difficult conversations regarding Canada and Indigenous relationships - past and present, honouring the residential school survivors, or engaging in self-reflection as to your own relationship with this land and its peoples, we encourage you to consider Sept. 30th not as “The” day of Truth and Reconciliation but as “a” day of continual progress towards the goal of being the fair, friendly, and just nation that we proclaim ourselves to be.

**FISA Update - September 17, 2021**

**Health and Safety**

* After the first couple of weeks of most IS reopening, there remain many questions from the K-12 sector that require clarification. FISA is appreciative of schools that have reached out and shared their questions. Please be assured that these questions are shared by many other IS and have been shared with the BCCDC and the MoE. I request your patience as we await further clarification from these organizations. There is ongoing work happening to produce an education sector specific FAQ document, within a very dynamic and changing environment, and we anticipate this will be shared with schools as soon as possible.

* After several questions from IS on contact tracing/school notification, FISA would like to provide some clarification on the adjustments health authorities (HAs) are making:
* While the process may have changed the outcomes remain the same – everyone with a lab confirmed COVID-19 positive test result has their case investigated by contract tracers.
* All confirmed cases and close contacts will be contacted directly by their respective HA.
* Schools may not be contacted by the HA unless it is necessary to do so (a cluster at the school, requires more information on close contacts, confirmation that the school is an exposure site…).
* Vaccine status will inform the direction the HA will give to the confirmed cases and the close contacts (most likely fully vaccinated close contacts will be requested to self-monitor while unvaccinated contacts will be asked to self-isolate).
* The [COVID-19 Exposure Report form](https://fisabc.ca/independent-school-covid-19-exposure-report-form/) should be submitted to [ISCovidLead@fisabc.ca](mailto:ISCovidLead@fisabc.ca) on the same day that a school learns of an exposure from the HA. Exposure Reports do not need to be submitted for self-disclosures of a positive test result, until the HA confirms the school is an exposure site.
* The FISA Rapid Response Team (RRT) is available to assist schools with a COVID-19 exposure (self-disclosed or HA confirmed). Contact [ISCovidLead@fisabc.ca](mailto:ISCovidLead@fisabc.ca) for assistance.

* Requirements for schools in relation to the proof of vaccine (POV) order are also evolving.
* POV was instituted to encourage greater vaccine uptake in BC.
* It is not intended to disrupt K-12 learning events.
* Further information is required to determine school POV practices when normal school operations intersect with the gathering and events orders (field trips, spectators attending school events…). At this point IS are advised not to implement school specific POV policies, and to await further clarification from the MoE.

***erase* Training Opportunities**

The *Hybrid Basic Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) / Basic Digital Threat Risk Assessment (DTA)* offered last year has been renamed to *Overview of the Provincial VTRA Protocol and Digital Threat Assessment*. 

There are two *Overview of the Provincial VTRA Protocol and DTA*sessions arranged specifically for independent school personnel. These sessions meet the inspection requirements for Basic VTRA and Basic DTA training.

November 9, 2021 9:00am to 3:30pm (online) - Register [HERE](https://event-wizard.com/OverviewDTAVTRAOnlineNov92021/0/register/)

January 24, 2022 9:00am to 3:30pm (online) - Register [HERE](https://event-wizard.com/OverviewDTAVTRAOnlineJan242022/0/register/)

Independent school personnel are also welcome to attend the trainings open to both the public and independent school sectors, as listed on the **main erase training schedule**[**HERE**.](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/erase/documents/erase-training-schedule-2021-22.pdf)

*erase* training is current for a maximum of 3 years. Training taken in 2018-2019, or before, is expired and needs to be refreshed this school year. For more information regarding the*erase* training requirements for independent schools visit the Ministry's[Safe & Caring School Communities](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/independent-schools/safe-caring-school-communities) webpage.

**Independent School Policies**

* FISA and the Ministry of Education collaborated over the past year to update the **STUDENT RECORDS REQUIREMENTS AND BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (2012).** The [revised document](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/independent-schools/student_record_independent_schools.pdf) (2021) can be accessed through the [FISA website](https://fisabc.ca/), under the Policy Aids tab. The revisions pertain to Part III - ACCESS TO AND DISCLOSURE OF STUDENT RECORDS and clarify that professionals who are planning for, or delivering education, health, social or other support services to a student will be granted access (consent not required).

**2020 – 2021 FSA Results**

* Each school year the MoE facilitates a FSA Marking Monitoring process to review the accuracy of in-school FSA assessments. Several IS teachers participated in this process along with their public school colleagues this past summer. During these sessions sample FSA assessments are reviewed by several evaluators to determine the accuracy of the initial assessment. I am pleased to report that the independent school grade 4 & 7 samples were determined to be over 95% accurate. Well done! A copy of the FSA 2020/21 District Marking Monitoring Report IS is available in the ‘members only’ section of the [FISA website](https://fisabc.ca/).

**FISA Weekly Update Archive**

We have established an archive of the FISA weekly updates which is accessible through the “members only” section of the https://fisabc.ca/ website. Please contact [info@fisabc.ca](mailto:info@fisabc.ca) if you have difficulty logging in. Thank you to the principal who offered this helpful suggestion.

**FISA Update - September 10, 2021**

Welcome back!

The initial feedback FISA has received from independent schools is that the 2021 – 2022 school startup has been smoother than the previous school year, even though a changing pandemic environment still requires clarification and resolution of issues that come your way.

I do want to share my appreciation for the efforts the Ministry of Education, the BCCDC and the Provincial Health Officers put in this summer to be responsive to the changing dynamics of the pandemic. Balancing health and safety practices that provide safe school environments while being as minimally invasive as possible to ensure effective school operations – is an art!

Of course, these guidelines require implementation in schools and I salute the dedicated efforts of the leaders in independent schools who navigate these additional demands to establish safe and impactful school communities.

**Health and Safety**

* With the start of school, planning is well underway for fieldtrips that provide enhanced learning experiences for students off school grounds. With the advent of a provincial vaccine card, with requirements for people 12 years and older, many schools are looking for clarification on offsite school trips. The government’s [vaccine card website](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard.html#required) was updated today so please take time to review this document and any further information contained in the DM Bulletin. This website provides some direction for schools but many other, more nuanced questions still exist and FISA continues to make the Ministry of Education aware of scenarios that require clarification.

Examples of places where proof of vaccination are not required:

* Before and after school programs for K to 12 students
* Worship services
* Before and after school programs for K to 12 students
* Student events and activities in K to 12 public and independent schools
* Indoor organized events with less than 50 people, except adult sports
* Hotels, resorts, cabins and campsites
* Public libraries

Examples of places that will require a vaccine card are:

* Indoor concerts, theatre, dance and symphony events
* Gyms, exercise facilities/studios and recreation facilities
* Indoor organized events with 50 or more people. For example: Wedding receptions, organized parties, conferences and workshops

* The fall is historically when class and student photos occur and having most of the people in the picture wearing a mask can be aesthetically displeasing. Please know that the current guidelines do allow for temporary removal of masks for the purpose of identification (which can apply to class photos). Please spread students out as much as possible for the photo and, where feasible, encourage the photos to be taken outside.

* Independent schools are encouraged to establish a mask exemption request process that reinforces the Ministry’s guidance which states “All students in Grades 4 -12 are required to wear a mask" expect when an exemption is granted as per the exceptions listed on page 20 of the [guidelines](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidlines.pdf).

**Rapid Response Team**

* FISA was once again selected to facilitate the work of the Independent Schools Rapid Response Team (ISRRT). FISA will continue to receive school exposure reports and provide supports, along with your respective association COVID Leads, for schools that require direction. The ISRRT Health Authority Liaisons will also share public health updates to schools within their jurisdiction. With an eye to pandemic recovery, the ISRRT also has added two members (Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, FISA Mental Health Coordinators) that will focus on providing schools with mental health and wellbeing resources and virtual Pro D.

**School Closure Policy**

* In the September 3rd DM Bulletin there was an item addressing the requirement for a [School Closure Policy](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20210903/indepschoolclosurepolicy.pdf) for independent schools. For schools scheduled for External Inspections or Monitoring Visits this school year you will have noticed that this policy is contained within the inspection catalogues. To be clear, this policy commences in the 2021/22 school year and school authorities of **all new independent schools** **are required to develop and maintain a school closure risk mitigation plan during the first five years of operation** to minimize the impact of a potential school closure on the school community. Therefore, independent schools and authorities established previous to 2021/22 are **not** required to have a school closure policy.

**International Students**

* The Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA) created an international student portal for students arriving at the Vancouver International Airport, to streamline the entry process. The CBSA has put the [YVR Student Portal](https://www.yvr.ca/en/students) on hold. Some challenges were identified due to pandemic factors and irregular air service connections, resulting in students not arriving on the day they originally planned and had communicated via the portal.

**ArtStarts – Artists in Education (AIE) Grant**

AIE Grant applications are due to the FISA office by Friday, September 17, 2021. Group 1, 2, 3, and 4 schools are encouraged to apply to receive reimbursement of a portion of the professional artist fees for performances and workshops held in schools (in-person or virtually). Details can be found in the application form which is available [**HERE.**](https://fisabc.ca/services/schools/formsapplications/) FISA thanks the BC Arts Council and the Province of BC for their generosity in making these grants possible.

**FISA Update - September 3, 2021**

**2021 – 2022 School Start Up**

* FISA was grateful to receive a notice last week from the Ministry of Education informing us that independent schools will receive equitable and proportional funding targeting mental health supports for school communities. FISA continues to advocate for equal funding for independent schools when supplemental grants target public health initiatives that should be equitably accessed by all BC students.

These grants, mentioned in the August 27th DM Bulletin, include the final instalment of a 3-year Early Initiative Mental Health grant ($472,290) and a one-time COVID-19 Recovery Mental Health grant ($650,000). The FISA Board and the FISA Mental Health Committee (with representatives from the 5 FISA member associations) will collaborate to determine the best way these funds can support mental health and wellness in independent schools.

FISA is also aware that the DM announcement has caused some understandable  confusion for independent schools. During last year’s school start up schools received funding from both the federal and provincial governments to support COVID-19 health and safety compliance and the purchase of required items (masks, hand sanitizer, washing stations, cleaning supplies….). These above-mentioned grants are not targeted for these initiatives but instead the focus is on recovery and mental health supports.

* A separate, one-time grant to independent schools of $1.2M to support health and safety compliance measures (similar to last year’s provincial grant) will be distributed early in the school year to independent school authorities that operate Group 1, 2, and 3 schools, based on a school’s Feb. 2021 FTE enrollment.

**Provincial Outreach**

Plans were well underway for FISA to resume the Provincial Outreach and the FISA team was looking forward to visiting the different regions of the province where independent schools make a difference in the lives of their students. Unfortunately, the present public health orders and the uncertainty of future orders means it is prudent for FISA to delay face to face Pro D gatherings at this time.

My sincere appreciation to the independent schools that agreed to host these events, to Janet Dhanani for her efforts to coordinate these events and to the Pro D facilitators, Jamie Morris and Michelle Hussey, for their planning for an engaging and valuable day for independent school educators.

FISA is hopeful that the future public health status in BC will allow us to resume the Provincial Outreach sometime this school year. In the interim, the FISA Mental Health team is exploring virtual options to provide mental health and wellbeing supports for independent schools this year. More information to follow.

**ArtStarts – Artists in Education (AIE) Grant**

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**FISA Update - August 27, 2021**

**2021 – 2022 School Start Up**

* On August 23rd Dr. Henry announced the implementation of a vaccination passport for non-essential public gatherings. The BC vaccination passport requirement commences on September 13th but does not apply to regular school settings. FISA has requested further clarification on school events that may draw parents and guests to school sites and for school field trips to indoor public spaces.

* The PHO order on masks in public indoor settings does apply to K-12 schools and aligns with the [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidlines.pdf)  and commenced on August 25th.

* The PHO and the Ministry of Education will be focusing on encouraging vaccinations for all that are eligible to receive one. Both the [Fraser Health Authority](https://www.fraserhealth.ca/news/2021/Aug/fraser-health-releases-data-review-of-covid-19-transmission-in-surrey-schools#.YSk1C9NKjjA) and [Vancouver Coastal Health Authority](http://www.vch.ca/covid-19/school-exposures) produced studies of COVID-19 cases in K-12 schools in their respective regions and the common theme was that vaccines are the most effective means to lowering case numbers and reducing the severity of illness for those who become infected with COVID-19. An increased provincial vaccination rate is also the most effective way to keep those unable to be vaccinated safe.

* The Ministry of Education has indicated that independent schools will not be required to supply weekly attendance reports to the Ministry at the start of this school year – as was the practice last year.

* In last week’s DM Bulletin independent schools were asked to complete their First Nations September Restart Engagement Plans. Thank you for the schools that have submitted this form. All independent schools are expected to submit this form. If your school does not enroll on-reserve Indigenous students you can respond with “does not apply” on the template provided.

**International Education Resources**

I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry of Education has added supporting materials to the Health and Wellness Guidelines on the International Education [Website](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/international-education/resources#health) - which is now live.

The new materials include:

* Documents that support student-adult discussions on 3 topic areas;
* Experiencing low mood/depression
* Feeling stressed
* Building Resilience

* A one-page student worksheet for each of the above topics, translated into Simplified Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese and;

* A Health and Wellness Resource directory.

**ArtStarts – Artists in Education (AIE) Grant**

AIE Grant applications are due to the FISA office by Friday, September 17, 2021. Group 1, 2, 3, and 4 schools are encouraged to apply to receive reimbursement of a portion of the professional artist fees for performances and workshops held in schools (in-person or virtually). Details can be found in the application form which is available [**HERE.**](https://fisabc.ca/services/schools/formsapplications/) FISA thanks the BC Arts Council and the Province of BC for their generosity in making these grants possible.

**FISA Update - August 24, 2021**

**2021 – 2022 School Start Up**

This morning Minister Whiteside provided an update to the K-12 Health and Safety guidelines. At the end of the last school year, we anticipated a move towards guidelines that would align more closely to pre-pandemic school operations. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 fourth wave is a reality and government and public health officials are responding with guidelines that promote safe and supportive school communities.

School leaders will need to spend some time with the health and safety documents released by the Ministry to answer the more nuanced questions you may have and to inform the updates to your Communicable Disease Plans (COVID-19 plans). Here are a few of the high-level themes:

* Vaccines will not be mandated for staff or students over the age of 12 that could be vaccinated. The government will focus on sharing credible scientific information to encourage greater vaccination levels across the province.
* To start this school year, all school staff and visitors are required to wear masks indoors.
* Grades 4 – 12 are required to wear masks indoors and on school busses.
* K – 3 students will be encouraged to wear masks indoors.
* Strict physical distancing guidelines (cohorts and 2 meters personal space) will be  replaced by practices that respect personal space through effective utilization of school space and student movement. There will be no Ministry prescribed cohorts.
* There will be baseline PHO orders that will apply across the province but local health authorities may also activate medical health orders that reflect their region’s context and public health experience.
* Cleaning protocols will more closely resemble pre-pandemic practices. Regulations on building ventilation remain similar with updates on the best practice for safe air movement.
* Extra-curricular school activities will resume and will be governed by the wider provincial or local health authority orders.

Important links:

This morning’s press release: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021EDUC0058-001663>

The August 24th version of the Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools: <http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf>

The August 24th version of the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidlines.pdf>

**FISA Update - August 20, 2021**

**2021 – 2022 School Start Up – FISA Updates**

Many independent school leaders have either returned to their leadership posts or will be doing so soon. I truly hope you all were able to take time this summer to completely disconnect, after a year that required a herculean effort from K-12 leaders throughout the province. A special welcome to any new personnel that have accepted the call to leadership for their respective independent school authorities.

**K-12 Health and Safety Guidelines**

The work of the Provincial Steering Committee and the Health and Safety Working Group recommenced on August 9th, with FISA providing an independent schools’ voice at those tables. I would like to acknowledge and commend the Provincial Health Office and the Ministry of Education for their work on the K-12 health and safety documents over the summer. When these committees concluded their work in July our goal was to provide the K-12 system with revised guidelines by the end of this week. However, with the recent increase in provincial COVID case counts and the prevalence of the Delta variant, we presently anticipate the release of these documents early next week.

It would be reasonable to expect a concerted push by the government and the education sector to encourage vaccinations for all people within the K-12 sector that are able to do so. You should also anticipate some form of mask requirements due to the present COVID-19 case numbers.

**BC Center for Disease Control (BCCDC) Updates**

The BCCDC continually analyses COVID related data to support public health initiatives and policies. You can access this information at <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/data>.  What this data reveals:

* BC has experienced an impressive rate of vaccination when compared with other jurisdictions.
* A majority of recent COVID cases are the Delta variant and predominantly impact people that are not fully vaccinated.
* While recent provincial COVID cases have increased, the corresponding rate of hospitalizations and deaths are much lower.
* Regional variance exists for vaccination rates, case counts, hospitalizations and deaths, with predominantly higher rates experienced in areas with lower vaccination uptake.
* People that are fully vaccinated are far less likely to be infected with COVID and, if they are infected, the severity of their health outcomes is dramatically reduced.

**Provincial Truth and Reconciliation Day**

On August 3rd the BC government announced that provincial employees will be granted a statutory holiday on September 30th this year. This will include public K-12 school employees that are governed by collective agreements with the provincial government, many of which include language that de facto applies to federally proclaimed statutory holidays. Independent schools will need to make decisions on how their communities will honour this day of Truth and Reconciliation. Possible options to consider:

* Align your schedule with the public K-12 sector and treat the day as a provincial statutory holiday.
* Consult with local Indigenous leaders to provide insight on how to make Truth and Reconciliation meaningful in your community.
* Designate September 30th as a non-instructional day and provide your staff with Truth and Reconciliation focused in-servicing.

The Ministry of Education has reduced the minimum hours of instruction by 5 hours for the 2021/22 school year (i.e. 845 hours instead of 850 hours).

**ArtStarts – Artists in Education (AIE) Grant**

AIE Grant applications are due to the FISA office by Friday, September 17, 2021. Group 1, 2, 3, and 4 schools are encouraged to apply to receive reimbursement of a portion of the professional artist fees for performances and workshops held in schools (in-person or virtually). Details can be found in the application form which is available [**HERE.**](https://fisabc.ca/services/schools/formsapplications/) FISA thanks the BC Arts Council and the Province of BC for their generosity in making these grants possible.

**International Education Scholarship**

Due to budget constraints some of the BC international student scholarship programs that previously existed will not be available for the 2021 – 2022 school year.However, I am pleased to inform you that the**International Student Ambassador Pathways Scholarships** will continue to be available for independent school international students in 2021 - 2022. These scholarships are for international students graduating from Grade 12 at a BC school and transitioning to an approved BC post-secondary institution. Deadlines for this scholarship are fast approaching and further details and the application form can be found through the following [link](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/scholarships/scholarships-awards/bc-international-student-ambassador).

The application forms have been modified from previous years and are now quite streamlined. If you have any questions on the application process, they can be directed to [bccie@bccie.bc.ca](mailto:bccie@bccie.bc.ca).

*The FISA office acknowledges that the land on which we gather and work is the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.*

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