



April 9, 2020

Ref: 219330

Dear Education Partners, Superintendents and School Leaders:

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and the Association of B.C. Deans of Education, and in light of the current COVID-19 crisis, we are pleased to confirm our support for teacher education program (TEP) students within B.C. in their goal to graduate on time and be readily available for job opportunities as soon as possible after their program completion.

The B.C. Government decision to suspend all K-12 classroom instruction, in consultation with the Provincial Health Officer and education stakeholders, to protect students, staff and families from the spread of COVID-19 impacts B.C. TEP students this year. Specifically, it impacts TEP students' ability to complete their practicums in the usual manner.

Ministry of Education staff, including the Director of Certification, the Association of the B.C. Deans of Education and the B.C. Teachers' Council have worked together under these unprecedented times. The commitment of teacher education programs to prepare TEP students to meet the professional standards remains unwavering. We have clarified and confirmed the legal requirements for certification and now need to work with partners to ensure that TEP students can complete their practicum experience to meet these standards.

All TEP students continue to require a positive recommendation from their university supervisors for certification. They also must successfully complete an acceptable practicum experience, as required under the *Certification Standards*. The practicum must include substantive engagement of the teacher candidates and robust assessment by both the program faculty advisors and host school associates. However, under the extraordinary circumstances in response to COVID-19 in Spring 2020, this may be delivered through a combination of face-to-face and up to 50 percent of online and remote teaching approaches. Please note that the majority of TEP students will have already met the face-to-face requirements at this stage of their program.

The current COVID-19 crisis presents an opportunity to think differently about how to support TEP students to meet the practicum requirements for certification. As education leaders in the K-12 system, you play a key role in this. We also acknowledge the challenges faced by teachers and education leaders currently and need to make sure that efforts to support student teachers do not add unduly to that burden.

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We know that there will be wonderful success stories over the coming months of TEP students being supported with practicums that may include supporting mentor teachers with remote learning, helping teachers to re-engage with classes in the context of non-face-to-face instruction, or helping to transition in person educational activities to remote delivery.

We appreciate your flexibility and understanding to ensure that B.C. teacher candidates graduate on time.

Sincerely,



D. Scott MacDonald
Deputy Minister

Sincerely,



Dr. Ralf St. Clair
Chair, Association of B.C. Deans of Education

Sincerely,



Jim Iker,
Chair, B.C. Teachers' Council