Recommendations for Successful Outreach and Consultation

Importance of Outreach and Consultation

- Meaningful and sustainable engagement is best informed by a diversity of voices in ongoing collaborative discussions, learning from past practice and building upon successes and lessons learned.
- Outreach is about providing information and about hearing all voices and feedback – both aspects are important.
- Successful consultation can build a sense of community and facilitate acceptance of change – forums that allow discussion and consideration of shared priorities and building upon the ideas of others.
- Consultation with educational researchers enables research-based decision making.

Broad Representation and Voice – Who we should reach

- Ongoing engagement with education sector partners, including students, parents, trustees, education support workers, teachers, school and board administration.
- Engage with the public directly and through existing community, labour, employer, business and manufacturing associations, labour councils, chambers of commerce, etc.
- Include transition perspectives, representatives and partners, early years into Kindergarten, transition years into high school, and transitions beyond high school to post-secondary education, industry, and world of work.
- On-going engagement with those who may not have had the opportunity to have voice or presence in the past to ensure there is diversity, including First Nations, Metis, and Inuit groups, those who have been traditionally marginalized and province wide geographical representation and feedback.

Considerations for Effective Outreach

- Ensure that outreach occurs in all parts of the province.
- Engagement should happen in stages, ensuring broader consultation is meaningful and stakeholders have a clear understanding of the questions/considerations.
- Ensure information is presented in a way that parents and public understand – use language and terms understood and accessible by different audiences.
- Draw upon existing structures and networks at the local, regional and provincial level, exploring ways to expand that outreach opportunities, i.e. Parent Involvement Committees, school councils, Indigenous Education Leads, and standing advisory committees.
• Connect with community leaders, including school board trustees, to provide input into local needs for successful consultation and allow them to reach out to the members of their community.

• Draw upon successes of other provincial consultations, and consider strategies such as engagement in mapping potential student pathways. Rely upon professional third-party assistance in broader community-based consultations.

• Base outreach on meaningful First Nations, Metis and Inuit engagement practices and culturally sensitive outreach utilizing existing groups and processes.

• Remove barriers to engagement: consider such factors as optimum time commitment, flexibility in the timing of consultations, community based locations, considerations of language and culture, and use of social media for effective and inclusive consultations.

• Use multiple approaches to consultations, taking into consideration the diversity of languages in communities, the need for a robust process, how to utilize local media - including cultural and diverse language media, the use of technology – social media and on-line engagement, as well as possible limitations to access such as geography and demographics.

• Ensure there is follow up to the engagement that includes feedback, results and outcomes of the engagement as well as next steps.