
From: Kim Dumore, Trustee

Topic: **Trustee Motion: Revision to Substance Education Curriculum in Response to the Ongoing Opioid Crisis**

BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2016, the BC Curriculum was revised to reflect "a context in time," aiming to equip students with the skills and knowledge required to succeed in a rapidly changing world. During this same period, the opioid crisis was declared a Public Health Emergency in April 2016. As a result, both the curriculum revision and the escalation of the opioid crisis unfolded concurrently, with the latter evolving into an ongoing public health emergency that continues to affect communities across British Columbia, especially youth, profoundly.

Between 2014 and 2024, the BC Coroner reported over 205 youth aged 0-18 who have tragically lost their lives due to the opioid crisis, though many more cases go unreported. This statistic underscores the urgent need for updated educational measures. Despite the ongoing impact of this crisis, the current BC Curriculum has not sufficiently kept pace with these evolving public health challenges. Therefore, it is essential to reevaluate the existing Substance Education curriculum to ensure it effectively addresses the opioid crisis and its far-reaching effects on youth.

RATIONALE

As School Board Trustees, it is our responsibility to ensure that students in British Columbia have access to essential life-saving education, particularly related to the opioid crisis. A revised curriculum that incorporates targeted opioid education and harm reduction strategies will equip students with the knowledge needed to make informed choices about substance use, recognize warning signs, and seek help when necessary.

This motion addresses an urgent public health crisis and equips students with the tools to protect their well-being and that of their peers. The ongoing opioid epidemic demands proactive, measurable steps to update the curriculum in a way that is relevant, effective, and responsive to today's youth's needs.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve the following motion for submission to the 2025 B.C. School Trustees Association Annual General Meeting:

"BE IT RESOLVED:

- ***That the BCSTA advocate to the MECC (Ministry of Education and Child Care) for a revision to the Substance Education curriculum, ensuring that it addresses the ongoing opioid crisis with a focus on harm reduction, substance use prevention, and mental health support and that a review be conducted to assess whether this education should remain solely within Physical and Health Education or be integrated across multiple areas of learning;***
- ***And further that the BCSTA advocate to the MECC (Ministry of Education and Child Care) for sufficient funding to support the timely and effective implementation of this revised curriculum, ensuring that it reflects current public health realities and equips students with the knowledge and resources necessary to navigate the challenges of substance use."***

RESOURCES

BC Coroners Report

- <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiM2Y5YzRjNzQtMzAyNS00NWFiLWI3MDktMzI5NWQ3YmVhNmZjIiwidCI6IjZmZGI1MjAwLTNkMGQtNGE4YS1iMDM2LWQzNjg1ZTM1OWFkYyJ9>

BCSTA Comprehensive Healthy School Working Group

- https://bcsta.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-06_CSHWG_Report.pdf

SD 42 Opioid Education and Report

- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1o_d1PXcsTX2xcDPeCcvUH_SpmY6NiR1V/view?usp=sharing