



November 29, 2023

Ref: 294051

Doug McPhee, Chair
Board of Education
School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay)
Email: c/o Jane.Nixon@sd5.bc.ca

Dear Doug McPhee:

Thank you for your subsequent letter of October 11, 2023, clarifying your request regarding educational programs and resources for gender-based violence (GBV) education within School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) and School Districts across British Columbia.

The ministry agrees that gender-based violence is an important topic and that education can play an important role in reducing its prevalence and impact in our society. That is why in November of 2022, important updates were made to the elaborations in BC's Physical and Health Education (PHE) K-10 curriculum and supplemental supporting documents such as the *Supporting Student Health Guide* to include learning about a variety of topics in sexual health such as consent, harassment, healthy relationships, and gender-based violence.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care does not mandate specific resources. Different communities are using a variety of resources and strategies to teach a variety of topics, including topics related to consent and gender-based violence. School districts are free to use specific programs or resources they believe are most suited for teaching the learning standards of the curriculum. Many districts are already using different resources and programs and the Ministry would not want to disrupt any district initiatives that are currently working well by setting Ministry mandates. School districts are also best placed to determine the specific needs of their teachers for any training and professional development related to gender-based violence.

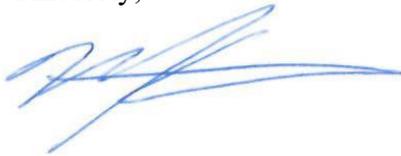
A standardized approach to educational materials and instructional approaches would not recognize the diversity of needs in communities and schools around the province. Students in different schools and districts will be coming to these topics with different background knowledge and experiences. Educators at the local level are best placed to make these determinations about student needs and which programs are best suited to meet those needs.

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I do want to assure you though, that the work towards ending gender-based violence is a priority of not only the Ministry of Education and Child Care, but the entire provincial government. As the province continues to move forward in their work towards a comprehensive Gender-Based Violence Action Plan, our Ministry will continue to seek opportunities for furthering GBV education in the K-12 system and will update resources like the *Supporting Student Health Guides* to align with this important initiative. More details about these updates will be announced once the final Gender-Based Violence Action Plan is released.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Melanie Stewart', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Melanie Stewart
Associate Deputy Minister