STATEMENT OF EDUCATION POLICY ORDER
(MANDATE FOR THE SCHOOL SYSTEM)

Authority: *School Act*, section 169 (3)

OIC 1280/89 ..... Effective September 1, 1989
Lieutenant Governor in Council Order

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The Lieutenant Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, orders that the attached statement of education policy for British Columbia be approved.

Mandate for the School System
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Anthony J. Brummet
Minister of Education
Province of British Columbia

Vancouver, British Columbia
September 1, 1989

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*Note: Parts A & B are intended to apply to all schools, public and independent.

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Part A: Mission Statement

The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

Part B: General Policies for the School System

The Educated Citizen

A quality education system assists in the development of human potential and improves the well being of each individual person in British Columbia society.

Continued progress toward our social and economic goals as a province depends upon well-educated people who have the ability to think clearly and critically, and to adapt to change. Progress toward these goals also depends on educated citizens who accept the tolerant and multi-faceted nature of Canadian society and who are motivated to participate actively in our democratic institutions.

Government is responsible for ensuring that all of our youth have the opportunity to obtain high quality schooling that will assist in the development of an educated society. To this end, schools in the province assist in the development of citizens who are:

- thoughtful, able to learn and to think critically, and who can communicate information from a broad knowledge base;
- creative, flexible, self-motivated and who have a positive self image;
- capable of making independent decisions;
- skilled and who can contribute to society generally, including the world of work;
- productive, who gain satisfaction through achievement and who strive for physical well being;
- cooperative, principled and respectful of others regardless of differences;
- aware of the rights and prepared to exercise the responsibilities of an individual within the family, the community, Canada, and the world.

Diversity and Choice

Government is committed to ensuring that parents in every region of the province have access to quality public schooling for their children. For those students unable to attend school because of remoteness or illness, the province will provide appropriate delivery systems to ensure access to the provincial curriculum.

In an effort to accommodate varying parental and student expectations of school services, public schools, within available resources, will provide parents and students with choice of programs.

Government is also committed to the principle that parents have an historic right of choice regarding the schooling of their children. Parents in British Columbia have the right to enroll their children in a public school or in any independent school of their choice.

Part C: Policy Statement on Public Schools

Goals of Education

Prime Goal of Public Schools – Supported by the Family and Community

- *Intellectual Development* – to develop the ability of students to analyze critically, reason and think independently, and acquire basic learning skills and bodies of knowledge; to develop in students a lifelong appreciation of learning, a curiosity about the world around them and a capacity for creative thought and expression.

Goals that are shared among Schools, the Family and Community

Schools are expected to play a major role, through learning experiences and supervised practice, in helping students to achieve the following goals:

- *Human and Social Development* – to develop in students a sense of self-worth and personal initiative; to develop an appreciation of the fine arts and an understanding of cultural heritage; to develop an understanding of the importance of physical health and well being; to develop a sense of social responsibility, and a tolerance and respect for the ideas and beliefs of others.
- *Career Development* – to prepare students to attain their career and occupational objectives; to assist in the development of effective work habits and the flexibility to deal with change in the workplace.

Attributes of the Public School System

- *Accessibility* – a variety of programs is available in the province to meet the full range of student needs.
- *Relevance* – programs are current, and relevant to the needs of the learner.
- *Equity* – resources are allocated fairly.
- *Quality* – professional teaching and administration are of high quality.
- *Accountability* – resources are allocated in a cost-effective manner; parents and the community are informed of the progress of schools and are involved as partners in planning.

Duties, Rights and Responsibilities

Students: have the opportunity to avail themselves of a quality education consistent with their abilities, the opportunity to share in the shaping of their educational programs, and the opportunity to determine their career and occupational goals. They have a responsibility to make the most of their opportunities, to respect the rights of others, and to cooperate with fellow students in the achievement of their goals.

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Parents: have the right and responsibility to participate in the process of determining the educational goals, policies and services provided for their children. They have a primary responsibility to ensure that children are provided with the healthy and supportive environment necessary for learning. They have a responsibility to help shape and support the goals of the school system and to share in the tasks of educating their young.

Teachers: have the right to exercise professional judgment in providing instruction to students in accordance with specified duties and powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure that each student is provided with quality instruction, to participate in all normal school activities and to monitor the behavior and progress of each learner in accordance with provincial and local policies. They have a responsibility to communicate with students and parents, and are accountable to the School Board and its delegates.

School Principals: have the right to exercise professional judgment in managing the school in accordance with specified duties and powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure that each student is provided with opportunities for a quality education. Principals are to provide administrative leadership, in consultation with teachers and the community that reflects the aspirations of parents and the school community and that is consistent with provincial and district guidelines. They cooperate with parents and the community in the delivery of non-educational support services to students, and focus on the following areas of school concern: (1) student access and achievement; (2) quality teaching; (3) communication with parents and the community; and (4) accountability to parents and to the Board.

School Boards: have a duty to govern districts and their schools in accordance with specified powers in a fiscally responsible and cost effective manner. They have a responsibility to ensure that schools provide students with opportunities for a quality education; to set education policies that reflect the aspirations of the community and that are consistent with overall provincial guidelines; to provide leadership and encouragement to schools and the community; to cooperate with the community and social service agencies in the delivery of non-educational support services to students; and to focus on the following areas of district concern: (1) implementation of provincial and local education programs; (2) school finance and facilities; (3) student access and achievement; (4) teaching performance; and (5) accountability to parents, taxpayers, the community and to the Province.

District Officials: have a duty to exercise professional judgment in managing the district in accordance with specified powers and duties. They have a corresponding responsibility to provide professional leadership in the design and implementation of education programs in districts, and are accountable to the local school board.

The College of Teachers: has the duty to establish and apply standards of fitness and qualifications governing admission to the teaching profession. The specific duties of the Council of the College are to approve, for certification purposes, teacher education programs established by provincial Faculties of Education, to define bylaws and policies related to the academic and professional qualifications of teachers, to issue teaching credentials, to investigate allegations of

professional misconduct and, if necessary, to exercise professional judgment in disciplining its members. The College has the responsibility for encouraging and facilitating programs of continuing teacher education, professional development and inservice designed to ensure general teacher competence, and to improve the quality of teaching in provincial schools.

The Community: has the right to expect that every child will have access to quality education provided in a fiscally responsible and cost effective manner. The community, through local volunteer groups and private and public agencies, has a corresponding responsibility to support the family and school by providing children with a healthy and supportive environment in the community.

The Ministry of Education: has a duty to set policies for the British Columbia public school system in accordance with specified duties and powers. The Ministry has a corresponding responsibility to ensure that the education system provides students with opportunities for a quality education in a cost-effective manner; to set standards and overall directions for the education system; to provide leadership and encouragement to all educational agencies in the province; to cooperate with provincial agencies in the delivery of non-educational support services to students; and to focus at a high level of provincial concern on the following areas: (1) finance and facilities; (2) program direction, development and implementation; (3) student access and achievement; (4) teaching performance; and (5) system evaluation and public accountability.

Other Government Ministries and Agencies: have a duty to set policies in accordance with specified powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure that provincial policies and resources support the family and local community in providing a healthy and supportive environment necessary for children's learning.

The Public: The public of British Columbia has the right to expect that schools operate effectively and efficiently and are accountable for evaluating and reporting their progress on a regular basis. The public has the corresponding responsibility to provide schools with the necessary resources and moral support to fulfill their mission.

Part D: Policy Statement on Independent Schools and Home Schooling

General Policy

Government recognizes and supports the principle of independent schooling in order to provide parents with alternatives to public schools. Government provides financial support for those schools that meet specified standards in a number of areas including curriculum and teacher certification consistent with the provisions of the *Independent School Act.*

Rights and Responsibilities

Parents: have a right to enroll their children in a registered independent school of their choice. Parents have a corresponding responsibility to ensure that the curriculum and programs being offered by the school are of suitable quality.

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Parents may choose to school their children at home provided that certain conditions are satisfied. If they choose home schooling, they have a responsibility to register their children in a public school, an independent school, or a regional correspondence school. Home schooled students and their parents will be offered educational services including assessment, access to learning materials and record keeping. Parents have a responsibility to ensure that children are provided with a healthy and supportive environment necessary for learning.

Independent School Authorities: have a duty to determine policies and curriculum in accordance with specified powers. They have a responsibility to register with the Ministry of Education and to provide the Ministry with appropriate information.

The Ministry of Education: has a duty to determine policies for independent education in accordance with specified powers and duties. The Ministry has a responsibility to ensure that these regulations and policies are implemented.