

Minutes - Learning Roundtable meeting of November 14, 2006

1. Welcome, introductions and Opening comments.
 - Premier Campbell welcomed the members of the Learning Roundtable to the second meeting.
 - The new members of the Roundtable, Mr. Jim Iker, BCTF and Mr. Harry Janzen, BCSSA were introduced.
 - Premier Campbell confirmed that the members present would be the members of the Roundtable until June 30, 2006.

2. Approval of Agenda
 - Jinny Sims – Item 7 - noted that she did not agree with characterization of the \$20M arising from the “Ready Recommendations” as being a matter for consideration by the Roundtable. It is the view of the BCTF that this discussion and determination should follow discussions between Government and the BCTF only.
 - Premier Campbell – Agreed with the BCTF view regarding the decisions to expend this \$20M. Premier Campbell went on to note there were other resources resulting from accruals during the walk out that could be the business of the Roundtable.
 - Penny Tees – Seeks assurance that the Roundtable will be informed of the plans to expend the \$20M – Premier indicates decision will be made known publicly.
 - Agenda approved with revised understanding of Item 7 – Education Re-investment strategy - \$20 M arising from Ready Recommendations.

3. Approval of Minutes
 - Jinny Sims – Requested that introductory comments of participants on behalf of organizations from October 24, 2005 meeting be included in minutes. Premier Campbell asked that they be added to the extent they are available.
 - Jinny Sims – Raised a number of issues regarding the minutes that will be included in a subsequent draft for approval of the Roundtable.
 - Second draft of minutes will be circulated to Roundtable members for consideration at next meeting.

4. Confirmation of membership of Roundtable.
 - Jinny Sims – Asks that the BCTF be permitted to bring a staff person to support the work of executive members sitting at Roundtable. Discussion follows. BCSTA notes that it has a staff member present. BCPVPA, BCSSA and BCCPAC indicate they have staff that may attend. Premier agrees that each organization may invite a staff person to attend. That staff person does not get directly involved in discussions among members.

5. Invitations to partners, stakeholders and other interested parties to make presentations.
- Premier Campbell – opened the discussion referring to the comments of the last meeting regarding the attendance of others at Roundtable meetings to provide varied points of view and inform the work of the Roundtable.
 - Penny Tees – expressed caution about sub-groups of the organizations at the table be given time to present – The partners present should represent the points of view of these groups to the table.
 - Premier Campbell – Acknowledged concern with numbers seeking to make presentations. The challenge is to establish a balance that provides for sufficient information to inform the Roundtable and be inclusive with the time available. Groups within the major partners may bring particular views or expertise that is needed.
 - Minister Bond - Noted that if the Roundtable meets in various locations that provides a rare opportunity for groups from those areas such as school boards, local teachers groups and parent groups to participate directly.
 - Kim Howland – Groups bring specific information on some topics. When a particular topic is addressed groups most able to inform that discussion should be included.
 - Sheila Rooney – Agreed that resource persons bring particular expertise on certain topics.
 - Premier Campbell – Noted the exchange is two way – it is also important that visiting individuals and groups hear the dialogue among the members of the Roundtable.
 - Jinny Sims – Suggested that the composition of regional meetings might be different than provincial meetings in order to permit participation by those in regions.
 - Premier Campbell – Agreed.
 - Emery Dossall – Cautioned respecting the “me too” phenomenon. It may be impractical to hear from everyone who wishes to present.
 - Premier Campbell – Requests that each member send a list of possible participants to Secretariat.
 - Minister Bond suggested that the lists be compiled to inform discussion at the next Roundtable. Secretariat to prepare a master list from submissions.
 - Penny Tees – Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie Britannique (CSF) has requested an audience with the Roundtable, citing its unique status under the Constitution.
 - A number of members mentioned groups and organizations that had already expressed an interest in participating at the Roundtable. These should be included in the submission to the secretariat.
 - Irene Lanzinger commented that the fact that many want to attend and participate is something to celebrate because the system is “all of ours”.

- Premier Campbell stated that he plans to visit schools to talk to teachers – the richness of the conversations is needed to get as many perspectives as possible. Premier Campbell stated, “I need to make more contacts and talk to a variety of people.”
6. Technical Briefing – Emery Dosdall began a technical briefing with respect to the class size data that have been reported by school districts and summarized for the Roundtable. A number of areas of discussion emerged.
- The data are “imperfect”. While this is the most comprehensive collection and report of data ever done, there are some errors in the data and these will continue to be corrected. The reporting of teacher assistants lacks accuracy because of varied service models and definitions. Data entry errors although minor, remain evident. Categorization and reporting of students with special needs lacks consistency and rigour. In spite of these shortcomings, at a high level the data give a clear sense of the issues arising from class size and class composition.
 - Confidentiality is a difficult issue as it relates to the reporting of the categorization of students with special needs. The data as reported to the Roundtable have real potential of causing the identification of a student and potential violation of privacy. Members of the Roundtable struggled with finding a balance that was in the public interest by way of promoting a full and complete dialogue, yet did not compromise the privacy of an individual child.
 - Premier Campbell reported that the office of the privacy Commissioner was not definitive on this matter. Whatever decision is made by the Roundtable, it may be challenged. Members at the Roundtable agreed to consider this issue as they became more familiar with the data and discuss the level of appropriate public release following further revisions and consideration.
 - It was decided that at this time the reports are not public – at next meeting the Roundtable will consider the views of what should be made public, addressing the balance between the public interest and the protection of privacy.
 - A wide range of issues were discussed among Roundtable members respecting the class size and class composition data.
 - The technical briefing was truncated and may resume at the next meeting.
7. Education Reinvestment Strategy. (Item not completed)
- Premier Campbell agreed that the expenditure of the \$20M arising from the Ready recommendations was a matter for discussion between government and the BCTF. He noted that its resolution would be reported publicly and to the Roundtable.
 - Susan Lambert made an inquiry regarding the timeline for legislative change that would take effect in 2006/07 school year. Premier Campbell explained that in the usual course of events most legislation for the spring

session would be ready by early January but there were some accommodations that could be made for the Roundtable's work.

- Jinny Sims circulated a document that outlined a set of recommendations for amendments to the *School Act* that would affect class size and class composition. Premier Campbell noted that this would be attached to the minutes of the next Roundtable meeting, as would be recommendations provided by the other members of the Roundtable.
- Premier Campbell invited all partners to make recommendations with respect to ways in which to enhance learning conditions. In the short term, the Roundtable will need to make recommendations that will result in some amount being used for this purpose from the grants reduction following the walk out.

8. Next meeting

- Short-term recommendations should be brought to the table.
- Public release of data will be discussed further.
- The list of potential participants in the Roundtable will be on the next agenda.
- Meeting to be set in early part of December.
- Revised report of October 24, 2006 will be circulated prior to next meeting.
- Meeting adjourned 12:20 p.m.