

**Maggie Li**

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**From:** EIA Minister EIA:EX [EIA.Minister@gov.bc.ca]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 23, 2007 8:22 AM  
**To:** Mike P. Gagel  
**Subject:** MEIA Response - 86607

Ref: 86607

Penny Tees, President  
British Columbia School Trustees Association  
[bcsta@bcsta.org](mailto:bcsta@bcsta.org)

Dear Ms. Tees:

Thank you for your letter of July 18, 2007, to the Honourable Claude Richmond, Minister of Employment and Income Assistance, regarding ministry policies for clients who are students. As Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for the Policy and Research Division, I am pleased to respond.

The ministry has conducted numerous analyses of the impacts of education on the welfare dependence of income assistance clients and, contrary to conventional wisdom, formal education has little impact on reducing welfare dependence for most clients. Studies found that Adult Basic Education actually increased income assistance dependency in the short-term, and had no long-term impacts.

Independent research such as that released by Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, a world-respected independent research group, found that formal education has no impact on the welfare dependency of income assistance clients.

The BC Employment and Assistance (BCEA) Program is an income and asset tested program of last resort and employable adult clients receiving income assistance are expected to participate in employment related activities for the purpose of achieving financial independence. Towards this goal, the ministry has a continuum of employment-related services whose aim is to help clients find sustainable employment as quickly as possible.

Although the ministry is primarily employment-focused, in some cases employable clients are able to participate in full-time unfunded studies but only if they are pre-approved by the ministry and the studies are part of their employment plan. In addition, employable clients may participate in part time or evening classes that do not interfere with their employment-related activities.

While clients with no employment obligations and persons with persistent multiple barriers need pre-approval by the ministry to participate in unfunded programs, the ministry takes into consideration that these clients do not have any employment obligations.

This ministry is also committed to the provincial government's goal to make

British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. As part of this commitment, ministry clients with the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) designation are able to attend school full or part-time with no affect on their eligibility for assistance. As well, clients under 19 years of age are required to have a plan focussed on high school completion.

Thank you again for writing. I appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts on this topic.

Sincerely,

Andrew Wharton  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance