

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

**ALBERTA – BRITISH COLUMBIA PROTOCOL FOR A PARTNERSHIP IN SUPPORT
OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER SPECIALIZED SERVICES TO
STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING executed on the 10th day of
Sept., 2004.

BETWEEN:

ALBERTA LEARNING

as represented by the Minister of Learning
(hereinafter called "Alberta")

and

BRITISH COLUMBIA MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

as represented by the Minister of Education
(hereinafter called "British Columbia")

WHEREAS Alberta and British Columbia (hereinafter called "the Provinces") have entered into a Protocol of Cooperation between the Government of Alberta and the Government of British Columbia;

AND WHEREAS Alberta and BC have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Co-operation and Collaboration on E-Learning;

AND WHEREAS the MOU on Co-operation and Collaboration on E-Learning provides for the negotiation of further technological and e-learning sub-agreements under its auspices;

AND WHEREAS this protocol falls under the auspices of the MOU on Co-operation and Collaboration on E-Learning and specifies a BC-AB partnership on assistive technology and specialized services to students with special needs;

AND WHEREAS the Provinces have previously agreed to explore potential partnerships regarding the purchase of technological equipment, resources and services for use in schools, activities that link well to and support the principles of the Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation and Collaboration on E-Learning;

AND WHEREAS the Provinces have agreed that a longer-term relationship has the potential to greatly improve operational efficiencies for both Provinces' educational systems by sharing resources;

AND WHEREAS the Provinces would be supporting the policies in each jurisdiction that promote the inclusion of students with special needs in the school system.

I. INTRODUCTION

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) defines a framework to enhance the availability of assistive technology and improve the delivery of other specialized services in Alberta and British Columbia. This will assist in providing systematic and equitable access to assistive technology and specialized services for students with special needs, and enable both provinces to develop strategies and partnerships aimed at enhancing these services.

II. GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE PROJECT

1. The Provinces' goal is to ensure that a high standard of service delivery for students with special needs is available, affordable, and accessible in Alberta and British Columbia: by creating operational efficiencies and cost savings in the acquisition and delivery of technological resources and provision of training in both Provinces; and by developing strategies and partnerships aimed at providing support for students and professionals who work with the students.

2. The Provinces agree that any future work or discussions regarding this Project will be guided by the following principles:

Accessibility and Visibility: The partnership, eligible resources and services will be accessible and visible.

Predictability and Sustainability: Staff and financial resources will be made available by the Provinces to focus on the importance of sustainable assistive technology services for students with special needs.

Cost Effectiveness: Through effective cost management of resources and services, financial savings will be realized.

Efficiency and Equitability: Sharing of services will promote the provision of efficient and equitable supports for students with special needs in both Provinces.

3. Staff and financial resources will be committed to providing assistive technology and specialized services to students with special needs based on the mandates of each province.
4. The Provinces will strive to identify additional opportunities to coordinate consulting services, and explore opportunities to collaborate on other aspects of service delivery for students with special needs, such as in the production of alternate format materials for students with visual impairments.

III. SPECIFIC AREAS OF CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION

Strategies and Planning

5. The Provinces, through Alberta's Learning Resources Centre (LRC) and Special Programs Branch (SPB), and British Columbia's Ministry of Education - Standards Department and the Special Education Technology – British Columbia (SET-BC) program, will cooperate in the development of strategies and business plans, in consultation with stakeholders, to establish priorities and allocation of resources.
 - a) The Provinces will develop a 5-year Strategy Plan that will act as the Project Business Plan; setting goals and proposing measurements.
 - b) The Provinces will meet to discuss possible partnerships to purchase specialized student equipment and software.
 - c) The Provinces will meet to discuss collaborative strategies and agreements to promote training for students, teaching assistants, and professionals in the use of assistive technology.
 - d) The Provinces will work toward providing consistent, sustainable service delivery, recognizing resource constraints.

Communications

6. The Provinces will identify opportunities to collaborate on provincial initiatives regarding students with special needs.
7. Recognizing the importance of delivering programs and services as efficiently and effectively as possible, the Provinces will develop and implement a comprehensive communications plan that provides clients and stakeholders with an understanding of the cooperative efforts associated with the MOU.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

8. The Provinces will implement the MOU through a working group responsible for the provision of assistive technology and specialized services to students with special needs. This working group will meet, as required, to identify:
 - a) Services, according to the needs of each Province
 - b) Program direction according to both common and unique policies of both provinces
 - c) Adequate staff according to the financial arrangements of each Province
 - d) Opportunities for other representatives to participate in elements of the partnership

- e) Updated information for progress reports to Ministries regarding the partnership.

Performance Measures

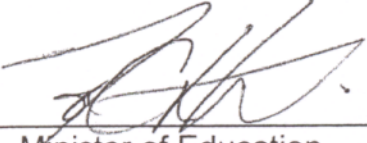
- 9. The Provinces recognize that there are major areas where success must be measured.
 - a) Report the impact of the Alberta/British Columbia partnership on assistive technology services and other specialized supports.
 - b) Evaluate the progress made in creating efficiencies, managing costs, increasing collaboration and seeking innovative ways to deliver the services provided to jurisdictions in the Provinces.
 - c) Report the degree to which this MOU leads to other collaborative initiatives.
- 10. Indicators will include improved access to assistive technology for school districts; better utilization of existing resources; and proficiency in the use of technology for students and professionals. Measurements tools may include:
 - a) Cost savings to government and school boards
 - b) Student achievement
 - c) Client satisfaction surveys
 - d) Information on the utilization of assistive technology

V. OTHER PROVISIONS

- 11. This Memorandum of Understanding does not create any contractual or other legal obligation to perform on either province. The Provinces will not be subject to any legal liability resulting from non-performance of any provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding.
- 12. Amendments to this Memorandum of Understanding require the written consent of the Provinces.
- 13. Either province may terminate the MOU for any reason upon three months advance notice in writing to the other Province.
- 14. This Memorandum of Understanding will terminate on March 31, 2009 unless the Provinces agree to an extension or it has been terminated under Clause V (13).

IN WITNESS WHEREOF THE UNDERSIGNED HAVE SIGNED THIS
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

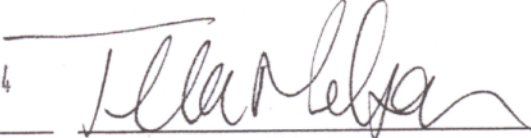
FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Minister of Education


SEP 10 2004

Date



Witness

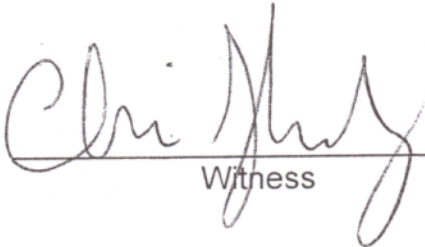
FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA



Minister of Learning

JUL 15 2004

Date



Witness
