

January 26, 2009

Chilliwack School District
BUDGET FORUM #1
January 22, 3:30-5:00pm Kipp Conference Centre

Summary of Table Discussions

Over the past 5 years, what might we consider our collective successes in supporting student learning?

- apprenticeship and trades program
- openness to work with community service providers to place programs in schools
- emphasis on early literacy and early learning programs
- offering schools of choice with a variety of programs (ie Fine Arts School, AVID, IB)
- Pilot at ADR – Shelter program
- collaborative structures throughout whole system
- conversation and consultation with partner groups
- early identification and early interventions
- integration of children with special needs
- job embedded professional development
- Accountability of school growth plans – data driven decision making
- attempting to create a respectful workplace for all staff, leads to a more positive learning environment
- safe schools anti-bullying, PBS/EBS
- opportunities for staff development
- work of the helping teachers
- connection to community groups – committees
- one-size doesn't fit all when allocating resources/staffing
- work around oral language – led to EDI improvements
- School Codes of Conduct

THEMES

- flexibility
- community connections
- early learning
- openness to new ideas/programs
- social responsibility
- collaboration/staff development
- movement toward data-driven decision making
- positive learning environments

Where do we need to continue to focus our resources? What work have we started and need to continue in order to achieve our goals for student success?

- early learning initiatives (Strong Start, Ready Set Learn, Gateway)
- critical to have early identification EDI
- focus early on language arts and math
- community partnerships
- parent involvement, family partnerships, expand on ways to support families, build relationships early
- apprenticeship program and other alternate programs. Partnerships with UFV
- preparing for post-secondary
- identify students at age 14 & 15 where their strengths lie – trades/academic
- choice for students, honour learning styles
- different ways for students to demonstrate their learning
- look at new technology and approaches in curriculum
- keep technology up to date
- tie technology to student interest
- make criteria clear – use examples
- collaboration time with teachers, EA's and support staff
- include all staff
- resources for EA's
- green programs, energy saving
- examine how we run the buses
- Health and safety and respect in the workplace
- communication
- custodians picking up garbage is a waste of time – kids need to be more socially responsible
- accountability and student ownership
- class size (grade 4)
- experiment with separating boys and girls
- bringing in parent helper
- community partnerships and maximize access to outside resource (eg drugs and alcohol)
- teachers as life long learners
- second teachers in specialty areas
- examine grade configuration
- poor transition from grade 9-10.
- look at grade configuration, specifically middle to secondary
- bullying teachers need to deal with it and address it head on.

THEMES

- early intervention
- assessing
- school community relationships
- efficient operations – energy, green programs
- creativity in programs (choices)
- priority of teacher time to student success (focus on the learner)

- technology

What are we doing now that is not supporting student success? What do we need to stop doing?

- teachers sometimes discourage students
- more attention needed for students with special needs
- effective use of technology
- stop spending money of food for staff (meetings)
- stop trying to get all students to fit the same mould – look at learning styles, emotional readiness, address uniqueness of learner
- stop grade promotion for students that have not completed grade level
- stop changing programs too quickly – focus on acquiring expertise
- too much emphasis on testing – need more on process of learning
- more support for unique learning styles
- too much upper/middle management
- stop school planning councils – time wasted on training
- stop having schedules, calendars dictate practice
- focus on flexible, individualized programs
- stop putting our least skilled staff with the most complex students
- stop having programs that are not sustainable over a long period of time
- too many ministry mandates at secondary (eg DPA)
- collective agreements can be a barrier
- stop the holding pattern, partial attendance for elementary behaviour kids – look at alternate programs
- stop reducing custodial time – dirty buildings = sick kids and staff
- stop pulling teachers out during instructional time for meetings
- stop “guest” speakers – it interferes with instructional time

THEMES

- Stop trying one-size-fits-all – need to address diversity of learners with diversity of instruction.
- Stop the confines of schedules, collective agreements – need flexibility

What needs will we have to address in the future if we are to achieve our aim of every student graduating with opportunities beyond graduation?

- access to more current technology
- move away from a one-size fits all model
- sustain collaboration, professional development, curriculum and respect piece
- have early testing to determine child's strengths, in particular for learning challenged students. Set them up for success
- retaining and recruiting staff as baby boomers retire (succession planning)
- determine why we have so many students dropping out
- better way of measuring the success of what we are doing
- split classes are challenging. Develop partnerships, grade-wide promotions – is this the best idea?
- more opportunities for different learners
- keep kids in school by connecting with their interests. Focus on the middle years. Provide many paths to graduation. Use technology as an instructional tool. Using rather than getting. Connect kids with technology – hands-on interactive learning in particular for adolescent males – single gender classes. Later start for adolescent students (not driven by bus schedules)
- co-op programs for all students (academic too)
- help students to see connection to what they are learning and their futures
- celebrate and speak out for what we do in public education
- allow work experience more than once during secondary school
- support families better networks between inter-ministerial agencies
- improve communication between all partners including community
- create a culture that supports respect, diversity, conversations
- more focus on middle school years with regard to prevention, crisis intervention
- basic support to students (like school supplies)
- look at success Apple Program, Bridges, Apprenticeship program and integrate into all areas.

THEMES

- individualized learning, diverse programming
- culture that encourages community, diversity, conversations, openness
- keep kids in school (meaningful learning)
- well trained staff that is committed to remaining
- address the current social needs of students and community

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Summary of Individual Interview Responses

Over the past 5 years, what might we consider our collective successes in supporting student learning?

- literacy (strong focus in early grades)
- literacy, very strong learning, writing too)
- classroom sizes stabilized and gotten smaller primary grades
- ability to work with community and other ministries with district administration and front-line level (teachers and counsellors).
- partnership @ CYC
- creativity – willingness to try new things – use of Community Link funds
- principals who work with community
- Fantastic alternative education programs
- approachable school board & superintendent
- YPP and REAL programs, school-based prevention workers, SWIS
- offering apprenticeship program
- identifying learning styles
- some community partnerships
- allowing more parent participation & input
- offering alternatives/electives (more choices)
- wide range of clubs & extra-curricular activities for children
- variety of different field trips
- some prevention programs now in schools
- community partnerships developed with service providers (new programs in schools)
- school district executive open to work with community organizations to provide resources (additional) for children and their families
- out of the “box” programs such as Young Parent (YPP) and REAL.
- neighbourhood hubs in schools (Central elementary, Watson & McCammon)
- emphasis on early learning
- support when young
- knowing how more support is needed for First Nations students
- trades and programs available
- arts and music programs
- more inclusion of parents
- early literacy program
- gateway program
- budget forums when they include others for input (ie students, parents & teachers)
- Support for addressing special need students and the early intervention programs

- initiatives to improve teaching practice with professional days.
- literacy programs as well as early learning program to help intervene with problems that might occur with students later.
- develop physical education program further with such things as daily physical activity and mandatory physical activity for graduation
- giving students other options such as art and drama.
- looking more at diversity
- early intervention programs
- more support for behaviour
- increase in funding for EA's
- Ready Set Learn, Strong Start, PALS
- building relationships with parents
- program at ADR
- pilot project full day K at Strathcona
- focus on adult learning communities
- collaboration time
- more open diversified attitude
- attempting to create a respectful environment among staff
- partnerships with UFV
- collaboration time
- early intervention pilots
- support with youth workers for at-risk students
- using data to drive decisions
 - Using good EBS strategies – functional behaviour issues
- flexibility with grant funding (Community Link) is meeting basic needs
- school mottos
- bringing in traditional schools (uniforms)
- school spirit
- measuring success – when we have a focus on reading, writing and math
- helping teachers have played a huge role in improving teacher practice in middle schools
 - smart reading
 - the Apple Program meets needs of students
 - the Shelter program at middle schools
 - integration of special need students
 - focus on at-risk students
 - expanding the number of on-line courses
 - partnerships that have been developed with the community
 - early learning
 - teacher training
 - collaboration time
 - district support improved
 - leadership from students, preparing for opportunities outside of schools
 - counselors at a high school for students in need
 - teachers have a positive attitude.
 - opportunity to learn by doing – the importance of school

- freedom of learning, choices, differentiated instruction
- the opportunity to demonstrate understanding in a variety of ways
- job embedded professional development
- collaboration
- vertical integration
- early learning & oral language
- primary literacy
- collective change in philosophy of learning
- the collective movement towards a learning/professional development model that changes the way we think about student achievement and learning
- improved collaborative work resulting in effective change
- more positive outlook and responses from those working within the school system
- initiatives that address vulnerable student needs
- early learning
- instructional practice
- on-line learning
- more attention to communication and learning for all staff, leaders & students
- introduction of multi-formats for learning
- more awareness of surveys and evidence and put more support into areas that lack resources (reading)
- making cohesion for staff (improved communication)
- looking at areas that need attention then follow-up
- early learning initiatives
- early identification and interventions
- supported educational initiatives with resources
- safe schools anti-bullying
- early learning
- collaborative initiatives
- Ready set Learn
- some collaborative initiatives need to be more job specific
- specific training for EAs (diabetic, autism, etc)
- more technology, more labs, more teacher have computers
- apprenticeship program
- talking tables
- literacy/numeracy programs consistency
- technology and apprenticeships
- expansion of distance education
- Alternative schools – social services
- early education, head start
- full day kindergarten for Aboriginal children
- talking tables
- connecting with UFV trades programs
- more kids going to university
- collaboration – pulling together support services
- conversation/consultation with partner groups
- leadership meetings – more aware of each other's jobs

- communication is more open
- maintain programs which are working well (literacy and numeracy)
- communication and collaboration
- offer graduation programs that fit the student (apprenticeship, etc.)
- some of processes around SPC's has been successful, some not
- Math Programs, helping teachers, talks to all teachers, knows what's working and what's not
- partnership with UFV, welding, trades programs
- Aboriginal programs
- collaborative time
- relationships with partner groups
- scholarship opportunities
- support from school board staff (central office)
- professional workshops
- literacy; good strides at the primary level and with Smart Reading at intermediate
- pre school screening
- oral language – leading to reading comprehension
- numeracy – first steps in Math, Math Makes Sense
- more collaborative structures throughout entire organization
- huge strides in technology, infrastructure development
- leadership learning
- respect in the workplace training
- infrastructure supporting the dispatch of casual staff
- processes for the recruitment of staff
- alternate programs
- oral language
- improvement of relationships with the Board

Where do we need to continue to focus our resources? What work have we started and need to continue in order to achieve our goals for student success?

- collaboration on all fronts
- early learning
- effort of curriculum department
- alternate programs presented to SB
- respect in the workplace
- absence management and dispatch of casual employees
- focus grade 4's to 9 at-risk
- focus on literacy & numeracy (tackle on their own)
- tie technology with kids where are interested and engaged
- math helping teachers
- collaboration and literacy
- continue but do more drug and alcohol programs
- chronic under achievers. Providing more support to kids that need LA. Expanding our resource base with technology to help kids where they are at. Continue with supporting work of EA's.
- Focus resources on student learning and district goals. Continue collaboration time and make that a priority. Continue to investigate new and different ways of doing things. Variety is a good thing. One size fits all isn't good. Non-judgmental of new ideas
- Chronically low achievers. Resources at the primary – continue. Early intervention program. Better model for EA's possibly resource room. Look at elementary behaviour kids.
- We also need to support our families. We have a major disconnect between elementary and senior high and I believe that is directly related to poor home environments. Especially during a child's developmental years of middle school. Therefore to continue and build on programs that get families being families such as Strong Start, Ready Set Learn, and PALS, etc to build family skills and supporting them.
- Students learning (focus) resources into classes for those students who are stuck. Not all kids can conform to regular classes. We need to provide opportunities to be successful. Continue focus on early intervention.
- Early learning we have been work on alternate education focus on different electives, learning assistance to help smaller classes.
- Early intervention data collection will help kids at –risk before kindergarten.
- community partnerships
- Our support for EA work so that they can be effective
- collaboration time needs to continue
- continue learning of training to help staff with students
- especially with technology and students who are not able. We need to help staff with their expertise and desire to use technology
- Focus on early learning
- kids follow attributes as being vulnerable
- focus on programs like pre-kindergarten, elementary learning, not just looking at academic success, but social success as well.
- We need to work with intermediate and middle schools

- focus on language arts and math
- focus on early learning, find new experiences for them to learn
- continue to encourage class discussion and conversation
- teachers need to learn about new things too
- there should be more tutoring. More teachers should stay later to offer help. There should be more opportunities that involve more students. Teachers should kindly encourage students to succeed without a negative attitude.
- there should be more opportunities to help a struggling student to graduate. There needs to be choice all the time in order to keep students wanting to learn, they do not choose to learn, show them benefits to having the knowledge.
- continue curriculum support (ie professional development, collaboration work addressing diversity in learning styles)
- on student learning – more teachers, more resource room programs, continue work experience program and apprenticeship programs not all students are strong academically.
- resources need to be focused directly on student learning in the classroom (ie staffing, EA's)
- early learning initiatives
- continue with vertical articulation
- collaboration time
- early learning
- address diversity in learning styles
- Support for students who struggle
- apprenticeship & work experience
- continue with collaboration time
- early learning, engaging young children and parents in non-threatening, welcoming places
- attitude of family learning
- extreme behaviours (social-emotional) good counselors but need more community partnerships (mental health, youth services)
- expand on PAC and parenting courses
- prevention – drugs & alcohol, tobacco
- partnering with community (service clubs, Rotary, Optimists)
- smoking awareness for teens (middle school)
- life skills programs
- alternate education paths for kids with different learning styles (trades, apprenticeship)
- classroom, LA, counseling, drug & alcohol counselors for CSS & other schools
- early years literacy
- program pathways (to address range of student ability)
- continue partnership with community agencies and with other funders
- community development approach to reaching goals
- partnership at governance and administrative levels all the way to hands-on front-line level.
- strong efforts in support services (maintenance, energy saving, green programs)
- communication (all levels)
- respect in the workplace

- Health & Safety
- collaboration time, technology, early intervention, Strong Start, alternate education, apprenticeship programs (school based and district based)
- opening conversation a difficult tasks – share ideas, opinions from a variety of sources and perspectives
- focus on numeracy and literacy
- we need to continue programs that are actually working (don't change for the sake of change).
- don't assume that what worked in the past will continue to work
- continue to find ways to engage at-risk kids in grade 10
- consider transitions between grade 9 & 10
- we need to examine and re-examine grade configuration as a factor in the dramatic drop out rate from grade 9 to 10. Should middle school be grades 6-8?
- continue with collaboration, professional days,
- continue full-day Aboriginal kindergarten
- district based and school based alternate education programs
- students, shelter programs in middle schools, program at secondary school (CSSS) that no student will fail
- Early learning, extra attention on EDI results, targeting resources for pre-kindergarten, talking tables, Strong Start, intensity working with young kids at-risk slowing putting resources into 4, 5 & 6. Smart learning.
- secondary level continue to develop wide range of electives (fine arts, advanced placement) of programs for wide range of kids @ middle school level (shelter program) – need to continue and expand to all middle schools
- challenging all kids, making schools work – more efficiently, reduce classroom sizes to reduce stress in classrooms both for kids & teachers
- grade 4 is when class sizes grow, experience with this. Also, experiment with same sex core courses. Separate boys from girls, see what happens with attention and success

What are we doing now that is not supporting student success? What do we need to stop doing?

- stop changing programs so often (ie math)
- too much focus on getting technology and not enough on using it
- stop cutting services to schools (building services)
- stop assuming that what we've done in the past will work forever
- stop limiting school-based budgets
- not enough resources going to physical operations (ie maintenance, custodial)
- we aim for average not excellent
- elementary, read, write, math proficiency – children must be able to read
- stress literacy & numeracy (take stress off social studies, science, etc)
- stop using outdated processes – increase areas around infrastructure
- SPC – too much time, stop the training
- look at programs not giving the biggest bang for the buck
- too many different programs at different schools (try to have a small based of programs that all schools can use)
- too many upper/middle management
- too much management
- stop programs prior to grade 4 that are not based on literacy and numeracy, need the basics first, the rest will come easier!
- utilizing technology – not efficient
 - classroom component for students
 - technology for teachers – better understanding their class
- using data to better inform
- on-line programs aren't helping, get rid of them -people complete them and take credit
- weight on testing and exams too much emphasis – day to day work counts more
- individual learning styles not used enough – more support for individual
- special needs formula does work
- I feel we are not looking at how different kids learn and really work to teach effectively. Whether it's by technology, more individualized support or just getting them more involved in their own education.
- Cutting back too drastically on custodian time. Absences not filled adequately – sick kids, sick staff. Don't maintain healthy learning environments when we have too many old, moldy, dirty, portables.
- stop huge battery of testing that does not generate support but only duplicates what teachers already know
- We need to stop trying to make one-size fits all. Throwing more resources without proper assessment of needs. We are not diversifying enough to meet student needs – need to think outside the box (eg, gender classrooms). We need to stop concentrating on the very low average students while ignoring average and above average especially at the elementary level. Start second day too early to optimize learning
- We are putting our least skilled staff with the most complex students – stop!
- pigeon holing students – putting square pegs in a round hole
- identifying learning styles and adjust teaching to suit style (set up child for success) especially when students constantly fails a course

- stop trying to get each child to fit the same mold
- more direct support in school (ie mental health)
- family support – some parents not ready to help children learn
- stop treating all students as if they are ready to learn
- stop ignoring emotional aspect of learning
- not making room for students who learn outside traditional learning styles (focus issues)
- not supporting student success
- get technology organized
- stop hiring people for the Board office
- effective use and delivery of technology
- budget things too much red tape (site based!)
- more variety for diverse needs of kids needs to be encouraged
- taken away ability for year-round schooling
- Distance education (time limits)
- struggling behaviour students – teachers send to someone else
- not supporting student success
- not going above and beyond the doing extra “not in the contract not done” (intramurals)
- needs to be more community building
- we need a behaviour class for really severe behaviour kids @ elementary level
- communication
- training of all staff
- core courses our standard by elective choice courses
- focus on all students not just top performing students
- flexibility not present being constrained by schedule & calendar
- more flexible student focused programs
- systems built around funding not necessarily what is good for kids
- funding not allowing on-line courses
- transition from intermediate to middle – not sure
- programs that are not sustainable (staff/resources) over the long term (always a note for more staff)
- kids get sick, more efficient less inefficient custodian
- stop mandating activities, sometimes a good idea can't be implemented within a limited school day
- aboriginal/ESL/special needs students need more support
- more coordination, involve parents more, uniqueness of students (they are all different)
- Continue to make students engaged
- purpose behind with resources we're using
- Aboriginal, disconnected
- special education (more attention/more individuality)
- More ESL student programs
- no discouraging students
- more special need attention
- no avoiding students while they need help
- treat as if all students have same level
- stop grade wide promotions
- excessive “feeding” of staff

- stop talking & start doing
- spreading staff time too thin – focus the work
- too much money spent on food for staff
- too many demands on staff time
- too many meetings
- some meetings are not relevant to all staff
- stop taking instructional time away from students (meetings, in-service, etc should be outside the instructional day)
- do what the research tells us regarding early learning, adolescent learning, adult learning, year-round schooling, wellness, etc.
- too many restrictions on good teaching practice – collective agreements (too many part-time positions), school calendars, timetables.

What needs will we have to address in the future if we are to achieve our aim of every student graduating with opportunities beyond graduation?

- family support; family development; child development
- address and identify at an earlier stage vulnerable and developmental assessments
- more life skills, resume writing, coaching/job interview skills
- teach them how to become independent
- more focus on the middle school years from prevention to crisis
- intervention for at-risk youth
- increase creativity into what graduation looks like – trades, not necessarily a dogwood
- partnering with community members (community services, mentoring/volunteering, accessing, programs within the district)
- need to expand our apprenticeship program
- offer students multiple exit points (trades, university)
- allow students to graduate on a completion program not necessarily a dogwood
- intervention and support
- early identification to allow intervention/support to occur
- increase learning assistance without stigmatizing
- be more flexible and focus on a child's strengths
- early testing to determine what "gifts" a child does have
- allow work experience opportunities more than once during the school year
- provide quality teachers with quality tools
- encourage evaluations of teachers by parents and students
- what are employment needs
- do we prepare for employment
- need to focus on work and work ethic
- giving students focus in middle years
- diversity of program no just about university
- technology
- keep literacy initiatives in middle and secondary grades
- keep children engaged and interested
- more courses at high school for a broader range of interests
- keep them interested!
- need to address employment needs
- need to focus on middle years
- need to keep kids interested
- focus on middle years
- use of technology
- students need access to quality teachers/instruction
- students need access to more current technology and other resources
- address severe learning disabilities and behaviours – current formula needs to be fixed
- we need to allow students to progress at their own pace - - we've changes attitudes towards these kids
- the use of technology to support learning, FVDES
- more communication between parents, school, students
- need to address school capacity

- continue emphasis on trades and careers
- need to build leadership capacity
- improvements in utilizing technology to inform and improve learning
- many of our students have social emotional concerns and vulnerability, increased collaboration with community partners (can't meet academic goals without it)
- early learning, readiness is critical in social responsibility
- more options for different kinds of learners
- more visible opportunities for post-secondary (scholarships, entrance into college)
- more one-one help between students and teachers
- programs encouraging students to enter the community (expand work experience)
- more ways to engage every student
- scholarship opportunities for students after graduation
- significant increased/appropriate support for:
 1. Aboriginal learners
 2. Cognitively able special needs students
 3. Intermediate middle school literacy teachers
 4. Low socio-economic families and their children
 5. Every student as a learner with a unique learning style/modality/profile
- need way of measuring success of what we're already doing (shelter program – wonderful but what happens when the teacher leavers? Sustainability of things we're doing?)
- need challenges for “bright” kids to keep them interested
- enrichment program to give more drive, competition
- continue to develop programs/courses for a variety of learners at secondary to keep them in school and a better job with transitions
- services for at-risk kids (drug and alcohol, mental health, etc)
- alternate programs
- reading experts at middle school – not just teaching a subject but teaching how to read
- continue to work at early intervention strategies (kindergarten screening, full day kindergarten programs) but push these strategies into intermediate – why the drop-off from grade 4 to 7? Re-think the role of 4-6 teachers (and 7-9) move away from subject-based teaching – further implement SMART learning approach.
- move way from on-sized fits all model
- needs assessment must be more individualized
- Each IEP student needs be evaluated on their own, can't assume the needs of a student based on a ministry category, offer resources that fit the student rather than the category
- need to diversify and offer more hands-on learning at the secondary level
- consider single gender classes
- millennium students are more diverse than ever
- mental illness, social and emotional issues,
- inter-ministerial dialogue to support parents
- needs of adolescents (eg a later start to school days) based on research
- support students with breakfast/lunch programs, supply basic school supplies to off-set eliminate costs for parents and allow students to all feel equal and prepared
- diversity, diversity, diversity but beyond just the ministry categorization of students with special needs.

- need to find better ways to consult and communicate – have the difficult conversations with each other, parents and students
- need to sustain momentum of our programs – collaboration, professional development
- need to support employees through difficulties
- continue to provide professional development and in-services programs
- how do we use the support services budget (custodians, maintenance, etc.) Are we using the money the most efficient way
- revamp job descriptions
- accountability
- respect for all levels and what they do
- address the issues of privatization of education – the importance of public education
- address the on-line learning programs as a feature of public education
- continue to work with partner groups to speak as one voice for public education
- maintaining students interest in going to and remaining at school
- maintain literacy and numeracy programs – technology is fine but basic skills are important
- classes to prepare students for life as an adult – bosses don't give second, 3, 4 & 5 chances – social skills, life skills, budgets, family planning.
- different abilities and needs of each learner and ability to adapt to each learner (various times, non sequential, formats, paper, electronic, not always bricks & mortar)
- technology – exposes students and allows to become literate about technology
- better job of working with students which are challenged system wide, families – need to do more parents classes
- define success differently
- continue to focus on early assessments
- better use of educational technology
- recruiting qualified and retaining staff as baby boomers retire
- early intervention, engage parents in student learning
- kids learn differently
- work experience, apprenticeship programs
- parent/family support of student learning
- improve advocacy of different learning styles
- inspiring hope in all students despite obstacles
- making sure every child is heard
- more computer training, special education that could be required to help them learn
- why do we have so many kids dropping out?
- more support for kids with learning disabilities
- more diversified curriculum to meet varied needs
- look at diversity within our programs
- allow our students to get their credits differently
- support our families, especially at-risk families (programs like PALS, Ready Set Learn, Strong Start) develop relationships between school and home
- behaviour kids – how do we support families at-risk and vulnerable
- have teachers appreciate the importance of relationships between teachers & parents
- students deserve good instruction
- more flexibility with staff to have open conversations about things

- develop a culture that is open to a variety of ways of doing things (judging but not judgmental)
- provide opportunities for dialogue so that we can learn from each other
- search out solutions that are unique and varied. Some may go against ministry guidelines – experiment