

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23 – BOARD COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Finance and Legal Committee DATE: April 16, 2008

CHAIRPERSON: Trustee A. Hunt-Binkley STAFF CONTACT: L. Paul, Secretary-Treasurer
E. Sadlowski, Director of Finance

Attendees:

Trustee A. Hunt-Binkley (Chairperson)
Trustee R. Cacchioni (Committee Member)
Trustee C. Wiebe (Committee Member)
Trustee M. Baxter
Trustee W. Horning
Trustee S. Nicholl
Trustee G. Scanlan

Staff:
E. Sadlowski, Director of Finance
L. Paul, Secretary-Treasurer
M. Roberts, Superintendent
H. Gloster, Assistant Superintendent
M. Essler, Executive Assistant (Recorder)

Partner Group Representation:

COPAC Gail Given, Executive Member
COTA Tom Potts, President
COPVPA Sandra Sellick, Executive Member
CUPE Ryan Miller, Transportation Steward
DSC K.J. Hanson, Executive Member

Discussion/Action Items

1. 2008/2009 District Budget Recommendations

The Superintendent reviewed the 2008/2009 District Budget Recommendations Memo dated April 8, 2008. The Ministry operating grant allocation to School District No. 23 for the 2008/2009 school year has been raised by approximately \$2.3 million. The cost to continue with the current programs, personnel, resources and materials would require \$4.4 million in addition to the \$2.3 million. Consequently, in order to achieve a balanced budget for the 2008/2009 school year, the School District will have to scale back or eliminate a number of programs, resources, positions and purchases in the amount of \$4,405,000.

The Superintendent reviewed the 2007/2008 budget items recommended for continuation in the 2008/2009 budget, as well as a listing of specific budget allocations/additions/initiatives currently taken from existing funding sources which were recommended for continuation. A further review was provided of the budget comparison of 2007/2008 and 2008/2009.

An overview was provided of the recommended expense reductions of the specific services or positions identified for elimination through the internal consultation process. The consultation process included input received from the public, partner groups, senior staff and administration. The specific services or positions recommended for elimination totals \$245,000. The remaining \$4,160,000 reduction is recommended through a percentage expense reduction by six listed District departments. The expense reductions by Departments would be recommended to the Superintendent by the Director of the department or Principal of the school. The Directors and Principals would report back to the Superintendent and the Superintendent would provide the Board a report on May 28, 2008 outlining each Department reduction plan for approval. There is a 2.4% reduction in the allocation to Technology/Learning Center, Student Support Services (non-targeted dollars), District Based Administration and Services and Operations. The reduction to elementary schools is at 1.5% or \$700,000. As there are strict elementary class size requirements to be adhered to and as the

elementary class size averages are very close to the maximums, there is very little room for reductions at the elementary level other than the reduction/elimination of non-enrolling teachers such as librarians. The reduction at middle/secondary schools is approximately 4.2%, or \$2,250,000, as there is more room for movement towards the secondary maximum for class size average of 30 students. The reduction in funding to Student Support Services is more complicated as the funding for special education is received in two forms. A portion of the funding is from targeted funding and a portion from the general K-12 budget. As the Ministry has held back \$85 million for mid-year funding, it is possible that a further amount could be received mid-year next year for special education. As the staffing for 2008/2009 commenced on April 1, 2008, the \$700,000 from elementary school based funding and \$2,250,000 from middle/secondary school based funding has already been held back from schools.

The Committee discussed the impact of positions/programs added in the budget process last year, including the funding for the reinstatement of the Local Specialists Associations. Tom Potts, President, COTA, advised that the reinstatement of the LSA has revitalized and increased enthusiasm of teachers.

The Committee discussed the recommendation for the elimination of the District Traffic Safety Officer position and the elimination of the District Communications Officer position.

Tom Potts, President, COTA, requested clarification from the Superintendent on the reduction of funding to schools which could possibly result in a decrease in the number of teachers in the District. The Superintendent confirmed that through declining enrolment there will be the elimination of approximately 10 teaching positions totaling \$800,000. The Superintendent confirmed there would also be approximately 25-30 fewer teachers in the District in 2008/2009 due to budget constraints. There will be no teacher lay-offs as the reduction in positions would be through attrition.

The Committee discussed the two week spring break period. In the 2007/2008 school year, \$40,000 was budgeted for use by schools for clerical assistance during the two week spring break. During spring break of 2008, approximately \$15,000 was accessed by schools for clerical assistance.

The Committee discussed employee recruitment, the Achieving a Necessary Future program, the District Health Promotion Worker (teacher) position, Graduation Coordinator position, transportation, and the comparison of teacher staffing levels to Principal and Vice-Principal positions.

The Committee reviewed the supplemental information provided by the Director of Finance which provided clarification on budget items, including the iLearn Program. The Superintendent provided information on the sustainability of the iLearn Program.

In response to a Trustee query from Trustee Wiebe, the Secretary-Treasurer provided information to the Committee on the savings to the District in the transition of the business corporation from active to dormant. The Secretary-Treasurer advised that after discussions with the School Protection Plan and the auditors, it is possible to make the business corporation dormant. There would be a possible savings of approximately \$35,000 to \$50,000.

Outcome:

THAT the Finance and Legal Committee forward to the Board a recommendation that the Board adopt the Preliminary 2008/2009 School District Budget, including the specific budget additions and reductions, as amended at the April 16, 2008 Finance and Legal Committee Meeting as follows:

- **Removal of the reduction in funding to support optional social justice programming in the amount of \$8,000 from the recommended expense reductions in specified areas.**
- **Reduce the spring break allocation for clerical staff to \$20,000.**
- **The Superintendent include in his budget recommendations the financial implications of moving the Business Corporation from active to dormant.**

Committee Correspondence

Received: District Health Promoting Schools Committee regarding District Health Promoting Schools Coordinator

Recommendations/Referrals to the Board/Coordinating Committee/Other Committees

Referrals to the Board:

2008/2009 District Budget Recommendations – *April 23, 2008*

Items for Future Finance and Legal Committee Meetings

Director of Technology and Education Services – Contractual Status with Ministry of Education regarding BCeSIS – *May 2008*

Investment Review for School District 23 by Cairy Holtby of Dominion Securities - *Future*

Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, May 21, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. at School Board Office

Wednesday, June 18, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at School Board Office

Questions – Please Contact:

Anna Hunt-Binkley, Chairperson

Phone: (250) 766-5690

Larry Paul, Secretary-Treasurer

Phone: (250) 470-3216

email: lpaul@sd23.bc.ca

Eileen Sadlowski, Director of Finance

Phone: (250) 470-3224

email: esadlows@sd23.bc.ca

Anna Hunt-Binkley, Chairperson