

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23 – BOARD COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Finance and Legal Committee DATE: February 20, 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 G. Scanlan

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

Partner Group Representation:

COPAC Gail Given, Executive Member
COTA Tom Potts, President
COPVPA No representative
CUPE Leanne Louie, Secretary-Treasurer
DSC No representative

Agenda

Add Information Item 7.3 – Throne Speech - Report from Director of Finance

Recognition/Presentations/Delegations

Introduction:

Cairy Holtby, B.A., CIM, RBC Dominion Securities

Trustee Hunt-Binkley, Chairperson, introduced Cairy Holtby of Dominion Securities. Cairy provided the Committee with a folder “Investment Review for School District 23”. This portfolio contains a snapshot of School District No. 23’s current investments. Cairy indicated this is a draft investment policy for the Committee’s review and would like to schedule a review of the portfolio once per year.

Outcome:

That a full review of the Investment Review for School District 23, by Cairy Holtby of Dominion Securities, be added to a future Public Finance and Legal Committee Meeting.

Presentation:

Special Education Budget and Programming

Presenter: Joanne Poole, Advisory Council for Exceptional Students (ACES)
Joanne Poole, on behalf of the Advisory Council for Exceptional Students (ACES), provided to the Committee a PowerPoint presentation titled “Special Education Programming and Funding”. In their PowerPoint presentation, the ACES Council requested that “special education funding and programs be of highest priority”. Also provided to the Committee members was a folder containing samples of information pamphlets that ACES has been working on and distributing to parents.

Public Question/Comment Period

Tom Potts, President, C.O.T.A.

Mr. Potts reviewed the COTA Budget Request 2008/09, attached to the Public Board Meeting Agenda for February 20, 2008. The three priorities of COTA for the 2008/09 school year are class composition, mentorship for new teachers and COTA Social Justice Initiatives.

The Committee discussed the challenges of class size composition situations. COTA is requesting that the Board set aside additional monies to be used specifically to provide focused assistance in teaching situations that present the most serious challenges as determined through joint consultation between the COTA and district staff.

Mr. Potts reviewed the COTA request for an allocation of \$250,000.00 to implement a revised mentorship program to aid in the recruitment and retention of the significant and increasing number of new teachers coming into the District.

Mr. Potts indicated with the \$18,000.00 the Board committed to Social Justice last year two student conferences were offered: Care and Make It Fair and SCOPE (Students Creating Opportunities to Promote Equality). With an additional one-time grant from BCTF an additional conference was added: FIT (Fighting Injustice Together). As this grant from BCTF was a one-time grant only, the COTA is requesting a further \$9,000.00 to the COTA Social Justice Program to enable the continuance of the FIT conference.

Jacqui Sproule, Chairperson, ACES

Jacqui Sproule requested clarification from the Chairperson that the presentation provided earlier in the meeting was sufficient for the budget submission on behalf of ACES.

The Chairperson confirmed that the presentation provided by ACES at the February 20, 2008 Public Finance and Legal Committee meeting was sufficient to be considered a budget submission from ACES.

Discussion/Action Items

1. Amended Annual Budget 2007/2008

(attachment)

Eileen Sadlowski, Director of Finance, reviewed the 2007/2008 Amended Annual Budget Executive Summary of revenue and expenses. The amended budget is the actual staffing and operations for schools based on September enrolment and staffing. The revenue from the Ministry of Education Operating Grant is \$154,014,869 which includes 20,965.562 School Age FTE (20,866.8125 regular enrolment and 98.75 Distributed Learning FTE), and unique needs funding of 268.0 ESL FTE, 1820.5 Aboriginal Education FTE, 731.0 Level 1, 2 and 3 Special Education FTE and 32.5625 Adult FTE. The Director of Finance stated there was an increase this year in miscellaneous revenue including multiple special purpose grants (i.e. Success By 6, Pine Beetle Grants and the District Literacy Plan). One additional expenditure item is for \$75,000.00 to cover the lease and set up costs for the Rutland Storefront School, which the Board approved in September of 2007.

The Director of Finance responded to questions regarding Federal Grants, rentals and leases, student transportation and ESL salaries. The Secretary-Treasurer provided an overview to the Committee on the International Education Program staffing and resources. The break even point for the International Education Program is 80 students. The goal for this program is 100 students for next year.

Outcome:

The Amended Annual Budget 2007/2008, as presented at the February 20, 2008 Public Finance and Legal Committee Meeting, be forwarded to the Board for approval.

2. Update of Appeals Bylaw and Policy
(attachment)

The Secretary-Treasurer confirmed that effective March 3, 2008 amendments to Section 11 of the *School Act* and Appeals Regulation came into effect. Accordingly the Secretary-Treasurer attended two meetings held by the Ministry of Education to review amendments required to Appeals Bylaws and Policies. The amendments to Section 11 contain an additional level of appeal for parents should they not obtain an acceptable resolution at the School District level. Parents will have the ability to appeal, under limited circumstances, to a Superintendent of Achievement. The draft amended Bylaw and Policy reflects these extra procedures, expectations and processes for parents.

The Secretary-Treasurer reviewed the recommended changes to the Bylaw and Policy. The Committee suggested amendments to the Bylaw and Policy.

Outcome:

The Finance and Legal Committee forward the amended Bylaw No. 5 Appeals Procedure and the amended Policy 460 – Appeals Bylaw, as presented and amended at the February 20, 2008 Public Finance and Legal Committee Meeting, to the Board of Education for approval.

Information Items

1. Review of 2008/2009 Budget Survey Results
(attachment)

The Director of Finance advised that 81 responses were received to the 2008/2009 Budget Survey. 70 responses were completed online and 11 responses were mailed in. This budget survey was an opportunity to voice opinions as to where the School District should spend more and where to spend less. All responses will be provided to the Superintendent for consideration in the budget recommendations. Of the 70 responses completed online, 52% were from parents, 37% from staff and 10% from community members. Trustee Wiebe referred to the budget consultation process for the Regional District of South Okanagan where questions are asked how important items are to the responder and how the Regional District is performing in these areas. Trustee Wiebe will provide a copy of the survey to the Director of Finance. In a response to a query from Leanne Louie, CUPE, the Chairperson confirmed that the Aboriginal Education Committee will be invited to the Overview of the School District Finances and Budget Development Process which is held every January.

2. Review of Funding Changes Fall 2007
(attachment)

The Director of Finance reviewed the Funding Changes Fall 2007. The estimated shortfall due to these changes is \$1,800,000.00.

3. Throne Speech – Report from Director of Finance

The Block Amount for 2008/09 will be the same as outlined in the 2007/08 Operating Budget Manual at \$4.467 billion. This is an increase of \$122 million which almost covers the salary increases owing for the school year so there is no additional funding for other cost pressures or new initiatives.

There is no funding provided to School Districts for the carbon neutral initiative.

Pay Equity, CommunityLink, Provincial Resource Programs and AFG funding will continue as in the past.

The Block will continue to need to cover the February and May Distance Learning enrolment counts and February special education counts.

Allocations to School Districts should be received on or before March 15, 2008 (likely March 14th, 2008).

StrongStart funding has increased and will continue to be funded outside of the Block. There is budget to cover the continuation of operating funding for ongoing centres and start up and operating funding for new centers.

The Ministry expects Distance Learning enrolment and budget pressures to increase by 10% which needs to be funded from within the Block.

Funding by course for grades 10 to 12 will continue as will the discontinuation of a funding allocation for GAAP, and all enrolment definitions will be the same as the final 2007/08 allocations.

Also, the funds from the Enrolment and Capacity Factor Grant will be discontinued.

Committee Correspondence

1. Letter from the Board to The Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education, regarding Record Surpluses

(attachment)

At the November 21, 2007 Public Finance and Legal Committee Meeting, the Committee made a recommendation to the Board that the Board write a letter of clarification to the Minister of Education regarding the Ministry's interpretation of School District surpluses.

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

Referrals to the Board:

Amended Annual Budget 2007/2008 – *February 27, 2008*

Update of Appeals Bylaw and Policy – *March 12, 2008*

Items for Future Finance and Legal Committee Meetings

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

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

Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, April 2, 2008 at 2:30 p.m. at School Board Office

Wednesday, April 16, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at School Board Office

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:

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Anna Hunt-Binkley, Chairperson