

**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
CENTRAL OKANAGAN – SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23**

CHAIRPERSON'S ANNUAL REPORT – December 8, 2010

With **22,000 students** and more than **2,500 staff members** associated with our **42 schools**, the Central Okanagan School District is a large and complex organization. With an **operating budget of nearly \$180 million** and a **capital budget of \$8 million**, we are the largest single employer within the immediate area, and we contribute greatly to the local economy. As the 6th largest school district in the province, we are also one of the very few that continues to sustain its enrolment, mostly as a result of in-migration into the area.

Each year the Chairperson of the Board of Education provides an **Annual Report** to the District and larger community on the accomplishments of the previous year. Once again over the past 12 months, our District has experienced a number of challenges and significant change. Despite these circumstances, there have also been significant accomplishments worthy of note.

The **challenges** have come to us in a variety of forms, not the least of which have related to our **budget**. We have now experienced three consecutive years of **budget shortfalls**, now totalling **\$12.1 million dollars**, which has made it difficult to maintain programs and services in the District. For the current operating year, for example, we have been dealing with a shortfall of **\$4.7 million**.

The largest systemic **change** we have been dealing with has been the introduction of **Full Day Kindergarten**. We were in a position to offer the program at 21 of our 30 elementary schools starting this year, which represents 60% of enrolment. However, with the full day program becoming universal in 2011-2012, the District has been challenged to prepare for the addition of another 300 'full time equivalent' students. At the same time, the popularity of the French Immersion Program, as documented in last June's program review, resulted in the necessity for the Board to consider plans for accommodating the increase in demand in the future. As part of this same discussion, the suggestion of moving grade 7's in both Lake Country and the Mission areas of Kelowna into their neighbourhood high schools, resulted in extensive public consultation. The Board intends to finalize its decisions regarding all three

topics – **Full Day K, French Immersion and Grade 7's at its public meeting on January 12, 2011.**

Despite this amount of change and the number of challenges we have faced, I am pleased to report that our District continues to make good progress toward its goals. Our Board has continued to place the interests of our students as its number one priority, and it continues to focus on maintaining the integrity of our classrooms and schools. Our committee structure also provides an opportunity for all partner groups to provide input into Board decisions.

The Board established **3 major goals** to work on over the previous year - to improve the **Graduation Rate**, and to enhance student achievement in the areas of both **Literacy** and **Numeracy**.

A major accomplishment during this time was the increase of our **Graduation Rate** by another two percentage points to **85%**. This continues a trend line that has been on a positive upswing since we were stalled at 76% from 2002 until 2006. What is also encouraging is the increase in our **Aboriginal Graduation Rate** by **5%** over the previous year, taking us to **60%** for this group of students. We now have Graduation rates in all categories that are well above the Provincial averages. We have also been very successful with our 'Readiness' initiative that tracks how well our students in grades 4-12 are doing in completing their core courses on time, which is another predictor of who will successfully complete their graduation.

In terms of **Literacy**, our work at the primary level, especially using data derived from the Early Learning Profile, is showing that we are significantly reducing the number of students at-risk in any of the key literacy skills by the end of grade 3. Interestingly, we can now see a correlation between the percentage of students exiting the primary program at risk, and the percentage of students that do not graduate. To provide more assessment evidence at the school and District levels, we have also introduced the Whole Class Reading Assessment and have expanded the use of the School Wide Write.

The 'expanded mandate' for literacy that Board's received more than two years ago, continues to encourage other **Early Learning** initiatives, including our operation of 7 **Strongstart Centres** and 13 **preschool programs**, a **Playschool** at RSS and a **Teen Parent Program** at

KSS. We have also offered a variety of other programs to support children of preschool age, including '**Ready, Set, Learn**' events, **PALS** (Parents as Literacy Support) Programs and more recently, **ELFF** (Early Learning For Families) sessions.

In terms of **numeracy**, we have recently adopted a **K-12 Numeracy Strategic Framework** that introduces a numeracy component to the early learning profile as well as the use of problem sets into the intermediate grades. We believe that early tracking of student achievement will inform instruction and, ultimately, improve the students' deeper understanding in numeracy.

In addition, the Board established 3 supplemental **areas of focus**:

1. **Quality Instruction and Assessment Leading to Student Engagement**
2. **Health, Wellness and Safety**
3. **Economic Viability and Stability**

In each of these areas, significant progress has been made in the past year. Of particular note is our work in health promotion, with 18 of our schools having goals pertaining to health, and another 7 schools listing it as an area of focus. We are also pleased to have such an active Safe Schools Committee, and we are very proud of the fact that we have now completed our work in establishing a Risk Assessment Protocol and in training all administrators, counsellors and other key personnel in the use of this tool. We were also very pleased to welcome the addition of another RCMP Liaison Officer into our District, working with the schools in Lake Country.

In terms of **economic viability and stability**, we have managed to both significantly reduce spending while also increasing revenues in order to help offset our budget shortfalls. Good examples of this work includes the reduction of well over \$200,000 in photocopying and paper costs in the past year, as well as the increases in revenue that have been created by some of our departments. Good examples of this are our International Education Program which is projected to generate gross revenues of \$1.4 million this year and our Health and Safety Department that will bring in close to \$375,000 in gross revenues into our District by handling the claims management for 24 school districts in the province.

Along with noteworthy accomplishments in the past year toward our goals and our areas of focus, our District also had much to celebrate in the areas of **the arts, athletics and extra-curricular activities**. Our students are regularly showcased in theatrical and musical performances throughout the District, and the Art in Action exhibit at the Kelowna Art Gallery provides evidence of the outstanding work being done in a variety of mediums. Our sports teams have gone on to distinguish themselves, including the KSS Girls' Fieldhockey Team that placed 3rd at the **provincial championships**. Our football program has seen unparalleled fan support and we have just concluded hosting very successful Provincial Volleyball Championships.

Student leadership has also been thriving in the Central Okanagan School District during the past year. Not only do we have an excellent complement of student leaders in our schools, but we have also enjoyed the leadership provided by the members of the **District Student Council**. Most recently we've seen the participation of 443 students and 40 staff in the **Free the Children - Me to We** event in Vancouver, and the great job that was done by students and staff as they harnessed the enthusiasm from this event to raise \$107,550 toward global programs and \$21,500 toward local programs.

Our **International Education Program** also expanded during the past year. Our numbers of International students have now swollen to more than 100 students, which is above the targets we had set for the past year. We are also welcoming record numbers of new immigrant families into our District.

In terms of our **Aboriginal Education Program**, we are finishing the fourth year of our current Enhancement Agreement and will soon begin working toward updating this plan. Currently achieving a graduation rate of 60%, our focus continues to be on reaching the goal of 75% of our Aboriginal students graduating within six years of their entry into grade 8. Most recently we have also signed an unprecedented 5 year Local Education Agreement with the Westbank First Nation, and we also look forward to concluding the selection process for the Principal of Aboriginal Education before the winter break.

On the **Capital Project** side of our operation, we celebrated the Grand Opening of Chute Lake Elementary and then immediately turned our attention to preparing for the introduction of Full

Day Kindergarten. This has seen us successfully negotiate with the Ministry for the addition of permanent space at Shannon Lake Elementary, and the reopening of Anne McClymont Primary. Additionally, we are currently finalizing plans to add multiple modular classrooms into the District to help manage the additional students.

As a District, we also welcome the Provincial direction with regard to the focus on early learning and on **individualized learning for the 21st Century**. Both are areas that we are investing time and effort in on behalf of our students. We are currently one of the leading districts in the province in terms of creating Board Authorized Courses and Specialty Academies to best meet the needs of our students. In fact, with the most recent additions this year, we now have 19 unique academies and 107 locally developed courses. Additionally, we have dual-credit programs established in partnership with BCIT, Okanagan College and the Industry Training Authority.

For the future, in addition to concluding the processes we are currently engaged in, the Board looks forward to:

1. **Securing capital funding** for our top 3 priorities – an elementary school building project on **Rosewood Drive**, a replacement for **Rutland Middle School** and the addition of permanent space in the **Mission area** of Kelowna;
2. Conducting a process to establish **catchment areas** around schools following the implementation of Full Day K and the adjustments made regarding French Immersion;
3. Concluding the processes to secure new collective agreements with **CUPE in 2011** and the **BCTF/COTA in 2012**;
4. Becoming even more singular in our **focus** to successfully **graduate** as many of our students as possible, while remaining committed to our work in literacy, numeracy, instruction and assessment; and
5. Examining ways to equip our students with the skills and abilities necessary to be successful in the **21st Century**.

I wish to thank our senior staff and all employees for the exceptional work they do on behalf of our students each and every day. Also, thank you to my fellow trustees for their commitment to the strategic guidance and oversight of our School District. You should be proud of your efforts on behalf of the students, parents, staff and community members of the Central

Okanagan. We will continue to lobby on behalf of public education in our district and province as we move into the third year of our term as trustees.

Rolli Cacchioni,
Chairperson
Board of Education – Central Okanagan School District No. 23