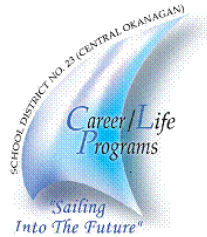


SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 23



CENTRAL OKANAGAN
"Together We Learn"



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Survey: Kelowna-area grads are staying in school and improving their financial life skills

Kelowna – Post-secondary enrolment for Central Okanagan School District graduates is at its highest level in seven years, and compared to 2006 graduates, 2008 graduates are reporting they learned more in secondary school about how to manage their finances. These are some of the findings released today in the annual School District No. 23 survey of its graduates.

“Former students are telling us they are satisfied with how secondary school prepared them for university or college, giving course relevance its highest rating in six years,” said Norm Bradley, director of instruction, School District No. 23. “This speaks positively about the variety of course offerings our teachers are creating and delivering at the secondary level.”

The 2008 Graduate Outcomes Survey identified how well Kelowna-area graduates felt their education had prepared them for life, work, post-secondary education and managing their finances. Graduates from 2006 and 2008 participated in the fourteenth annual survey that includes questions aimed at assessing their financial life skills, which the British Columbia Securities Commission helped to develop.

The annual survey is an opportunity for SD No. 23 and the BCSC to work together in order to understand if financial life skills education in high school better prepares youth to navigate through the financial realities of adulthood. Since 2004, Grade 10 students in B.C. have been taking a mandatory course called Planning 10 that has four components, including Finances. In this survey, only the 2008 graduates had taken Planning 10: Finances.

“We are glad to hear that graduates who have taken Planning 10: Finances tend to be more satisfied with their financial preparation,” said Patricia Bowles, BCSC director, communications and education. “Teaching students about how to manage money in high school can go a long way in helping them to avoid falling into debt or making poor financial choices that could affect them throughout their lives.”

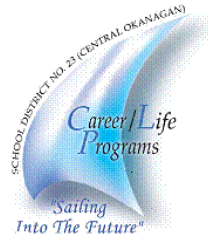
2008 Graduate Outcomes Survey highlights

- Post-secondary enrolment is the highest (71 per cent) it has been in seven years. Most of these graduates (61 per cent) had taken post-secondary programs leading to a degree, and 72 per cent had enrolled in local university or college programs.
- Over the past five years, the percentage of graduates attending major local institutions has increased from 52 per cent in 2003 to 72 per cent in both 2007 and 2008.

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- Answering a new question added to the survey this year about retention, graduates identified a caring teacher (80 per cent) and a friend or peer (83 per cent) as the top two factors that kept them on track for graduation.
- The 2008 graduates said they learned more about managing their finances in high school compared to the 2006 graduates. On a scale of one to four (one being nothing and four being a great deal), the average for all graduates was 2.11. The average of the 2006 graduates was only 1.84, while the average for 2008 graduates was 2.33.
- Graduates were confident of their money management skills, but not overconfident. Asked to grade themselves as money managers on a scale of one to five, with five being excellent, the respondents averaged 3.58.
- When asked about their high school preparation for managing finances, graduates reported the highest satisfaction rating (30 per cent) in six years – 29 per cent were dissatisfied and 41 per cent were neutral.

The telephone survey of former SD No. 23 graduates yielded a sample of 359 graduates from 2006 and 2008. The sample of graduates from the five SD No. 23 secondary schools is proportionately representative of the graduation population over the two years. The full survey is available at www.sd23.bc.ca or www.InvestRight.org.

School District No. 23 mission: To educate students in a safe, inspirational learning environment where every student develops the knowledge and skills to be a lifelong learner and a healthy productive member of our global society.

The City: Financial Life Skills for Planning 10 is part of a number of investor education programs offered through the BCSC InvestRight program. The BCSC is the independent provincial government agency responsible for regulating trading in securities within the province. If you have questions, contact Ken Gracey, Media Relations, 604-899-6577.

Learn how to avoid investment fraud at the BCSC's investor education website: www.investright.org.