



## BOARD OF EDUCATION

# Media Information

June 10, 2008

### **Students to Learn About Democratic Political Activism at a Meeting with Westside Council**

**Kelowna, BC:** Today at 1:30pm, the Mayor of the District of the Westside and their Council will hear from future voters. Students at Helen Gorman Elementary School will share their concerns about safety in relation to bicycle paths and sidewalks near the school. Reminiscent of the spirit of the 1960's, the presentation will include five very short speeches, a skit, and a song written and performed by the students and their Principal, John McMahon.

"Originally, this was a social studies project," say McMahon. "The students were learning about the Canadian Government and the Constitution, and how they work. They brainstormed on issues that they care about. They chose safe sidewalks and bike paths as their focus, then learned how to go about influencing change to make it happen. They tried to research all the sides of the issue as thoroughly as they could. Then, they each wrote a letter to all of the Mayoral candidates since there is an election coming up soon. Next, they invited the mayoral candidates to our school to hear their concerns."

Last year, students invited the all candidates to the school just prior to the District of the Westside election. This was the students' first opportunity to present their research on the benefits and drawbacks of sidewalks and bike paths and, ultimately, make a case for constructing both. This spring, the students were invited by Westside Council to make a second presentation.

Today's meeting takes place at the Westside Council office at the District of the Westside office at #4 – 2466 Main Street in Westbank.

"The students are excited about the meeting and the fact that they are feeling listened to!" says McMahon. "It's a great learning experience for them."

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For comments, please contact:

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