



March 5, 2026

Via Email

The Honourable Gavin Dew, MLA
Kelowna–Mission
Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

Dear MLA Dew,

Re: SD23 Education Advocacy Priorities

On behalf of the Board of Education and senior leadership of Central Okanagan Public Schools (School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan)), thank you for your engagement with our District and your interest in the success and well-being of students and families in our community.

Thank you for your support in advocating, on behalf of the District, in the following priority areas:

Capital Projects, Annual Facilities Grant, and Deferred Maintenance

Our schools are essential public infrastructure that must remain safe, functional, and responsive to the needs of students and staff. The District appreciates the Ministry of Education and Child Care and Ministry of Infrastructure's ongoing investment in education however rising inflationary costs, aging facilities, number of portables on school sites to address enrolment and classroom complexity have created significant pressure on the Annual Facilities Grant (AFG) and the District's ability to address ongoing deferred maintenance. Additional AFG would greatly assist the District in maintaining safe learning environments and addressing urgent infrastructure needs in a timely manner.

Rutland Middle School Addition

Rutland Middle School serves a large and diverse student population and plays a critical role in the Rutland community. The school requires significant renewal to address aging building systems, functional learning spaces, and accessibility considerations. The District would appreciate your continued advocacy to support the prioritization of this project within provincial capital planning, ensuring students and staff have access to a modern, safe, and inclusive learning environment.

Funding for K-12 Public Education

School districts across British Columbia continue to face increasing inflationary pressures related to staffing, illness, insurance, software, utilities, services and supplies, transportation, and educational resources. While slight funding increases in recent years are acknowledged, they have not fully kept pace with rising costs. An enhanced and sustainable funding model for K-12 public education is essential to ensure districts can maintain programs and services without diverting resources away from classrooms or student supports.

Supports for Health, Well-Being, and Safety of Our Youth

The health, well-being, and safety of children and youth remain a shared priority. Schools are increasingly supporting students with complex mental health, social, and safety needs, often in partnership with community and government agencies. Continued and expanded investment in school-based and community-connected supports is vital to ensure students can learn, thrive, and feel safe both in and beyond the classroom.

We value your leadership and advocacy on behalf of the Central Okanagan community and look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with you to support students, families, and staff in Central Okanagan Public Schools.

Thank you in advance for your advocacy efforts and ongoing support of public education.

Sincerely,



Valene Johnson
Board Chair
School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan)
/lsb