



"Together We Learn"

BOARD OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23

(CENTRAL OKANAGAN)

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June 20, 2014

The Honourable Peter Fassbender
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Fassbender:

RE: Seismic/Capital Project Cost Sharing and Education Funding

At a recent Public Board Meeting, the Central Okanagan Board of Education agreed to send a letter expressing concern over the budget pressures we are experiencing and the expectation that School Districts will be called upon to cost share major capital projects through the use of School District surplus funds.

Board discussion included concerns regarding shortfalls in funding, and additional municipal, provincial and federal cost pressures, e.g. employee benefit increases and utility increases. Stabilized funding for School Districts was also discussed, which would allow Boards of Education to complete long-range planning for future years, and it was agreed that opportunities should be explored for School Districts and the Ministry to work together, possibly sharing resources, which could lead to savings for all School Districts.

Regarding seismic/capital project cost sharing, the Board is pleased that you have clarified that each School District will be afforded careful consideration of their actual "surpluses" before the Ministry makes a decision on capital funding; however, for the record, we wish to provide you with the following information.

The Central Okanagan School District has already exhausted any capital reserves to purchase two properties that are needed for future middle schools. As well, our District is facing \$4 million in budget pressures for the 2014/2015 school year. Our preliminary budget for 2014/2015 includes all of the 2012/2013 surplus funds as well as a portion of the projected 2013/2014 surplus funds in order to provide a balanced budget.

Board of Education - Trustees

Moyra Baxter
Julia Fraser

Joyce Brinkerhoff
Christopher L. Gorman

Deb Butler
Murli Pendharkar

Rolli Cacchioni

This Board has, for many years, embraced and supported Skills and Technical Courses. The Dual Credit Programs we have established with BCIT and Okanagan College are examples of this. The Ministry's focus on increasing Skills and Technical Training is therefore welcomed by our Board. However, we know that there is a cost to providing these specialized programs and we are finding it increasingly difficult to support them as we cope with budget pressures each year. We would ask that the Ministry commit to ensuring that Boards of Education are not expected, once again, to do more with less.

We are committed to working with government on behalf of all students and, as co-governors of BC's Public Education System, we send this letter to express our concern that we believe that the system is underfunded, and also to state that we believe we can find ways to work together to continue to provide the first class education system of which we are all so proud.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Moyra Baxter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Moyra Baxter
Board Chair

cc: Central Okanagan Board of Education Trustees
The Honourable Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia
Dan Ashton, MLA
The Honourable Norm Letnick, MLA
The Honourable Steve Thomson, MLA
All BC Boards of Education c/o BCSTA
CUPE Local 3523
Central Okanagan Teachers' Association