

From: [Laurie Bowen](#)
To: [Board of Education](#)
Subject: Follow Up to Wednesday School Board Meeting
Date: Monday, May 1, 2023 9:27:30 AM
Attachments: [2023-04-26 Action Item Question - Budget Report.docx](#)
[SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN THE CENTRAL OKANAGAN SCHOOL DISTRICT.docx](#)

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Lee-Ann Tiede, Chair
Board of Education
School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan)
1040 Hollywood Rd S.
Kelowna, B.C. V1X 4N2

Dear Trustee Tiede,

I realized I neglected to add my contact information to the notes I handed in after I spoke during the public comment period at last Wednesday's Board meeting. It would be great if someone was able to get back to me with responses to my questions as I have had at least a couple parents follow up with me further on them. For your convenience, I have attached the notes.

Thank you very much.

Laurie Bowen

I was looking at school enrollment in the Central Okanagan and noticed, based on the numbers from the end of September 2022 that around 25% of elementary and secondary aged students in the Central Okanagan are not attending public education but are instead attending private schools or are being homeschooled through non-public institutions. The total number of students not attending public education was at that time 7,970.

I understand that the Independent School Grant following students not in public education is around \$3,300, which is just a portion of what would be funnelled to public education if those students were attending public schools. If you multiply the \$3,300 grant by 7,970 students, you get around \$26.3 million that's being funneled away from public education to private education in the Central Okanagan alone.

In the budget recommendation report, it says that the District anticipates around a \$2 million budget pressure for the 23/24 budget, which is less than 8% of what is being funnelled away to private and homeschool education.

Given that private and homeschool education is funded to a lesser degree than public education, it seems you would only have to attract say around 5% or 6% of those students (around 480) back to the public education system to theoretically address the budget pressure. If you divide those theoretically between 47 schools, that would be an average increase per school of only around 10 students – not a huge influx to drive up operational costs.

Of the students attending private education or homeschooling, around one-third of them (around 2,800) attend private schools, which have an average tuition of around \$7,000 per year. Taking into consideration family discounts, a conservative estimate might be around \$10 million that is being paid out in the Central Okanagan for private education. Many other parents are choosing to expend significant time to homeschool their children, so it seems parents are willing to expend significant time and money to find the right education environment for their children.

Based on that background my questions are:

The budget report notes it anticipates continued student growth. Is any of that anticipated growth attributed to attracting currently private or homeschooled children residing in the Central Okanagan?

Is the District doing anything to find out specific reasons why the parents of 25% of students in the Central Okanagan are choosing private or homeschool education? It would seem that if you had a good understanding of the reasons, you could perhaps put measures in place to start attracting some of them to, or back to, public education.

If the District is not taking measures to find out this information, why not? It seems like a huge field to draw from if you can make reasonable changes to attract them to, or back to public education. It would also seem to make economic sense to try and do that.

Respectfully,

Laurie Bowen

West Kelowna Resident

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN THE CENTRAL OKANAGAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

K to 12 PUBLIC EDUCATION ENROLMENT		COMMENTS
2021-2022	23,647 ¹	
2022-2023	24,006 ²	

	COLUMN 1 SCHOOL	COLUMN 2 GRADES	COLUMN 3 TYPE OF SCHOOL *	COLUMN 4 2021-2022 ENROLLMENT*	COLUMN 5 2022-2023 ENROLLMENT*	COLUMN 6 POTENTIAL ANNUAL TUITION (2021/2022)	COLUMN 7 FTE RATE/STUDENT** (50% for Group 1; 35% for Group 2)	COLUMN 8 TOTAL SCHOOL GRANT (Column 5 x Column 7)	COLUMN 9 AVERAGE TUITION (Does not include discount for multiple children)
1.	Studio 9	K to 12	Independent 1	86	75	\$6,130	\$4,768	\$357,600	\$5,868
2.	Balsam School	K to 5	Independent 1	45	67	\$6,500	\$4,768	\$319,456	\$7,000
3.	Aberdeen Hall	K to 12	Independent 2	640	654	\$18,500	\$3,338	\$2,183,052	\$16,275
4.	Willowstone Academy	K to 9	Independent 1	184	149	\$5,800	\$4,768	\$710,432	I understand this school has gone bankrupt and has been purchased by KCS.
5.	Heritage Christian School	K to 12	Independent 1	258	177	\$4,923	\$4,768	\$843,936	This school will be closing at the end of June 2023 and transitioning into Flex Academy, essentially a homeschooling type arrangement with a cooperative component.
6.	Kelowna Christian School	K to 12	Independent 1	754	778	\$7,325	\$4,768	\$3,709,504	\$6,465
7.	Immaculata	8 to 12	Independent 1	230	240	\$7,350	\$4,768	\$1,144,320	\$6,475
8.	Okanagan Christian School	K to 11	Independent 1	109	144	\$5,950	\$4,768	\$686,592	\$5,110 Offers a first year incentive tuition of \$550
9.	Our Lady of Lourdes	K to 6	Independent 1	128	110	\$5,000	\$4,768	\$524,480	\$4,785
10	Okanagan Montessori School	K to 4	Independent 1	29	37		\$4,768	\$176,416	Not advertised on the website
11	St. Joseph Catholic School	K to 7	Independent 1	266	285	\$8,960	\$4,768	\$1,358,880	\$5,910
12	Lakeside School (Waldorf)	K to 6	Independent 2	23	40	\$7,450	\$3,338	\$133,520	\$6,225
13	Sensisyusten School	K to 5	Independent 2	58	50		\$3,338	\$166,900	
14	Heritage Christian Online School	K to 12	Independent 1	4,879	4817		\$4,768	\$22,967,456	
15	KLEOS Open Learning	K to 12	Independent 1	386	347		\$4,768	\$1,654,496	
				8,075	7,970			\$36,937,040	Average annual tuition

¹ [SCHOOL OPENING REPORT, PART 2, September 28, 2022](#)

² Ibid.

*Source: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/SchoolContacts.do?distNo=023&distName=Central%20Okanagan>

**Source: [Funding Rates for Independent Schools 2022-23 Preliminary \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

ANALYSIS

- Total # of students enrolled in the Central Okanagan – 31,976 (24,006 + 2,806 + 5,164)
- Percentage of students not attending public school – 25% (7,970 / 31,976)
- Total amount of Independent School Grants - \$26,301,000³ (\$3,300 x 7,970)
- Average tuition for private schools is \$7,124 (does not take into consideration the multiple child discount)
- Given that the average private school tuition does not take into consideration the family discount, we will calculate the amount of tuition paid at only half the private school students in order to calculate a conservative estimate - \$7,124 x 2,756 private school students (does not include home school or Sensisysten School) = \$19,633,744; divide that in two to help compensate for multiple children discount = \$9,816,872. This is on top of the school tax that parents are paying as part of their property tax.
- Total funds being diverted away from public education: \$26,301,000 (Independent School Grants) + \$9,816,872 (private school tuition) = \$36,117,872 in the Central Okanagan alone (\$4,532 / child based on total of 7,970 students not attending public education)
- Last year's budget shortfall was \$3.3 million
- \$3.3 million shortfall / \$4,532 (cost per student not attending public education) = 728 students needed to be attracted back to public education to cover the budget shortfall. Based on 44 schools in the District, this works out to around 17 more children per school, which wouldn't be a huge burden. Essentially, if public education could attract around 9% of those being homeschooled or private schooled back to public education, it could cover the budget shortfall of \$3.3 million.
- The 7,970 students being homeschooled / private schooled consist of those only whose families feel they can afford the additional financial burden (for private school) or time allotment needed (for homeschooling). There are undoubtedly more parents who are significantly dissatisfied with public education and would choose those options if they feel they had a choice.

³ <https://www.aberdeenhall.com/admissions/tuition-fees/preschool-grade-12/>