



The Board of Education of School District No. 83 (North Okanagan - Shuswap)

PO Box 129 ~ 220 Shuswap St. N.E. ~ Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4N2 ~ 250-832-2157 FAX: 250-832-9428

01 December 2009

The Honourable Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045 STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister MacDiarmid:

Re: **Cost Increases & Funding Concerns**

The Board of Education of School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap) and partner groups: North Okanagan-Shuswap Teachers' Association, Canadian Union of Public Employees Sub-local #523, and the District Parent Advisory Council are extremely concerned about cost increases that are occurring over the next two years; and the impact this will have on the quality and level of educational services that can be provided to students.

The Board and Partner Groups embrace the Government's goal of British Columbia students being the best educated and most literate that the Province has ever produced. To achieve this goal, we need all partners working together: Government, Trustees, Teachers, Support Staff, Principals, Parents and the Community.

We need consistent and appropriate funding to deliver quality education. Quality education is delivered through the efforts of our staff and that is why approximately 90% of our budget is spent on "People". New costs or increased costs that are not funded will result in less staff supporting students and put in jeopardy our ability to meet our shared educational goal.

Unfunded cost increases would force the Board to consider education program reductions, including the potential for school closures. We do not believe program reduction or school closures are consistent with the current government mandate for public education. These options certainly would not be supported by parents or the community

At this point in time we are aware of the following significant cost issues:

Issue	Annual Cost
MSP Premium Increase, effective 01/01/2010	\$38,000
Negotiated Wage Increase 2% effective 07/01/2010	\$669,000
Carbon Tax effective 01/01/2010 estimate	\$35,000
HST – 12% effective 07/01/2010 rough estimate	\$50,000 - \$100,000
Pension Plan Increase 1% effective 07/01/2010	\$345,000
Transportation Funding levels frozen at 2001/02 Levels	\$400,000 shortfall in funding
Annual Facility Grant cancelled 2009/10	\$1,600,000
H1N1 Prevention Costs 2009/10 approximate estimate	\$60,000
BC Hydro Rate Increase Application effective – Spring 2010	\$25,000
Total - Approximate	\$3,247,000

Clearly there are very large storm clouds on the horizon.

The Board of Education and their partner groups: North Okanagan-Shuswap Teachers' Association, Canadian Union of Public Employees Sub-local #523, and the District Parent Advisory Council request that the Provincial Government commit to and provide funding support for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 to directly address these cost pressures. We respect that these are extremely challenging times for the Provincial Government. We also believe that we have done our part to reduce costs in dealing with the effect of the significant decline in enrolment over the last 12 years (25.2% a loss of 2,197 students). The associated reduction in funding that has occurred over this period is significant; approximately 12 million dollars. Unfortunately this trend is expected to continue to 2014/2015.

We look forward to your support, and we would be pleased to discuss this matter with you.

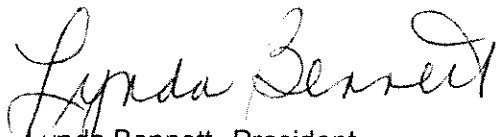
Sincerely,



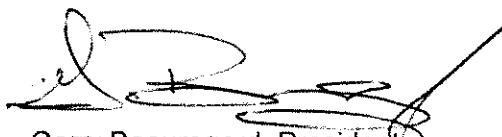
Teresa Hebert
Board Chairperson



Dan Adriani, President
District Parent Advisory Council



Lynda Bennett, President
North Okanagan-Shuswap
Teachers' Association



Gerry Beauregard, President
Canadian Union of Public Employees
#523 Sub Local

Cc G. Abbott, MLA Shuswap
C. Hansen, Minister of Finance
All School Districts