



The Board of Education of School District No. 83

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Donna Kriger, Superintendent
RE: Trustee Variation – For Information

DATE: March 11, 2025

Background

In 1997, Government established School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap) by an amalgamation of School District No. 21 (Armstrong) which had five (5) trustees and School District No. 89 (Shuswap) which had nine (9) trustees. The new amalgamated school district had nine (9) trustees.

In 2016, the Ministry engaged Elizabeth Watson to review governance practices in the district. One of the recommendations made on page 15 of the Watson Report suggested the following:

"We recommend that the current regional representation model be retained but simplified and that the allocation of Trustees be revised to better reflect population within the region. We recommend that the number of Trustees be reduced to five or seven. This recommendation should be addressed and implemented in advance of the next election (2018). The effectiveness of the revised Board composition and Board size should be reviewed and assessed within six years after that election and fine-tuned if needed."

Of the 60 school districts in the province, 13 have five (5) trustees, 38 have seven (7) trustees and nine (9) have nine (9) trustees.

Information

How does the number of trustees compare with other like sized school districts (based on enrolment):

School District	Enrolment	Schools	Electoral Areas	Trustees	Est. Voters
83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap)	6,668	25	4	5	28,856
60 (Peace River North)	6,159	22	5	7	15,984
67 (Okanagan-Skaha)	5,848	17	3	7	40,159
72 (Campbell River)	5,830	17	3	7	28,650
75 (Mission)	6,783	11	2	5	30,650

How does the District compare to other districts with five (5) trustees?

Reviewed two factors, enrolment and the geographic funding which recognizes the distance schools are from the board office, small communities, and the dispersion within the district.

District	Enrolment	Weighted Distance	Geographic Funding
School District No. 83	6,668	159.00 KM	\$10,742,447
School District No. 10 (Arrow Lakes)	509	276.75 KM	\$4,755,108
School District No. 49 (Central Coast)	212	2,767.50 KM	\$4,744,316
School District No. 19 (Revelstoke)	1,105	0.00 KM	\$3,099,360
School District No. 45 (West Vancouver)	7,395	262.50 KM	\$2,420,096
School District No. 47 (Powell River)	3,140	220.00 KM	\$3,907.842
School District No. 69 (Qualicum)	4,417	299.60 KM	\$5,532,568
School District No. 81 (Fort Nelson)	623	188.00 KM	\$3,320,261
School District No. 84 (Vancouver Island West)	318	1,263.50 KM	\$4,941,372
School District No. 87 (Stikine)	190	1,201.00 KM	\$4,409,918
School district No. 92 (Nisga'a)	380	121.00 KM	\$4,539,604

This comparison indicates that the other districts are primarily smaller in enrolment. As well, the Ministry recognizes with the geographic funding that it is more difficult to connect with dispersed communities in SD83.

How does the District electoral area representation by population compare?

Across the province there are 412 trustees with an average of 6.86 trustees per district with an average voter population of 7,940 per trustee and average population represented by an individual trustee of 13,800.

School District No. 83 has the following Electoral Areas:

- 1 Trustee elected from Area 1 Armstrong and Columbia-Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Area D and District of Spallumcheen
- 1 Trustee elected from Area 2 - City of Enderby, CSRD Area E and Sicamous Area A
- 1 Trustee elected from Area 3 - CSRD Areas C, F, and G
- 2 Trustees elected from Area 4 Salmon Arm

Electoral Area	Estimated Population	Average Population per Trustee
Area 1	13,500	13,500
Area 2	9,900	9,900
Area 3	4,600	4,600
Area 4	20,600	10,300

Comparison with other electoral areas:

The city of Penticton has an estimated population of 38,665 with 4 trustees elected for an average population per trustee of 9,671.

The city of Mission has an estimated population of 43,652 with four (4) trustees elected for an average population per trustee of 10,913.

In more rural electoral areas such as Okanagan-Similkameen, average population per trustee is 6,476.

Rationale for the District requesting to increase to seven (7) trustees:

- Improved representation from the electoral communities;
- Increased board members will allow for a reasonable assignment of governance oversight duties; and,
- Reasonable comparison to other similar sized districts for population represented by each trustee.

Based on the above information, representation would compare to other districts by adding one (1) trustee to be elected from Area 1 and the second to be elected from Area 2. Adding the two trustees would assist the board in its governance oversight duties, aligning with other similar sized districts in supporting school communities and distances.

Alternate Suggestion Based on the Watson Report (2016)

Region	Number of Trustees
Salmon Arm	2
Armstrong/Spallumcheen	1
Enderby	1
Sicamous Malakwa	1
Falkland/Deep Creek/Ranchero	1
North Shuswap/Carlin/Sorrento	1

Ministry guidance for requests under Section 30 of the School Act:

1. A person or a board should have a stated rationale for requesting a variation in the number of trustees in a school district, any trustee electoral areas and/or the number of trustees assigned to trustee electoral areas.
2. The rationale should be brought to public attention and the views of the public obtained, as expressed through some form of public consultation.
3. The views of appropriate municipal councils, regional boards, and First Nations should be solicited as well as the views of other special interest groups.
4. A person or a board should then write a letter to the Minister requesting that, pursuant to section 30 (4) of the School Act, the Minister consider making a variation order.

Summary

Next Steps:

1. The Board decides on the electoral areas to request increasing the number of trustees.
2. Board consultation with First Nations, regional district, and municipalities.
3. Board consultation with partner groups and community.
4. Preparation of documentation for the Ministry of Education and Child Care
5. Meet with Ministry staff to ensure they have adequate documentation.
6. Formal request to the Minister, submitted no later than October 31, 2025

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Kriger
Superintendent of Schools