



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

341 Shuswap Street SW, Box 129, Salmon Arm, BC, V1E 4N2

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January 26, 2023

The Honourable Rachna Singh

Minister of Education and Child Care

PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

E: educ.minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Katrine Conroy

Minister of Finance

PO Box 9048, Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

E: fin.minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Singh and Minister Conroy:

The Board of Education of SD 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap) carried a motion at our January 17, 2023 Regular Public Board meeting to inform your Ministries of funding constraints our district is facing for the current school year and looking ahead to the 2023/24 school year.

Background

The Regular Per Student Funding rate has remained unchanged at \$7,885 for 2021/22 and 2022/23 school years. During this period we have seen unprecedented cost increases across a broad range of cost factors outside our control. These cost increases include the CPP/EI increase for 2023 at over 6%, rise in fuel for heating schools, fuel for bussing operations, significant increases for school supplies and classroom equipment, and food costs for home economics courses and breakfast programs. These inflationary pressures compound themselves year over year. We are thankful at this time that the impact of COVID has diminished significantly although we continue to experience higher absenteeism due to illness, both from students and employees. This results in ongoing significant pressure on our substitute replacement costs.

District Focus & Priorities

In alignment with expectations from the Province, our Board has goals to prioritize budgets to address the harms created by institutional racism, to take action in our commitment to the Calls to Action, and to close the gap in graduation rates between the non-Indigenous and Indigenous and diverse learners in our district. Without additional funding, our District will have to divert funding from existing programs, in order to fund these priorities.

Our Request

That the Ministry of Education and Child Care make a significant increase to the Per Student Funding rates for the 2023/24 school year. This increase needs to take into account that no changes were made for the last two school years when significant inflation occurred in employee statutory benefit costs and a broad range of supply related costs, and these inflationary increases are expected to continue into 2024. This funding increase needs to be in addition to the Ministry fully funding the Provincially coordinated labour settlements with employee groups that were settled over the last year.

Impact of Not Fully Funding Cost Increases

If school boards have to absorb inflation costs on an ongoing basis, along with other cost pressures, more and more services will have to be cut that directly impacts student success and our common goals of seeing every student graduate with success and a meaningful Dogwood to ensure their future success as citizens of BC.

Sincerely,



Marianne VanBuskirk
Board Chairperson
School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap)

cc: Hon. David Eby, Premier of British Columbia
Greg Kylo, MLA - Shuswap
BCSTA Board of Directors
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Donna Kriger, Superintendent – SD83
Dale Culler, Secretary-Treasurer – SD83