

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 28, 2010

School District No. 22 (Vernon) Approves Expenditure Reduction Plan to Balance Projected Preliminary Operating Budget for the 2010-2011 School Year

The Board of Trustees adopted an expenditure plan to balance to the 2010-2011 projected provincial funding of \$69,532,415. This budget plan reflects a projected decline in enrolment of 155.56 students from September 2009. For the 2010-2011 school year only, the district will receive two additional grants. The first grant is \$689,789 through a program of enrolment decline protection and for the first time a funding protection grant of \$543,471. These two onetime grants total just over \$1.2 million dollars providing a net increase in provincial funding of \$316,000 or 0.46%

To maintain a status quo spending budget the board is faced with a shortfall of \$2.1 million dollars. Trustees are faced with the pressure of many inflationary costs for supplies, services, utilities, and employee benefits which strain the financial ability of the school district. These increased costs include the provincially negotiated salary increases, costs of maintaining employee pension plans, benefit renewal rates for employee benefits in the areas of long term disability and extended health care premiums.

These effects of declining enrolment, funding based on per student enrolments, and the inflationary costs of doing business has brought the district to a position of having to initiate reductions to its expenditure base.

This budget has affected every area of the school district by reductions in funding; a summary is as follows:

1. Trustees, Management and Board Office
 - a) Savings from the services, supplies, and staffing

2. School Based and Educational Services
 - a) The enrolment is projected to be down by 155.56 students resulting in 7.77 fewer teachers.
 - b) Declining enrolments in some schools will result in less clerical support staff.
 - c) Reductions to school administration positions
 - d) Teaching staff allocations will be reduced across the system impacting various programs, functions , and delivery options
 - e) General reduction across the board of teaching positions.
 - f) Allocation for supplies and services budgets to secondary schools reduced, due to declining enrollment

3. Operations Departments
 - a) Across the board reductions to supplies and services budgets to transportation department.
 - b) Reduction of bus runs as a result of declining enrolment.
 - c) Reductions in staff levels.

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Total Proposed Budget Reductions

\$2,100,000

The result of these actions by the Board of Education will be a balanced budget.

Trustees held three evening community meetings to seek feedback on the budget development.

Trustees acknowledge government has recognized the provincial costs of the collective agreement settlements. However, the delivery of education expectations and cost pressures remain.

Chairman Turanski, on behalf of the Board acknowledges decisions to balance the budget this year have been the most difficult in some years. Trustees support a call for a review of the funding system for our district. Block funding in a declining enrolment environment creates a requirement for tough decisions to be made that will alter and effect delivery of services. "It is evident that with reserves depleted the school district will need to reduce expenditures to balance the budget in the future as well," says Chairman Turanski. The Board indicates that with less money available decisions will need to be made about how the district provides and delivers education in its community for future school years. This will mean re-prioritization of services in the budget. Secondary schools in particular have the largest decline in enrolment, and will have to look at increasing the use of the district common timetable to continue to offer some specialized programs.

Support for the delivery of special education, Aboriginal, numeracy and literacy programs were not affected by the current budget reductions. The overall pupil teacher ratio moves from 18.1 to 1 to 18.5 to 1 for the 2010-2011 school year. This ratio has been accomplished within the class size and composition legislation requirements.

The Board is implementing full day kindergarten in eight of our elementary schools. This will provide extra play based learning time to some of our more vulnerable learners.

Trustees are pleased the annual facilities grant for the 2010-2011 year was reinstated which will allow important maintenance work to be undertaken.

The Board of Trustees has lobbied government about funding issues through the British Columbia School Trustees Association, with our MLA, and directly to the Education Minister this year and years past on behalf of students, parents, and staff of our district and will continue to do so in the future. Chair Turanski acknowledges that the work of the school district remains focused on improving student learning and has confidence that all our employees will continue to do excellent work on behalf of our students.

Trustees recognize and acknowledge the work of all people involved in the budgeting process. The Chairman recognized the community for attending the public meetings and their feedback. Superintendent Rundell thanks the management of the School District and representatives of Principal and Vice Principal Association, District Parent Advisory Council, Vernon Teachers Association, and CUPE for their input and involvement during this budget process.

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School District No. 22 (Vernon)

- Serves 8,500 students including international students and continuing education adult student programs.
- These students are served by over 1,200 employees - teachers, support staff, administrators, and teachers on call and casual personnel.
- The school district has 24 school facilities (5 secondary and 14 elementary schools) plus 5 alternate school facilities.
- These facilities are located in the City of Vernon, Municipality of Coldstream, Village of Lumby, Cherryville, Lavington, and the Okanagan Indian Reserve