

# Saanich Schools

May 15, 2017

On behalf of the Board of Education, let me first express my appreciation for the advice, suggestions and other feedback so many of you have provided as we work our way through yet another budget funding shortfall. Let me also acknowledge our profound regret that once again we find Saanich, like many other districts, in our usual annual financial squeeze. We had hoped that with the addition funding resulting from the Supreme Court of Canada decision we could avoid budget cuts for next year. But that is not the case. We recognize that, this is yet again, a very stressful time for our staff in the District and we are sorry for this.

We have clarity now on the status of our current budget and the needs that we have for our 2017/18 budget. That gives us an opportunity to provide you with more details about the needs and proposals we are reviewing as a board, with decisions likely to be made mid-June. By then we have a better sense of what cuts have to be made, as well as how much additional funding we will receive from government for new teachers. We have met with ministry staff to press our case related to our budget shortfall and our need for more teachers, and are awaiting a response to our submissions.

Below is some background information provided by Superintendent Elder and Secretary-Treasurer Reid that may be helpful to you in understanding the Board's present budget considerations. Also for even more detail see the briefing note from the Secretary Treasurer on the website.

- Our shortfall of \$953,000 for 2017/18 comes from unfunded inflationary pressures of \$445,000, depletion of accumulated surplus of \$395,000 (our savings account spent this year and not available for next year), plus a \$113,000 net pressure from areas including reduced numbers of designated students.
- The Board is considering the following reductions:
  - \$704,000 from the proposed reduction of 7.144 FTE non-enrolling teaching specialist positions
  - \$100,000 from district administrative accounts
  - \$149,000 from Education Assistants, supplies and services
- Our proposals to the Ministry of Education in regard to teacher funding could see the removal of the \$395,000 pressure from depletion of accumulated surplus. That would drop the shortfall from \$953,000 to \$558,000.
- Should the Board have a \$558,000 reduction to make in June, we would hope to amend the FTE non-enrolling teacher reductions from 7.144 to 3.0 FTE.

The good news is that because of the Supreme Court Decision we will have as many as 40 additional teachers for 2017/18, resulting in smaller classes. Should some classes be larger than others, for example because of shortage of space, extra teaching staff will be assigned to the school as support for those classes. While we may have to reduce some non-enrolling positions we will still exceed the required minimums.

Thank you again for your patience, and for whatever involvement you have had to date in budget planning discussions. Making budget decisions from a position of unfunded structural shortfalls is not our favourite work, but it is important work. We look forward to concluding this work in June and then getting ready for another great year in Saanich schools as we look to September.

With respect and appreciation,



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