

Saanich Schools

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June 17, 2015

The Honourable Peter Fassbender
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Fassbender:

Since 2011/12 School District No. 63 (Saanich) has reduced its operating budget by \$4,519,000. When adjusted for enrolment decline, this leaves the district with combined reductions totaling \$2,619,000. This is further impacted by an approximate \$200,000 per year cost pressure due to inflation. This amount, compounded over three years, adds \$600,000 to the budget reductions for a total impact of approximately \$3,219,000. Therefore, in order to restore district services and resources to their 2011/12 level, an additional \$3.2 million dollars would be required.

It should be noted that a significant number of reductions happened prior to 2011, including the closure of schools and significant reductions to school district staff.

In order to reflect what resources could be restored in support of student learning, the following categories have been used as organizers:

- Regular Instruction, Library, Counselling, and Career Programs
- Special Education, English Language Learning, and Aboriginal Education
- International Program
- Distributed Learning
- School and District Administration
- Operations, Maintenance, and Transportation

Saanich Schools



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Program Area	Impact of Reductions	Restored Services
Regular Instruction, Library, Counselling, Career Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant upward pressure on class size district-wide has resulted in less opportunity for individual student support. • Fewer “small section” secondary courses can be offered due to reduced teacher staffing. • Fewer teachers and increased workload reduces the number of staff interested in or available to offer extra-curricular opportunities for students. • Significant reductions to non-enrolling positions have impacted the ability of classroom teachers to collaborate for student success. • Fewer resources means less opportunity for students to engage with hands-on activities through consumable purchases, such as manipulatives and art supplies. • The social-emotional needs of students are increasingly difficult to meet as a result of decreased counselling time and increased counselling caseloads. • Reductions at the school and district level place greater pressure on principals and vice-principals who take on additional duties. This places greater pressure on teachers to pick up the areas that administrators can no longer attend to. • With additional workload pressures on remaining staff, there is a concern about the potential for the district culture of inclusion, relationships, and respect to be diminished. • Reduced staffing levels create challenges in implementing innovative practices such as Learning-Commons. • Reduction of supply budget puts pressure on families to make up the difference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase/restore classroom teacher positions to reduce the number of classes at maximum capacity. • Restore elementary technical support • Restore equipment, learning resources and consumable budgets • Increase teacher-librarian time • Increase counselling time (particularly at the elementary level). • Increase career program teacher time. • Increase in-service training funds. • Decrease professional development funds. • Restore Tier III counselling services. • Increase district instructional support teacher time for curricular areas such as math and literacy. • Restore school plan funding in support of innovation and continual growth. • Increase/restore support staff positions such as youth and family counsellors, French assistants, career supports, and school-based technology.
Special Education, English Language Learning, Learning, Aboriginal Education	<p><u>Special Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While enrolment has declined consistently over the past number of years, the number of students with 	<p><u>Special Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore/increase integration support, vision and hearing teacher time • Restore/increase learning assistance

	<p>special needs has remained relatively constant (from 861 in 2011/2012 to 875 in 2013/2014 and a slight decline in 2014/2015 to 854). Additionally, the complexity of need that students are exhibiting is becoming more challenging to support with the resources available. Therefore, the percentage of the overall budget required to support students with special needs is increasing, resulting in fewer general education services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social service agencies are going through funding challenges and therefore families place greater expectations on the school system, e.g. families wanting students with special needs to stay in public school longer. • Decreased non-enrolling teacher supports or increased case-load expectations puts stress on classroom teachers, non-enrolling teachers, and on student learning. • Reductions or lack of growth has the potential to jeopardize health and safety issues for students. • When the needs of students with special needs are not being met in the classroom, there is a negative impact on the overall learning environment. • A key protective factor for students with mental health struggles is a strong relationship with a caring adult. This protective factor diminishes with decreased staff availability. The volume and complexity of mental health challenges for our students is increasing. • English Language Learning time has remained constant over the three years, however the number of students being supported through that full time equivalent has increased. • Indigenous students are engaging in academic and academy activities in all Saanich schools. The challenge of providing teacher support in these 	<p>time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore/increase education assistance support • Restore/increase consumable supplies • Increase district instructional support teachers to support school-based teams with complex student needs. • Restore funding to support students with outstanding capabilities. • Restore the seconded social worker position • Restore/increase occupational therapy and physical therapy time • Restore/increase behaviour support time • Provide greater outreach possibilities through Children’s Development Centre/Alternate Learning Program. <p><u>English Language Learning:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase English Language Learning (formerly English as a Second Language) time. <p><u>Indigenous Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Indigenous program staff (teacher and assistant) • Increase SENĆOŦEN language program offerings. • Develop teacher/class resources in collaboration with WSÁNEĆ School Board, e.g. local culture, history and traditions. • Increased support of Enhancement Agreement and Local Education Agreement.
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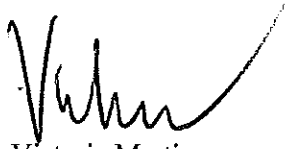
	<p>schools may have a negative impact on their sense of belonging and connection to their culture.</p>	
International Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of admin time causes issues for custodial support of entire Saanich International Student Program population. • Commitment of funds must be in place in advance in order to ensure continued enrolment into the following year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance funding provided to District from Saanich International Student Program. • Restore vice-principal position • Increase marketing and recruiting supports. • Ability to have Saanich International Student Program open during breaks in the school year (i.e. Christmas, spring break, and summer).
Distributed Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in Ministry Education Guarantee funding now requires a fee for adult graduates to upgrade. • Reduced funding to South Island Distance Education School causes issues for students that do not complete their courses within the Ministry funded timeline. This means that some students continue to work at completing their courses after Ministry funding stops, however the school's obligation remains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore support for adult grad upgrading. • Restore course development time. • Restore support staff positions (eg: clerical and education assistants)
School and District Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of vice-principals at five schools has created challenges and pressures. This is of greatest concern at Cordova Bay Elementary and Prospect Lake Elementary, which are left with one administrator. • Reduction of supply budgets puts pressure on schools, the district, and families. • Loss of district level teaching positions reduces the district's capacity to serve schools (curriculum, health, numeracy, and more). • Reduction of administrative and supply budgets results in reductions to positions that serve children and families, including clerical time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore vice-principal position at Cordova Bay Elementary, Prospect Lake Elementary, and South Island Distance Education Schools. • Increase curriculum support staff at the Board Office, e.g. Comprehensive Health and Numeracy. • Restore consumable and supply budgets. • Restore staffing support levels at the board office. • Restore canteen clerical and other support positions in schools.
Operations, Maintenance, Grounds, and Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased grounds and maintenance positions. Work orders are taking longer to complete and some are denied. • Increase in rider fees in order to gain income is challenging for parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase grounds and maintenance staff. • Reduce bus fees charged to families • Restore Transportation Manager position. • Restore bus routes to ensure safe

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Transportation Manager Position was eliminated, leaving the district vulnerable to liabilities as well as leadership. • Reduction in bus routes has created crowded bus routes and longer ride times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pick up points and reduced time on bus for students. Remember the value of bus drivers being the “eyes on the road” in our communities for safety for all. • Restore supply budgets for grounds and maintenance departments to ensure preventative maintenance of facilities, playgrounds, and fields. • Restore floater custodian positions.
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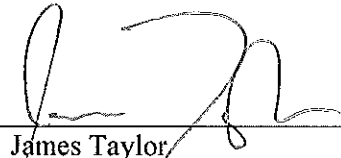
Conclusion

While overall funding to school districts from the Ministry of Education may have increased over the last number of years, this increase has not been sufficient to cover increased costs. A total of \$3,219,000 in reductions has been made, which, if restored, would be reflected in the above table.

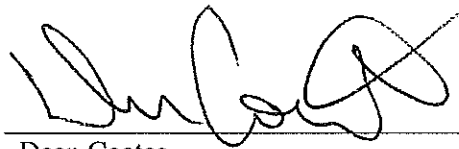
Respectfully submitted,



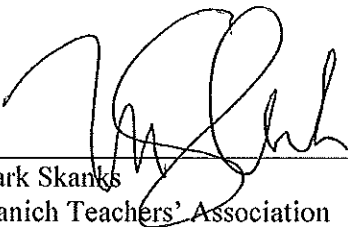
Victoria Martin
Board Chair, School District No. 63 (Saanich)



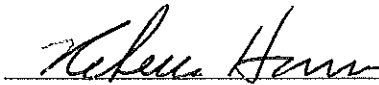
James Taylor
The Confederation of Parent Advisory
Councils of Saanich



Dean Coates
Canadian Union of Public Employees
Local 441



Mark Skanks
Saanich Teachers' Association



Rebecca Harris
WSÁNEĆ School Board

Cc: Gary Holman, MLA, Saanich North and the Islands
Lana Popham, MLA, Saanich South
Rob Fleming, Opposition Spokesperson for Education

VM/da