



SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

July 8, 2019

SD5 Presentation to the Select Standing Committee on Finances and Government Services Focused on Funding Supports

On June 11, 2019, School District 5 (SD5) Southeast Kootenay presented a Brief to the BC Legislative Assembly's Select Standing Committee on Finances and Government Services (SSCFGS).

The all-party Committee*, who visited Kimberley during their annual, province-wide public consultations, is tasked with compiling a report each year on public feedback with regard to the next provincial budget and is empowered to make budget recommendations in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. In previous years, these consultations took place in the fall. This is the first year the date has been shifted to June.

Previous Committee reports have recommended government provide the K – 12 public education sector with stable, predictable and adequate funding –including capital funding –all priorities that have consistently been addressed by the SD5 Board.

Trustee Chris Johns addressed the Committee on behalf of SD5 and much of the presentation still focused on adequate funding and the need for capital funding – and the persistent efforts of the District to replace Mount Baker Secondary School (MBSS) in Cranbrook.

According to KMB Architects, MBSS, built in 1949, was designated category D in 2008 –being in very poor condition and requiring significant redevelopment. The Board continues to request over \$400,000 for repairs to the drama and music rooms to temporarily “repair” the roof's structural integrity.

Johns says the repairs and upgrades undertaken to maintain a safe environment for students has cost the District over \$1 million in the last ten years –and counting. “This building is past its best-before-date, and is out of step with the current, revised curriculum.”

Johns also highlighted the need for government to re-think how they fund students with diverse needs.

“We know that all students have unique educational needs,” says Johns. “But for approximately 13% of our students, the funding we receive is insufficient to adequately support those needs.”

Johns says that this is unacceptable, as every student deserves to graduate with dignity and purpose. Since 2001, when the then-Liberal government deregulated a portion of special needs funding, the District has provided an additional 5% – 6% out of the Basic Allocation Funding to support these students in their learning.

For the upcoming 2019/2020 year, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has reported a 9% increase in provincial target funding. However, according to Johns, while this long-overdue funding is welcomed and appreciated, more support services funding is required.

“This additional funding enables the District to keep up with the well-deserved and past due staff salary increases, but it is still not enough to ensure that all of our students have the supports they need, and deserve.”

Johns has indicated that the Board will continue to advocate on behalf of these students, on this important funding issue.

To view the Board’s presentation to the SSCFGS, any of the correspondence related to the SSCFGS or replacement efforts for MBSS as an NLC, visit <http://www.sd5.bc.ca/Board/advocacy/>. For information on the SSCFGS, visit <https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/committees/>.

*The “Committee” refers to the Select Standing Committee on Government Finance and Services (SSCGFS)

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