



SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

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

May 13, 2021

The Honourable Selina Robinson
Minister of Finance
PO Box 9048, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

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

RE: Funding in Special Education in Southeast Kootenay Schools District

Dear Minister Robinson and Minister Whiteside,

We know that all students have unique educational needs. Even though most students are able to be educated within the Basic Allocation, approximately 13% [Refer to Table 1] of the Southeast Kootenay School District student population is identified as having diverse abilities or disabilities and require additional support to **meet their needs and graduate with dignity and purpose.**

We also know there is an unparalleled increase in the complexity of students and their needs year after year. Some of the reasons include:

- students survive medical difficulties during birth that were not prevalent a decade ago
- experience of adverse childhood trauma; and
- a significant increase in the students diagnosed with autism annually

As a result, some students require up to four times the amount of support funding to educate than their peers. These students equally **deserve a fully funded, unreduced education.**

In the 2020/2021 academic year, the Ministry of Education targeted funding provided 12.1% (approximately \$7.7M) [Refer to Table 2] of our total District budget to attempt to meet these needs. In the same academic year, 6.4% (approximately \$4.1M) of our total District budget amount was pulled from the Basic Allocation to further meet the needs of students. Using Basic Allocation funding to supplement student supports has been a district practice since the deregulation of a portion of the special education funding in 2001/2002.

For 2021/2022 academic year, the Ministry of Education has reported approximately a 4% increase (2020/2021 – 1%) [Refer to Table 3] in provincial targeted funding. These increases have not maintained the growth in expense which is required to educate some of our most complex students. **The increase is welcomed and appreciated but has been long overdue** to bring funding in line with support staff salary increases.

Frank Lento (Chair) • Trina Ayling • Bev Bellina • Krista Damstrom
• Chris Johns • Kathryn Kitt • Doug McPhee • Wendy Turner • Patricia Whalen

As a result, targeted funding will comprise 13.2% (approximately \$8.4M) [Refer to Table 2] of our total District budget. We will continue to use 7.7% (approximately \$4.9M) of our total District budget amount from the Basic Allocation to minimally meet the service needs of students. **Targeted funding for all students, with needs, would work best for our District.**

Not only is more support service funding required to properly address the needed resources and to increase the Southeast Kootenay School District 91% six-year graduation completion rates for all students but more importantly to address the pathways of the other 9%, our precious learning challenged students.

Please give careful consideration to our special education funding.

Sincerely,



Frank Lento, Board Chair

See attached table: Special Education Figures

Cc*: John Horgan, Premier, BC New Democratic Party
Shirley Bond, Interim Leader, BC Liberal Party
Sonia Furstenau, Leader, BC Green Party
Tom Shypitka, MLA Kootenay East BC
Jackie Tegart, Education Critic BC Liberal Party
Stephanie Higginson, President, BCSTA
BCSTA for distribution to member Boards of Education
Teri Mooring, President BC Teachers' Federation
Andrea Sinclair, President, BCCPAC
Shelley Balfour & Chris Kielpinski, CFTA Co-Chairs
Tara McKee, DPAC Chair
Aaron Thorn, President, SD5 Administrators' Association
107.5 Today FM Radio
Drive 102.9/B104 Radio
Cranbrook Daily Townsman
Elk Valley Herald
e-know Online News
Fernie Free Press

*This correspondence is public and transparent. Please feel free to share and/or respond with comment.

**SD5 Southeast Kootenay
Special Education Figures**

Table 1

21/22 Estimates	Students	% of SD5
Level 1 - A, B	12	0.2%
Level 2 - C-G	271	4.8%
Level 3 - H	178	3.1%
K, Q, R, P	278	4.9%
	739	13.0%
SD5 Students	<u>5,700</u>	

Table 2

	21/22		20/21		19/20	
MoE SPED Funding	\$ 8,453,320	13.2%	\$ 7,744,100	12.1%	\$ 8,387,200	13.6%
SD5 Additional	\$ 4,947,918	7.7%	\$ 4,081,491	6.4%	\$ 3,998,683	6.5%
SD5 Budget	\$ 66,466,727		\$ 64,163,377		\$ 61,894,407	

Table 3

MoE Funding	21/22	Increase	20/21	Increase	19/20
Level 1	\$ 44,850	4.3%	\$ 43,000	1.4%	\$ 42,400
Level 2	\$ 21,280	4.3%	\$ 20,400	1.0%	\$ 20,200
Level 3	\$ 10,750	4.4%	\$ 10,300	0.5%	\$ 10,250