



School District No. 67 (Okanagan Skaha) MEDIA RELEASE

(May 5, 2008)

At a regular public meeting today, the Board of Education of School District No. 67 (Okanagan Skaha) passed its 2008-09 budget at the level provided by the Ministry of Education plus local revenue. The provincial operating grant is \$54,423,441 and the total 2008-09 budget is \$57,982,958.

Our district's provincial operating grant for 2008-09 was increased by \$970,795. This funding was based on \$1,677,371 to support employee labour settlement costs and a reduction of \$706,579 mostly due to our projected enrolment decline of 100 students.

Budget increases for 2008-09 are primarily for employee contract and benefit costs plus rising fuel costs. Budget reductions include staffing adjustments associated with the 100 student enrolment decline, a \$212,000 reduction in programs and funding approved for 2007-08 based on the availability of 2006-07 surplus and a \$100,000 saving due to the estimated utility cost and operating savings of the new Penticton Secondary School building planned for opening this September. During the budget review process a number of funding sources were identified including an estimated revenue increase from the provincial funding holdback, an identification of \$200,000 of surplus funds estimated from the 2007-08 budget year and a number of other revenue and expense adjustments. In total the district has identified a budget amount of \$283,500 available for 2008-09 service enhancements or to maintain current services funded from the 2006-07 surplus.

Each year the Board of Education approves a consultative process to support the budget development. Consultation for the 2008-09 budget included a public meeting and individual meetings with employee groups and the school planning councils/parent advisory councils. Based on information gathered at the consultation meetings and consideration of goals and initiatives of the Board, the following additions have been approved by the Board of Education for the 2008-09 budget:

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| Middle school teachers – increase of prep time | 1.30 FTE | \$ 112,580 |
| Certified education assistant – coordinator position | 1.00 FTE | 47,000 |
| District goals – resource funding | | 30,000 |
| Flex funds | | 84,000 |
| Health and Wellness support | | 10,000 |

Board Chair Larry Little noted that although School District No. 67 has limited funds to add services in the 2008-09 budget the district was fortunate to be able to make additions. “A recent education review of our district has resulted in positive feedback of our education enhancement initiatives. This budget will provide support for continued work for student achievement,” said Little.

The provincial funding includes a holdback of \$84.5 million identified for enrolment growth during 2008-09. If funds are found to be in excess of the requirement for enrolment growth they are committed for a general funding increase. Enrolment will be counted and funded based on September 30th, January 2009 and May 2009 enrolments.

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