



February 7, 2024

RE: Kamloops-Thompson Board of Education Meets with MLAs Milobar, Stone, and Tegart

The Board of Education met with MLAs Todd Stone, Peter Milobar, and Jackie Tegart on January 23, 2024, to review SD73 capital needs and budget pressures, and discuss emerging issues of importance.

Capital Needs Discussion

Board Chair Grieve provided an overview of the fast pace of growth of enrolment (250 students/elementary school per year) in the Kamloops-Thompson School District. Approximately 8% or 1200 students learn outside of the core of the school in portables— 50 portables are attached to 17 schools, which is 35% of our schools. This means that students have less accessible space to learn in small groups or one-on-one or to relocate to a sensory space to decompress. Portables are required to manage enrolment growth on a temporary basis; yet, they have become a long-term solution while waiting for new schools. SD73 has spent approximately \$6.372 M from 2018-2023 on portables (purchasing, installing, servicing, maintaining, moving).

Capital Advocacy Priorities Discussed:

Batchelor Heights: Advocacy to expedite Crown Grant application.

- February 4, 2023- Board thanked Mr. Gord Humphrey for expediting the Crown Grant application locally.
- November 2023- the District was given information that the Crown Grant application is still under review in Victoria. MLA Nathan Cullen was assigned the task of reorganizing what is now officially known as the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development into two government departments, which has slowed Crown Grant approvals.
- December 13, 2023 - Board sent a letter to Minister Cullen to expedite the Crown Grant application and cited the previous promise to expedite.
- Project Definition Report is complete.

Aberdeen Site: Advocacy to Secure \$7.5M to Purchase the Land

- In 5 years, students in southwest Kamloops will need a secondary school.
- Current secondary schools are projected to be at 146% capacity.
- April 11, 2022- Board wrote to Minister Whiteside asking for support to purchase land for the Aberdeen secondary school for a price of \$6.1M prior to December 31, 2022.
- As of January 18, 2023, the Board had received School Site Acquisition Charge funds, approximately \$163,000 to contribute to the purchase of the land.
- April 18, 2023 and July 24, 2023-Board advocated again to the Ministry of Education and Child Care and now the price of the land is \$7.5M.

Sun Peaks: Advocacy for Funding Support for School of Portables

- School of all portables in 3 different locations within the municipality.
- 1 location is on the ski hill.
- No multi-purpose rooms or common gathering spaces.
- Staff are serving 3 locations by travelling to them.
- Board motion (March 2020) to fully integrate grade 8 and 9.
- The Board purchased the portable (\$ 136,000) for Gr. 8-9 at P2. Students access the washroom in the portable owned by Sun Peaks Municipality.
- Rented conference centre for Grades 4-7 due to enrolment growth (\$ 74,000).
- Purchased 2 portables and site works to go to P5 (Gr. 4-7) (\$ 1,908,000).
- Maintenance of portables: P5, P2- SD 73 Repairs and Maintenance.
- Portables “on the hill” (SD73 pays \$25,000/year).

Playgrounds: Advocacy for New Funding to Make Existing Playgrounds Accessible

- Existing playgrounds do not have the same or any accessible equipment as a new playground would have.
- We have multiple requests for adding accessible equipment to existing playgrounds.
- The Board is bringing forward this motion at the British Columbia School Trustees Association AGM.

Operating Budget Discussion

There was no increase in the per student FTE rate this year to address inflationary pressures, and COVID-19 funding was not allocated again this year.

- Expectations for providing supplies (masks, hand sanitizer, MERV-13 filters, increased ventilation) continue without the funding.
- Relief costs exceeded budget by \$2.044M in the 2022-2023 school year due increased absenteeism, the change in the Employment Standards Act sick leave provisions and due to the expectations of regional health authorities.

If you have any questions, please contact us:

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