

EDUCATION FUNDING UPDATES

This information has been put together by the Education Funding Committee of the Deep Cove Parent Advisory Council to help inform parents and families about the funding cuts affecting our schools.

Part I: Education Funding Updates newsletter
distributed in October 2009

Education Funding Facts

For many years funding for public education in BC has not kept up with increasing costs. As a result class sizes are bigger, programs are being cut back and important repair and maintenance work is left undone.

The Deep Cove PAC executive has prepared this newsletter to explore some of the issues that contribute to the current financial crisis in public schools. It also details the impact of the latest round of cuts on Deep Cove School and on the Saanich School District. Our sources of information are the Ministry of Education, the Saanich School District, the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC), the BC Teachers Federation, the Centre for Civic Governance and local newspapers (links to these sources can be found on our PAC website at www.deepcovepac.ca) We also obtained information from our principal Rob Carere, the district superintendent Keven Elder, the Board Chair MaryLynne Rimer and the district Secretary-Treasurer Joan Axford and we wish to thank them for taking the time to share their knowledge with us and answer our questions. We hope that you will find this information helpful.

We believe that all children have the right to a high-quality, publicly funded education. Furthermore, today's children deserve the same opportunities as those who were schooled ten or fifteen years ago. It is part of the PAC's mandate to inform parents and to advocate for the families who use the public education system. As your elected representatives, it is time that we ask you about your views on this issue, and about how you recommend that your views be communicated.

Please send us lots of e-mails with feedback as well as any other information and links you come across. We will do our best to share them with other Deep Cove parents. We look forward to develop a strategy and a strong parent voice together in response to the challenges facing our schools.

Martine Lunke, Christine Kenwood, Grace Owen, Tara Houle and Karen Gartside

This expanded version of the special PAC newsletter on education funding will be updated as new information comes along. It also includes references and links to useful websites where you can find more information on the topic.



The BC government is asking for some feedback about the budget.

You can take part in a brief survey at

<https://www.leg.bc.ca/budgetconsultations/survey.asp>

Deadline is October 23, 2009.

Please send us your feedback

Martine Lunke (martinelunke@shaw.ca)
Christine Kenwood (c.kenwood@shaw.ca)
Grace Owen (graceowen@shaw.ca)
Karen Gartside (karen.gartside@shaw.ca)
Tara Houle (houle@shaw.ca)

More information on the topic and some useful links can be found on our PAC website

www.deepcovepac.ca

Gaming grants to PACs cut in half

As education funding gets cut back, the PACs are increasingly paying for things such as fieldtrips and teaching resources. The BC government has cut grants to PACs in half this year, so PACs are relying more and more on fundraising. This increases the disparities between rich and poor schools. As we all know, it takes both time and disposable income to fundraise!



How is it affecting Deep Cove School?

The Deep Cove School budget has been cut by 12% over last year, although the number of students has essentially remained the same (360 last year, 362 this year). This figure does not include the teachers' salaries, which are paid directly by the district. These cuts will affect the classrooms in many ways.

The **class sizes in the intermediate grades are larger**, with 4 classes of 28 students. In the primary grades, we lucked out: because the district average was higher than what is allowed by the Ministry of Education, SD63 hired an additional teacher...and we were lucky to get Mrs. Curnow teaching in the English program. Welcome to Deep Cove!

Staff:

We have lost **half of our counsellor time** (half a day a week, versus a full day last year) and it will take much longer for children to access counselling services.

We have also lost **one half day of librarian time** as well as some librarian assistant time, which will limit the time available to manage the book collection and assist teachers find appropriate resources for their teaching. The administration and administration support time has also been reduced.

Programs:

There is **no funding for the SWOC program** (students with outstanding capacities), a program that had been run by Diane Sarty for many years on Friday afternoons. The **Itinerant Music Teacher** position has been cut: our kids will no longer benefit from specialized music instruction.

Fieldtrips:

The money for fieldtrips has been slashed by 71%. Schools may charge parents a fee only for fieldtrips that are considered extracurricular. We can therefore expect to have fewer fieldtrips that are relevant to the curriculum, unless they are paid for by the PAC.

Others:

There are so many cuts, where do we even start? The money to bring in artists (dues and fees) is eliminated, and so is the money allocated to implement the school planning goals. Consumable supplies have been reduced by 7.5%, learning resources by 12.6%. Also significant is the loss of the money allocated to release teachers from their teaching duties so that they can take on positions of leadership in bringing new technologies or methods to the school.

Building maintenance and repairs:

Basically, that will have to wait until the provincial government restores the annual facilities grant, which is not in their official plan for the next 3 years. I will just give one example to illustrate the impacts of this cut: our computer lab. This summer, a bunch of vandals were partying on the school roof and broke part of the air conditioning unit that keeps our windowless computer lab from overheating. The deductible on the insurance is \$3,000 and the district can not find this money in their very tight budget, so it will not be repaired. Also, we now have 7 computers on the same electrical circuit and the fuse blows every time they are all turned on at the same time...but no money is available for electrical upgrades. Let's just hope our computers survive the school year.





In the Province: the Big Issues

The total amount of money spent on public education in BC has been increasing every year; however, **the increases have not kept up with the costs of providing the same level of service.** In its report entitled “When more is less”, the Centre for Civic Governance estimates the shortfall at \$132 million for the 2008/2009 school year. As a result most school districts are experiencing financial difficulties. Many factors contribute to this crunch:

- *Declining enrolment and current Per-Student Funding Formula:* Student enrolment in the province has declined by 8.5% since 2000-2001. With the current funding formula implemented in 2002, the operating grant for each school district is determined primarily by the number of students enrolled. **For 2009-2010, the estimated per-student amount is \$8,323** (half for kindergarten kids). In other words, for every student that a school district loses, it receives \$8,323 less in funding. However, many costs remain the same. Whether 25 or 20 students are in a class, the teacher still needs to be paid, the school needs to be heated and lit and cleaned, and the support staff, administrators, librarians are still required. **Our school district estimates that for each student that leaves the system, only \$2,828 can be saved.**
- *Labour settlements:* In 2006 the BC Teachers Federation negotiated and signed a labour agreement with the province of British Columbia. This settlement was negotiated fairly, agreed upon by both sides and has prevented labour unrest since then. All BC public school districts are bound by this agreement. It would therefore be

reasonable to expect that the province, having granted the increases in salaries and benefits, would fully finance the resulting increase in labour costs for the districts. The labour settlement costs for the 2008–2009 year were \$137 million, yet the total operating grants only increased by a total of \$122 million (or 15 million short). For the 2009-2010 year, the labour cost settlements are estimated to add an additional \$100 million to the labour cost, but the total provincial grant was only increased by \$84.4 million. **Therefore, once the labour settlement is accounted for, almost all public school districts actually receive less discretionary money each year.** This is expected to continue next year.

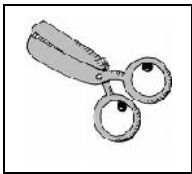
- *Increasing mandates:* In 2007 School Boards were given **additional responsibilities for early learning and community literacy.** There were no new funds allocated specifically for these purposes, so the increased mandates have to be funded out of the regular operating budget.
- *Other cost pressures:* Inflation, increase cost of energy for heating and transportation, the carbon tax and the implementation of various new programs and requirements (distributed learning, GAAP, targeted literacy, arts and special needs, summer school and course challenge)
- *Cancellation of the Annual Facilities Grant:* In September the government announced the cancellation of the funding to repair and maintain school facilities. Many schools had done work during the summer months in order to avoid disruptions and noise during the school year. These works will have to be paid for with money taken from the general operating budgets, putting many districts in a deficit position, and many essential repairs will not be done.



Saanich School District: 15 years of cutting back

There have been cuts to our School District's operating budget for most of the last 15 years, so why is the situation worse this year? Well, SD63 has now spent all its savings reserves and they have simply run out of easy things to cut! Most new cuts will affect the classrooms directly. Moreover, it looks like the cuts will continue: consultations about the next round are expected to begin in the spring.

A few figures to illustrate the situation:



-18.9 %: reduction of the operating budget of the Saanich School District (SD63) between 1995 and the summer of 2009, or **\$13.34**

million.

+31%: inflation in Canada over the same period of time

For 2009/10, the budget was cut back by **an additional \$ 3.6 million** and the impact is being felt everywhere.

- Class sizes throughout the district are bigger than ever, especially for the grades 4 to 12.
- many programs have been cut back. Students in middle and high school have fewer course options.
- There are fewer counsellors, teachers, librarians and education assistants.
- The District Resources Centre, a sort of district-wide "library" of shared educational resources, has been closed: all its contents are being distributed amongst all the classes, making it much more difficult to locate and share these valuable learning tools.

This is not the end of the cutbacks: according to Joan Axford, secretary-treasurer for SD63, there are several more dark clouds on the horizon.

- The cancellation of the *Annual Facilities Grant*, announced at the end of the summer, has hit the district hard. This grant is used to maintain and repair buildings and has been about \$1.5 million per year in the past. SD63 had begun some of the work over the summer and had spent \$ 554,000 prior to the announcement. They are unsure how they will make up the shortfall. About \$800,000 in further projects have been cancelled, including the building of handicapped access and the renovations of classrooms. Worryingly, the Ministry of Education has issued a 3 year budget plan, but the Annual Facilities Grant does not reappear in the next 3 years.
- *Debt Financing:* The Ministry of Education has reneged on a signed agreement to finance the debt that the district had incurred to build Kelset School and to upgrade Royal Oak and Prospect Lake Schools. This means a loss of \$544,000 for the school district. The school board is currently trying to persuade the Ministry to honour their side of the contract.
- *Harmonized Sales Tax:* schools get a 68% rebate on GST and are exempt from the PST for many purchases. There are no plans to include such tax breaks for schools with the HST, and this could cost SD63 up to \$600,000 per year.
- *Declining enrolment:* student enrolment in the district is expected to continue declining until 2012, bringing the total decline to 25% of the student population.

"I have no complaints and only admiration for the work that Deep Cove staff does with our kids (and my kid especially ;) and I am astounded that morale is still so high given the constant financial grinding down and

concomitant cutting and slashing of people and programs. It is hard to be angry at the education system when I am happy with what is happening with my child. Yet I've learned that if there is going to be any courses left but the bare minimum by the time my son hits high school and if I want him to have at least a few classes that are small enough for the teacher to get to know him by name, I am going to have to act."

A Deep Cove mom

**Links to Additional Information on Education Funding in BC and
References for the sources of information used in the newsletter:**

- *When more is less: education funding in BC*, issued by the Centre for Civic Governance. This very readable and informative document is available at <http://www.civicgovernance.ca/files/uploads/WhenMoreisLess.pdf>
- Background information about the challenges facing the Saanich School District can be found at <http://www.sd63.bc.ca/DeptFinance.htm>
- Of particular interest is the document entitled *2009/10 Budget Challenge* available at <http://www.sd63.bc.ca/resources/DeptFinance/2009-10%20Budget/Backgrounder%202009-10%20Budget.pdf>
- Ministry of education website: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/bced/>
- *Ministry of Education 2008/09 Summary of key information* : <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/keyinfo/pdfs/ski09.pdf>
- On the BC Teacher's Federation website, an article entitled "*Reading between the lines*" by Margaret White <http://bctf.ca/publications/NewsmagArticle.aspx?id=18284>
- The Tyee had a few good articles on education funding: check the following. *BC's Education Budget Faces "Structural Shortfall"* at <http://thetyee.ca/News/2009/05/11/EdAdmin/print.html>
How the Province Erased \$22 Million in School Funds at <http://thetyee.ca/Views/2007/03/13/SchoolFunds/print.html> *Why BC Schools Are Always Short of Money* at <http://thetyee.ca/News/2009/02/11/SchoolDollars/print.html>
- Times Colonist had several articles on education funding on September 11, 2009. <http://www.timescolonist.com/life/Charity+grants+guaranteed+Coleman+says/1983051/story.html>
<http://www.timescolonist.com/business/Funding+cuts+leave+schools+scrambling+solutions/1983099/story.html> <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/todays-paper/Coleman+says+parent+groups+with+cuts/1983110/story.html> <http://www.timescolonist.com/life/remarkably+string+school+cuts/1983115/story.html>
- The Peninsula News Review of September 30, 2009 had an article and an editorial on the issue http://www.bclocalnews.com/vancouver_island_south/peninsulanewsreview/news/62624157.html
http://www.bclocalnews.com/vancouver_island_south/peninsulanewsreview/opinion/62625307.html
- The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Council's website: <http://www.bccpac.bc.ca>
-

ACTION STEPS

- **Send your feedback to the Deep Cove PAC** (see contacts at the bottom of the newsletter)
- **Fill in the survey at <https://www.leg.bc.ca/budgetconsultations/survey.aspt>**. Deadline is October 23, 2009
- **Write letters to the editor** in the Times Colonist (max 250 words) or in the Peninsula News Review. Write in with your comments whenever there are features on the topic of education funding on the radio.
- **Phone or write to your MLA or to the Minister of Education:**

Hon. Murray Coell
MLA Saanich North and the Islands
Suite F, 2412 Beacon Avenue
Sidney, BC
V8L 1X4
(250) 655 5711

The Honourable Margaret Mac Diarmid
Minister of Education
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4
(250) 387 197

Part II: Update for the *PAC News* newsletter of November 2009

EDUCATION FUNDING UPDATES



Remember the provincial government's budget consultation survey? The results have just been released and many British Columbians have spoken out and made it clear that health care and public education are their top priorities. As a result, the Finance Committee made several

important recommendations to the government about K-12 education funding.

The Finance committee recommends that the Government:

- 1) **Work with the boards of education to conduct a comprehensive review of the education funding formula.** With the current funding formula, each school district receives a grant based on the number of students enrolled. Many of the oral and written submissions made to the FC stressed that this system does not adequately cover additional expenses incurred by the districts such as increased labour costs and Medical Services Plan premiums, higher utility bills, bussing costs, building maintenance costs and the carbon tax.
- 2) **Treat the Annual Facilities Grant as a high priority for funding in the 2010/11 Budget.** The grants provided districts with resources to undertake essential maintenance projects such as roof replacements, electrical systems upgrades and asbestos abatement. The loss of the grant has placed many districts in a deficit position and some districts have declared that it will result in additional costs down the road as planned preventative maintenance will be deferred to future years.
- 3) **Ensure that the implementation of all-day kindergarten is fully funded.** In addition to the hiring of new teachers, there will be costs associated with moving portable classrooms to some schools, furnishing the classrooms and developing a full-time curriculum.
- 4) **Work cooperatively with the boards of education on a review of the administrative and reporting requirements for each school district and within the Ministry of Education.** During the consultation process, some districts noted that the workload for principals, vice-principals and senior staff has increased immensely, due to report preparation, data collection, implementation of government priorities, and reduced staffing.
- 5) **Enhance capacity within ministries and the community level so that planning and funding of adult literacy services are effective and well coordinated.**

Voices from across the province

Selected excerpts of submissions made to the Finance Committee

"The government needs to provide a funding formula over a three-year cycle that is predictable, sustainable and meets the growing educational needs of our students, our schools and our communities. Investment in education today is an

investment in the future. It must be the government's top priority." (Sharel Warrington, Board of Education, School District No. 57 (Prince George))

"Transportation funding has not increased since 2001, in spite of rising fuel and labour costs. This has put increasing pressures on our system. Given that we bus approximately 50 percent of the students in School District No. 8, this is forcing us to supplement our transportation budget with funds from other sources, which has been exacerbated by the impact of the loss of the annual facilities grant." (Patricia Dooley, Board of Education, School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake),

"All-day kindergarten is another example of a commendable policy that will have a negative impact on all the rest of the education system...Where will the funds come from? Unless there is more funding, they can only come from reducing resources for other parts of the system." (Irene Lanzinger, British Columbia Teachers' Federation, Written submission 686)

"There continues to be pressures that hinder a reduction in administrative areas – provincial data collection systems, monthly financial and capital reporting, GRE reporting, criminal record check requirements, health and safety changes, carbon usage reporting and class size reporting." (MaryLynne Rimer, Board of Education, School District No. 63 (Saanich), Written submission 212)

"We're counting on a restoration of our facilities funding of \$10.6 million as we have work that must be done, such as asbestos abatement, building component upgrades, fire alarm testing and building envelope protection. If the annual facilities grant isn't restored, the funds to do that work will have to come straight out of classrooms." (Patti Bacchus, Board of Education, School District No. 39 (Vancouver))

"Many boards have aging facilities in need of remediation or replacement. The recent loss of the annual facilities grant has significantly worsened the situation. Boards lost funds for roofing project or a significant heating-ventilation project. If there is an incident — an emergency roof repair or a boiler blows in some cases — boards really don't know what they're going to do at this point without those reserves in place." (Connie Denesiuk, British Columbia School Trustees Association)

"The increased mandate for boards of education to include community literacy, adult learning and early learning has put additional pressure on the system." (Teresa Rezansoff, Board of Education, School District No. 51 (Boundary))

The entire report on the 2010 Budget Consultation can be found at
<http://www.leg.bc.ca/CMT/39thparl/session-1/fgs/reports/HTML/Rpt-FGS-39-1-1stRpt-Budget2010Consultations-2009-NOV-13.htm#K12Edu>

Part III: Update for the PAC News newsletter of
January 2010-04-17

Education funding cutbacks: time to get ready for the next round.

Did you know?

In 2009/2010, School District 63 implemented \$3.6 million in budget cuts, resulting in the most significant teacher reduction in Saanich history. As a result:

- the number of classes over 30 students increased from 54 in 2008/09 to 82 in 2009/10
- The number of classes with more than 3 designated (special needs) students rose from 142 in 2008/09 to 189 in 2009/10.

But it is not over yet, oh no! The next round of cuts is appearing on the horizon. The first draft of the School District's Operating Budget indicates **a shortfall of \$2.7 million for 2010/2011**, or in other words, the budget will have to be cut by another 3.85%. According to documents posted on SD63's website, *"Government Funding projections outline that increases to funding for 2010/11 will only cover full day kindergarten enrolment in 50 percent of schools/districts with no increase in funding to cover the teacher July 1, 2010 labour settlement, medical service plan increase, HST implementation, teacher pension contribution increase, and carbon offset costs"*. In other words, the school district is expected to cover much greater costs with far less money. More cuts in teacher positions and programs seem unavoidable. The question is: what are we going to cut this time? Expect some School Communities and Public Meetings in March and April of 2010, and in the meantime, let's remind our politicians that a good public education is vital to the health of British Columbia.

Another interesting piece of news last week was the ruling by arbitrator James Dorsey that said that school districts have to compensate 10 teachers (2 from SD63) who had to teach classes with more than 30 students, or with more than 3 designated special needs students, by giving them extra days off or extra pay. The ruling also states that the government should fully finance the additional costs incurred by the school districts to comply with the legislation on class size and composition, which was introduced in 2006 as Bill 33. *"If there isn't enough money to meet Bill 33 standards, the government should retract them and "explain to parents and teachers why the standards are no longer desirable or achievable,"* the ruling states. Concerned about the financial impact that this decision might have on our school district, I asked Joan Axford, secretary-treasurer for SD63, for some clarifications. Here is her reply: *"The cost for the 2 teachers is about \$1,000 if they take the release time awarded. It is clear in the ruling that it does not establish a ruling on other classes but does provide some guidance on what is reasonable. The school district normally offers release time and did in the case of these two classes. We have a small budget for class size consultations. At this point we do not intend to increase that budget based on this ruling"*. In other words, this ruling is not expected to put too much financial pressure on our school district for the time being.

Part IV: Update sent as a separate newsletter in April
2010:

Education Funding: the pizza dilemma

EDUCATION FUNDING CUTS...AGAIN! WHERE DO WE CUT \$ 3.4 MILLION?



It is all over the news... again. Many school districts in the province are grappling with tough budget decisions, as the money they receive falls short of covering the cost of the school programs that are

mandated by the provincial government. **Our school district is no exception, with an estimated shortfall for the 2010/2011 school year of \$3.4 million**, and this despite some recently announced increases in the education budget by the province.

Why is this happening?

In brief, the costs of education are increasing because of many factors that are beyond the school board's control. Chief amongst them are the increases in teacher salaries negotiated by the provincial government, the increases to the teacher pension plan and medical services plan contributions, the delivery of new programs such as the full day kindergarten and early literacy initiatives, the increase in the price of energy for heating and transportation, increases in taxes such as the carbon offsets and the new HST, fees for the new centralized computer system BCeSIS and so on. For more background information on some of these issues, see our previous newsletter at http://www.deepcoverpac.ca/PDF_files/20092010/Education%20Funding%20Updates.pdf

What about the funding increases announced by the Ministry of Education in March?

On March 15, the Ministry of Education announced that they will spend an additional \$54 million to fully fund the teachers' wage settlement and \$58 million to fund the implementation of the full-day kindergarten program. In addition, the Annual Facilities Grant, which had been eliminated last year, will be restored to its previous level of \$110 million for 2010/2011¹. This is good news: it shows that public pressure and media coverage can influence high-level decision making. As a result of these announcements, 26 of the province's school districts will see an increase in their operating grant, whereas the remaining 34 districts will

receive the same amount as last year^{2,3}. School District 63 will receive the same grant as last year.

Why doesn't our school district benefit from the funding increases?

In consultation with its education partners, the province has decided to change the formula that it uses to distribute the money to the various school districts. According to the Ministry of Education¹ "*The updated formula allocates the current labour settlement supplements through the existing population-based model, which is currently how the majority of funding is allocated... This change ensures equity across the province*". The new formula is not to SD63's advantage as it penalizes smaller districts with declining student enrolment. As a result, the new funds for the teacher salary increases and full-day kindergarten are completely cancelled by the loss of money due to enrolment decline and the funding formula changes.

If we get the same funding grant as last year, why does our district have to cut \$3.4 million from its budget?

The three biggest contributing factors are the loss of reserves, the new cost pressures and the loss of interest revenue⁴. In order to maintain the current level of services, the school district has utilized reserves to balance their budget since 2003/04. The reserves were built with money saved from school closures and savings between 2005 and 2007 in anticipation of leaner times ahead. The reserves are now quickly depleting and will no longer be available to finance programs. The reserves are like a savings account that you would dip into when your income no longer covers your living expenses. Once it is depleted, you have to either make more money or reduce your living expenses. The loss of reserves means that the

To give your feedback on the proposed budget cuts, come to the
SD63 Public Budget Meeting
Wednesday April 21 at 7 pm
Bayside Middle School

or submit it by e-mail at
budget@sd63.bc.ca

school district will have to cut about \$ 1.5 million from its operating budget in the coming year. The loss of interest revenue (\$250,000) stems from the loss of the reserves, but also from the fact that the government now gives money to the districts throughout the year as opposed to giving larger sums at the beginning of the school year, thus the government now pockets the interest revenue instead of the school districts. The new cost pressures facing the district amount to \$1.36 million and are outlined in “*What is happening?*” The increased costs associated with pensions and benefits plans are considerable and are mostly outside the control of the Board. In addition, numerous new taxes and fees are downloaded to the school districts and new programs need to be implemented without proper compensation from the provincial government

What is BCeSIS?

BCeSIS stands for British Columbia Electronic Student Information System. It is a commercial software that all public and independent schools in BC will use to track the academic achievements and attendance records of students. The cost to implement the system and train staff to use it is considerable (\$80 million province-wide by some estimates^{5,6}). In addition, each school district has to pay a licensing fee. The yearly fee for SD63 is \$80,000⁴.

The per-pupil funding formula

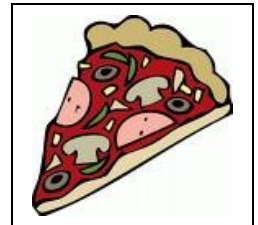
The per-pupil funding formula does not recognize the fixed costs of operating and maintaining schools and places an extra burden on the majority of school districts in the province which are facing a declining student enrolment. Our school district is expected to lose 63 students due to declining enrolment next year². These students will be spread between 13 grade levels, 14 schools and different programs. The school district can not necessarily regroup the remaining students in fewer classes and save the cost of the teachers’ salaries. Moreover, the schools still need to be maintained and the non-teaching staff still needs to be paid. Thus, the school district loses much more funds when enrolment numbers decline than what it can make up in savings.

What are the budget reduction options?

Basically, everything is on the table. A full list of the reductions being considered can be found on the sd63 website at <http://www.sd63.bc.ca>. Please look it up. Because the school district spends most of its money in salaries, mostly for people working directly with the kids, the impact is going to be felt strongly in the classrooms. That is unavoidable. We can expect reduced support for students with special needs, which will affect all the students as the teachers will have to struggle to meet everybody’s needs. We can expect fewer counsellors, fewer librarians, more fundraising and fees for special programs such as fieldtrips or band, and larger class sizes especially at the secondary school level (remember that your children will get there before you know it!).

The Pizza dilemma

You have 15 kids coming for dinner and you have only one pizza. How do you share it? If everybody gets an equal slice, then everybody will be hungry. Some kids are hungrier than others to start with. Bob is growing so fast, and Leslie and Anne are coming straight from a long soccer practice, so they will be starving. Casey is so small and skinny, she surely needs more food. And how are we going to accommodate Sam who is a vegan, and Phil who is allergic to dairy? How are we going to split this pizza fairly? Or are we simply asking the wrong question here. Maybe the question should be, “**Why don’t we have more pizza?**” Why don’t we have enough money to maintain our existing programs and give each child the help they need to succeed with their education?



Yes we can!

- Write to your MLA, to the education minister, to the editor of local newspapers.
- **Come to the Public Budget meeting on Wednesday April 21 at 7 pm at Bayside Middle School.**



Still suffering from the “Olympics are over” letdown? Want to believe in something again? Check this really cute video of kids who believe in

*public education, from the West Coast Save Our
Schools Committee in Ucluelet.*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KtjL0azX-U>

Links and references:

- 1) Ministry of Education Information Bulletin
http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010EDUC0015-000269.htm
- 2) Ministry of Education
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/docs/2010/fs_PreliminaryOperatingGrants_100315.pdf
- 3) Janet Steffenhaugen's blog in the Vancouver Sun
<http://communities.canada.com/VANCOUVERSUN/blogs/reportcard/archive/2010/03/16/no-additional-cash-for-33-of-60-school-districts.aspx>
- 4) 2010-2011 School Communities Meeting Presentation on SD63 website
http://www.sd63.bc.ca/resources/2010_11%20School%20Communities%20Presentation%2007April%202010.pdf and information gathered at the School Communities Meeting on April 7, 2010.
- 5) Information on Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BCeSIS>
- 6) BC Teachers' Federation : Teacher newsmagazine
<http://bctf.ca/publications/NewsmagArticle.aspx?id=10454>
<http://bctf.ca/publications/NewsmagArticle.aspx?id=17540>