



News Release

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Additional classroom support the focus of Surrey Board of Education 2008-2009 preliminary budget

Elimination of cosmetic herbicide use also funded

There will be 17 more teachers and 39 additional education assistants in Surrey School District classrooms to start the next school year, according to preliminary budget figures approved by the Surrey Board of Education at this evening's public meeting.

"This year, trustees had very limited flexibility to provide the many budget enhancements proposed by our stakeholders as slowing enrolment growth and other factors have left relatively little room for discretionary spending," says Surrey School Board Budget Committee chair Terry Allen. "However, the board continues to 'keep learners at the centre' with enhancements directly for student support. Trustees are also responding to concerns expressed about the use of herbicides in the district."

The board has budgeted \$292,000 to provide additional Special Education Assistant services for students in the district and it is providing \$195,000 to fund more costly weed control alternatives in order to eliminate the use of herbicides for cosmetic purposes. Other initiatives in the total \$1.6 million in budget enhancements include:

- Expansion of English-as-a-Second Language, full-day kindergarten programs
- Expansion of career and other trade programs
- School library technology upgrades

The board's operating budget is allocated 86 per cent to instructional and classroom support, 11 per cent to fund operations and maintenance, two per cent for district administration and one per cent to transportation.

The total 2008-09 preliminary operating budget of \$525.9 million includes \$500 million in Ministry of Education and other provincial government grants, and \$25.9 million in district-generated revenues and surpluses (rounded numbers).

The budget has been calculated based on the district's school-aged student enrolment projection (including on-line learners) of 63,597; an increase of 311 students over the previous year. The final school district operating grant will be based on the September 30, 2007 enrolment count and any adjustments to the preliminary budget will be made after that date.

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