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SD43 Board Approves Positive Budget for 2016-2017

(Coquitlam, BC – April 27, 2016) The School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) Board of Education is pleased to announce it has approved the 2016-2017 budget - which includes the hiring of teachers and support staff to enhance teaching and learning in classrooms and schools.

Budgeted positions to be added for the coming school year include additional classroom teachers, a speech and language pathologist, a psychologist, more lunchtime supervisors, principals/vice-principals, a school maintenance position, and a technology coordinator, as well as funding for operational support needs. Available funds were allocated in the most effective way to maximize the learning and support for all students.

The Board of Education is committed to financial transparency and accountability and its budget objective is to provide long-term stability and sustainability for the district's education system. In support of that objective, the Board passed the \$290 million budget that provides for positive incremental changes within a financial framework of strategic multi-year financial planning. This allows for smoothing of future year budget fluctuations resulting from funding inadequacy and assists in managing unforeseen expenditure risks.

Despite several years of budget constraints, the district's achievement levels are exceptional with a 6 year graduation rate that is first in Metro Vancouver. "We've had to make some difficult strategic financial decisions on the allocation of our limited resources but our exceptional achievement levels are testimony to the great work our teachers, support staff, administrators, parents and other stakeholders do towards achieving and sustaining these positive student outcomes," stated Judy Shirra, Chair, Board of Education of SD43.

The school district continues to face funding uncertainty, frequent adoption of new and unfunded initiatives, and rising costs, while funding from the Ministry of Education does not maintain pace with inflationary pressures. In fact, Coquitlam is the third lowest per student funded district in BC (58th of 60 school districts) yet is the third largest and one of the most complex districts in BC.

To supplement low Ministry funding the school district continues to seek alternate revenue sources including International Education which realized another banner year for enrolment and profitability. "We are pleased about the continued success of our international program and the budget contributions it makes towards enhancing teaching and learning in our entire district," noted Patricia Gartland, Superintendent and founder of the district's international education program.

While this year's budget provides for positive incremental additions for the coming school year, and is a very positive step in the right direction, Board of Education and district leadership acknowledge that they will continue to advocate for more funding for future years.

The district continues to advocate to government for more funding through meetings with the Minister of Education, Deputy Ministers and local MLAs to express concerns about the lack of provincial funding. Advocacy also occurs through provincial organizations such as the BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA), the BC School Superintendent's Association (BCSSA), and the BC Association of School Business Officials (BCASBO). SD43 partner groups including the Coquitlam Teacher's Association (CTA), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE Local 561), Coquitlam Principals' and Vice Principals' Association (CPVPA), District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) and others also advocate to government on behalf of the school district.

"The Board and the district leadership team continues working with our partner groups including the CTA, CUPE Local 561, CPVPA, DPAC, and others to send a clear and unified message to government that our district needs more funding and a more equitable funding model for BC's education system overall," said Shirra.

Details of the budget process, financial statements, FAQs, and other information can be found on the SD43 2016-2017 budget website at: <http://www.sd43.bc.ca/budget/Pages/Budget2016-2017.aspx>

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