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SD43 Board Approves Positive Budget for 2018-2019

(Coquitlam, B.C. – April 25, 2018) The School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) Board of Education is pleased to announce it has approved the 2018-2019 budget which includes adding resources to enhance teaching and learning in classrooms and schools for all students.

Guided by *Directions 2020*, the district's strategic vision and goals, the Board of Education passed the \$374 million total budget, of which \$313 million is the operating budget, which includes additions of \$2 million for the 2018-2019 year.

Key outcomes from last year were the elimination of past debt, ahead of schedule, and the elimination of the \$23 million unfunded Employee Future Benefit liability bringing greater certainty to SD43's financial stability. This year, three significant accomplishments which have shaped the school district that will have a lasting impact include: the implementation of the class size and composition ruling resulting in the addition of the required resources into classrooms and schools; the addition of thousands of new technology devices into schools; and the agreement to close the Non-Teaching Pension Plan and transition employees to the Municipal Pension Plan which will allow the district to redirect ongoing annual solvency payments and invest those funds back into the classroom and educational programs in support of student success. This later achievement provides greater stability and funding certainty for many years to come.

For the 2018-2019 budget, additional resources being added include 4.5 more teachers - despite a projected decline in student enrolment of 133 students for next year. This is in addition of up to 30 more teachers and 4 more educational assistants funded through the Classroom Enhancement Fund as part of the class size and composition agreement. To ensure sufficient teacher staffing for 2018-2019, SD43 has again eliminated the teacher layoff / recall process for the coming school year.

20 FTE Educational Assistants are being added to support students with special needs, as are additional supports for vulnerable students. Resources are being added to support career resource facilitators and library teaching assistants, music programs, expansion of digital literacy programs, increased investment in technology in schools, and classroom learning initiatives such as coding throughout the district.

Overall, this year's budget continues to provide resources in alignment with *Directions 2020* the district's strategic vision and goals. Fundamental to this continued allocation of resources is the strategic budget management approach of multi-year planning with incremental positive changes that allocate funds in the most effective way to maximize the learning and support for all students. This approach allows for smoothing of future year budget fluctuations resulting from funding inadequacy and assists in managing unforeseen expenditure risks.

"Guided by our strategic vision *Directions 2020*, our school district's continued strategic financial focus and decision-making over the past 3 years has stabilized our budget and added significant resources back into classrooms and schools, and this coming year we are very pleased to be continuing that pattern," stated Kerri Palmer Isaak, Chair, Board of Education of SD43.

The Board of Education's budget objective is to maintain a financially healthy, stable and sustainable school district for the long-term to continue achieving the district's vision and mission. The 2018-2019 budget helps achieve that and helps maintain the school district's exceptional student achievement levels which are consistently above the provincial average and some of the highest in B.C. across all categories.

"Positive relationships and engagement with our partner groups and stakeholders continues to be a priority for this Board and our District Leadership Team. Working collaboratively together we will continue to build upon the many successes of our students, employees and district as a whole," added Board Chair Palmer Isaak.

To supplement Ministry funding the school district continues to seek alternate revenue sources including our Continuing Education offerings and our International Education programs which realized another banner year for enrolment and profitability.

"We are very pleased with our continued positive budget position and the successful international program for its budget contributions which support the ongoing enhancement of teaching and learning, global knowledge and cultural experiences in our entire district," noted Patricia Gartland, Superintendent.

Details of the budget process, financial statements, FAQs, and other information can be found on the SD43 2018-2019 budget website at: <http://www.sd43.bc.ca/budget/Pages/Budget2018-2019.aspx>

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