

## Trustees slam cuts

Beleaguered trustees were scratching their heads about how to balance already-tight budgets after the government imposed even deeper cuts in the February provincial budget. Then Premier Christy Clark added insult to injury by describing the \$54 million shortfall districts have to absorb as “low-hanging fruit.” One after another, trustees have publicly called out the premier for her offensive remark. They also emphasized that further budget cuts will irreparably damage classroom conditions and the system as a whole.

### **SD 19 Revelstoke**

*He's [Fassbender] got this from every single school board in the province. It's something provincially we're all united on. ...*

*It is clear that protecting programs and services to students, in the face of increased costs and a lack of funding to meet those pressures, will be even more challenging than in previous years. ...*

*The low-hanging fruit has been gone for years. We're trying to get the message across that cuts do affect students. ...*

*There is an immediate need for an increase in funding to address the widening gap between revenues and expenses. We call on government to demonstrate a commitment to public education by allocating funding that reflects increased expenses related to conditions outside of our control.*

Alan Chell, past Chair of BCPSEA, [Revelstoke Times Review](#), March 31, 2015

### **SD 20 Kootenay-Columbia**

*It is very distressing for us to be cutting year after year. Our concept has always been to cut away from the classroom as far as we can.*

Darrel Ganzert, [Trail Daily Times](#), March 12, 2015

*Unfortunately it is in the fine print in the budget that has left school trustees and administrators feeling like they have been played for chumps. It was a ministry order for the province's 60 districts to find \$29 million in “administrative efficiencies”—also known as budget cuts – this year and an additional \$25 million in “efficiencies” next year. Keep in mind the cuts are cumulative and ongoing. So that's \$29 million this year and a total of \$54 million next year.*

Mark Wilson, [Trail Daily Times](#), March 20, 2015

### **SD 23 Central Okanagan**

*It's just a big worry. We've made so many cuts. We're so lean and found quite a lot of savings already.*

Moyra Baxter, [Kelowna Daily Courier](#), March 14, 2015

*In recent years, we have faced service reductions that have affected the classroom both directly and indirectly. The requirement for further cuts will only compromise the District's ability to deliver programs and services to our students.*

Moyra Baxter, [Kelowna Now](#), March 16, 2015

### **SD 33 Chilliwack**

*So much for the comments of low hanging fruit that happened way back in the 2000s. Cuts just keep coming and coming—it really seems an assault on public education.*

Silvia Dyck, [Chilliwack Times](#), March 4, 2015

### **SD 35 Langley**

*We've already got kids traipsing to school with paper and Kleenex. Maybe we can ask them to come with toilet paper.*

Megan Dykeman, [Langley Advance](#), March 11, 2015

### **SD 36 Surrey**

*Longtime Surrey school Trustee Laurae McNally called the government directive "completely unfair," saying the province is "penalizing" Surrey with the funding reduction as the district already has the lowest administrative costs of any of the 60 school districts in the province. "And it has been that way for years. You can't get any lower than number one."*

Laurae McNally, [Surrey Leader](#), February 28, 2015

### **SD 37 Delta**

*We are at a bit of a loss where we would go to find these efficiencies. ... It's not that we don't understand fiscal responsibility. We live it every day.*

Laura Dixon, [Surrey Leader](#), February 28, 2015

*There are assumptions being made by the ministry that there are further savings to go after when there are not.*

Laura Dixon, [The Province](#), February 23, 2015

### **SD 38 Richmond**

*We already have an arrangement with other school boards to purchase bulk supplies together to keep the cost down. And we've looked into combining payroll and human resource departments, but the savings were not that significant.*

Eric Yung, [Richmond News](#), Feb 24, 2015

### **SD 39 Vancouver**

*As our superintendent has said, it will be tough to balance our budget this year as it was last year, and certainly another \$2.9 million of unexpected cuts is not helpful.*

Christopher Richardson, [Vancouver Courier](#), February 18, 2015

### **SD 42 Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows**

*I don't honestly understand it. It feels like government is really disconnected from the front lines, in terms of what it takes to deliver education.*

Mike Murray, [Maple Ridge News](#), February 19, 2015

### **SD 47 Powell River**

*"And there does not seem to be any significant changes in the foreseeable future," said Scott, who wonders how the province's public education system is to remain "a leading jurisdiction on the international stage" with this funding trend.*

Jeanette Scott, [Powell River Peak](#), February 25, 2015)

### **SD57 Prince George**

*We are proponents of public education and when I see the savings we have to make going into the private schools, that concerns me.*

Tony Cable, [250 News](#), March 4, 2015

*It's almost like double speak because on one hand they're saying that we have to make these cuts out of administrative savings and we can't affect the classroom by them but on the other hand, they're taking part of per-student funding and applying it to capital (costs). ...*

*It's a fine line between really expressing our frustration and concern about this and having someone else step in and the board being replaced.*

Brenda Hooker, [Prince George Citizen](#), March 24, 2015

### **SD 63 Saanich**

*Saanich board chairwoman Victoria Martin said trustees across the Island were incensed by Clark's comments to reporters at the B.C. legislature last month. "I think there was a serious concern about the premier's lack of sensitivity and apparent lack of awareness of what school districts have been through in the last decade."*

Victoria Martin, [Times Colonist](#), March 25, 2015

### **SD 67 Okanagan Skaha**

*Superintendent Wendy Hyer described it as the province giving on one hand, but taking away on the other. "We have made cuts every year I was here," said Hyer. "Over the last years we have eliminated administrative positions, we've reduced clerical hours, we've reduced custodial hours. To suggest that we haven't cut the low-hanging fruit is an insult."*

Wendy Hyer, [Penticton Western News](#), March 14, 2015

## **SD 68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith**

*I'm all for consolidating services if it makes sense, but to me all they're is doing is trying to take everybody's eyes off the ball. The fact is the provincial government continues to underfund education.*

Steve Rae, [Nanaimo News Bulletin](#), March 31, 2015

## **SD 69 Qualicum**

*To believe that the past and future reductions in expenditures do not impact classrooms is unrealistic.*

Eve Flynn, [Times Colonist](#), March 25, 2015

*The professional growth of our teachers, guided by our district's educational leaders, will be disrupted and will have a direct impact on our student achievement.*

Eve Flynn, [Parksville Qualicum Beach News](#), March 26, 2015

## **SD 79 Cowichan Valley**

*It's a very difficult time for trustees. And it's been years where they've faced these challenging budget decreases. It's compounded the frustration because they're looking for increased funding and it's reversed by the government taking back funds.... That's where the upset is coming from: the lack of recognition that we really need the money."*

Candace Spilsbury, [Cowichan Valley Citizen](#), February 20, 2015

## **SD 83 North Okanagan Shuswap**

*We've already cut in so many areas which we hoped didn't affect the classroom too, too much, like custodial and administration. Last year, we had to cut things that do impact the classroom, like family life and library time, and this year the cuts are going to go even deeper. It's tough to do this.... We can no longer maintain the status quo," adds Johnson. "We have cut everywhere we can, and now we have to cut some more. We have to look at everything."*

Bobbi Johnson, [Castanet.net BC News](#) March 12, 2015

## **BC School Trustees**

"It's unacceptable," said Teresa Rezansoff, president of the B.C. School Trustees Association.

[The Province](#), February 23, 2015