

Vancouver School Board

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Vancouver School Board Reports Decrease in Enrolment Less Than Expected

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA--(CCNMatthews - Oct. 10, 2006) - A decrease in the September enrolment of students in Vancouver schools has now been finalized at 1,030 students, which is less than the 1,160 decline initially reported. Consequently, there have been fewer staff reassignments and program changes than expected.

The September enrolment was initially projected to be 54,627 students in the K-12 programs - 250 students less than the 2005-2006 school year. The actual number reported to the provincial Ministry of Education as of October 6 is 53, 847 indicating a decline of 780 students greater than the 250 student decline originally projected.

Enrolment declines have also been reported in the district's Adult Education and Distributed Learning (online) programs.

As a result of their decreased enrolments, 24 elementary schools and 11 secondary schools experienced some loss of teaching staffing. Of these, three elementary schools reorganized their classes to varying degrees and eight secondary schools adjusted their timetables to accommodate the changes.

The number of teaching assignments affected has declined from an original estimate of 70 full time equivalents (FTE) to 48 FTE. Of the 48 positions, 20 have been accounted for through unassigned positions and unfilled postings, leaving 28 teachers who have been reassigned within the school system.

Of the 28 teachers, 20 have been assigned to continuing or long-term roles and eight have been assigned to permanent Teacher On Call (TOC) positions, each of which is identified with a given school in the district.

It is anticipated each of these permanent Teachers On Call will be placed in continuing or long-term positions in the course of this year. There have been no employee layoffs as a result of this decline.

The overall enrolment decline combined with additional cost factors has resulted in a projected budget shortfall of \$5.04 million. Approximately half this amount has been addressed through the reassignment of positions, leaving a remaining shortfall of \$2.36 million.

"While we are thankful we have been able to make the changes to classes and staffing less widespread than originally estimated, we regret having to make any such changes to our programs and teaching assignments. There is an expectation by trustees that the remaining budget shortfall will be managed via other reductions within the system in order to minimize any further impact on students, schools or teachers," says Vancouver School Board chairperson Ken Denike. "All stakeholders will be made aware of our specific intentions in this regard in the near future."

A public meeting will be held in the Vancouver School Board offices beginning at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 11 to discuss factors leading to the decline in enrolment and the impact of measures taken to reduce the budget shortfall. Chris Kelly, Superintendent of Schools, says input from this meeting will assist the school district in its analysis of the factors related to declining enrolment.

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