

Dear Board of School Trustees,

Hello, my name is Payten Smith; I am a grade 12 student currently attending Maple Ridge Secondary. Upon reviewing the preliminary operating budget proposed for the year of 2014/2015, I came upon some cuts that I found quite disturbing, and from my point of view, unrealistic. I, myself, am a grade 12 student and as so, I would like to describe to you the difficulties of transitioning from High school to Post Secondary, and the absolute necessity of General Clerks, and Career Planning Assistants.

Going from point A to point B, isn't always a direct route. Our class was notified in early September of the tasks that we would have to perform in order to be successful in graduating. In my personal case and many others, I needed to apply for scholarships, bursaries, and to universities themselves. Without the assistance of our CPA'S, I do not believe that this information would have been easily accessed. It is stated in the proposed budget that "students can readily access [the] information on their own" and that it can be found "on web sites." (Page 24) From first hand account, I can state that finding this information is not an easy task. For example, applying to different schools whether in B.C., other Provinces, or even the U.S.A. can be a frustrating undertaking. Each website has a different layout, with different requirements. Also, in being a grade 12 student our schedules are extremely overloaded with responsibilities. Most scholarships in this day and age require a high G.P.A, lots of volunteer work, and an athletic involvement. Somehow, I find the time to do all three maintaining an 89% average, volunteering for multiple groups, and being the captain of the wrestling team. But, with this heavy work load, it leaves little or no time to "readily access this information" (page 24) without the help of someone to guide me.

Computers and devices that can access the internet are expensive. Coming from a background with great financial need, I do not have access to technology in my own home. Because of this hurdle, I have had to spend many hours in the career center using the computers provided there, and information packages provided by the CPA. She has stayed by my side throughout the entire process and she has gone above and beyond the requirements of her job. With the vast amount of institutions available for post-secondary, I found it a daunting task to narrow down the schools best-fit for myself; but with the help from Shannon Domitruk, I was finally given a light in a dark tunnel.

The CPA's have go out of their way to make sure that we feel comfortable, confident, and enthusiastic about exploring the possibilities after High School. They are absolutely essential in the process of growing, learning, and supplying students with the answers to questions we didn't know we should ask. Being young and inexperienced, most do not know how to navigate their way into applying for opportunities without the help of someone by our side. Researching and applying are not as simple as it was when our parents were my age. It can be a very arduous and complex task. We are still children, we do not know which route to take or how to get there. The CPA's are our guides, and without them, we would be lost without direction.

Also, upon reading through the recommendations, I was alarmed at the plan to reduce a general clerk, and the changes implemented to the hours able to work. Overall at my school our staff would lose 73 working hours; this includes 48 general clerk hours and 25 CPA hours. Having been in the same school for my whole high school career, I can state that these clerks need those hours. These staff have a hand in many duties such as reception duties, scholarship applications, graduation preparation, counsellor and teacher support, parent liaison, attendance and more. Being an active voice in our school, I am aware of how hard these women work, and that they need all the hours in a day- if not more- to cover these responsibilities. They also go out of their way to create relationships with students, and to make them feel at home.

The staff of our school makes sure that every student feels secure, positive, and gives us the motivation to conquer tasks that we aren't sure of. They provide a needed support system, and if these recommendations are approved, I fear the worst for my school. These proposals will effect not just the families who will be losing a salary, but the students who look up to these individuals, and place them as their role models. Our institution needs these people; they are the foundations that we build our school upon and they are the structure that we need in order to stand tall.

Yours Truly,

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