

BUDGET MEETING FEEDBACK

The Board of Education hosted three public budget meetings to seek input from the education community, with two purposes:

- Knowledge of the main elements of the 2010-2011 budget
- Input to three questions

The meetings were held:

- March 24, 2010 at Charles Bloom Secondary in Lumby, which was attended by 13 community members;
- March 29, 2010 at New Horizon's Hall on the Westside, which was attended by 10 community members; and
- March 30, 2010 at WL Seaton Secondary in Vernon, which was attended by 15 community members.

The following is the feedback received to the three questions:

What expenditure categories would you recommend to the board that are no longer required or relevant to achieve the goals of the district?

Bus Service

- Enforce walk limits to reduce bussing costs
- Free universal bus services (public transit)
- City bus schedule coordinated with schools (carbon offsets as well)
- Fees for school bus service - perhaps cross boundary fees (essential services based on distance from school)
- Lease buses
- Students attending specialized programs or schools out of their catchment area should pay for bus service

Counselling

- Substance abuse counselor required?
- Elementary school counselor required?

Custodians

- Do not have the custodians work the second week of spring break to save money
- Total shutdown of district for 2 week spring break (including custodial services)

Library Services / Resources

- Library clerk / library teacher (re-think)
- Eliminate the District Resource Centre (DRC) and spread resources out throughout the schools
- Make the DRC mobile
- Move the DRC to a school library

Noon Hour Supervisors

- Eliminate Noon Hour Supervisors especially at the secondary school level (check if behavior issues have increased since teachers stopped supervising)
- Charge for noon hour supervision (charge a fee if the student is remaining at the school over the lunch hour)

Scheduling / Vacations

- 5 day school week?
- 10 month school year?
- 2 week spring break and total shut down of district and related services

School Administration

- Reduce photocopying costs
- Not every school being "everything" (composite elementary and secondary)
- Look at different providers for communication costs to get the best deal (ie. Cell phones)
- Corporate sponsorship
- Increase cost of school supplies for students
- Have teachers give up one weeks wage like CUPE has to
- Review textbooks used
- Examine the extra costs of using retired teachers as TOCs
- Charge for certain extra programs or out of catchment pay
- Rethink how we service students in classes with 15 or less students; i.e. specialized art class could be held at only one school

- Principal and Vice Principal - why 5% of budget - cut from the top, not the bottom
- What can administrators, teachers and the union do to help this situation
- Reduction of the number of part-time teachers and other staff that work part time - reduce the pod of staff so that our benefit costs are reduced - only full time teachers should receive benefits

School Programs

- Quest - if current teacher is retiring, change the model and have the academy 100% student funded
- Have Quest students take one online course (FN 12) to bring in additional funding
- Have every student take one online course for extra funding
- Eliminate literacy and numeracy district resources teachers - maintain programs within the schools
- Share the computer resource teaching positions between the schools
- Can the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) and speech programs be delivered differently at less cost?
- Examine need for vLearn, online courses, virtual courses, Fine Arts programs
- Forestry / Quest - too much money being spent for too few students
- Support of trades - students at college - why are their fees paid with school funds?

General Comments

- MLA Eric Foster should be at budget meetings - He vowed to be our voice so where is he?
- Please revisit last year's suggestions

What programs/strategies would you recommend to the board that are essential and must be maintained to support student achievement?

School Administration

- 1 school, 5 campuses
- Equity in staffing for specialty programs
- Training teachers to build capacity...better meet the needs of the diverse population of students...incorporating technology (must teach technology - literacy)

Bus Service

- Sustain bus service for rural students; to pursue specialized educational programs - disadvantages to rural students regarding bus service

Counselling

- Sustain career counselling
- Sustain drug and alcohol counselling

Resources / Library

- Literacy (books), music, art
- Keep librarian and expand the programs

Social/emotional

- Whole child educated
- Individualized support
- Student / teacher ratio
- Encourage students to transfer to the program of choice
- Sustain supports to struggling students; i.e. protection and increase for essentials in speech and hearing and identified students should have continued support to grad
- Enhance communication at home and school; one to one; and online

School Programs

- Must keep Physical Education (PE) programs and expand them
- Literacy and Numeracy programs should be maintained - they are essential
- Keep the Trades and Forestry programs
- Important to maintain and build International program - more long term students and fewer short term students - It's important to share cultures and learn from one another
- Don't touch speech, not meeting needs now, only getting level 1, not 2 or 3

What additional programs/strategies would you recommend to this board to improve/support student achievement

Counselling / Life Skills

- Career prep should happen earlier like grade 5,6,7
- Life skills should be started earlier
- Study skills should be learned earlier

- Maximize DL Learning ie. Work experience to increase revenue and opportunity for students

First Nations

- Need to hire more first nations teachers for the classroom

Forestry program

- Change the Forestry program to make it more current with the times

International program

- Use Whitevale as the ESL school for International students just until they can speak English and then integrate them into other schools

Magnet programs

- Hire Red Seal Tradespersons
- Magnet schools where resources are focused - science, special needs, math (more cost effective)
- Spread the Red Seal trade capabilities across the district (ie. Chef Program at VSS for the first semester and then to Fulton for the second semester)

Professional Development

- ProD days - ensure they are relevant to true Professional Development to improve teaching/learning

Social / Emotional

- Need more support for students - educational, mental health and all areas

Secondary Schools

- Grade configuration for secondary schools
- Offer secondary courses on a cyclical basis

Special Needs

- Need more resources for Special Needs students