2024-25 Budget Consultation

Staff report to the Board of Education

April 24, 2024

PROPOSED 2024-25 BUDGET CHANGES

Adrian Johnson, Secretary Treasurer

BACKGROUND

Next school year's budget (2024-25) is created as:

- This current school year's budget, approved by the Board in January; plus
- Changes to the budget, to be approved by the board in April.

This document considers the proposed changes to the budget.

At the April 10, 2024, Special Board meeting, the Board considered the Superintendent's budget change recommendations.

This year's budget requires the use of $468,000 of unrestricted reserves on an ongoing basis. Therefore, to balance the 2024/25 budget, $468,000 more in revenue than expenses is required.

In the months leading up to this meeting, the Board heard feedback from many different groups and individuals. The budget development timeline outlines the process to date, including budget related information presented to the Board.

The Trustees indicated the following priorities for the budget.

Increase in supports	Increase in reserves
↑Increase Education Assistant support ↑Increase SBRT support ↑Reduce wait times in psychological assessments ↑More counsellors	↓Reduce professional development expenses (eg attending conferences virtually) ↓Balance the budget ↓Rebuild reserves

Ongoing cost pressures and the need to rebuild reserves limits opportunities to increase supports and make cost reductions necessary. The proposed changes therefore focus on preserving the supports prioritized by the Board. Those changes reflect reductions in other costs to balance the budget.

CONSIDERATION OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED

These proposed budget changes were shared, via email, with student's families, staff, DPAC and Union Representatives. Staff published an online form with the question '*Please outline your comments on the proposed budget changes.*'. This online form has been available from April 12 to April 17.

Staff have reviewed the feedback received, which is summarised below. The feedback is broadly consistent with the feedback received earlier in the budget setting process and shared with the Board in the March regular board meeting. The proposed budget changes

One additional theme is a variety of comments regarding the diversion of $100,000 of salary costs from targeted Indigenous funding to general operating funding. The majority of comments on this topic were in favour of diverting more than $100,000.

Ongoing cost pressures and the need to rebuild reserves limits opportunities to increase supports and make cost reductions necessary. The proposed changes therefore focus on preserving the supports prioritized by the Board. Those changes reflect reductions in other costs to balance the budget.

Several comments have been received, both in April and earlier in the budget setting process, regarding the need for additional qualified Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) support. To address this, staff recommend adding an additional 1.0 FTE SLP. Some education assistant positions are currently assigned to support SLPs. To balance the additional cost of a 1.0FTE, staff propose reducing the number of EA positions by two. This shift in staff allocation will provide more effective support to students.

REVISED PROPOSED BUDGET CHANGES

The Board moved that the following proposed budget changes be distributed for public consultation. These proposed changes reflect the Superintendent's recommendations except where indicated.

In addition to the budget changes proposed by the Board, the table below reflects an increase of one SLP and reduction of two education assistants assigned to supporting SLPs.

The table uses the following abbreviations to link the proposed changes to the strategic plan, with the number referencing the specific goal:

- LE – Leadership Excellence
- CC – Community Connections
- SS – Student Success

Change $	Description	Strat. Plan
REVENUE		
$602,000	Forecast increase enrolment of about 70 students	
$1,063,000	Additional revenue for students with funded designations. The number of students with funded designations increased from September 2023 to February 2024. This forecast assumes the number of designated students remains the same as currently enrolled.	
$173,000	Forecast increase in number of students with funded English Language Learner (ELL) needs	

Change $	Description	Strat. Plan
$171,000	Increase in targeted Indigenous Education funding, including $60,000 to support Indigenous Education Council meetings.	
$1,742,000	General wage increase funding (2%) for unionized staff	
-$195,000	Eliminate reliance on International Profit	
$25,000	Increase in transportation fees and facility rental fees	
$3,581,000	Projected increase in revenue	
EXPENSES		
Cost pressures		
$1,742,000	General wage increases (2%) for unionized staff	LE5
$1,000,000	Increase in employee benefit costs	LE5
$100,000	Increase in average teacher wage due to higher average placement on scale	LE5
$100,000 *$200,000*	Allocate specific salaries previously attributed to targeted funding in anticipation of Indigenous Education Council requirements *(Superintendent's recommendation – allocate $200,000 in order to provide more direct services to Indigenous students as per strategic plan goals)*	CC2
$410,000	Impact of inflation and enrolment on service and supply costs	LE1
$100,000	Increase in substitute costs for sick leave	LE5
Service level changes		
$173,000	Additional 1.4 ELL teacher FTE to support additional ELL students	SS1
$25,000	Additional 0.2 FTE Psychologist position	SS1
$50,000	Enhance technology security	LE4
$- *$50,000*	*Superintendent's recommendation – allocate $50,000 for additional Vice-Principal, inclusion position to support 25% increase in funded inclusion students over the previous two years.*	SS1
$120,000 *$0*	Board addition due to feedback - Additional School Based Resource Teacher (SBRT) position *(Superintendent's recommendation – maintain existing levels, no change, to offset the cost of other changes)*	SS1
$100,000	Additional education assistants to support inclusion (about two positions)	SS1
-$440,000	Adjust elementary divisions allocations to reflect forecast enrolment and composition at schools. This reduction is possible despite forecast increased enrollment as: • This current school year, actual enrolment was less than forecast, resulting in more divisions or blocks in some schools than was necessary. • Primary grades typically have smaller classes than average, and intermediate grades larger than average. In 2024/25, the number of students in primary grades is forecast to decrease by 32 students, and the number in intermediate grades increase by 55 students. Overall class sizes are forecast to remain below the Provincial average.	LE1
-$153,000	Secondary schools are allocated blocks on per-student ratio, plus several additional blocks for specific purposes, such as outside the timetable programs or online learning support blocks. This reduction reflects a reduction of nine of these additional blocks allocated to secondary schools.	LE1
-$120,000	Reduction of itinerant teacher staff	LE1
-$60,000	Reduce advertising expenses	LE1
-$90,000	Reduce Principal, Vice-Principal and teacher pro-d expenses	LE1
-$50,000	Forecast fuel savings from use of electric busses	LE6
-$60,000	Reduce maintenance department service and supplies allocations	LE3

Change $	Description	Strat. Plan
$171,000	Increase in targeted Indigenous Education allocation, to offset additional targeted funding received.	CC1
$120,000	Additional SLP position	SS1
-$100,000	Reduction of two Education Assistants assigned to SLP support	SS1
$3,138,000	Projected increase in expenditures	
$443,000	**Overall change, consistent with the $468,000 more in revenue and expenses required for a balanced budget.**	

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

These proposed budget changes were shared, via email, with student's families, staff, DPAC and Union Representatives. Staff published an online form with the question '*Please outline your comments on the proposed budget changes.'*. This online form has been available from April 12 to April 17.

The form collected over ninety responses, which are reproduced below. Names are omitted for privacy. Edits have only been made where necessary, to:

- remove foul language;
- remove language that is derogatory towards any person or group, including race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity; or
- remove statements referring to specific individuals.

Anonymous

I believe it equally as important to increase time to supports such as SLP as it is to SBRT and counsellors. When you consider the percentage of students with designations, behaviour concerns etc also have speech, language, social communication disorders as well, why would we not support these needs. Communication is a basic need for academics.

Anonymous

Relax in the indigenous programs and field trips etc. They're now included and people are more aware. They should be treated like any other nationality or race at this point in my opinion. I'm not saying ignore, I'm saying don't specialize.

Anonymous

we need to have more sport instructors, coaches and music teachers The kids need more hours of learning activities

Alicia

The FTE for the psychologist needs to be increased more than 0.2

Justin Dorval

I don't have a specific comment on the budget per se but Mission Hill needs busing. The fact that there is no bus from Mission Hill to Fulton school is outrageous. There are hundreds of kids that live on Mission Hill that have zero access to busing and have to use the city bus. How do you to get their kids to school? Your job is to provide easy transportation and an education unfortunately, you're failing the kids on Mission Hill. It was taken away with no thought of consequences. This needs to be rectified asap.

Cristita Harvey

What is this budget for?

Carla

A budget allocated to small remote schools to subsidize busing which is making field trips inaccessible and a budget for healthy lunches as kids in our community are coming to school hungry

Anonymous

The budget changes proposed on April 10 do not show evidence of the board's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and does not reflect the districts Strategic Plan goals for Indigenous students and all students. In declining to support the movement of the salary of the Director of Indigenous Education from Targeted Funding to Core Funding, the board is messaging that the work of Reconciliation and Indigenous student success is the work of the Indigenous Education Dept and not the collective responsibility of the district.

Anonymous

I would like to see the funding reduced for vice principal / principal, ELL support and indigenous support in order to achieve the additional 4 FTE EA positions as requested by teachers association. The introduction of specialized training for EAs can cover the ELL & indigenous requirements.

Anonymous

Please do not fund any more administrators that have a focus on inclusion. There are so many more efficient uses of scarce funds.

Anonymous

Inclusion doesn't need a VP. There is enough admin support currently allocated.

Anonymous

Inclusion department does not need a vice principal. Other staffing suggestions (e.g., additional EAs & SBRTs) are needed to support students and families.

Anonymous

Unfortunately, the board should have considered what the increased district-level staffing would do to the budget in future years when creating all kinds of new district-level positions a few years ago.
Also, I am very glad to see a decrease in the advertising budget of 60,000 - we are a public school district and should never have been spending that much on advertising in the first place.
Additionally, I am very happy to see the addition of 2 EA positions and 1 SBRT. The increased funding from student designations SHOULD be going to things like this that directly support the students who bring in that funding.

Anonymous

I find it interesting that there can be a decrease to a budget of $60,000 for advertising. What are you advertising? It is the law that children go to school. What more is there to say? Any advertising is a waste of money. I noticed a big splashy blurb about the school district at a Viper's game. I was appalled. This directly takes money from my grandchildren's education. Using money from the reserves in this quantity should be a huge red flag that costs are out of hand. Let's have a quick breakdown of the jobs and salaries in the board office. Could anyone be downsized to 3 or 4 days a week? A budget using this much from reserves seems to indicate bigger problems.

Kevin Jameson

Transportation fees related to busing to and from school have already gone up, I hope there is not another increase. If busing related to field trips goes up my kids will not be attending if I'm responsible for the fees. I know professional development benefits my kids, but I think there is a lot of wasted money in this area so I'm glad to see some cuts. My hope would be the professional development cuts would be fair between teachers and support staff, not just one sided.

Alex Arav

There seems to be too much money for 'inclusion'....I'm not sure what this is, but it sounds very silly/woke. I would like to see less money towards that.

Fern

More EA s are definitely needed with the increasing diversity of needs in classrooms. More psych Ed assessments are desperately required. So many students are waiting years for a diagnosis. Counselors are desperately needed as well. Younger and younger students are experiencing mental health crises and classroom teachers are overwhelmed with this along with more and more students with learning disabilities. Also, more ELL supports are required in CLASSROOMS. It is very challenging to try to meet the needs of students when they do not understand English and do not speak the language.

Anonymous

A 1.0 FTE increase for SBRT positions will not help enough at the school level if the District is reducing Itinerant staffing positions. The schools need more SBRT time to deal with case load numbers, and a 0.1-0.2 increase at schools is not sufficient at the current high school level when you look at caseload numbers, as qualified SBRTs are not taking enough part-time positions.

Anonymous

District needs to cut District level positions (ie: [position name redacted]) that in theory support staff, but which are not proving to reduce workload or increase student contact, both of which directly relate to staff/teacher wellness.

Anonymous

I do not believe we need more board office ("Vice Principal to the Vice Principal to the Principal") type positions in our school district. I would also like to see a drastic reduction in unnecessary itinerant teaching positions (no teacher has time to meet with them). Get rid of all of the curriculum leads (again... no teacher has time). Instead, I would like to see additional supports in the schools: additional vice principals (especially at Seaton - two principals for 1000 students is unrealistic), regular classroom teachers, and EAs.

Anonymous

- Allocate specific salaries previously attributed to targeted funding in anticipation of Indigenous Education Council requirements (Superintendent's recommendation – allocate $200,000 in order to provide more direct services to Indigenous students as per strategic plan goals)
-----> $200000 should be allocated - reconciliation is a significant goal for our district and a personal goal of the vast majority of district employees. Moving this salary into our operational budget shows that the work we are doing is meaningful to us and not just superficial work that we 'must do'. We know that this role and the support it provides needs to be ongoing.

- $50,000 Superintendent's recommendation – allocate $50,000 for additional Vice-Principal, inclusion position to support 25% increase in funded inclusion students over the previous two years.
----> a 0.5 VP Inclusion is needed in our district. We are talking about our most vulnerable learners here. There are other ways to make up the shortfall without taking from the most vulnerable in our system. Additionally, this role supports the categorization of vulnerable learners that bring in additional funding which could help with the budget crunch.

Anonymous

Moving the salary of the Indigenous education department director to Operational fees is great idea, the extra money should be used for at risk indigenous youth who, statistics show, struggle more than non-indigenous students. Morally and ethically, this needs to be done for the future of indigenous students. More work needs to be done for them...

Angela johnson

My daughter Ava has attended Vernon Senior Secondary for the past 5 years. She is part of the summits program as she has autism. The PALS program plays a valuable part of our children learning how to be and be perceived in the community. I love to see her interactions with neurotypical children and see how much they both learn from it. Please do not cut the budget for such a worthy program.

Lisa Elder

By not approving the suggestion of the Superintendent I feel that it is our Indigenous students that will ultimately be affected. With an already strapped budget to support our kids it will be a great loss to lose programs in place. This is another disappointment and a shame.

Anonymous

Disappointed by the budget as a whole. Increasing time allocated to school psychologist is only meaningful if a school psychologist can be found. Wait times are horrendous - and the financial burden levied on families to assess privately is not acceptable.

Anonymous

I think that the decision to not add to staff at the district level (VP of Spec Ed if I am reading that correctly) is a good choice of where to limit spending.
I notice that the buses forecast fuel savings, but is there consideration for quicker tire wear, battery replacement, etc?
Does hosting Pro-D conferences bring in money for the district?

Sheryl

I do not agree that the IED director's salary should be coming out of targeted funding. It should be coming out of SD22's Core Budget. Where does all of the other directors' salaries come from? The targeted money should be supporting at most teachers, ISWs, IOWs and services. Also, cutting the services budget in half will prevent the IED from meaningful engagement with Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students (class room presentations). What it really comes down to with all the proposed cutting of the budget to Indigenous Education is that it reflects poorly on the districts commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. How much does SD22 value it's indigenous students and teachers?

Anonymous

No increase in funding or creation of District Principal/Vice Principal positions. More funding for EA's in classrooms - more EA's present in schools on the first day of schools for students with IEPS. Decrease Pro-d funding for big keynote events - keep staff at their own schools (virtual keynote); plus decrease funding for lunch during Pro-d days. Staff can bring their own lunches. Decrease energy use in schools - motion sensored lighting. Have schools - staff and students - do their own energy use audit (decreased energy use = savings).

Anonymous

Higher wages for EA’s.

Anonymous

So you are not cutting any positions at the board office because other districts have similar compositions? That makes no sense. The board office has more staff than at any time in history. We never had 3 Technology support teachers and a Technology Principal, Learning Coordinators, a Assistant Superintendent we never had until 2 years ago, Food coordinator etc. etc. None of those positions help actual students in classrooms, they have no affect on graduations rates or contribute to the success of Special Needs students. So you are going to cut 9 blocks from high schools that directly help students but make no cuts to the bloated board office. It is absolutely ridiculous.

Gareth Jones

I was curious if the Indigenous Principal and Vice Principal positions are funded from the additional Indigenous student allocation from the Province or are they funded as regular SD22 staff?

You had stated that there would be a $171,000 increase in targeted Indigenous Education funding, including $60,000 to support Indigenous Education Council meetings.
Does this additional funding impact students or is it used to pay for administration?

Tina

The PALS (Peer Assisted Learning) block is being cut for next year. I am disappointed to hear this. The PALS program is an important program for both the students with special needs as well as the peer tutors. It helps the peer tutor to develop important life skills such as good communication, responsibility and empathy. Both my son and daughter are involved in this program, my daughter as a peer tutor and my son as a child with special needs. They have both benefited from this program and have made meaningful connections with their peers. My daughter has learned alot, loves being apart of the program and comes home and shares about this specific block of her day. Please reconsider cutting this program.

Anonymous

The salary for the Director of Indigenous Ed should be taken out of the operational funding. If it isn't, current programs will be cut and taken away from Indigenous Students.

Anonymous

More EA's to support challenging students
For FTE for teacher librarians to boost literacy

Colleen Waldegger

Budget needs to address un-funded, increased needs in our classrooms and add more than 2 additional CEA positions and increase counselling FTE. My two cents...

Anonymous

Prefer to add to SBRTs and/or EAs rather than a new District VP of inclusion.

Anonymous

The addition of 2 EAs seems low. There is a current shortage of EAs at the high school level in particular, and there is an increasing number of identified students in the system each year. There is also a shortage of replacement EAs when EA staff is sick. Might there be a way to reduce positions at the district level (i.e., reduce the number of learning coordinators) in order to hire EAs who provide support for students on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Anonymous

Regarding the $153,000 reduction of 9 blocks at the Secondary School level - one of those blocks is PALS (Peer Assisted Learning) at VSS; for so many reasons this should not be cut. It offers direct support to vulnerable students in the school, providing opportunities for both typical and neurotypical peers to grow together and be supported socially and academically. It builds capacity in peers supporting the ever increasing numbers of students with ASD and other social challenges - it is grounded in evidence based practice and leads to better mental health and transition outcomes for students. It is one block of funding and students can take it wherever it works best in their schedule, in this way, it reaches the maximum number of students with special needs throughout the year.

Anonymous

Moving some salaries to operational funding from targeted funding in the Indigenous department is a required action in reconciliation. It shows that the position is valuable for the entire district as well as increases funding for 1200 indigenous students. This is a necessary action that speaks much louder than words. Time to step up and make real changes. I was happy to see it as a recommendation.

Sara Knol

a lot of onus and discretion re: budgeting priorities is being put on individual principals. concern that funding for designated students gets spent on programs, FTE's, etc. that offer little to no benefit to children with unique learning needs. would like to see qualified social workers hired by SD22 to take on some SBRT and counselling roles rather than teachers or contracted NOYFSS workers. need innovative, fresh and evidence based ideas/programs to educate students with learning disabilities, sensory challenges, dyspraxia, ASD, severe anxiety, etc. physical health, mental health, life skills and critical thinking are most important… kids can't learn if their basic needs aren't met and honestly who cares if you know the periodic table if you can't carry on a conversation or go 5 minutes without hitting a vape pen.

Whitney

I would love to see bussing have a better budget , especially for the schools who are far from the bigger towns/cities .
I would love to see more EA's as there are a lot of children who need extra help who may not have the proper diagnoses or are waiting for referral . Also extra help for the ones monitoring lunch hours/recess/afterschool bussing . We have one and there are far to many children to properly be watched by one adult.
I would love to see each classroom teacher get a little more funding if possible. Or for field trips to have more funding This will help with supplies throughout the year, as I learned a lot of our teachers had to use their budgets for field trips this year!

Anonymous

When you decide to stop propagating the sexualization of children and the pornographic materials you subject them to and get back to teaching students, you may find some of your needs become drastically reduced.

Subjecting students to sexualized material before they even know they are at an age where they can understand, is only going to further the mental trauma and issues kids face. Just because everyone else is jumping of the bridge doesn't mean you have to follow. True leaders stand by morals and principals and not by mob pressure or agendas.

anonymous

Having more admin at the School Board Office (ie VP for Inclusive ED) is unnecessary when we have too few people in schools. More supports are needed, not more admin.

Anonymous

Please STOP increasing positions at the Board Office. It is the most 'top heavy' districts in the province with excessive, redundant and made-up managerial positions that are simply taking money away from the students.

In fact, many of these positions should be reviewed and with actual insight and wisdom, the board would see that many should be removed, as they didn't exist in past and schools had more money for students.

Anonymous

Lower bussing fees. Registration fee is acceptable. Paying hundreds of dollars for a bus that is driving by anyway is unacceptable.
Scanning on and off and the inability to not get off at a different stop is also frustrating.
Bussing is essential for parents that work full time plus.

Anonymous

With a 25% increase in funded students with special over 2 years - we need more services on the ground, particularly SLP services. The VTA is correct in requesting an increase in SLP time - it is very much needed! The last thing we need is another VP of something at the board office - please put resources into direct services to students.

Jennifer Smith

Yes please to increased mental health supports for students, they are extremely lacking. How are 2 counsellors supposed to be able to help more than 1,000 secondary school students?

Anonymous

test

Gareth Jones

The Indigenous School Principal and VP salaries should come from general administration funds and NOT Indigenoious targeting funding.

Anonymous

I believe that the Director of Indigenous services should not have their budget come out of the Indigenous funds. The funds of the Indigenous department are already limited for service delivery. The directors salary should come out of the general budget as every other director. The reality is that if the salary is within the IED department, the ones who are really losing out are the Indigenous students. If the district wants to be active participants in reconciliation and provide adequate supports and resources for Indigenous students, they would vote for whatever opportunity to provide for the Indigenous students. By taking away from the IED budget, it is the students who will be negatively impacted the most.

Anonymous

I hope the Trustees seriously consider and accept Superintendent Perkins recommendation to re-allocate Indigenous Education salaries (Director and/or District Principal) from Targeted Funding. By putting these additional dollars back into Targeted Funding shows the Trustees' further commitment to the success of Indigenous students as was their signatures on the Enhancement Agreement & LEA. By NOT re-allocating these salaries, it shows that once again, lip service was given with no real commitment. Further, other School Districts are paying Indigenous Education salaries; they are ensuring that the money from Targeted Funding is used so all Indigenous students can have the services & programs to help them succeed.

Andrew Hough

I feel that maintaining our current staffing levels for SLP and school psychologists is an utter disservice to our students and affects the ability of many students to be successful at school. Schools need these professionals to help us assess and support the students who need these services. Currently, many students who need the support of an SLP are not receiving service because of poor staffing levels forcing SLPs to only service primary students for the most part. School psych ed assessments are another gigantic issue for schools and parents. There is currently a huge waiting list for students to get assessed - some may wait for 2 or even 3 years. These assessments are very, very important in order to understand how these students learn and help them be successful.

Samira

More resorces for students. 46 students for 1 SBRT is too much, please add more than the one asked for.

Anonymous

Instead of a VP for inclusion, we need more positions in schools (EAs and SBRT). The leadership team for inclusion has grown a lot over the last 5 years; moving from a director to now also having a district principal and mental health lead. The district does not need more leadership positions at the board office.

Fern

1) more EA support in classrooms. So many more children with significant needs are without support leading to behaviour issues and teacher burnout
2)more counseling. Mental health concerns with children from kindergarten and up is more and more prevalent.
3) psych ed testing - shorter timelines as 2-4 year waits is unacceptable for children. Hiring of more psychologists.
4)any and all support IN CLASSROOMS - EA/ELL/SBRT. Not at the board office level but directly in classrooms supporting students who desperately need it.
5)speech and language.

Andrea Harwood-Jones President: Vernon Eco Educators (VEE)

I am thankful to the Board for realizing how top-heavy our District has become, and for supporting student-facing, front-line staff positions on the ground. Staff on the ground are the ones who have the most impact on student learning, and also on teacher development. Teachers learn best from other teachers who are facing the same challenges and who are working within the same constraints. Having a slew of expensive consultants/lead teachers/directors who are stationed out of the Board Office is not the most cost-effective way to create real impact for students.

On a similar note, last year a group of climate change educators presented a proposal to the Board to fund one block per high school so that we could have a supported climate-focused educator on each high school staff. The Board was very supportive of the need for climate change education, for which all eco-educators were very thankful. This in-house model was proposed because teachers are far more likely to get help and support from a colleague in their own school, someone who understands the school culture, the students, the busy times of the year, and the particular needs and assets of their school, than they are to go to a special meeting or learning group after school hours. Also, being able to concentrate and contribute at meetings after 3:30 is a real challenge because teachers are already drained from teaching all day, and still have to mark and prep. for the next school day. Unfortunately, instead of supporting the model proposed by teachers, the Superintendent and/or her directors chose to hire yet another lead teacher who is stationed at the Board Office and not in schools. While this individual is very committed, she is not only responsible for climate change education but is also tasked with so many other topics/areas, areas that other Board Office people are also covering. This top-down, unfocused model is not what we asked for, and is not what will move climate change education forward in a meaningful way in our District.

Thank you again to our Board for all of your hard work.

Anonymous

I agree that there should not be money put forward for a new .5 position for Inclusion VP at the District level.
In addition, there has been a great deal of money allocated towards itinerant teachers that have been supporting teachers. (Curriculum support and Early Learning Support teachers.) These are itinerant teachers. With the growing needs of students and families, teachers and P/VP need more support directly in the schools available to work with our student on a daily basis. We could cut 2 or 3 or more of those positions in Early Learning/ Curriculum and put those teachers back in the classrooms. The Early Learning Success teachers would be experts for grade 1, 2 or K classrooms. Teachers are asking for more support at the ground level to support the needs of students. We have been very lucky to have a great number of years where teachers have been given time to learn from those Itinerants. Now it is time to utilize their knowledge at the ground level with the students.

Anonymous

Get rid of more upper positions such as vice principals for positions that are not in actual schools (such as in Early Learning, or Technology) and use that money for more teachers or EA's or SLP. Stop all advertising and use that money for EAs supports.

Anonymous

SD#22 has presented a public image of respecting that actions are needed for Truth & Reconciliation to succeed, along with the initiative to address inequities in the district. The lack of support for the recommendation to treat Indigenous Education as an equal to all other departments is so disappointing. The past practise and out dated thinking that the Indigenous Education Department has lots of money so they can pay is wrong and needs to end.
Every Director should be treated with the same respect. Targetted Funds come to the district for other departments so how can you defend your decision to treat the Indigenous Education Department like a money grab.
Have you calculated the impact of this decision on Indigenous students and their families as well as the moral of a very dedicated, hardworking staff?
I respectfully ask that you find a way to reverse your decision.

Anonymous

Where do I start. Your ideas are I have no words. I read a lot of increase education for the indigenous and give more funding towards there education but yet we have just as much need of our other children in need as well. Where is the increase for them. The kids with disabilities is just as in important and yet you guys can't even given the resources they need but you sure can jump on giving our indigenous so much more. How is this fair. I want to see the allocation distribute more evenly. If you guys would stop and think about your guys approaches. This is been year after year and nothing has gotten better only worse. STOP. Think of our children and what their needs are. They need stability, RESOURCES and and fair equal education. This is not what our children have. WE need more support we more EA's need Qualified EAs to support our disability children and we need to change how the job posting are done with the right pay for their level of qualifications. Your allocations of school funds should be based on what all children's needs are to learning ways of the indigenous, learning ASL to pay for school find trips, to be put back into our children's education. Investing in our children's education is where your gone see the most reward. Adding one EA, one SLP, is not going to make anymore different. Hello do you not even see that we don't even have a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing for almost two hears now. Why. Because the wording of the job posting and the pay sucks. You want to want people to come to your district make them want too. There is so many better ways to allocate. Your numbers drop in you district because parents talk about how and what school aren't worth sending their kids too. This is due to teachers, resources and and how they are with our children with disabilities and what they have to support them. Bottom line is all our children need to be supported with whatever mean and we don't do this. If the allocation was actually thought about in the right way, then this could really help your means. This is just a part of what I want to say where the allocation should go.

Thank you.

Teresa Bigsby (VDMA)

I appreciate the allocation of specific salaries previously attributed to targeted funding. I believe that this protects the positions and recognizes that we need more direct Indigenous student services.

I am hoping that our Idigenous Education Council will not cost as much as indicated by the funding.

I am concerned that the reduction of 9 blocks in secondary is taking away student supports that obviously were necessary this year. These students will still require services, where will this happen?

My last concern is around reducing maintenance department service and supplies. After coming out of the pandemic, I believe we need to make sure that our schools are maintained and cleaned to the highest standards.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Kelli Mazurak

I would like to see more funds directed towards support in schools that directly impact student learning and success. We are in need of more specialists, including speech, ELL, counselling, learning resource teachers and

Education assistants. Less district level principals, vice principals, learning coordinators etc, with funds put into the above.

Anonymous

I believe too much of the funding is going to top-end officials. There is not enough support within the schools or for students who need support. Cuts should be made for the reckless hiring of more "Admin" staff for the district. That money should be used to provide programs and services for students. Not another salary. An example of this would be the "Indigenous Principal" We have a director who does the job and has no need for another person that is a waste of money. That money could go into bolstering the ISW wages and extending their hours so they could provide more services for students. The "Indigenous Principal" has no connection to students and is just a waste of money. Give that money to staff who actually do their jobs and work with students directly.

You need to remember, education money is for students, not hiring more admin staff that have no connections to students.

Erica manger

I support the increase of funding for mental health!!!

Stephanie Cowan

As an Indigenous Support worker, a member of OKIB, and a mother of a student who benefits from Indigenous Education the decision to NOT move the Indigenous Directors salary away from targeted to core would be detrimental and does not display the District's promised and mandatory moves towards Truth and Reconciliation.

The Indigenous Education Department supports ALL students and should be part of the core budget. Our department provides learning and cultural opportunities that all students in the district participate in, and taking the Director's salary out of targeted funding would remove opportunities we have all been working towards improving as it would decimate our budget. Taking out of our targeted funding would effectively reverse the truth and Reconciliation Initiative and again feels as though our department, people, and students are not important enough for the district to support.

Anonymous

Indigenous Education Department budget changes to move the Directors salary out of the Indigenous targeted funding. Opening up this budget opens up more opportunities for Indigenous Students and Indigenous Learning.

Anonymous

I believe that the board should approve the "Superintendent’s recommendation
– allocate $200,000 in order to provide more direct services to Indigenous students as per strategic plan goals." It is my understanding that salaried positions such as Director and principal of indigenous education should be partially funded from the core funding, rather than these positions being paid for from the targeted indigenous funds. This is in keeping with the actions of many other districts in B.C. and this shows a commitment to

reconciliation and reflects the importance of this work in the district. It seems that if the entire budget for the sd22 Indigenous department comes from targeted funding, it is essentially indigenous students paying for reconciliation to some degree. I think that the district should show its commitment to indigenous relations by approving the funding recomendations that are supported by the local indigenous community. The end result is that targeted funding for indigenous students can then be allocated to services that continue to have a positive impact on indigenous student success.

Anonymous

I am writing specifically around Indigenous Education budget concerns. It is my understanding that under the current budget proposal the Director of Indigenous Education's salary is to continue to come out of targeted Indigenous funding. This is very concerning for multiple reasons.
It is my understanding that the Indigenous Education Council had been in agreement with this position being funded by Targeted Funding until such time that the surplus was gone (which is the current situation) and then this position should be funded through CORE funding, as other director positions are. Going against this now, means is not showing respect for the IEC and moving in the opposite direction of Reconciliation.
There are other boards that have some district level positions funded fully or partially by core funding and not targeted Indigenous funding. The reason behind this lies in the scope of the work performed by district level Indigenous Education staff. Targeted Funding is meant for Indigenous supports, services, and programming above and beyond that of regular funded programs. Much of the work done at the district level does not encompass this. District Indigenous Education staff are also supporting staff in curriculum implementation, pedagogical practices, and school wide Indigenization/decolonization work. With the recent implementation of the Indigenous focused graduation requirement, even more of the district work is going towards curriculum support and implementation, an area that is specifically laid out as not acceptable use for Indigenous Targeted Funding. Indigenous Education departments are also at the forefront of Reconciliation. This is not just for the benefit of Indigenous students, but for all staff and students and thus should be funded through core and not Indigenous targeted funding.
Through the years, many school districts speak of and showcase their work around Reconciliation; however, if the reconciliation is only happening under the funding allocated for Indigenous youth and implemented by Indigenous employees, then is it actually reconciliation, or is it just Indigenous peoples having to continually fight and fund equity in the school system? With the current budget, programming specific to Indigenous youth will have to be cut. These programs are essential to the well being and success of our Indigenous youth. By moving forward and having the Director of Indigenous Education salary come out of the CORE budget instead of Indigenous Targeted Funding, this district will begin to show its commitment to Reconciliation and assure that our youth have a greater chance of success in Education than their relatives over the last 200 years. Please make the right choice moving forward.

Anonymous

I do NOT support any additional administration time that allocates $50,000 for an additional Vice-Principal, inclusion position. This funding could be better used to support students directly in schools. We already have 3 administrative positions in Inclusion (Director, Principal, and Mental Health Liaison.) More supports working directly with students is needed. School staff are burning out, leaving the profession and programs are suffering as a result. Support is required directly with students and families in the buildings.

Andrea Schiiler

Subject: Urgent Appeal Regarding Proposed Budget Cuts and Impact on P.A.L.S. Program

Dear Honored Members of School Board 22,

We, the undersigned teachers of the Student Supports Services team at Vernon Secondary, along with the endorsement of Dave MacKenzie, VTA president, are writing to bring to your attention a crucial implication of the 2024-25 budget
recommendations. Specifically, on page 2 of the report, there is a proposed reduction of $153,000 to secondary schools, citing the need for "... several additional blocks for specific purposes."

We wish to underscore the potential impact of this recommendation on our highly successful Peer Assisted Learning (P.A.L.S.) program at Vernon Secondary. Regrettably, in response to these proposed cuts, we have been informed that our P.A.L.S. block will not be able to
operate at Vernon Secondary next year.

To fully comprehend the significance of such cuts, we feel compelled to clarify the purpose and value of the P.A.L.S. program. Established in 2016 at VSS, the P.A.L.S. program is grounded in evidence-based practice and serves as a unique form of peer tutoring. Unlike conventional peer tutoring, P.A.L.S. equips grade 10/11/12 students with the skills and knowledge necessary to inclusively engage neurodivergent peers within their school and community. A dedicated block of time is allocated for this purpose of coordinating the program, ensuring accessibility across all 8 blocks. This widespread availability facilitates the fulfillment of both typical and neurotypical students' needs, often commencing with hands-on training and assignments within the Summits Program. P.A.L.S. students are subsequently paired with higher-functioning peers in both elective and academic classes, with ongoing support from the P.A.L.S. teacher throughout the semester.

Participants in the program typically consist of high achieving students interested in supporting individuals with diverse needs, as well as students who themselves may have vulnerabilities but find fulfillment in assisting others. Notably, many P.A.L.S. students pursue careers in education, psychology, nursing, social work, and related fields, underscoring the program's profound impact on vocational aspirations and personal growth.

Central to the program's success is its ability to address the unique social learning needs of neurodivergent adolescents. Research indicates that planned intervention efforts, such as those provided by P.A.L.S., are essential for facilitating peer interaction and shared learning among students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The improved social connections and skills fostered by P.A.L.S. not only enhance the well-being of neurodivergent students but also promote a culture of tolerance and inclusion within the school community.

Since its inception, the demand for the P.A.L.S. program has grown exponentially, mirroring the increasing prevalence of students with ASD and social difficulties at VSS. Today, with 42 students identified as ASD and over 150 additional students requiring targeted intervention for social difficulties, the indispensability of the P.A.L.S. program is more evident than ever, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We implore you to consider the immense value of the P.A.L.S. program as you deliberate on the 2024-25 budget recommendations related cuts to the “additional blocks for special purposes”. By preserving funding for this vital initiative, we can ensure that this vulnerable population continues to benefit from the invaluable support provided by peer-mediated instruction and intervention.

Gray Boisvert (CUPE 5523 President)

To the Board of Trustees, Superintendent Christian Perkins & Secretary Treasurer Adrian Johnson,

I will use one word to describe the first draft of the 2024/25 budget. "Disappointed". As the President of CUPE 5523 I have requested over the past two years that this District not increase Management, Administration or other positions that did not support the students directly in the classroom. (Boots on the Ground / Employees that actually work in the classroom with designated students). I questioned last year when there was no money targeted for inflation. Now we appear to have come to a point where we are using designated student funding to balance our budget and not supporting students needs. The Ministry of Education and Childcare has on average increased funding by 3.4%.

Please explain the $100,000 for additional EAS. Is this for temporary positions this past year being made permanent? Funding from the $1,063,000 that should definitely be supporting more than 2 additional EAS? Support for designated students arriving in September? Are we actually increasing the support for our present designated students? Would be curious to know the actual cost of our EA absenteeism. (not replacement cost as many EAS' are not replaced when absent)

Put the money in the classroom, more EAS', ISWS' SBTRS'. No additional P/VP or Management.

In closing, I request that this Board of Trustees demand the creation of a District Financial Committee involving all partner groups.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Sincerely,

Gray Boisvert
CUPE 5523 President

Mark Bendall

Has reducing teachers' pro-d funding been discussed with the VTA (I don't see it mentioned on p.5 of the document), and is it a part of the Collective Agreement?

Dave MacKenzie (VTA President

INFLATIONARY COSTS
On page 2 of the Superintendent's Budget recommendations report 2024-25….
Under COST PRESSURES, there is a $410,000 increase related to "Impact of inflation and enrolment on service and supply costs"

> Can you clarify what "services" are being referred to?
> Can you clarify what rate of inflation was used to calculate this increase?

IN COMPARSION…..

On page 2 of the 2023-24 Superintendent's Budget recommendations, the INFLATIONARY COSTS were only budgeted $100,000…
As mentioned above

> Can you clarify what is accounting for the $310,000 increase for what is noted a similar "cost" this budget recommendation?

Dave Mackenzie (VTA President)

INCREASED EMPLOYEE BENEFIT COSTS
The increase budgeted amount equates to an "average" of an increased benefit usage of $800++ for each of the approximately 1200 employees.
Can you please clarify what sources of information informed the estimated increase of $1,000,000 in benefits costs?

If there is a report from the extend health benefits provider (BLUE CROSS) that informed this estimated increase in benefit usage, I would be interested to review the document to understand better what benefits my members are accessing. I am not asking for disaggregated data with any personally identifying information; however, if an age demographic breakdown of disaggregated data was available I would be interested in reviewing that information to see if there are areas that our association may be more supportive of our members.

Dave MacKenzie

ENROLLMENT RELATED REVENVUE AND COSTS

I have questions about the lack of support for the increased OVERALL STUDENT enrollment that is projected for the 2024-25 school. As indicated in the 2024-25 budget recommendation report, there is an estimated 70 students increase over the revised enrolment count for the 2023-24 school year, as evidenced by the Dec 2023 operating grant document (see link below) compared to the Operating Grant estimate for 2024-24 (see link below). Despite this overall student enrollment increase, the budget recommendations will result in a net reduction of student support (a reduced number of teacher fte) in the school district. Interesting enough, there appears to be a recommendation of a net increase to administrative positions.

> Can you clarify the reasoning behind the reduction is direct support to students, as demonstrated by a reduction teacher fte for the 2024-25 school year?

The 2024-25 Superintendent's recommendations reports there is an estimated enrollment increase of 70 students.
According to the OPERATING GRANT document (March 2023) the enrollment projection is 8860.1875.

However, the "Service Level Changes" amount indicated in the budget recommendations indicates a net reduction in direct supports to students as evidenced by:

3.66 fte reduction for elementary classroom teachers (i.e. $440,000 reduction in elementary divisions)
1.275 fte reduction for secondary classroom teachers (i.e. $153,000 reduction of 9 blocks)

1.0 fte reduction in itinerant teacher staff (i.e. $120,00, with department unknown)

The only increase appears to be:

1.4 fte for ELL fte
2 EA for inclusion support
0.25 fte for School Psychologist

YET there is a recommended increase in SPECIAL EDUCATION administration
Recommended additional VP of Inclusion

This is in contrast to

In the 2023-24 Superintendent's recommendations report there was an estimated enrolment increase of 90 students.
According to the OPERATING GRANT document (Dec 2023) the enrollment was 8790.4375

This generated "Supports for increased enrollment" recommendations of $1,640,000 including and increase of ….
2.5 fte for ELL
4.7 fte for classroom teachers
7 EA positions
And other additional supports

SOURCE DOCUMENTS
• 2024-25 Budget Recommendations
o https://sd22bc.civicweb.net/document/40561

• 2023-24 Budget Recommendations
o https://sd22bc.civicweb.net/document/37773

• 2023-24 Operating Grant (Dec 2023)
o https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/download/353637BA44494FA69C58D76850EE6815

• 2024-25 Operating Grant (estimates March 2024) for the 2024-25 school year
o https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/download/AE434F7BB8514C31A6748BC12AEACB74

Anonymous

Does not appear to be alot of allocation going into indigenous students and the indigenous education department considering the education gap that exists in school across Canada, specifically relevant for schools in B.C.

Anonymous

I support the board recommendations regarding the changes made to the superintendent allocations. Further, in next years budget process I would request more accurate estimates for items that appear to be ball park figures. The purchasing practices of the district should also be reviewed and updated with an additional eye on leveraging the purchasing power of the district in areas like school supplies which could save the district and parents money.

Anonymous

Priorities need to be more services to kids and to help schools with student mental health. Less board office positions. Would like to see more EAs and more school based resource teachers. District doesn't need a VP for inclusion. Mental Health district person should be helping schools with kids MH needs - such a waste of a valuable resource.

Anonymous

Funding from inclusion department needs to go into direct support for students in schools - SBRTs, EAs, counsellors….
Do not use funding for a VP for inclusion department. We do not need more management positions at the board office

Anonymous

Keep funding and supports in school. Do not fund a $50,000 board office VP position

Anonymous

In order to accomplish access to education for all students, as is their human right and also mandated by the school act-there must be meaningful support for those students that require it. For example-those that need 1 to 1 support in order to access their education should not be excluded from a full day of meaningful school because there is not enough EA coverage. EA coverage should be appropriately calculated to provided for all those that require it. For example - how can one school with over 60 students that require various support needs be supported by less than 20 EA's. Remembering that we meet students where they are at, and don't need to wait for assessments to be provided appropriate supports.

Anonymous

we do value people in schools. It is very important to have more support ready and able to be in the schools and supporting our students and staff in the school.

Anonymous

I agree with the trustees and their not wanting more people at the board office.

Anonymous

Please consider supports for kids and direct support at the school level to be top priority.
More funding for enhanced services (OT, PT, SLP, ELL), CEA's, and SBRT' positions is needed desperately to help support the ever increasing emotional and learning needs teachers are seeing in the classroom. Inclusionary practices need support to work properly and help all children succeed.
Additionally, mental health supports (for both students and staff) should be of paramount importance. We need more boots on the ground to help with the stress and anxiety that everyone on the front lines are feeling.
Thanks for requesting input!

Anonymous

Do not increase administration time in Inclusion department, agree with increased supports that will directly benefit students in schools, direct contact, by increasing EA, ELL and School Psychologist. Also suggest that itinerant staff could be decreased by more than suggested $120, 000. (ie climate action and anti-racism positions).

Anonymous

Continuous needs for direct support for students is partially addressed. It is difficult to see more funds to administration at the board office. VP additional cost is not an addition of a person as the person is there. Does this mean the behaviour specialist position no longer exists or just changing the pay for this person? Experience in schools as administration is important for administration. If you want more administration add the time to admin in schools, but this $ is better spent on SBRT or EA staffing. Thanks for taking out ad costs. We have the audience, we just need to support them in the schools. How are we supporting students who are struggling to make it through the doors?

Interested parent

- I agree with the reduction in advertising costs and other attempts to reduce costs, especially in these times where we do not want to cause more tax burden on overburdened Canadians. I commend the team for these efforts.

- I query whether increased Education Assistant support is the right answer. Putting additional resources at an issue does not always solve the issue. It can be like filing a leaky bucket with yet more water. We will never have enough water. Are we in danger of doing this? We may need to spend some time strategizing what is actually going on. What is happening to our students with the increasing rise of designations? What is actually going on here? Does it mean what we think it means or does it mean something else entirely different? An open mind on this question may lead to unexpected yet helpful answers.

For example, there is a lot of cutting edge research about learning that can apply to the issue of designations and Education Assistants. Are we able to take this research and apply it? Do we have anyone who can play the role of finding visionary ideas for our school? For example, Jim Kwik is a world-renowned expert in brain optimization and learning - he wrote the book Limitless: Upgrade Your Brain, Learn Anything Faster, and Unlock Your Exceptional Life. Also, William Glasser, who wrote the book The Quality School, is a very interesting psychologist for his insights into how to model a school system that creates quality work even with varying degrees of learning speed. All this to say there may be something that we can do that is more effective at helping all students be their best learning self than adding more Education Assistants. As someone who was involved with teachers a few years ago, I know that schools and teachers often stay in their own comfort zone of familiar resources, as do we all very often. Adding more of anything can seem like the obvious answer, yet often it does not do anything about the underlying issue and we are really no better off. What would it take to examine some of the more recent research around learning and designations? We might find an answer that not only improves the learning for children with designations but also improves our own joy in the job of a teacher, something that has become more of a struggle in recent years. It may be the change needed is a structural issue, for example.

- I am not in favour of a full time sexual health position. As an education system, we cannot be all things to all people and stray too far from what we are here for. Are we in the business of social welfare or are we in the business of academic excellence? If we are to succeed in the difficult job of educating the next generation, we need to truly prioritize learning. Sexual health, I am sorry to say, is not academic excellence. However, we may want to put some resources into empowering parents to encourage these conversations with their own children, in the home. In my experience, I have observed that the vast majority of sexual education at school consists of teaching children about the mechanics and ignoring intimacy. Which I would hazard a guess is what no parent wants for their child's long term relationships.

- I am not in support of a District Indigenous Support Worker. As Jordan Peterson so aptly describes, when you label based on race, in the long run, you simply divide and alienate. Hiring and labelling job positions based on race also comes back to the old proverb "two wrongs do not make a right."

- I am not in favour of more resources spent on mental health. I have observed over the past few years that the increasing focus in schools on mental health has had the effect of creating more anxiety and reduced mental health. At the last school meeting I attended the school speaker dwelt on three issues: drugs, aboriginal trauma and climate change. I hope that was not a reflection of what is said to the students in the school day - that would not help anyone's anxiety!

Anonymous

We need support in schools, not at the board office. More EAs, less board office administration. Also, as opposed to creating more administrative positions, just add on the points to individuals already in administration. That way you won’t be having a cost impact, for example, instead of creating a VP for inclusive Ed, increase the district principals administration time, which doesn’t come out of cost of the district, or offer the .2 to another administrator in the district who doesn’t have a full-time administrative workload.

Allan Louis

The need to have the Principal of Indigenous Education be part of the core funding, many school districts in BC have already included this as part of the budget. The indigenous graduation rates have increase in the last few years but still have aways to go, our SD must to support the growth of the indigenous program.