



Staff Report to the Board of Education

April 16, 2025

SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

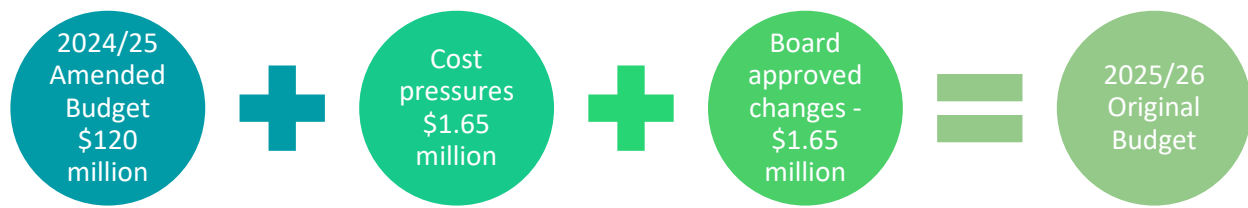
Karla Mitchell, Superintendent and Adrian Johnson, Secretary-Treasurer

BACKGROUND

The School Act requires the Board to submit a balanced budget for the 2025/26 school year to the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) before June 30, 2025. The submitted budget is referred to as the 2025/26 Original Budget.

The Board adopted the 2024/25 Amended Budget at the February 19, 2025, regular board meeting.

The Secretary Treasurer will prepare the operating component of the 2025/26 Original Budget as follows:



At the April 2, 2025, Special Board Meeting, the Superintendent summarised the anticipated cost pressures for the next school year and proposed \$1.65 million of operational changes to address those cost pressures.

The Board received feedback on those changes via an online form which closed on Wednesday April 9. Staff, parents and community members provided 41 responses, which are provided at the end of this document.

The Superintendent's budget recommendations remain largely unchanged from April 2nd. The only difference is a variation in the implementation of the transportation changes along Westside Road.

These recommended operational changes are presented for the Board's consideration.

BUDGET COLLABORATION

Between January and March, the Board received budget submissions from CUPE, VTA, and 83 members of the public. A consistent theme of these submissions is the need for more Education Assistants (EA) and School Based Resource Teachers (SBRT) to address the growing number of students with additional complex needs.

A lack of additional funding for cost pressures means an anticipated \$1,650,000 of cost savings must be found in this budget. That makes it particularly difficult to add resources, including SBRTs and EAs.

To find ways to address both the cost pressures and the feedback received, the Superintendent and Department Leaders have had many detailed conversations and meetings with School District leadership, including Principals and Vice Principals. Such conversations corroborate the need for more EAs and SBRTs.

The information gained through this collaborative approach informs a means to offset the cost pressures with minimal impact on students.

Further, the Superintendent has read and considered the staff and parent's feedback on the proposed operational changes.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

The Superintendent recommends the following changes to offset the \$1.65 million of cost pressures. Negative amounts show an increase in cost, and positive amounts reflect a decrease in cost. Opportunities to add more inclusion supports are highlighted.

Where appropriate, the commentary is updated **in bold** to address comments received through the feedback process.

Ref	Change	\$	Commentary
1	Decrease in elementary divisions - enrolment	700,000	Elementary schools are allocated divisions based on their forecast enrolment, which, overall, reflects fewer students than this current year. This reflects a net reduction of five divisions. Although there will be fewer divisions, there will also be fewer elementary students, and so class sizes will remain consistent.
2	Decrease in elementary divisions – contingency	-140,000 140,000	It is difficult to predict the number of divisions that will be needed at some schools in September. Staffing for one division will be held back, and if necessary, allocated near the start of the school year. If it is not needed, then the funding will be used for additional EA or SBRT supports instead.
3	Increase in secondary blocks - enrolment	-100,000	Secondary schools are allocated blocks based on their forecast enrolment, which, overall, reflects more students than this current year.
4	Reduction in secondary blocks – program adjustment	130,000	This reflects an overall decrease of seven blocks, or 1.0 FTE. District staff are coordinating with Secondary Principals to minimize the educational impact of this cost saving reduction. Adjustment #3 adds secondary blocks to accommodate more secondary students, indicating the cost needed to maintain the same block : student ratio. Adjustment #4 then layers on an operational change, slightly reducing the number of blocks available.
5	Transfer of Early Learning Success Teachers from targeted funding to operating	-260,000	In the 2022/2023 school year, the district itinerant Early Learning Success teachers were funded through the operating fund. The Integrated Inquiry Project (IIP) targeted funding provided an alternative funding source for these teachers. They have been funded through the IIP for the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 school years. The IIP funding is no longer available for this purpose, and so this is an increase in cost for the operating fund.

Ref	Change	\$	Commentary
6	Reduction in English Language Learner (ELL) Teachers	260,000	This change reduces the number of ELL teachers from 10 to 8. This year's allocation of 10 teachers was based on a forecast of 455 ELL students. The actual number of ELL students was 60 fewer than forecast (395 students), and we forecast to have 400 ELL students next school year. This reduction brings the expected ELL student to teacher ratio to about 50 : 1, which is more in line with other School Districts. Forecast Provincial funding allocation for ELL students is \$726,000, which is less than the salaries and benefit cost of 8 teachers of about \$1,040,000. Much of the feedback provided on these proposed changes indicates concern about having eight ELL teachers going forward. The feedback includes many examples of the important support ELL teachers provide vulnerable students. The number of ELL students joining SD22 is decreasing, with 32 new ELL students between September and February this year, compared with 50 over the same period last year. District staff are exploring ways of restructuring case loads to assist the eight remaining ELL teachers in continuing to provide this much-needed support to students.
7	Itinerant teacher reduction	572,000	This cost saving results from a reduction in the number of district itinerant staff. It reflects feedback received to focus reductions at the district level. It includes the re-allocation of one literacy support teacher to a newly announced literacy support targeted fund, with funding confirmed for two years. Department leaders will confirm the exact FTE and impacted positions once the Board confirms the budget.
8	Staffing reduction	130,000	This cost saving results from a reduction in the number of staff who are not directly involved in the education of students.
9	Additional inclusion support	-130,000	The inclusion team will use this available funding to add more SBRT and / or EA time in September. Inclusion refers to programs that support students with additional needs.
10	Reduction in service and supply budgets	242,000	Cost pressures of \$1.65 million include \$270,000 of inflationary pressures. This cost saving measure involves not increasing department and school budgets to offset inflation. An inflationary increase will still be applied to utility costs, offset by the utility saving noted in point 12. This cost saving measure will reduce the opportunity to buy supplies, software licenses etc.

Ref	Change	\$	Commentary
11	Trustee Travel	40,000	Board policy restricts unutilised portions of individual Trustee's professional development allocations for future use by the Trustee. This one-time adjustment releases the restriction on the unused amounts, allowing the funds to be used to balance the budget.
12	Utilities	50,000	A substantial amount of cleaning and maintenance occurs in schools over the summer, and the air conditioning runs in schools all summer to accommodate that. Adopting a team cleaning approach will allow some schools to be vacant for periods, with the air conditioning turned off. This reduction represents about 5% of our annual electricity costs of about \$1 million.
13	Transportation fees	16,000	This reflects a change in the route servicing students living outside of the SD22 catchment area on Westside Road. The route will be shortened to turn around at the Westshore Loop.
14	Transfer from Superintendent's discretionary budget to Inclusion	-50,000 50,000	This net zero change allocates resources away from administration to Inclusion. In the current school year, the Superintendent has implemented several cost reductions, including: • the almost elimination of advertising expenditure (including media advertising and purchases of SD22 branded swag). • a reduction in travel costs. • elimination of annual offsite school leadership retreat in favour of annual meetings held at the Board Office. These changes allow the reallocation of budget to better support students.
	Total	1,650,000	

Opportunities to add additional supports for inclusion students within these recommended changes include an increase in the Inclusion budget and a contingency amount which, if not needed for divisions, can be utilised for additional EAs or an SBRT.

It is possible that, come September, enrollment will exceed forecast or further students with designations may be identified. If so, additional revenue will be generated and an increase in the number of EAs and SBRTs will be prioritized.

POTENTIAL VARIANCES AND RISKS

The cost pressures of \$1.65 million are about 1.4% of the total operating budget. Many assumptions are used in calculating the cost pressures. Small differences in those assumptions can have a significant financial impact. The following table considers some key assumptions.

Variance	Commentary
Enrolment	MECC provide funding of \$9,015 for every student enrolled in SD22. 37 fewer students enrolled at SD22 in September 2024. A similar variance next school year would result in a funding reduction of \$330,000. To forecast as accurately as possible, SD22 engages a demographics company called Baragar to assist in enrolment projections. The budgeted enrolment includes the following factors: - the number of pre-kindergarten children living in the catchment area - the number of children graduating from SD22 at the end of this school year - the expected percentage of children living in the catchment area who enrol in SD22 (the participation rate), based on historical trends - expected in and out migration based on historical trends.
Student designations	In February, 962 students enrolled in SD22 had additional inclusion needs that generate an average of nearly \$20,000 each in additional funding for SD22 from MECC. The forecast assumes the same number of students next year. Historical trends have shown a steady year-on-year increase in the prevalence inclusion students, so this may be an overly prudent forecast. However, unlike previous years, overall enrolment is expected to decline which may lead to a decrease in inclusion students. Variances from forecast in this current school year resulted in about \$1.3 million more in revenue, as well as additional cost pressures to support the extra inclusion needs.
Sick leave	The cost of replacing staff who are absent due to illness has risen substantially every year since 2020. The cost pressure forecast assumes this trend comes to an end next school year, with sick leave rates remaining consistent with the current school year. This may be an optimistic assumption. Unexpected variances from the original budget in this current school year resulted in an increase of about \$1 million in sick leave replacement costs. This change is reflected in the current year's amended budget.
Benefit costs	SD22 provides extended health and dental benefits to its employees through an Administrative Services Only plan. This means that the benefit premiums are based on forecasted use of health and dental benefits, and then there is an annual adjustment to reflect actual usage. Teacher and support staff benefit plan premiums will increase next year by 8% and 7% respectively. This leads to a total increase in annual premiums of about \$500,000. However, this year, actual usage was less than the premium costs, resulting in a \$400,000 cost saving. This forecast assumes that actual usage will continue to be less than the cost of premiums and so assumes no overall cost increase. This may be an optimistic assumption.
Wages	The Provincial Government has not yet committed to any wage increases for staff for next year.

Variance	Commentary
	Should there be any increase for unionised staff, it is very likely that this cost increase would be matched by additional taxpayer funding. There is a significant risk that wage increases for non-unionised staff would not be offset by additional funding and so be an unexpected cost pressure. This forecast assumes that any wage increases, unionised and non-unionised, are offset by additional funding.

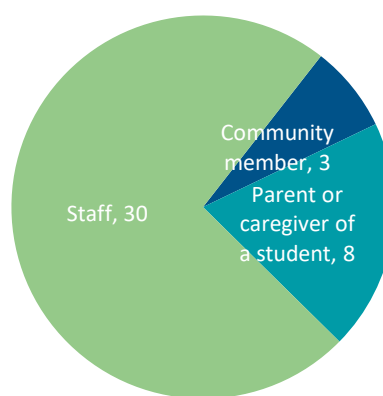
FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED CHANGES

On April 3, the Superintendent distributed a link to the proposed changes and a survey to staff and parents with the question 'Please outline your comments on the proposed changes'.

41 responses were received by end of day Wednesday, April 9.

These are reproduced below, with references to individuals and positions that identify specific individuals removed, other than where respondents have provided their name within the response. [Square brackets] indicate where text has been preplaced.

Chart: Number of responses by group



Parent or caregiver of a student

Reduce head office staffing. Inclusive specialists can be replaced with 0.25 time slots allocated to an SBRT in the school for this purpose. This reduces wasted time travelling from place to place and empowers the staff actually working with the students to create opportunities. That is just one examples. Anti-racism, mental health, food security, 'specialist' jobs. Basically ALL specialist positions should be incorporated into "on the ground positions" (with time release) to better meet the students' and staffs' needs as there will be proper realization of these needs. Reduce head office significantly. SBRT, Head Teachers, etc do not have administrative assistants. Head office needs to set the example.

Bussing - work out an agreement with the City of Vernon for particular bus routes and rates within the city and eliminate school bussing. Most cities have this already and its time for Vernon to join. Build adequate bike racks, and scooter racks, under cover and secure to encourage bike/scooter riding. Partner with agencies to provide safe non vehicle travel options (walking busses, group pick ups for younger children to take public transit, group bike/scooter, etc). Connect with RDNO, Health Region, participation Canada, etc. The School District doesn't need to be an isolated entity.

Do not decrease elementary divisions. This will just become a problem later. Our kids need significant help with basic educational skills.

The utility idea was great! Maybe look into Community School formats from other provinces.

Staff

I was pleased to see a 500K reduction in district itinerant teacher staffing. I have always felt this was a grave waste of money. We do not need a climate action teacher or curriculum leads. However, I do find [name redacted] very helpful.

If possible, I would like to see funding for district staffing (district vice-principals to principals of various departments) reallocated to staff a second vice principal at Seaton—boots on the ground, we say here. Our outstanding administrators here are run off their feet. I suggest moving [name redacted] (district staff) to the board office to make room for a second school vice principal here at Seaton. I understand VSS has the same enrollment numbers and will likely make a similar request, but the diversity and needs at Seaton are far more consequential.

Staff

I am pleased to witness the transparent efforts to balance the budget for next year. What stood out to me the most was the acknowledgment of student need and the efforts to increase the budget for inclusion for the upcoming year. I am impressed to see discretionary funding going into inclusion. As an inclusive educator, I was grateful to see this show of support and an effort from our district to address the unique needs of our students. This makes me feel hopeful that students will have more wrap around support opportunities and I feel seen and appreciated despite budget pressures being felt across the province.

Staff

The proposed budget proposes cutting 2.0 FTE from the ELL Department. As the ELL Coordinator, I would like to share some information that might be helpful when considering this. Currently, we have 409 ELL students as noted in MyEd. This is the same size as Silver Star Elementary. In the Collective Agreement, there is a 1:13.5 ratio for ELL Specialists. This equates to 30 ELL teachers. However, our ratio is blended with Inclusive Education and so that ratio is not adhered to. As I attend both regional and provincial meetings with other ELL Coordinators, I would agree that 1:50 is in line with some of the ratios in other districts. However, this would not include the blocks of ELL available at the high school level as these blocks are funded separately. Please refer to page 12 of the Policy Guidelines for ELL: (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/guidelines.pdf>) “Board / Authority Authorized (BAA) courses, locally-developed (LD) courses, and Literacy Foundations courses are all block-funded courses – not supplementary ELL services – and therefore do not qualify as ‘additional service’ for ELL Supplemental Funding.” Currently, these separately funded blocks of ELL have been covered by our current FTE. In addition to the separately funded blocks at high school, the 1:50 ratio would likely not include the position of the ELL Coordinator or staffing for the Welcome Centre.

In order to meet the audit criteria, ELL Specialists must assess students’ English language proficiency, create Annual Instructional Plans, provide specialized supplementary ELL services to address their linguistic needs, report on the progress of their language acquisition at regular reporting times, and provide regular face-to-face support. All of this has to be documented.

When considering this cut, please consider not cutting or having the 8.0 FTE available to meet the “above and beyond” requirements outlined in the Policy Guidelines and not including the separately funded blocks of ELL at the high school.

ELL students not only face linguistic challenges that are often a barrier to accessing the curriculum, but they also face a myriad of other challenges. They may have come from war-torn countries or left many family members and friends behind in their home country. They may have a learning disability that can’t be readily identified due to a language barrier. They may have a hard time making friends due to their limited English. There are many more challenges that this group of vulnerable students face. Administrators, teachers, parents and students all

rely on ELL teachers for support.

Thank you for considering my feedback. Please reach out if I can add clarity to anything mentioned or not mentioned above.

Staff

Please provide more FTE for ELL teachers.

Staff

I feel reducing the itinerant positions is not a good choice and the students will be the ones to suffer. Anyone or any service provided to our students shouldn't be affected by this procedure. The board office is top heavy with staff including multiple principals for [positions]. Maybe those departments should be looked at and combined to a smaller admin team.

Also paying two principals for one school seems outrageous too. Our district never had [a senior staff position] before, that is a huge expense that came from the previous SI that could be eliminated.

I agree with reducing the cost of tech and programs, our school has had multiple programming like freshgrade or reporting systems for a year and then changed the next year.

Overall, reducing services and people IN the schools is not ok and the district should be looking at ways to cut costs right at the board office. The importance of educating students comes from people IN the school.

Parent or caregiver of a student

Thank you for sharing this important information. It helped me better understand the situation.

As a parent, I hope the district will ensure that core courses remain stable and unaffected. I also suggest continuing support for creative programs like design and visual arts, which are important for developing students' creativity, confidence, and future opportunities.

Parent or caregiver of a student

I am so sad to see the changes you will make cost jobs to teachers ! We are already in a very scary time for our financial status in this country. The last thing we need to do is add stress both financially and mentally to teachers who provide our children with a safe space to learn and be full supported. This costs our community way more than saving money on a budget.

Find other ways to make these changes!

The cost to the wellbeing of our dedicated teachers , children, and the community is too high if you decrease roles and jobs.

Parent or caregiver of a student

Don't make these cuts. Don't make any cuts to education. Children need this money, it's literally stealing from children and the future

Community member

This is the stupidest thing ever. The schools need more money not less. If you keep cutting \$, education will start being effected then we will be no better than the US school system, and look where that's gotten us (world). Education is the single most important thing on this planet, without it we don't get doctors, nurses, pharmacists, IT specialist, developers, engineers and tradespeople and more.

Staff

I am advocating for more ELL teachers for the school district. I am currently at VSS and we have one teacher part time that is shared between here and Seaton. There are many times where I need to access her and she isn't available because she isn't physically here. I have ELL students in my classes who are at an extreme disadvantage because of this as they are not able to receive additional support while they are in class. The ratio is currently less than 1:50 and a 1:50 ratio would extremely disadvantage high school students as they have multiple classes they are requiring help with.

Staff

I am confused by the fact that there is an increase in secondary block enrolment due to a projected increase in students, and yet there is a reduction in secondary blocks listed as a "program adjustment". I am unsure how decreasing blocks will accommodate an increase in student enrolment.

I am also concerned for the ELL specialists who will be forced out of their role due to a reduction in the total number of ELL teachers. I understand that there are budget concerns here, but I hope considerations will be made for these teachers, who have worked to build their practice in specialized roles and likely have unique experience and training specific to those roles.

Staff

I am advocating for an increase to 9.0 FTE positions for English Language Learning teachers next year, rather than the 8.0 FTE currently budgeted. Presently, 1.0 FTE is allocated to the Welcome Centre and ELL Coordinator role. With 9.0 FTE, we could dedicate 8.0 FTE to directly servicing students and fulfilling audit requirements, which now includes face-to-face interaction with every student on our caseload each week, thereby maintaining the recommended 1:50 ratio.

Since the budget proposal, our student numbers have risen to 409. If the number of ELL students is 60 fewer than forecasted, reducing the FTE to 9.0 would align more closely with the 1:50 ratio, only eliminating one position due to the decrease in student numbers (not two).

The suggested 1:50 ratio is challenging to compare with other districts due to the unique composition of our district. Our students are distributed across 11 different schools and are present in nearly every classroom. Providing face-to-face service each week is time-consuming, especially when there are typically 2 ELL students per class and multiple schools for some ELL teachers. In contrast, other districts might have 10 ELL students in a single class, allowing them to provide face-to-face support in one in-class support block.

Reducing FTE will be particularly difficult in a high school setting where teachers spend at least half of their time teaching enrolling blocks. These blocks do not count towards audit compliance support, necessitating that ELL teachers provide face-to-face support to each student weekly. This is unfeasible when teachers have more than 50 students on their caseloads across multiple locations.

With 9.0 FTE, I believe that ELL teachers would be able to better deliver the audit-compliant support that our diverse student population deserves and requires. Thank you for your time.

Parent or caregiver of a student

Trustee unused balance- this money is being transferred to directly support students or it is being given back to the trustees in addition to their yearly allowance? Will there be a reduction in trustee individual budgets moving forward considering \$50,000 was unused this year?

What type of staffing will be reduced when "not directly involved in the education of students"

Over \$500,000 reduction in ininerant teachers is significant, what services are being cut? Are families going to be

made aware of the services that our kids are not longer benefitting from?

There is not enough staff directly working with students and it is impacting all students, I can not imagine having even less qualified staff supporting our kids.

Of course I understand that public education is not being adequately funded, it is very concerning that so much is being taking away from our students (and our future) when these students deserve and need opportunities that support them in to dream, believe and achieve in SD22

Staff

It is unfortunate that due to the budget the SD is cutting direct resources and support (ie teachers). Things that directly impact the children we are all here to do better by.

I feel that the cuts should be at the school board level. For years they were able to do there jobs without the extra jobs that have been created at the School Board. If teachers are cut due to numbers I believe that jobs at the School Board should be cut too. Less students means less work at the SB as well as in schools. Our Past Superintendents never had [a senior staff position]. I am not sure what has changed so significantly that now we need one? I believe that is a job that should be looked at. As well as many other jobs that have been 'created' over the years.

We all have our jobs because of the students. Time to start making them the first priority!!!

Parent or caregiver of a student

I understand that we are in a fiscally tight time but kids need the support in the classroom at younger ages to set them up for success. We are seeing teachers leave the profession and removing their supports (ea/sbrt) is going to compound the shortage. We need to be proactive in our approach, and support the children at younger ages to be successful. Rather than reactive in their later high school years when they are already struggling and haven't developed the skills they need to be successful in school.

I know we have to make cuts-and I don't have the answer but I would love to see an increase in more active outdoor learning to support the increase in ADHD kiddos.

Parent or caregiver of a student

It is unclear what is meant by inclusion, is the plan to hire someone to promote inclusion? If that is the case, why not just hire additional EAs as needed?

Staff

As an ELL teacher, I would like you to know that a decrease of 2.0 FTE will NOT bring the student -teacher ratio to 1:50 as proposed. It will be closer to 1:60 or higher in some schools. This is because you are not taking into consideration that or senior highschool ELL teachers teach enrolling blocks which is funded separately from ELL and should not be included in this FTE reduction. The proposal also does not take into consideration that 1 FTE is the ELL coordinator, and she does not instruct or manage ELL caseloads. This means that we will have an instructional FTE for ELL at 7 teachers for next year. This will dramatically reduce support for students and make it almost impossible to meet audit criteria, as we MUST work with each student weekly.

Please take a closer look at how you are obtaining the ratio and speak to our ELL coordinator about the senior high enrolling blocks.

This reduction in FTE will be a terrible loss for our ELL students who need extra support both academically and social emtionally.

Parent or caregiver of a student

I have a question in regards to the proposed budget changes...

The reduction in supplies. Does this mean that parents will no longer have school supplies ordered through the school at the beginning of the school year?

Will the staff cuts end up indirectly affecting the kids that need specialized supports to begin with? Which staff is being cut?

Staff

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback about future potential budget cuts. These conversations are never easy, and often uncomfortable. I would like to open by saying that I fully understand and respect the challenges faced by the district.

After looking over the budget shortfall documentation and suggestions, I have a few potential concerns that I would like to discuss.

I am concerned that some of the areas of proposed savings; such as reducing secondary blocks and limiting purchasing / supplies may significantly impact a variety of programs in SD22 schools. It was not clear in the documents provided how these cuts would be applied, and I'm hoping to add my perspective. As a secondary shop teacher, supplies, equipment and consumables are a significant concern, especially in today's economic climate. My worry is that these programs in particular will be targeted as areas of savings, since they are much more expensive than many other courses.

Considering the financial struggles we face, I work hard to procure the absolute best prices possible for the district, spending a lot of my own time on evenings and weekends, using my personal vehicle to deliver materials, bringing in my own material and even tools to help, as well as reaching out to personal contacts in industry for their support. Additional cuts would make this even more challenging. Please consider the challenges that ADST programs throughout the district face and keep in mind that these courses provide opportunities and directly employable skills that can turn into careers right out of highschool.

Another concern that times of financial struggle bring, is that course fees are often encouraged as a way to offset expenses, but adding financial barriers to families, and acting as a fee collector and teacher is not conducive to a successful program. Fees also create a divide between students of financial means and those without. I strongly believe that all students regardless of means should have the opportunity to learn how to create and craft quality projects that they can be proud of. Historically I have also been encouraged to seek out donations; however, local suppliers can only do so much, and often become fatigued from regularly being approached by multiple teachers at multiple schools throughout the year. We need your support more now than ever before.

I am a strong champion for applied skills education, and I would be remiss if I did not implore the district to protect and even increase financial support for skills-based education. I believe that the expense of these courses is well worth the investment, as they provide valuable skills and hands on learning in an otherwise traditional academic setting. Elective courses are often the first places cuts occur, as they are expensive, but I would assert that ADST / Trades education is one of the most valuable investments we as a district can make, and one of the most important areas in education we can provide for students.

As a teacher I am not always privy to the reasons why things in the district are done, and I do have a number of questions about how money is spent and resources allotted. I think that having an open forum and safe space to share observations, questions, thoughts and suggestions would be fruitful. I appreciate the opportunity to share thoughts, and for your continued support in making SD22's trades programs the best they can be.

Kindest regards.

Staff

ELL teachers are a wealth of knowledge and are an important support to students as well as staff. While I appreciate the challenges that come with decreasing a budget, it feels like a big change to cut 2 full-time positions. I am curious as to why the projected number of ELL students for this past year were so different from the actual number, and furthermore, the degree of certainty for next year's projected numbers if such changes to staffing were to occur.

Staff

*with classes having more and more needs, in addition to reduced SBRT time at our school, it is getting harder to meet students' needs. We need more support at the elementary level in all areas - speech and language/ELL/SBRT/counselling. Perhaps reducing the number of district/board office level positions and more boots on the ground positions (EA's as well) is one small way to help with our shortfalls. EA costs are lower than district vp/principal positions and could be one way to offset costs. I am aware and do understand the need for board office level positions but our children need more supports.

Staff

We very much need more support in schools for students. For example, the idea of cutting ELL teaching positions is shocking to me. We need more people (specialty teachers and EA's) in schools working directly with children to support their learning and development. Perhaps some district positions could be reallocated to school roles.

Staff

Please don't cut ANY ELL, SBRT, Counselling, Speech, OT/PT, EA, & teaching positions - these are critical positions for our "trenches" and working with students and their complex needs. We NEED more of these people! The needs are not getting easier since I began teaching, in fact this classroom teaching job has become almost impossible. Our jobs as classroom teachers involves so much that we need the extra support just to survive. Perhaps we could do with a few less secretaries & assistant positions at the board office level. It would be great if board office positions involved one day a week in classrooms to truly understand the intensity of needs classroom teachers deal with every day. We won't be getting fewer ELL students, diverse needs or demanding parents that tell us how to do our job. I've never seen so many strong teachers in crisis mode trying to meet the demands of our classrooms because we ALL really care about each child. Or the other solution is to cut the curriculum and reporting process in half, lower academic expectations. Then we might have a better chance of survival in the trenches.

Staff

Please reconsider eliminating 2 ELL positions from our district. A 1:50 ratio is an enormous caseload not allowing sufficient ELL time for the students who need it. I'd like to stay the numbers stay as is and allow for an increase in support for the current students.

Staff

ELL support has ensured that everyone in my class has thrived both socially and academically. ELL support has made sure that all students in my class feel valued and supported. Without this support, my ELL students would have struggled to communicate their needs and wants and would not have felt as included.

Staff

Reduce Reuse Recycle. I would like to see the district Reuse Refurbish old desks/tables that sometimes just need a new top. the frames are solid, just from delamination, or vandalism/ wear and tear and with a little help we can reuse some of these instead of throwing them all away. here at CBSS we have had 30 plus redone last year and have 30 more frames waiting. The cost of always buying new outweighs the cost of repair let alone added contribution to landfills.

Staff

Concern with cutting divisions and filling classes to maximum capacity when teachers are already unable to help all their students with the lack of support available. Cutting ELL teachers by 2.0 is a huge concern, many ELL students need a lot of one on one support and adaptations. The ELL teachers help support this by working on basic vocabulary and student needs in a less distracting environment. These skills transfer directly to classroom spaces helping teachers and students alike.

Staff

I'm concerned about cutting 2 ELL positions. I have worked closely with my school's ELL teacher over the past 2 years. She has been crucial in working with and assisting the children on her caseload. She provides them another safe adult to confide in along with all the learning she does with them. She has provided various activities that allow me to support these students in my class. I feel that her job should be full time and the idea of cutting 2 full positions when I am hoping for increase in time is unfathomable.

Staff

Itinerant learning teachers are critically important roles that should not be cut. They support teachers and students directly through their work, specifically; residencies, portfolio work (climate action and anti-racism), mentorship, curriculum development, professional development, providing community connections, supporting literacy and numeracy, middle years transitions, In class Tier 1 support, assessment practices, classroom management, culturally responsive teaching practices, communities of practice and new teacher training among many other roles.

Classroom teachers rely on supports provided by itinerant learning teachers to help them navigate their ever changing classrooms. I urge you to reconsider this budget item and to maintain these integral support roles.

Thank you

Staff

On behalf of CUPE 5523 K - 12 Support Staff, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Superintendent's budget recommendations.

It is clear from all those that submitted recommendations at the beginning for budget proposals that funding needs to be directed for additional EAS and SBRTS to support inclusive education, a classroom environment that is not disruptive and the safety of students and staff.

We require clarification in the costing where it was indicated that \$310,000 was being allocated potentially for additional support in inclusion. Please provide the cost breakdown and areas it will be directed. Also, the \$130,000 in cost savings from staffing not directly related to student education. We would normally have these cost reductions specifically identified.

Of note in reviewing the package proposal, there is no reduction in administration or exempt staff to help support funds going directly back into the classroom. Please advise if this is a correct assumption.

Our hope is that EA staffing is kept at the present level and increased if there are new designated students

identified in September. This would mean that present temporary positions EAS are working, would continue as permanent positions for the following school year.

CUPE supports equality in education, a safe working environment for staff and students, and a productive learning environment in classrooms supported by the staffing required to succeed. Please direct any additional funding to provide additional EAS and SBRTS during the 25 / 26 school year.

Kind regards,

Gray Boisvert - CUPE 5523 President

Staff

I have concerns about reductions to roles such as ELL teachers and other teaching staff in the district. I understand that this is a result of projected enrolment, but I have also witnessed first hand how these projections can be underestimated and result on stress to our schools to accommodate students that do not have necessary supports or needed blocks.

Staff

Is it possible to save money through things like staying local for administration retreats and cutting back on school district and administrative expense/travel accounts? School staff are always looking for management to lead the way in cutting costs. When we see admin with Stanley mugs, it's not a good feeling when we don't have enough EAs. Could the temperature in schools be dropped a few degrees during the school year - how much are our hydro, etc. costs - would save that money? Just thinking of creative ways to save money so that students can have increased support in classrooms. That's all I can think of right now. Thanks.

Staff

I am concerned that the reduction in itinerant staff will mean learning support positions being cut instead of some of the more administrative roles which are not student connected

Staff

I am concerned that there are a number of the bugetary changes that will impact class size/composition, ie. Decrease in elementary divisions; Reduction in secondary blocks; Itinerant teacher reduction; Reduction in English Language Learner (ELL) Teachers; and Staffing reduction, all of which will directly impact student learning and success and cause undue stress to teachers and support staff.

I also note that the majority of the cuts are at the school level. What about at the Board Office level? If enrolment is going down, do we really need [various Board Office staff positions]? Should we not be looking at changes that will have the least impact our students?? This budget is not putting our students first, nor is it prioritizing the health and well-being of SD22 staff.

Staff

I am writing this to advocate to maintain the current 10 FTE for ELL teachers for the 2025-2026 school year.

The proposed ratio of 50 students to one teacher may have some validity in the Elementary School context, but it does not work in the High Schools. Having worked in both contexts, I can say with some authority that the jobs are very different in many different ways; but especially because the High School ELL teachers have 1-3 enrolling blocks per semester (depending on the needs in the given school population). Without these enrolling blocks the ratio could be workable, but it is in these longer, and more intensive blocks that the real learning occurs. Removing these from the responsibilities of the High School ELL teacher would not make sense. It must

be made clear, however, that these enrolling blocks DO NOT COUNT as “above and beyond” ELL support for audit purposes.

As we have been diving deeper into an investigation into what IS required to pass an audit by the Ministry of Education, we are coming to the realization that our current practice would fall short of what is expected. Changes need to be made, and we are currently working out what those changes will be. All of these changes will add to the expectations of the job.

An audit has not happened in many years, but we know that it is imminent. We will all be very surprised if it does not happen early next school year. Cutting FTE from our ELL program at this time, puts the funding for entire program in jeopardy. We MUST ensure that we have a full compliment of experienced ELL teachers who can hit the ground running at the start of the year to implement the proposed changes we need to make in order to pass the audit process.

Staff

The loss of two ELL teachers is huge for an already struggling system. This cut stretches us even thinner than what we are now. This cut not only hinders the impact of an intervention role additionally we will now struggle even more to develop relationships and foster community trust. We also have to be mindful that many of our ELL students come with traumatic experiences and they seek places of refuge and ELL classrooms are usually a safe place for them. As support staff is reduced the opportunities to access such safe havens is also reduced.

Please reconsider your decision for the benefit of our students and ensuring their success.

Staff

I would prefer to see a readjustment of resources from the board office to the school sites. Perhaps those positions that are "success teachers" or positions of special responsibility such as [staff position], could be reallocated to the schools, working directly with students. Losing two 1.0 FTE from the ELL program seems to be out of alignment with the increase our community is seeing in children needing this service. Perhaps they could be attached to schools as resource teachers as more and more students are being coded with diagnoses. I would also love to see an increase in the number of EAs that are at each school site because of the increased needs of students.

Community member

To: SD22 Board of Education Trustees
From: Vernon Teachers' Association (VTA)
Re: Proposed Reductions to ELL Staffing

The Vernon Teachers' Association urges the Board to reconsider the proposed reduction of 2.0 FTE from the English Language Learning (ELL) Department in the upcoming budget. This reduction would significantly impact the supports available to some of our most vulnerable students, as well as the classroom teachers who rely on ELL specialists to help meet these students' needs.

Currently, there are 409 ELL students in SD22—approximately the same number of students as in BX Elementary. The Collective Agreement recommends a staffing ratio of 1:13.5, which would equate to around 30 ELL teachers. However, this ratio is not being met, as it is blended with Inclusive Education staffing. ELL services are already stretched thin.

While some districts may use a 1:50 ratio, that number does not account for the full range of ELL service obligations, including:

- ELL blocks at the secondary level, which are separately funded and do not qualify as supplementary ELL support under the Provincial ELL Policy Guidelines (page 12);
- The roles of the ELL Coordinator and staff at the Welcome Centre, who provide essential intake and ongoing support services that are not included in the ratio.

ELL specialists are also responsible for fulfilling a wide range of Ministry-mandated duties to ensure compliance and meaningful service:

- Assessing English language proficiency;
- Creating and maintaining Annual Instructional Plans (AIPs);
- Delivering targeted, supplementary language instruction;
- Reporting on student progress at each formal reporting period;
- Providing face-to-face support and maintaining documentation.

These responsibilities are not optional—and they cannot be met if staffing is further reduced.

ELL students face unique and often complex challenges. Many:

- Experience barriers to accessing the curriculum due to limited English proficiency;
- Come from war-affected regions or experience family separation;
- Struggle with social isolation, mental health concerns, or undetected learning needs;
- Require specialized instruction and connection to school life that general classroom teachers are not resourced to provide alone.

ELL teachers are not only direct supports for students—they are vital collaborators for classroom teachers, administrators, and families. Cuts to their staffing diminish the district's capacity to provide appropriate and equitable education, and they place additional strain on classroom teachers already working under significant pressure.

For these reasons, we strongly urge the Board to maintain the current 10.0 FTE in the ELL Department. Any reduction would compromise:

- The district's ability to meet audit and compliance requirements;
- The quality and consistency of support provided to ELL students;
- The ability of classroom teachers to effectively meet the needs of their students;
- Our shared commitment to equity, inclusion, and student success.

Community member

Vernon Teachers' Association (VTA) Budget Feedback: Superintendent's Budget Recommendations – April 2, 2025

The Vernon Teachers' Association acknowledges the financial challenges outlined in the April 2, 2025, Superintendent's Budget Recommendations and appreciates the Board's efforts to find operational efficiencies while preserving services to students. However, we have serious concerns regarding the clarity and transparency of some of the proposed changes—particularly the significant reduction to district itinerant teacher staffing.

Lack of Transparency Regarding Itinerant Services

A \$572,000 reduction to district itinerant teacher staffing is listed under "Itinerant teacher reduction," with minimal accompanying detail. Given the magnitude of this cut, the VTA is requesting greater specificity on:

- Which itinerant roles will be reduced (e.g., Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Vision Support Teachers, Speech-Language Pathology support, Literacy Support, Behaviour Intervention support, etc.),
- Which student populations will be affected by these reductions,
- Which schools or zones will see changes in itinerant service delivery, and
- Whether the impact is to FTE allocation, caseload thresholds, or the type/intensity of support provided.

These roles support some of our district's most vulnerable students. A vague reference to a reallocation of a literacy teacher to a targeted fund is not sufficient explanation for such a sizable cut. Without this level of detail, it is impossible for stakeholders to assess the actual implications of these changes on inclusion, accessibility, and equitable service delivery.

Impact on Inclusive Education

It is worth noting that the budget acknowledges an anticipated increase in students with additional needs and includes a potential \$310,000 in increased supports. However, this investment is undermined if critical itinerant services are being simultaneously reduced without clarity or accountability.

Inclusion is not simply about SBRT and EA staffing—it requires a coordinated team that includes itinerant specialists. Without knowing which parts of that team will be diminished, the risk to student service continuity and educator capacity is real and significant.

VTA Request

The Vernon Teachers' Association respectfully requests:

1. A full breakdown of the \$572,000 itinerant teacher reduction, including FTE and role descriptions.
2. A rationale for each change, including the anticipated impact on service levels and student support.
3. An opportunity for the VTA and school staff to engage meaningfully in assessing these impacts before final decisions are made.

We urge the Board to ensure that this portion of the budget—impacting some of the most specialized and essential services—receives as much scrutiny and transparency as other line items. If cuts must be made, they should be informed by data, guided by equity, and made in consultation with those closest to students.

Sincerely,

Dave MacKenzie
President, Vernon Teachers' Association

Staff

Date: April 9, 2025

Dear Trustees and District Leadership,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed budget changes for the 2025/26 school year. While I recognize the challenges of balancing the budget amidst declining enrollment and increased cost pressures, I'd like to offer a constructive recommendation regarding the reallocation of human resources — with the goal of increasing direct support for schools, building stronger community connections, and ultimately improving outcomes for students.

Premise: Streamline District Administration & Reinforce School Leadership

Rationale:

1. Principals Are Overextended:

Across the district, Principals are burdened with administrative demands that leave little/no time for vision-setting, instructional leadership, inquiry or innovation. Our schools risk further stagnating in outdated models unless Principals are given the time, training, and support to lead.

2. District-Level Bloat:

Over recent years, there has been a marked increase in the number of administrators and support staff at the district level. Many of these roles, while well-intentioned, are increasingly removed from the day-to-day realities of classrooms and learners. This disconnect can dilute responsiveness and slow innovation.

3. Other District Examples:

Numerous districts across Canada and the U.S. (e.g., Beverly Hills USD, Conejo Valley USD, Mesa Public Schools, Richland SD, and Greater Victoria SD) have successfully restructured administrative staffing to support student learning without sacrificing governance.

Proposed Changes:

1. Reduction of Administrative Positions at the District Office:

- Objective: Streamline operations and reduce overhead to redirect funds toward student-facing supports.
- Suggested Areas for Review:
 - [Senior staff position]
 - [Board office positions]

2. Addition of Vice Principals in Secondary and Elementary Schools:

- Objective: Strengthen site-based leadership and help Principals manage growing student needs and administrative demands.
- Impact: A second VP in high schools or select elementary schools would allow for better implementation of school and district goals, improved support for teachers, and more consistent student guidance.

3. Strategic Reallocation of Human Resources:

- Conduct a district-wide audit of administrative roles.
- Engage stakeholders in meaningful dialogue — including staff, students, and parents.
- Reassign or consolidate roles not directly contributing to classroom learning or school improvement.
- Invest in instructional coaches, SBRTs, and EAs to better support inclusive education.

The Need to Build Community

We must also recognize the need to strengthen community across SD22 — between schools, families, and district leadership. Many/Most educators and parents feel disconnected from decision-makers, and the current top-down structure does little to build trust or shared ownership of our schools' future.

Reallocating resources to school sites — and empowering Principals and Vice Principals to lead meaningful change — would go a long way in rebuilding relationships and fostering a culture of collaboration. Strong school-based leadership, visible support staff, and open communication channels help create schools that feel welcoming, responsive, and grounded in the values of our community and district. Everyone needs to be connected to the students.

I fully support the district's commitment to minimizing classroom impacts and prioritizing inclusion. However, I encourage the Board to look deeper — to ask where resources can be realigned to support people over process, and relationships over hierarchy. A district where families, staff, and students feel seen, heard, and valued will always outperform one that is efficient on paper but disconnected on the ground.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.