

April 6, 2023

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT 2023-2024 Engagement Summary Report



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Overview

The Vancouver School Board’s budget development is guided by the [Education Plan, Framework for Enhanced Student Learning](#) (FESL) and the Board’s [motion](#) to address the structural deficit. The budget development process provides several and varied opportunities for input about the annual budget’s development. The report summarizes feedback input from the District’s formal stakeholder groups¹ and members of the public gathered between February and March 2023 about the 2023-2024 budget. Additional opportunities for feedback and input remain in April during Committee-of-the-Whole meetings and via written submissions to the Board.

Engagement Goals and Activities

The District is committed to open, clear and transparent engagement as guided by the District’s [Administrative Procedure 106: District Public Engagement](#). Best practices acknowledge that the engagement activities can and should be fluid to reflect meaningful engagement opportunities for various audiences. As such, engagement goals for the 2023-2024 budget development moved between the “inform”, “consult” and “involve” levels of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum.

Engagement Audience	Engagement Method	Engagement Activities/Materials (Engagement Goal)
Stakeholder Group Representatives	Workshop, February 1, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion guide (Inform) - Staff presentation (Inform) - Dotmocracy exercise (Consult) - Group discussion (Consult + Involve) - Post-session survey (Involve)
	Workshop, March 9, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion guide (Inform) - Staff presentation (Inform) - Group discussion (Consult)
Broader Public Engagement	Online survey, February 27 – March 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget Survey (Inform and Consult)

District staff held two facilitated workshops to seek feedback and request input/additional ideas and priorities from stakeholder representatives. The annual online budget survey for the broader public was informed by the first of these sessions. The budget sought feedback from students, their families, staff and the broader Vancouver public about potential budget measures. To encourage participation, a link to the survey with general information was provided to all students’ families. The survey was also promoted on the District’s website, social media channels and staff intranet.

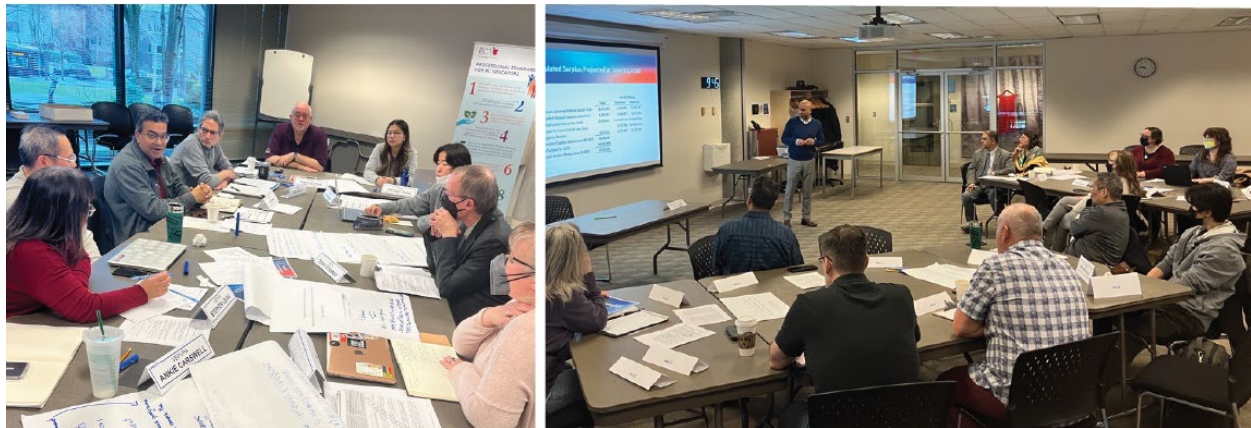
¹ Union groups, professional associations, Vancouver District Parents Advisory Council and Vancouver District Student Council

Summary of Feedback and Input

Feedback and Input by Formal Stakeholder Groups

Each year, as part of the budget development process, District staff and representatives of the District's formal stakeholder groups meet to discuss budget priorities. With a new Education Plan fully approved by the Board last school year and a Board motion adopted in October 2022 directing staff to bring forward strategies to address the structural deficit, these meetings were reformatted to facilitate collective participation by stakeholder group representatives.

District staff began the early development of priority action items for consideration within the annual budget development and sought early involvement of stakeholder representatives. The initial ideas/potential measures developed by staff align with the Board motion pertaining to the structural deficit and provincial government policy directions requiring school districts to develop multi-year financial plans based on strategic plans and goals of the FESL plan. As such, District staff determined it was vital to seek stakeholder feedback and invited them to add their input via other ideas/measures for consideration.



Two workshop sessions were held to provide an opportunity for collaboration and discussion amongst representatives of stakeholder groups, bringing in different perspectives that may not have been included in the previous individual meetings (format of prior years' stakeholder engagement). Based on discussions and feedback, stakeholder representatives expressed appreciation for the group format and that they valued the sessions as well as being included early in the budget development process. There was indication that similar engagement formats, earlier and often, would be welcomed for future budget development processes.

See [Appendix A](#) and [B](#) for a summary of each session.

While feedback and input received during the workshops noted that the possible budget measures were interrelated and interdependent, the following themes emerged from the two sessions.

Staffing to Serve Students

There was an expressed opinion that priority should be given to supporting school-based staff. Stakeholder representatives strongly advised that more support and funding be directed to frontline staff versus administration and management personnel. During the sessions, it was noted that VSB maintains a high ratio of non-enrolling staff than the District is funded for under provincial grants. Some

stakeholder representatives noted that non-enrolling staff provide vital support to students and therefore, should be retained as is at a minimum. While some representatives noted that centralizing some staff to schools to support students may be beneficial, they also advised that this could have unintended impacts such as professionalization or managerialism within the school system. Stakeholder representatives discussed the priority to improve students' accessibility to specialist educators and other support staff (especially school counsellors at the secondary level). Stakeholder representatives discussed the need for and how to create better/more equitable access to programs and courses for secondary students, including offering programs in different locations throughout the year. Adding to this input, during the second session, the idea of leveraging technology to offer more accessibility to off-site programs for students was briefly also suggested. Stakeholder representatives noted that the Vancouver Learning Network (VLN) which now a provincial online school that enables expanded enrolment beyond VSB, may provide greater revenue generation and benefit Vancouver students through more program offerings. Based on group discussions, stakeholder representatives also advised that expanding adult education opportunities is a worthwhile pursuit, educationally as well as possible additional revenue generation.

Maximization/Optimization Use of Facilities

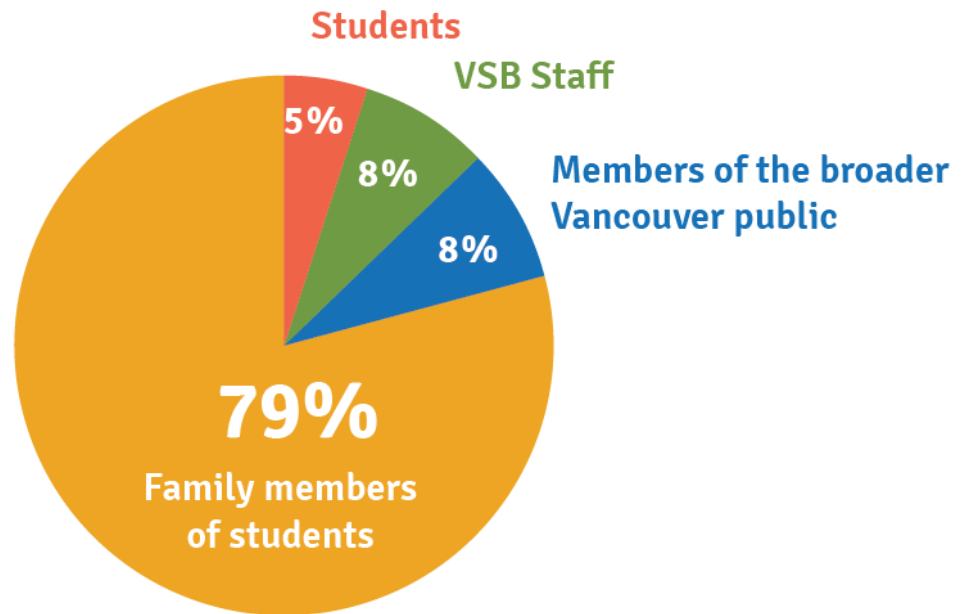
While closure of non-enrolling/empty schools was seen as a possible prudent avenue to pursue, stakeholder representatives encouraged that these facilities remain for District and/or wider community use, through development of multi-use options (inclusive of things like child care, community group/non-profit programs, commercial and other tenants). During the workshops stakeholder representatives noted multi-use community hubs such as at Strathcona and Britannia where there are community centres, libraries and potentially housing. Furthermore, they advise that the Board retain ownership and consider revenue generation through leasing agreements. Additionally, stakeholder representatives suggested the need for complete audits regarding space as well as programs to ensure services to students are robust and responsive to students' needs, and that decisions are based upon a site's physical circumstances/space rather than details from reports with formulas/ratios, etc. It is important to note that stakeholder representatives did not wish to see facilities commodified and they cautioned that there are students whose learning and personal needs may be better served by smaller schools or learning spaces that typically have lower student enrolment.

Several stakeholder representatives indicated a desire that the Board advocate for more funding for education with the provincial government. They noted the value of the public education system, the hard work of their members and the importance to adequately fund the system as a key societal priority.

Public Engagement Feedback

Each year, the District seeks the public's feedback. Part of the annual budget development process via an online survey. Participation in the survey is voluntary and all responses are kept anonymous while being combined with the responses of other survey participants.

This year, the budget survey was available online between February 27 and March 3. Approximately 3,500 participants took part – which is the highest participation of the last five years. Based on self-identification, most participants were family members of students enrolled in VSB schools, predominantly of the elementary-aged students. This is consistent with participation in previous years.



OUR VSB

2023-2024 Budget Development Survey

Introduction

Each year, the Vancouver School Board (VSB) adopts a budget for the upcoming school year. The annual budget must be balanced and adopted by the Board at a public meeting.

Feedback from rightsholders, members of school communities and the broader Vancouver public is helpful to the Board as it makes its budget decisions. Please share your feedback about some key areas for consideration in the budget for next year.

Anonymity

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Your answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. The responses you provide will be combined with the responses of other survey participants and individual responses will not be identified.

Please do not include personal identifiable information, such as your name, email address, phone number, address, etc. in the comments. Please be respectful in the comments you provide – offensive comments will be omitted.

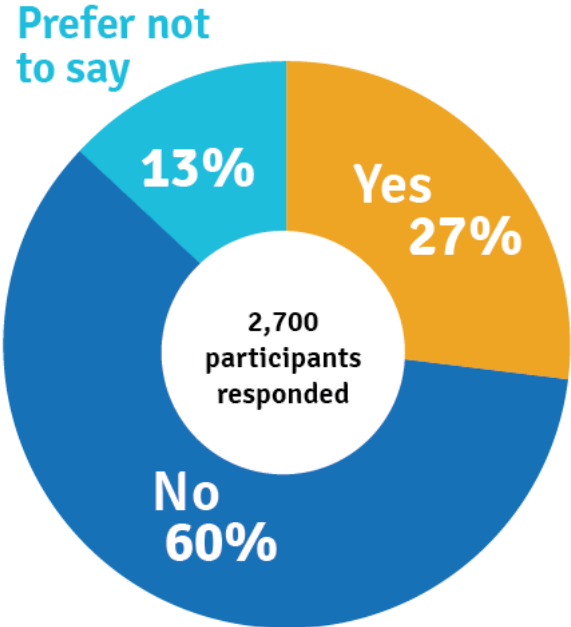
The online survey sought feedback about the following theme areas: **Programs and Services Supporting Students, Staffing to Meet Students’ Needs and Use of District Facilities**. Prior to indicating their level of support (via a three-point scale) for each theme area, participants were provided with background information about VSB, as well as an overview of the budget development process, the Education Plan, the District’s FESL plan and the Board motion to address the structural deficit.

Hearing from many diverse voices is a priority for District staff and the Board. Working to remove barriers, dismantle systemic discrimination and create equitable, inclusive and welcoming learning and

work environments is fundamental to VSB. To help achieve this and to consistently improve, survey participants are invited to provide some demographic information about themselves. This information is voluntary and kept anonymous.

More than 2,700 participants responded to the question:

Have you or your child/ren faced barriers as a special education learner, person of physical or other disability, English language learner, new immigrant, or as a member of the Indigenous, Black, persons of colour, 2SLGBTQIA+, or other equity deserving community?



Based on responses by participants, general support was indicated for each of the three theme areas. It is important to note that each theme had a decreasing number of responses by participants.

- All participants responded to the first theme, **Programs and Services Supporting Students**, with about 75 per cent indicating a level support.
- Approximately 92 per cent of participants responded to the second theme, **Staffing to Meet Students' Needs**. Of those respondents, about 75 per cent indicated a level of support.
- Of the 89 per cent of participants who responded to the third theme, **Use of District Facilities**, about 78 per cent indicated they were supportive of the types of measures within this theme area.

See [Appendix C](#) for a breakdown of response via theme.

Via an optional open-ended comment box, participants were also invited to share other priorities for consideration in the 2023-2024 budget or provide additional comments. Based on a review of more than 900 comments provided, there is a general sentiment that if funding constraints are necessary such reductions should be in areas not directly impacting students in schools. Additionally, the following themes emerged from submitted comments.

Programs and Support for Students

Many participants commented about program offerings and supports to students. Some participants urged more supports for students' mental health and wellness as well as additional programs for students with special education designations as well as accelerated learning opportunities and choice programs. There was also a call for more music and art programs as well as more support for athletics and field trips. While to a lesser degree, some participants also advocated for a greater focus be placed on academics rather than social-emotional and inclusivity initiatives.

Staffing

Many participants indicated attention to staffing should be a priority. Suggestions included providing more funding to increase school-based staff levels, particularly school counsellors, SSAs and teachers (most notably teachers-teaching-on-call). Several participants suggested the District pursue more comprehensive evaluation of staff performance as well as pursuing possible contracting options. To a lesser degree, comments submitted suggested increasing salaries for staff as a strategy to improve both retention as well as staff work-attendance. Additionally, several participants suggested reducing school administration and District management staffing levels. Furthermore, some participants echoed support for relocating centralized staff to schools.

Efficient Facilities, Equipment and Processes

There were several comments provided about facilities, including some comments urging measures to increase seismic projects and funding to improve school facilities, including washrooms. Participant comments also suggested the lease/rental of school facilities to outside agencies – especially those offering compatible programs such as child care services. While a few comments provided were supportive of consolidating schools with low enrolment or closing annexes where possible, there were also comments about the need to retain ownership of property. Also, regarding school-owned property, some participants urged the selling or development of the Kingsgate Mall property and other (non-specified) real estate assets. Additional comments noted that staff equipment (i.e., computers and other devices) should be examined and that they felt there is a need for general efficiencies including limiting printing and change purchasing practices to get better value for money.

Revenue Generation and Fiscal Management

While to a lesser extent, some comments provided by participants urged greater advocacy with the provincial government to increase funding allocations to the District. Of these, some comments included advocacy efforts to redirect funding provided by the government to private schools to the public system. Other comments submitted suggested VSB seek other revenue sources such as increasing taxes, adding fees and increasing tuition rates for international students. Some participants also commented that the District should revise its processes for projecting enrolment, the impact of inflation and general cost increases.

Other comments provided were general in nature and included personal experiences, opinions and complaints of varied matters. There was also an expressed desire that future surveys present more information about trade-offs and benefits of budget proposals so participants can provide more thorough and informed feedback.

Conclusion

Participation in the engagement activities as part of the annual budget development process continues to grow. While varying formats, questions and budget proposals have been presented in the last several years, there are some common takeaways each year. Stakeholder representatives, school community members and the broader public place high value on school-based staff and the supports they provide to students' learning and well-being as well as ensuring school facilities' upkeep be a priority.

Advocating for additional funding from the provincial government is also commonly raised each year. Furthermore, detailed costing of budget proposals (funding sources, savings, impacts/outcomes, etc.) is also a consistent request from stakeholder representatives, school community members and the broader public.

Appendix A – Budget Engagement Summary Report (Stakeholders) – Part 1

Overview

Each year, as part of the budget development process, District staff and stakeholder representatives meet to discuss budget priorities. With a new Education Plan fully approved by the Board last school year and a Board motion adopted in October 2022 directing staff to bring forward strategies to address the structural deficit, these meetings were reformatted to facilitate collective participation by stakeholder group representatives.

District staff began the early development of priority action items for consideration within the annual budget development and sought early involvement of stakeholder representatives. The initial ideas/measures developed by staff directly align with the Board motion pertaining to the structural deficit and provincial government policy directions requiring school districts to develop multi-year financial plans based on strategic plans and goals of their Framework to Enhance Student Learning (FESL) plans. As such, District staff determined it was vital to seek stakeholder feedback and invite them to add their input via other ideas/measures for consideration.

Engagement Methodology

This engagement rests at the level of *involve* on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum and, thus far, involved:

- A discussion guide was developed to inform and support stakeholder participation and contribution. The guide was distributed to participants several days ahead of the scheduled engagement session.
- A presentation providing an overview of the budget development process, detailing the challenge of a structural deficit for a school district, and possible measures to begin addressing that challenge as directed by the Board.
- A facilitated workshop to begin collection of feedback and seek input about other ideas to achieve outcomes required in the budget development process.
 - The workshop included a grounding exercise during which participants reflected on what aspects of the Education Plan resonated with them and the importance it has on their members
 - To begin to assess support of potential measures developed by staff and to encourage other possible actions, a dotmocracy exercise was planned
 - Small group discussions were then held to further explore and assess potential budget considerations. Participants were asked to focus their discussions in relation to how the system might advance the goals of the Education Plan and the FESL and/or contribute to addressing the structural deficit strategies.

There was participation by the majority of stakeholder groups with the exception of, and regrets, from Trades and Vancouver Association of Secondary School Administrators (VASSA).²

² All materials including this report, continue to be shared with the executives of these groups as will details about future meetings and support materials.

While formal engagement sessions are a vital and key element in the annual budget development process, other avenues through which stakeholder groups can share their aspirations and priorities also remain available, including direct submissions to the Board via writing and/or presentations at Committee-of-Whole meetings as well as at Finance Committee meetings.

Summary of Feedback and Input

Stakeholder representatives expressed appreciation for the opportunity to contribute their feedback and input early in the budget development process. They also indicated they value group discussions and cross-sectional sharing of viewpoints. This sentiment was further echoed by expressions to have more such opportunities, as well as sufficient time scheduled to enable thorough exploration of potential measures and brainstorm new/other ideas.

While participants expressed appreciation to gather together and for early involvement, there was hesitancy by a few representatives to participate in a dotmocracy exercise. Some felt participation would be used to simply rank priorities as presented and therefore not fully convey their perspectives to the Board. Additionally, there was hesitancy to participate as the representatives did not feel they could adequately reflect their membership's assessments of initial possibilities nor what they would like to see their representatives contribute. Following explanation and discussions, most participants took part and contributed in the dotmocracy activity, where and how they felt appropriate to do so. Participants reviewed the possible measures requiring support within the upcoming budget and potential budget reduction strategies, placed dots to indicate those with potential merit as well as added commentary to initial possibilities. While participants were invited and encouraged to add new measures, most comments were considerations and/or objections (less frequent) to proposed measures and comments rebutting/adding to others noted by participants.

The attendees then participated in smaller group discussions. This activity provided an opportunity for more in-depth conversations and considerations. Based on comments, participants deeply valued this activity and expressed a preference for this format for their continued participation. Some remarked that this enabled a greater exchange of ideas and discussion of various view points in a collaborative manner. Others indicated they favoured it as it allowed for greater brainstorming of opportunities to inform the eventual budget and decisions about the District's operations.

Two small groups were formed for these breakout discussions. There was cross-sectional representation at each smaller group (i.e., stakeholders of educators' groups and support groups). Additionally, and more importantly, each smaller group included student representation and their contributions were actively welcomed and supported.

Key Takeaways

Based on the participation in the activities, two primary themes emerged:

1. Maximization/Optimization Use of Facilities
2. Examination of Staffing to Serve Students

Maximization/Optimization Use of Facilities

While participants questioned the notion that there is excess/available space in a variety of school/learning environments, there was general support to ensure all facilities are used to maximize services and supports for students. With respect to moving classes and programs into available space, where possible and in alignment with recommendations of the preferred school size working group, there was caution raised to be mindful of students' particular needs as well as the location/ease of access for students. While closure of non-enrolling/empty space was seen as a possible prudent avenue to pursue, stakeholders encouraged consideration that these facilities remain for District and/or wider community use, through development of multi-use options (inclusive of things like child care, community group/non-profit programs, commercial and other tenants). Child care was often raised by stakeholders, including the idea of co-locating services in small school/annex sites where space permits. Lease and rental of available space was also something stakeholders generally saw as a worthy pursuit, included for services and operations that are compatible with a school environment such as non-District/school programs, wellness supports and others.

Additionally, stakeholders advised the need for complete audits regarding space as well as programs to ensure services to students are robust and responsive to students' needs, and that decisions are based upon a site's physical circumstances/space rather than details from reports with formulas/ratios, etc. It is important to note that stakeholders did not wish to see facilities commodified and they cautioned that there are students whose learning and personal needs may be better served by smaller schools or learning spaces with low enrolment. Stakeholders indicated that bigger is not better for everyone and the varied needs of students should be prioritized.

Finally, and somewhat related to the second theme below, stakeholder representatives noted that relocation of District-based staff warranted further consideration and possible pursuit. In addition to consolidating District-based staff currently located outside of the Education Centre to a central location such as the soon to be empty original Eric Hamber Secondary School site (when the seismic replacement school is complete), stakeholder representatives suggested that other school sites could also be used to house District-based staff. They suggested staff based in the Education Centre be relocated to schools where offices could be accommodated for space utilization as well as strengthening relationships with school communities.

Staffing to Serve Students

There was consensus expressed that staffing decisions be centered on ensuring services to students. While through the dotmocracy activity participants expressed divergent views about how best to meet the needs of students, through the discussion groups, they agreed that staffing levels must be considered as well as that of locations. Staff assignments should all drive to service and support students learning and well-being. This was particularly true when considering the work location of staff who have offices outside of school settings but work within school settings (particularly those who support multiple school sites). The location and availability of counsellors was frequently discussed by several stakeholder representatives, including student participants. Student access to staff (counsellors and others) was discussed in relation to program locations as well, and stakeholders raised that qualified staff be available for their specific discipline/role (i.e., counsellors, specialized teachers such as senior sciences/languages, etc.). The participants also felt that staff should be conveniently located and that close access to students was a priority for student well-being and academic success. Secondary

programs with staff located in areas easily accessible by students was also discussed by attendees, particularly for students who wish/need to take a course at another location. In some circumstances, these programs are prohibitive to access by students in one area of the city as the only other option for a program/course is at another school located far away. The Histories of African Descent course was one such example raised while others noted sciences, etc. While the need for innovation and careful coordination was raised in light of the challenge of having qualified staff to run programs, discussions indicated stakeholder representatives feel it is vital that staffing is sufficient for program operation and replacement of staff (who are absent due to illness, leaves, retirements, new assignments, etc.) should be a priority as without such, service levels to students are diminished.

Generally, there is shared commonality by stakeholder representatives of deeply valuing staff contributions. However, there was divergence expressed regarding the level of staffing (via type) depending on stakeholders' particular membership groups. Yet, consensus was evident that the health and well-being of staff positively contributes to that of students and their outcomes. For those reasons, there was expressed support for staff providing direct support and services to students (versus toolkits and other resources) as well as for support of staff health and well-being.

Conclusion

Amongst stakeholders, their questions raised concerns about the validity of details for consideration in the budget development. These included, "Does a structural deficit exist?" "Are enrolment projections accurate and if they are off, does that mean there is no structural deficit?" These were coupled by opinions that foundational items (i.e., Education Plan, FESL goals, no specific examples of largely empty learning spaces, etc.) are too ambiguous to make decisions or suggestions on behalf of stakeholder groups. This, together with feedback from a survey regarding the materials and information shared during the workshop will be gathered, in an effort to continuously improve future processes.

Additionally, during the scheduled session, stakeholder representatives did not discuss every potential measure to advance the goals of the Education Plan and FESL as well as all the early possible strategies to address the structural deficit developed by staff, nor did they discuss all the comments/considerations added by participants. While explicit mention of this was requested by one group, all echoed a desire to continue participation. Given the new format of bringing together representatives of all groups to formally engage (versus previous practice of individual meetings with each group), District staff intend to host another session in March for further consideration and discussion by stakeholder representatives. District staff are also considering more sessions/workshops for stakeholder groups periodically next year as part of the budget development work.

Appendix B - Budget Engagement Summary Report (Stakeholders) – Part 2

Overview

As part of the budget development process, District staff invited stakeholder representatives to a second meeting to continue group discussions to help inform the 2023-2024 budget.

Engagement Methodology

This engagement rests at the level of *inform*, *consult* and *involve* areas of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum and included:

- A discussion guide shared in advance of the first stakeholder workshop held February 1, 2022.
- Information about potential measures to begin addressing that challenge as directed by the Board.
- A presentation by staff further explaining the structural deficit.
- A facilitated workshop to further gather feedback and seek input about other ideas to achieve outcomes required in the budget development process.
 - The workshop included a grounding exercise during which participants reflected on what aspects of the Education Plan or which of the budget development principles resonated with them and the importance of such to their members.
 - Small group discussions were then held to further explore and assess potential budget considerations.

There was participation by the majority of stakeholder groups with the exception of, and regrets, from Trades, Vancouver Association of Secondary School Administrators (VASSA), and CUPE 15.

The second workshop was scheduled and structured based on feedback received through a post-session survey provided after the first workshop.

It was noted again for stakeholder representatives that while formal engagement sessions are a vital and key element in the annual budget development process, other avenues to share input remain available, including direct submissions to the Board via writing and/or presentations at Committee-of-the-Whole meetings as well as at Finance Committee meetings.

Following a recap of the prior session and a staff presentation, attendees participated in smaller group discussions. This activity provided an opportunity for more in-depth conversations and considerations about three themed areas for feedback: **Programs and Services Supporting Students, Staffing to Meet Students' Needs and Use of District Facilities.**

There was cross-sectional representation at each smaller group (i.e., stakeholders of educators' groups and support groups).

Summary of Feedback and Input

Stakeholder representatives noted that potential budget measures and the themes presented were interconnected and interdependent. Representatives reiterated thoughts about multi-use facilities, the importance of frontline (i.e., school-based staff) as well as that funding and support be specific to

students learning and development needs. Once again, stakeholder representatives discussed student enrolment projections and the need to be flexible considering future demographics changes (i.e., expected increase of immigration).

Stakeholder representatives noted the importance of respecting the diversity of learners in Vancouver schools and that to do so requires a diversity of learning opportunities and programs. They advised that decisions regarding student programming and supports should make pedagogical sense first and foremost.

Regarding the location and/or relocation of staff, based on the report out of group discussions, there is still some support amongst several stakeholder representatives, however, it was coupled with the caution about unintentional outcomes including professionalization or managerialization of the system. Stakeholder representatives noted that the Vancouver Learning Network (VLN) which now a provincial online school that enables expanded enrolment beyond VSB, may provide greater revenue generation and benefit Vancouver students through more program offerings. Based on group discussions, stakeholder representatives also advised that expanding adult education opportunities is a worthwhile pursuit, educationally as well as possible additional revenue generation.

Once again, stakeholder representatives suggested more advocacy with the provincial government to increase funds for the District, while some representatives offered the idea of advocating for school contribution fees by Vancouver.

Conclusion

During the second workshop session, stakeholder representatives raised many of same themes, concepts and topics brought forward in the first session. Some stakeholder groups were represented by different participants at each of the two sessions, and as such, this repetition was valuable in a validation sense.

Based on feedback and comments by stakeholder participants, additional sessions bringing together the different perspectives of stakeholder groups is a recommendation moving forward. While stakeholders expressed a strong desire to brainstorm ideas for future budgets, they also requested a more thorough presentation of costs, funds and allocations as they do so.

Appendix C – Survey and Results

Introduction

Each year, the Vancouver School Board (VSB) adopts a budget for the upcoming school year. The annual budget must be balanced and adopted by the Board at a public meeting.

Feedback from rightsholders, members of school communities and the broader Vancouver public is helpful to the Board as it makes its budget decisions. Please share your feedback about some key areas for consideration in the budget for next year.

Anonymity

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Your answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. The responses you provide will be combined with the responses of other survey participants and individual responses will not be identified.

Please do not include personal identifiable information, such as your name, email address, phone number, address, etc. in the comments. Please be respectful in the comments you provide – offensive comments will be omitted.

About the VSB

VSB is among the most diverse public-school systems in Canada, with an annual enrolment of about 48,500 students in kindergarten to Grade 12, in addition to educational programs and services for adult education students as well as international students.

- 89 elementary schools including 12 annexes
- 18 secondary schools
- 1 Vancouver Alternate Secondary School (VASS)
- Adult Education School
- Vancouver Learning Network (online learning opportunities)
-

Learn more [here](#).

Background Information - 2023-2024 Budget Development

The budget's development is directed by:

VSB [Education Plan](#)

VSB [Framework for Enhanced Student Learning](#) (FESL)

Board Motion: [Structural Deficit Reduction Strategies](#)

The majority of funding in the budget is provided by the provincial government through a funding formula. Salary and wages take up most of the expense portion of the budget (more than 90 per cent).

For the last 10 years, the Board has had to use money from previous years' savings (known as an accumulated surplus) to balance the budget. This meant that services and initiatives that were not fully funded, could continue. Accumulated surplus is money that can only be used once and continuing to use previous years' surpluses to balance the annual budget means there is a structural deficit in the District's

operating fund budget. A structural deficit is the cumulative impact when there is not enough funding received to cover all the expenses in the budget.

Reasons why there is a structural deficit include:

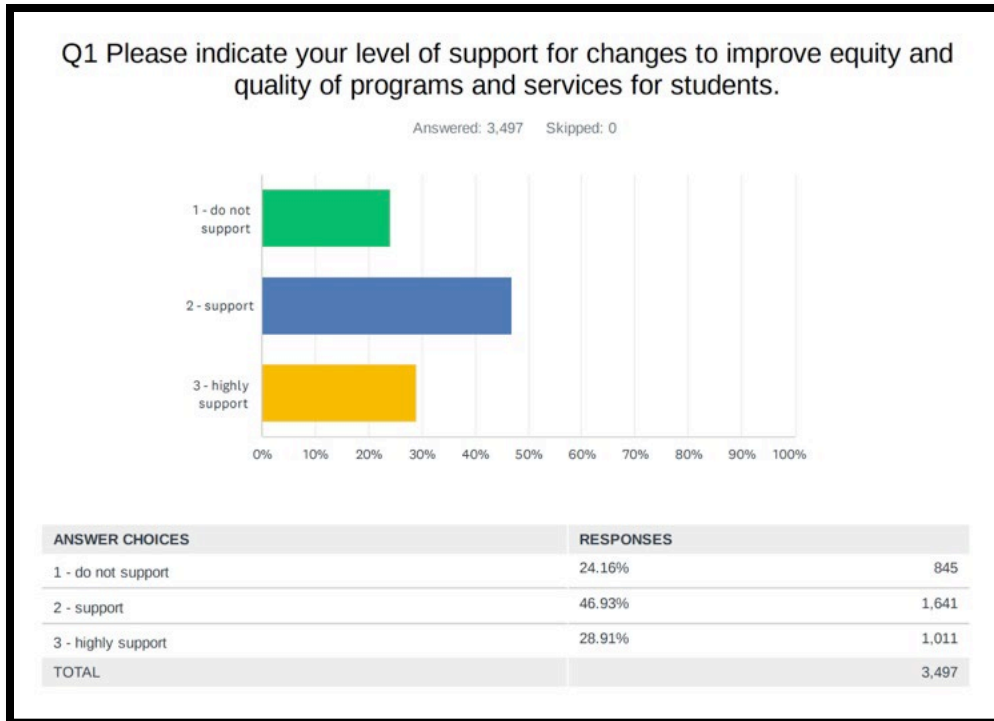
- Enrolment declines over time
- creation of programs and services that do not have a funding source or that rely on surplus funds
- exempt staff and collective agreement wage lifts not fully funded by the government over time
- maintaining more than required numbers of non-enrolling teacher staffing
- fewer students coming to VSB through the International Student Program (as tuition paying learners)
- higher costs of maintaining old building
- lack of funding to keep up with inflation
- operating more sites than are required to meet the current and projected student enrolment (many schools have available space).

Simply put, the costs are now too high and there are not enough funds from the surplus to offset the difference. To address the structural deficit, long-term changes, restructuring operations and related costs will be needed. This reflects Goal 2 of the Education Plan: Increasing equity is addressed as “Improving stewardship of the District’s resources by focusing on effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.”

We’d like your feedback about three areas being considered for the 2023-2024 budget.

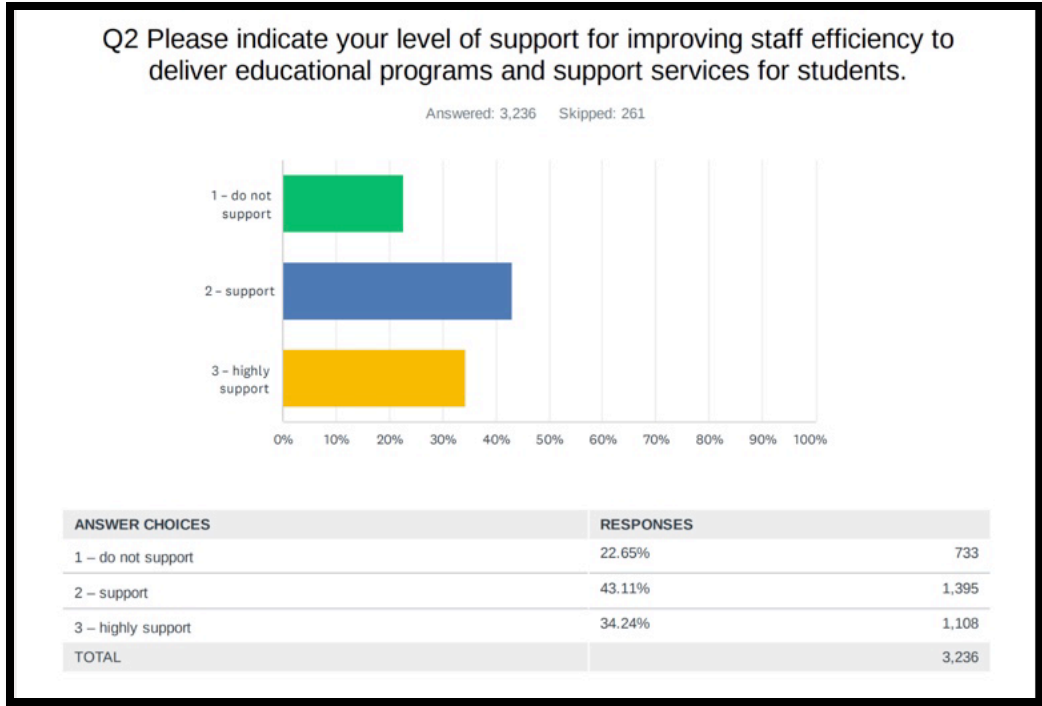
Programs and Services Supporting Students

Students’ learning journeys and personal development are supported by programs and services. Programs and courses should be easy to access for students, be inclusive of all types of learners and provide students with the support they need to succeed. To do so may mean combining secondary classes with low enrolment into one class (i.e., grades 9 and 10 French) at some schools. It may mean discontinuing or changing some programs which, now with a revised provincial curriculum, are outdated and add costs not funded by the government. It may mean relocating District Choice programs, Alternate and Alternative programs to provide enhanced service for students or even where some secondary courses are offered, so students can easily get to them.



Staffing to Meet Students' Needs

Dedicated, highly skilled and caring staff are the backbone of the public education system. Ensuring their work locations and efforts meet students' needs is essential to improve outcomes for students. With a new Education Plan, B.C.'s revised curriculum and changing student needs, some reorganization or restructuring of staff may be necessary. For example, this could be reorganizing staff who support multiple schools to create a learning and instruction team that would support staff in addressing student learning needs such as literacy, numeracy and/or critical thinking in specific schools. It could also mean reorganizing staff who support the summer learning program and the Vancouver Learning Network (online learning program) as those programs have changed. Or, possibly, relocating work sites of staff to schools with space or in a centralized location, so they can more efficiently support students. It may also mean investing in training and professional development for staff, so they have the best skills and resources to support students including supporting equity, anti-racism and non-discrimination. It could also mean reorganizing staff that support learning through programs such as Vancouver Learning Network, Summer Learning, Adult Education, or Alternative Programs.



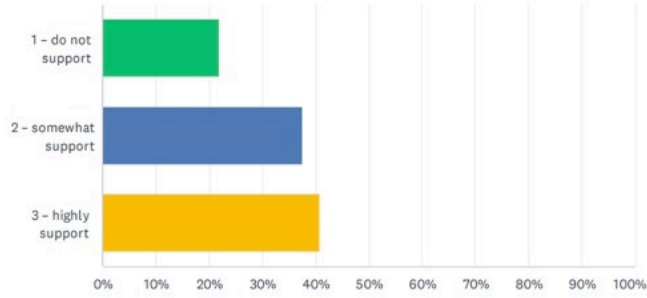
Facilities

VSB operates schools, offices and other buildings. Like everywhere, costs continue to rise for things like hydro and gas, maintenance and general upkeep. By making better use of existing spaces, we can save money, improve efficiency and better serve students. This may involve things like moving Choice Programs that run out of satellite or out buildings to the main schools. It could mean moving classes in annex buildings to main schools that have space. Other possible measures include closing non-enrolling/empty sites (i.e., Carleton Elementary and Garibaldi Annex) as well as relocating/consolidating worksites of District-based staff who work outside of the Education Centre office. Another option may be to adjust lease and rental rates to increase operating revenue. By maximizing the efficient use of space the high operations and maintenance costs in the budget can be reduced

Indicate your level of support to maximize facility use to improve efficiency and save money.

Q3 Indicate your level of support to maximize facility use to improve efficiency and save money.

Answered: 3,120 Skipped: 377



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 – do not support	21.89%	683
2 – somewhat support	37.44%	1,168
3 – highly support	40.67%	1,269
TOTAL		3,120