

Engagement Summary Report 2026-2027 Financial Plan

March 2026



With deep gratitude and respect, we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x^wməθk^wəjəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

Table of contents

Table of contents	1
Introduction	2
Executive summary	3
Engagement summary	4
Engagement and analysis methodology	4
Inherent rights holders and formal stakeholder groups input	4
Budget input survey summary	5
Survey participation	5
Survey input overview.....	6
Staffing and classroom support	6
Learning and foundational skills	7
Course offerings and programs.....	7
Learning resources and classroom materials.....	7
Facilities, maintenance and school environments.....	8
Student well-being, mental health and safety.....	8
Inclusion, equity and access.....	9
Scheduling, calendar and instructional time.....	9
Child care, early learning and family supports.....	9
Technology and digital learning	10
Written submissions	10
Conclusion	11
Appendix A: Financial plan engagement budget priorities	12
Appendix B: Financial planning engagement workshop	19
Appendix C: Finance and personnel committee meeting	21
Appendix D: Survey participation	22
Appendix E: Written submissions to the Board	25

Introduction

Under the *School Act*, by June 30, all school districts must approve a balanced budget for the upcoming school year. At the Vancouver School Board (VSB), all operating and financial decisions are informed by the [Education Plan](#) and priorities in the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning [report](#).

As part of the financial plan development process, VSB implements varied engagement activities as part of the annual budget development to support the Board’s considerations. Engagement activities follow best practice standards set by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) and in alignment with the District’s administrative procedures. The goal is to actively seek and incorporate input from xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh’ Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and səilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation), District leaders and the District’s formal stakeholder groups, as well as from students, their families, staff and the broader public in the annual budget and financial plan. Staff aim to provide clear information, ensure voices are valued and make financial recommendations to the Board that align with the community’s values and school district’s educational goals. All input gathered is provided to the Board, the final decision-makers in this process.

Financial plan development process



Executive summary

As part of the development of the 2026–2027 financial planning process, VSB undertook a range of engagement activities to ensure a broad range of perspectives were gathered to support the Board’s budget considerations. Engagement activities were designed in alignment with the IAP2 best practices for public participation and [AP 106: District public engagement](#).

Engagement began with inherent rights holders and formal stakeholder groups, including meetings and facilitated sessions with representatives of x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation), as well as the District’s formal stakeholder groups (unions, professional associations, the District Parent Advisory Council and the Vancouver District Student Council). These activities also included workshop and committee discussions that explored shared priorities and practical considerations for the upcoming financial plan.

Input was also gathered from students, their families, staff and the broader Vancouver community through a public online survey and written submissions.

Across engagement activities, including discussions with inherent rights holders and formal stakeholder groups, the public survey and written submissions, similar themes were identified. Participants’ shared ideas focused on strengthening inclusive, future-ready learning and working environments, deepening equitable access to learning supports and culturally grounded education, enhancing student well-being and belonging through day-to-day services and relationships, and building workforce capacity through aligned staffing and role-specific professional learning. Participants also emphasized the importance of reliable technology to support student learning and District operations, as well as the purposeful use of data to identify equity gaps in student outcomes and guide action.

This report summarizes engagement activities undertaken to date and key themes raised through the process. Detailed summaries of individual engagement activities are provided in the [appendices](#).

Engagement activities for the 2026–2027 financial plan remain ongoing. Written submissions will continue to be accepted until April 16, 2026. A committee-of-the-whole Board meeting dedicated to inherent rights holder representatives and stakeholder representatives presentations is scheduled for April 13, 2026. This will be followed by a public delegation meeting on April 15, 2026, providing members of the broader public with the opportunity to share perspectives directly with the Board. An updated engagement summary report will be shared prior to the Board’s final financial plan approval consideration.

Engagement summary

VSB encourages input and feedback as part of the financial plan development process. Guidance is sought from inherent rights holders through the Indigenous Education Council (IEC). Input is gathered from the District's formal stakeholder groups: unions, associations, the District Parents Advisory Council (DPAC) and the Vancouver District Student Council (VDSC). Input is also gathered from students, their families, staff and the broader Vancouver public through an online survey. Written submissions, via electronic and traditional mail, and the opportunity to present to the Board during dedicated public meetings are also available.

Engagement and analysis methodology

A mix of quantitative and qualitative activities were implemented, and results were analyzed to arrive at key takeaways and themes. An inductive approach was followed in assessing the information gathered through engagement activities. This yields an objective presentation of input gathered across engagement activities and audience segments. To aid in the review, artificial intelligence assistance was utilized to limit manual input. All information gathered was first reviewed by qualified professionals and assessed for accuracy prior to staff analysis. Together with other considerations, the key takeaways provide valuable insights for the Board as it considers the 2026-2027 budget.

Inherent rights holders and formal stakeholder groups input

Engagement with inherent rights holders representatives and representatives of VSB's formal stakeholder groups provides valuable input as part of the financial plan development. Throughout engagement activities, participants shared perspectives about student learning, staffing approaches and system conditions that contribute to inclusive, safe, future-ready learning and working environments.

In meetings between senior staff and representatives of inherent rights holders and representatives of stakeholder groups, participants provided input emphasizing the importance of advancing equity, inclusion and access, enhancing student well-being and safety as well as building staff capacity. Discussions underscored the need for robust learning supports, locally culturally relevant programming, access to specialized services, opportunities for professional development and technology systems that enable effective teaching, learning and school district operations.

A facilitated workshop held at the Education Centre on February 2, 2026, further explored shared themes and practical actions for consideration in the 2026–2027 budget. Discussion areas included student support services, role-aligned professional learning, technology supports and the use of data to identify and address equity gaps in student outcomes.

Small group discussions at the finance and personnel committee on February 11, 2026, contributed more detailed considerations raised during earlier activities. Input included near term activities to

advance student well-being, equity and inclusion, staffing capacity, workplace culture, collaboration and modernizing technology to support learning and operations.

Detailed summaries of input provided during engagement activities are included in the [appendices](#). Representatives of inherent rights holders and representatives of District's formal stakeholder groups are also welcome to share input directly to the Board at the committee-of-the-whole meeting scheduled for April 13, 2026.

Budget input survey summary

Each year, VSB makes a public survey available as part of the engagement process to help inform the Board's budget considerations. To address calls for more open engagement, this year, the survey was made available earlier and focused on seeking input by inviting participants to share their budget priorities via open-ended comments.

Participants were also informed about other ways to share their input as part of the budget development process. Written submissions are open until April 16, 2026 (via electronic or traditional mail) and members of the public also have the opportunity to present to the Board at its public delegation meeting dedicated to budget input, scheduled for April 15, 2026.

The survey was available from January 14 to February 2, 2026. Participation was promoted using VSB-owned channels. Direct email messages were distributed twice to all students' families and adult education students. Other promotion included social media posts, links in school newsletters, website postings (District and schools' websites), an email to staff and intranet posting as well as reminder messages posted in TEAMS channels. Survey participation was also encouraged by VSB chair Jung in her opening remarks at the Board meeting held on January 28, 2026.

Survey participation

The online budget input survey was voluntary and all survey questions were optional. A total of 1,240 participants accessed the survey. Most participants indicated they were parents, guardians or caregivers of a VSB student, representing approximately three quarters of respondents. Additional respondents identified as students attending a VSB school or program, VSB staff members, individuals who are both staff and parents or caregivers, and members of the broader Vancouver public. As in previous years, participation was strongest among family/caregivers connected to VSB schools, particularly elementary programs. This aligns with participation patterns observed in prior financial plan engagement surveys.

Participants were invited to provide the first three characters of their postal code. Submissions align with Vancouver addresses and reflected participation from across the city. Responses were distributed across multiple neighbourhoods, with no single area dominating participation. Postal code information is included to provide context and should not be interpreted as a statistically representative sample of the city.

Participants most commonly accessed the survey through direct email, followed by links shared by schools or programs and social media posts.

Survey input overview

Participants shared a wide range of ideas focused on how resources could best support students, schools and staff. Across responses, several recurring themes emerged. Participants most frequently referenced the importance of school-based staffing, particularly education assistants (SSAs), support workers, counsellors and resource teachers. Curriculum-related input was also common, with a strong focus on literacy and course availability as well as arts and enrichment programming. Facilities were another area of emphasis, with comments clustered around maintenance, renovations and safety. Further details about participant submissions are below including examples of submissions that informed the thematic analysis

Staffing and classroom support

Participants most often suggested increasing the number of school-based staff who work directly with students. Many referenced education assistants (SSAs), support workers, counsellors, resource teachers and specialists as essential to daily learning. Several recommendations submitted suggest redistribution of staffing to more school-based roles rather than resourcing administrative/operational positions.

Suggestions included hiring additional school-based staff, increasing in class support for students with diverse learning needs, expanding access to counsellors, psychologists, speech language pathologists and occupational therapists, reducing reliance on substitutes or educators-on-call and lowering student-to-staff ratios through smaller class sizes. Also notable were calls for staff training, particularly about supporting children with neurodiversity and in evidence-based evolving pedagogy.

Participants emphasized that staffing levels affect learning outcomes, inclusion and student safety and well-being, as well as teacher workload. Many noted that staffing supports classroom stability, helps address diverse needs and enables educators to focus more fully on instruction.

Illustrative examples of submissions

“Stable, school-based staff create the conditions for safe, inclusive classrooms where students can learn and teachers can focus on teaching.”

“When classrooms have consistent adult support, everyone benefits—students feel supported, and educators can do their best work.”

Learning and foundational skills

Many participants highlighted the importance of strong foundations in reading, writing and math, particularly in the early grades. Input frequently referenced early literacy, structured reading instruction and a stronger focus on writing, spelling, comprehension and numeracy.

Some participants noted the value of evidence-based strategies and training for educators, while others highlighted the importance of early identification and intervention for students who may show signs of learning challenges.

Participants described foundational skills as critical for long term success and as the basis for learning across all subject areas.

Illustrative examples of submissions

“Strong early foundations in reading, writing, and numeracy build confidence and support success across all areas of learning.”

“Early, targeted support helps students develop the skills they need to thrive as learners over time.”

Course offerings and programs

Participants often suggested increasing choice and variety in programming, especially at the secondary level. Input included calls for broader course availability and different curriculum focus, as well as revisions to school scheduling, including timetables, semesters, school year breaks and professional development days.

Choice programs, gifted and advanced programs were frequently noted as important to meet the needs of students who are excelling academically. Arts, music, drama and band were also described as contributing to belonging, creativity, future learning and overall well-being. Clubs, athletics and extracurricular activities were also highlighted as key to supporting physical and mental health.

Illustrative examples of submissions

“A broad range of programs and courses keeps students engaged and allows them to explore their strengths and interests.”

“Choice and enrichment opportunities help students stay motivated and connected to their learning.”

Learning resources and classroom materials

Many responses expressed calls for additional or improved learning resources. Participants referenced books, library resources, classroom supplies and learning materials across literacy, math, science and the arts.

Suggestions included access to textbooks, workbooks, hands-on materials and experiences as well as digital tools and resources. Participants described these resources as necessary for equitable access to learning and for reducing out-of-pocket costs for educators and families.

Illustrative examples of submissions

“Access to high-quality learning materials supports hands-on instruction and equitable learning experiences.”

“Well-resourced classrooms allow students to fully participate and engage in meaningful learning.”

Facilities, maintenance and school environments

Many respondents shared perspectives about the physical condition of schools and grounds. Input referenced building maintenance and cleanliness, specifically regarding washrooms, playgrounds and outdoor spaces/exterior conditions. Participants also called for renovations/upgrades of schools and for investment in safety infrastructure/work.

Climate resilience, heating, cooling and air quality were also noted in participants’ comments. Participants linked school environments to student health and safety as essential to enable learning.

Illustrative examples of submissions

“Safe, well-maintained, and welcoming school spaces support student well-being and readiness to learn.”

“Investing in school environments helps create healthy, supportive places for students and staff.”

Student well-being, mental health and safety

Participants also raised the importance of student well-being, mental health and safety. Input included suggestions for increased counselling and mental health supports, bullying prevention and school safety measures.

While input varied widely, some participants referenced digital well-being, screen use and phone or device policies, while others emphasized emotional and social skill development. Many respondents noted that students learn most effectively when they feel safe, supported and are able to focus.

Illustrative examples of submissions

“Students learn best when they feel safe, supported, and able to focus on learning.”

“Access to counselling and well-being supports strengthens engagement and helps students succeed.”

Inclusion, equity and access

Participants highlighted both the importance of inclusion and the need for supports to be effective and accessible. Input submitted referenced supports for students with disabilities and diverse learning needs, as well as equitable access to services and resources throughout the school district. Participants also noted the importance of designated supports tailored for Indigenous students and English language learners to promote equitable opportunities for all learners.

Input provided also highlighted the significance of food programs within the education system, to address challenges related to nutrition/food security. Participants' comments also noted student learning supplies and materials, as well as experiential learning opportunities. There were also calls for funding support and availability for before- and after-school programs, child care and extracurricular activities as important ways to advance access and equity for all students.

Illustrative examples of submissions

"Inclusive education works best when students have the supports they need to participate and belong."

"When classrooms are supported effectively, inclusion strengthens learning for all students."

Scheduling, calendar and instructional time

Participants frequently commented about how the school year and day are structured. Input included references to semester versus linear system at the secondary level, professional development days (timing and frequency), instructional time, daily schedules and transitions between grades and schools.

Illustrative examples of submissions

"Thoughtful scheduling supports continuity of learning and helps students stay engaged throughout the year."

"Clear, consistent time structures help balance learning, well-being, and family routines."

Child care, early learning and family supports

Participants noted priority for before- and after-school-care and early learning supports. Input referenced on-site child care, after-school programs, StrongStart and other early learning initiatives, as well as supports for working families.

Illustrative examples of submissions

"Early learning and child care supports help families prepare children for a strong start in school."

“Before- and after-school programs play an important role in supporting students and working families.”

Technology and digital learning

Input submitted presented mixed views about technology, with strong opinions about both access and limits. Participants referenced classroom technology, devices, digital literacy and artificial intelligence (AI), as well as concerns about screen time, distraction and well-being. Many emphasized the importance of thoughtful, age-appropriate use of technology that supports learning rather than replacing it.

Illustrative examples of submissions

“Reliable, well-supported technology enhances learning when used thoughtfully and purposefully.”

“Age-appropriate use of digital tools can support learning while maintaining focus and well-being.”

[Appendix D](#) provides additional demographic detail about survey participants. All comments submitted through the survey were provided to trustees for their review.

Written submissions

Written submissions were received by email as part of the budget engagement process and are included in [Appendix E](#). Submissions received between January 12 and February 13, 2026, reflect input from stakeholder representatives, parents/caregivers, students, staff and members of the broader Vancouver community.

Written submissions shared personal experiences and perspectives related to budget planning. Topics raised included school-based staffing such as education assistants (SSAs), student support workers, counsellors and resource teachers, learning conditions and instructional approaches, inclusive education, student well-being and safety as well as school facilities and capacity pressures. The correspondence received echoes a shared focus with input provided by inherent rights holders representatives and stakeholder group representatives, as well as input gathered through the public survey.

Conclusion

The 2026–2027 financial planning engagement process reflects VSB’s commitment to transparent, inclusive and values-based decision-making. Input gathered from inherent rights holders, formal stakeholder groups, students, families, staff and the broader community provides important insight into shared priorities across the District. This thoughtful and considered input will support the Board’s deliberations as it considers educational goals, community values and fiscal responsibilities.

VSB extends its sincere appreciation to all participants for the time, care and perspectives they contributed throughout this process. Their engagement plays a vital role in shaping a financial plan that supports student learning, well-being and equitable opportunities within the school district.

Appendix A:

Financial plan engagement budget priorities

The Vancouver School Board (VSB) leadership met with inherent rights holders representatives and formal stakeholder groups representatives in January 2026 to gather input to inform development of the 2026–2027 financial plan. Participants identified ongoing challenges, emerging needs and priority areas aligned with supporting student learning, operational effectiveness, staff retention, equity, and safe, well-maintained learning environments. The following summarizes key themes and considerations shared during the engagement meetings.

Inherent Rights Holders: *x^wməθk^wəyəm*, *S_kwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw & səlilwətaʔ*

Meeting Date: January 23, 2026 – 11:00 a.m.

The inherent rights holders’ priorities are focused on increased supports for students, development of specialized curriculum and increased cultural awareness.

Key Insights

- **Indigenous enhancement workers:** Every school to have consistent and reliable support to meet students where they are at.
- **Specialized teachers:** Highlighted urgent need for Speech Language Pathologists, occupational therapists. Current access is once every 2-3 weeks which can make it challenging to meet the literacy needs.
- **Literacy and numeracy:** Urgent need for one-to-one literacy and academic support across the board.
- **Local curriculum development:** Develop local cultural view based on the local nations to be delivered in every school. Collaboration between the metro school districts to hire one curriculum writer for each district or as a shared resource.
- **Elders and Knowledge Keepers:** Increase the Elders and Knowledge Keepers in schools so that students have more regular access. Artists could also be invited to schools to teach art and weaving classes and make teachings more accessible to students.
- **Cultural competency training:** Provide cultural competency training for all teachers who support students with diverse needs to successfully support students. Increase the expectation that all teachers are training in cultural awareness.

Vancouver District Students' Council (VDSC)

Meeting Date: January 16, 2026 – 4:00 p.m.

The Vancouver District Student Council identified several priorities focused on preparation for future workforce demands, student safety, well-being, and equitable access to basic facilities.

Key Insights

- **AI-related learning:** Students expressed a strong desire for instruction in safe, ethical and effective use of artificial intelligence, as well as expanded course offerings aligned with future labour market needs.
- **Mental health supports:** Students reported concerns regarding counsellor availability and limited culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health supports, especially for international students.
- **Bathroom facilities:** Students highlighted ongoing concerns with outdated and inadequate school bathrooms, including broken locks, low stall doors, leaks and insufficient menstrual products.
- **School meal programs:** Feedback indicated that current offerings lack culturally diverse and dietary-appropriate options (e.g., vegan, halal, celiac-friendly) and that meal quality and pricing require improvement.
- **AED access and training:** Students acknowledged that AEDs were installed across all schools in fall 2025 but requested AED training for improved emergency preparedness.

District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC)

Meeting Date: January 16, 2026 – 3:00 p.m.

The District Parent Advisory Council emphasized timely student supports and flexible staffing solutions.

Key Insights

- **SSA staffing and reallocation of savings:** Suggested deploying teachers-on-call when SSAs cannot be hired, using budget savings to supplement classroom support and training.
- **Enhanced financial disclosure:** Advocated for the allocation of resources to support the creation of enhanced financial disclosure during the financial planning process, focused on making financial information understandable to families and the community.
- **Learning assessments:** Highlighted urgent need for increased assessment resources due to lengthy wait times. Requested strengthened support for reading interventions, dyslexia, and executive functioning development.

Bargaining Council of Vancouver School Board Construction and Maintenance Trades Unions (BCVSBCMTU)

Meeting date: January 21, 2026 – 1:00 p.m.

Representatives from the Bargaining Council of Vancouver School Board Construction and Maintenance Trades Unions reiterated several considerations raised in previous budget cycles, noting these issues remain fundamental to maintaining VSB facilities and supporting a sustainable workforce.

Key insights

- **Preventative maintenance:** Funding constraints limit the ability of trades staff to complete preventative maintenance and necessary upgrades. As a result, work has shifted to a triage-based model addressing only urgent repairs. Representatives emphasized the need for a proactive and properly funded maintenance program. The budget priority is to adequately fund preventative maintenance programs
- **Aging infrastructure:** Many buildings rely on outdated systems—such as aging electrical components—which require specialized knowledge to maintain. Without adequate succession planning, the loss of experienced workers risks compromising long-term infrastructure stability.
- **Apprenticeship and succession planning:** BCVSBCMTU emphasized the importance of increasing the number of apprentices to ensure knowledge transfer and future staffing capacity. The budget priority is to recruit apprentices to support long-term succession planning
- **Professional Development and Training:** Trades staff and supervisors receive limited training despite increasing demands and responsibility. Representatives identified professional learning as essential to support safety, quality, and operational efficiency. The budget priority is to provide dedicated, ongoing training for tradespersons and supervisors.

Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 15 (CUPE 15)

Meeting date: January 22, 2026 – 2:30 p.m.

Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 15 emphasized recruitment, training, and workplace cohesion as key priorities.

Key insights

- **Hiring and retention:** Continued focus on hiring SSAs and SSBs to support increasing student needs.
- **CPI training:** Requested district-funded and standardized Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training for all SSAs, with in-house trainers to improve access and consistency. Cited benefits

include reduced injuries, improved confidence, better de-escalation, and strengthened retention.

- **Team building and wellness:** Requested district-wide team-building professional development opportunities for office support, information technology and technical resource staff to reduce isolation, support staff wellness and strengthen collaboration.

Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 407 (CUPE 407)

Meeting date: January 21, 2026 – 12:00 p.m.

Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 407 emphasized the need for adequate staffing, training, and morale-building initiatives.

Key insights

- **Seasonal staffing:** Eliminated temporary staffing has increased workloads during peak summer periods, resulting in delays, overwork, and reduced morale.
- **Training and operational safety:** Requested structured training for specialized tasks (e.g., excavator operation, chainsaw safety) to ensure consistency, quality, and safety.
- **Team building:** Recommended dedicated, annual team-building events to strengthen cohesion among geographically dispersed staff.

International Union of Operating Engineers Local 963 (IUOE 963)

Meeting date: January 16, 2026 – 9:00 a.m.

International Union of Operating Engineers Local 963 outlined priorities related to supervision aides, supplies, and staffing structures.

Key insights

- **Supervision aides:** Requested increased staffing hours for supervision aides, noting previous expansions significantly supported operational safety and reduced pressure on administrators and teachers.
- **Operational supplies and equipment:** Requested no further reductions to supplies budgets and identified an urgent need for improved repair and replacement processes for cafeteria equipment.
- **Exempt staff growth:** Suggested reviewing growth in excluded positions and monitoring large vacation payouts.

Professional and Administrative Staff Association (PASA)

Meeting date: January 16, 2026 – 2:00 p.m.

The Professional and Administrative Staff Association’s priorities remain consistent with previous years.

Key insights

- **Flexible work policy:** PASA reiterated the need for a clear and actionable remote work policy to support staff and enhance retention.
- **Professional development:** Members emphasized the importance of increased professional development funding to maintain required certifications and support continued high-quality professional practice.

Vancouver Elementary and Adult Educators’ Society (VEAES)

Meeting date: January 21, 2026 – 3:00 p.m.

The Vancouver Elementary and Adult Educators’ Society emphasized equity, inclusion, and consistent support for students.

Key insights

- **Inclusive education:** Highlighted increased student needs and required supports. They emphasized the importance of replacing resource teachers and Student Support Workers (SSWs) on the first day of absence to prevent delays in assessments, disruptions to programming, and interruptions to essential complex care tasks.
- **Technology implementation:** Requested that the district consider teacher workload whenever purchasing or selecting new technology or software. They stressed the importance of providing in-service so educators can implement new tools effectively.
- **Anti-oppression:** Called for a district-wide, systemic approach to anti-oppression work, including sustained support for implementing human rights commitments related to SOGI inclusion, anti-racism, anti-Indigenous racism, classism, and ableism/neurodiversity. A non-stigmatizing meal program accessible to all students is one way to support this.
- **Adult education:** Emphasized the opportunity to increase enrolment of graduated adults, and the need to increase support, including SLPs, resource teachers and librarians. Current funding structures create perceived deficits when students transition mid-year from secondary to Adult Education.

Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association (VSTA)

Meeting date: January 20, 2026 – 3:00 p.m.

The Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association emphasized the need for increased staffing, updated technology and adequate course-level funding.

Key insights

- **Classroom staffing:** VSTA requested 28 FTE additions to classroom staffing, citing increased enrolment alongside reductions in secondary teaching blocks.
- **Flex funding:** Current department budgets do not reflect inflation. Tier 1 shop classes continue to receive \$16.31 per student, with similar strain in foods programs and departments without dedicated funds. VSTA requested a stable, inflation-adjusted flex funding model.
- **Technology:** Severe gaps in device access—sometimes as low as 1:15—were highlighted. Challenges with connectivity of laptops due to Wi-Fi challenges, slow updates, and high rates of non-functional devices. VSTA requested targeted technology funding if it can be achieved without impact on staffing.

Vancouver Elementary Principals and Vice Principals Association (VEPVPA) and Vancouver Association of Secondary School Administrators (VASSA)

Meeting date: January 20, 2026 – 12:30 p.m.

Vancouver Elementary Principals and Vice Principals Association and Vancouver Association of Secondary School Administrators highlighted equity, administrative capacity and classroom-level support as central to their priorities.

Key Insights

Administrative Time and Staffing

- **Equitable allocation of admin time across the district:**

VASSA: Secondary school principals and vice principals have variable teaching loads assigned to them depending on the school they work at. The budget request is to reallocate this teaching time to teachers enabling administrators can focus on educational leadership to improve staff retention. This shift is intended to increase engagement with students' families to improve student learning, mitigate legal and safety risks and focus on reconciliation. The budget request is for an increase of 4.57 FTE in secondary teaching staff.

VEPVPA: Elementary school principals and vice principals request an increase to their administrative time due to rising student complexity, increased compliance requirements, and safety needs. VEPVPA believes the minimum VP administrative time should be 0.4 FTE in

schools with a principal, and no less than 0.5 FTE in annexes. The budget request is for an increase of 4.5 FTE in elementary teaching staff.

Technology for student learning

VASSA: Requested district-funded cyclical device replacement to ensure functioning computer labs and equitable access to digital tools, noting that secondary schools face high replacement costs (approx. \$30,000 per lab) and rely on limited flexible budgets.

VEPVPA: Requested baseline, district-funded technology resources for all schools, noting that reliance on PAC fundraising creates inequitable access. They highlighted that schools need updated devices to support curriculum delivery, assessment, literacy and numeracy development, and secure digital learning environments.

Appendix B:

Financial planning engagement workshop

Invitations to the workshop session held at the Education Centre on February 2, 2026 were sent to education leads of the host nations as well as all stakeholder groups. In total, 25 individuals were invited to attend.

The session commenced with a comprehensive overview of the financial planning cycle, outlining its key stages and importance for effective resource allocation. This was followed by a review of themes that surfaced during recent meetings with representatives of inherent rights holders and representatives from VSB's formal stakeholder groups, conducted in January. Trustees Fraser, Mah, and Richardson attended the session as observers.

A total of 15 participants, organized across four tables, engaged in a facilitated discussion during the session. Each group shared experiences and perspectives, focusing on six overarching themes. The insights generated from these discussions contributed to a well-rounded and thoughtful exploration of key issues and potential actions to advance them within the upcoming budget.

Discussions were framed within two questions:

What could this look like?

What would it take to get there?

Each table was asked to consider the themes at their table and, through an exchange of their ideas, experiences and perspectives, suggest one or two steps to advance each priority within the budget developed for next year. Ideas generated were noted and posted ahead of a gallery walk and further discussion. Each table then reflected on their suggestions to advance each priority before reporting it out the full group.

What we heard

Participants converged on practical, near-term steps: stabilize frontline supports (reliable SSA coverage and protected counselling-only time); strengthen job-aligned professional learning (safety, certification, cultural competency); establish a funded student device-refresh and systems-reliability plan; and improve the collection and use of data to identify and address equity gaps.

1) Enhance student well-being, safety & belonging

- Protect dedicated counselling-only time and ensure consistent SSA coverage (e.g., relief pools, role clarity) to stabilize daily supports for students.
- Ensure Elders and Knowledge Keepers are central contributors by offering dedicated support, including honoraria, to recognize their expertise and enable them to actively foster and advance student learning and well-being.

2) Strengthen staff capacity & support

- Launch targeted career pipelines (job-shadowing/apprenticeships with students, partnerships with local Nations/post-secondary institutions) and implement tangible retention supports.
- Use employee-group feedback/input to prioritize staffing allocations/time reallocations add the most value.

3) Expand high-impact professional learning

- Use Pro-D opportunities to deliver role-specific training (operational safety/CPI, onboarding for specialized tasks, certification maintenance/obtainment) and locally grounded Indigenous cultural competency.
- Base the offerings on input/feedback of by employee working groups/function.

4) Advance equity, inclusion & access

- Establish a streamlined equity data initiative: identify a small set of key indicators, gather clear and reliable data, and clearly communicate how this information will be used to close equity gaps.
- Address coverage for staff to maintain instructional schedules and increase the amount of staff to provide assessments for students.

5) Foster positive workplace culture & retention

- Make trust an explicit District-level focus (appreciative-inquiry process) and create structured cross-department connection time (e.g., scheduled connection sessions/shared practice) to reduce friction and increase belonging.

6) Modernize technology for learning & operations

- Fund a student device-refresh cycle and prioritize reliability (Wi-Fi, IT support/troubleshooting).
- Shift selected paper-based workflows (e.g., timesheets/mileage) online and apply the Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition (SAMR) lens to ensure technology spend improves learning/operations.
- Advance AI digital-citizenship for students.

Appendix C:

Finance and personnel committee meeting

2026-2027 Financial Plan Engagement Update

The Executive Director of Finance and Director of Communications presented a report dated February 11, 2026, titled **2026-2027 Financial Plan Engagement Update**.

Participants shared detailed feedback about preliminary priorities raised by inherent rights holders and formal stakeholder groups through engagement activities to date.

Enhancing student well-being, safety and belonging / Advancing equity, inclusion and access

Participants highlighted the need to strengthen and stabilize student support services through additional counselling time, psychologists, speech and language pathologists, non-enrolling staff and consistent SSA coverage. Priority was placed on recruitment, training and retention to ensure staffing consistency, particularly for supporting diverse learners. Input emphasized the importance of centering Elders and Knowledge Keepers by improving communication about their availability and providing appropriate supports and honoraria to enable meaningful engagement.

Strengthen staff capacity and support / expand high-impact professional learning

Suggestions emphasized intentional succession planning through job shadowing, career pipelines and partnerships with post-secondary institutions and local First Nations, along with apprenticeship programs for senior secondary students. Key actions suggested included expanding paid and release-time training (including summer, weekend and in-service days), investing in safety and certification training and increasing in-house and community-based learning opportunities. Perspectives also supported developing internal pathways into specialized roles and embedding training within work schedules to ensure accessibility, consistency and impact.

Foster positive workplace culture and retention

Feedback noted sustaining or increasing current staffing and resource levels, particularly in classrooms and schools. Emphasis was placed on creating intentional opportunities for collaboration and connection, including dedicated collaboration time at elementary schools, structured cross-department engagement and joint professional learning across employee groups.

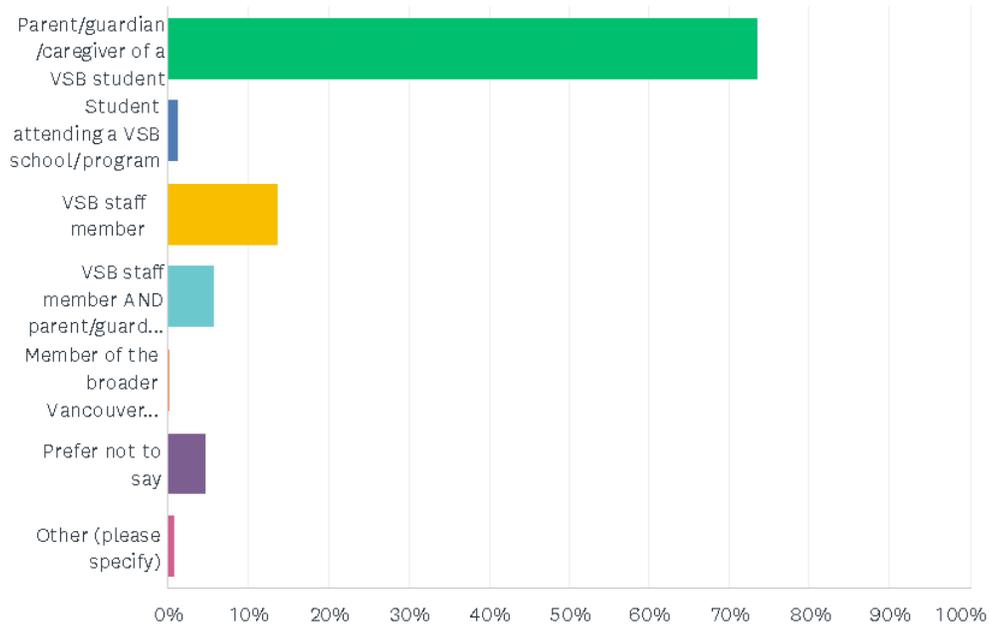
Modernize technology to support learning and operations

Feedback highlighted that modernizing technology and device availability will require stable, ongoing funding to support a reliable device-refresh cycles and address inequities with access. Participants further mentioned the need to apply an instructional lens to technology investments to ensure tools meaningfully enhance learning and operations, strengthen AI digital-citizenship for students and address challenges related to productivity, device suitability and responsible technology use.

Appendix D: Survey participation

Q6 Please select the one option that best describes you:

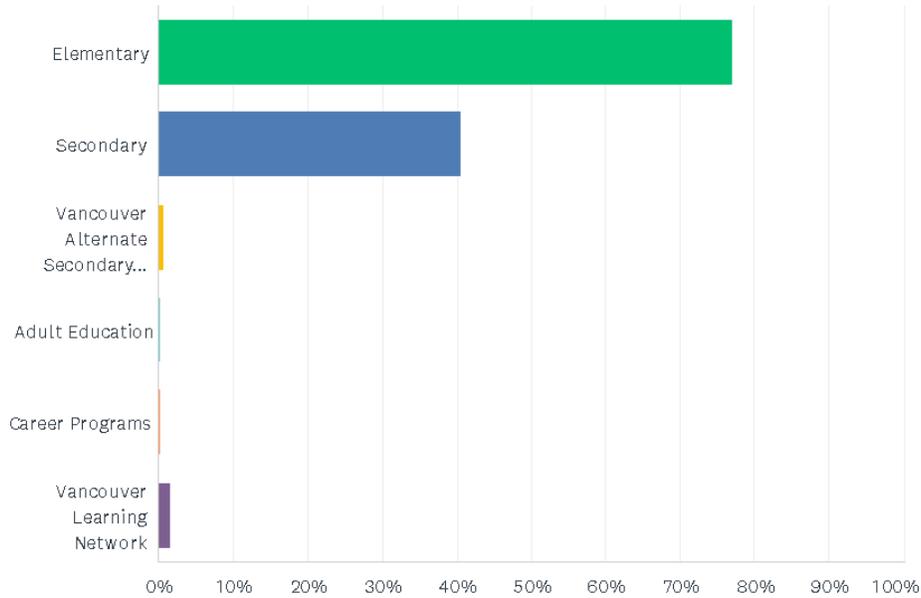
Answered: 1,223 Skipped: 17



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Parent/guardian/caregiver of a VSB student	73.59%	900
Student attending a VSB school/program	1.23%	15
VSB staff member	13.65%	167
VSB staff member AND parent/guardian/caregiver of a student enrolled in VSB	5.81%	71
Member of the broader Vancouver public	0.16%	2
Prefer not to say	4.74%	58
Other (please specify)	0.82%	10
TOTAL		1,223

Q7 Which VSB school or program does your child or children attend? (Select all that apply)

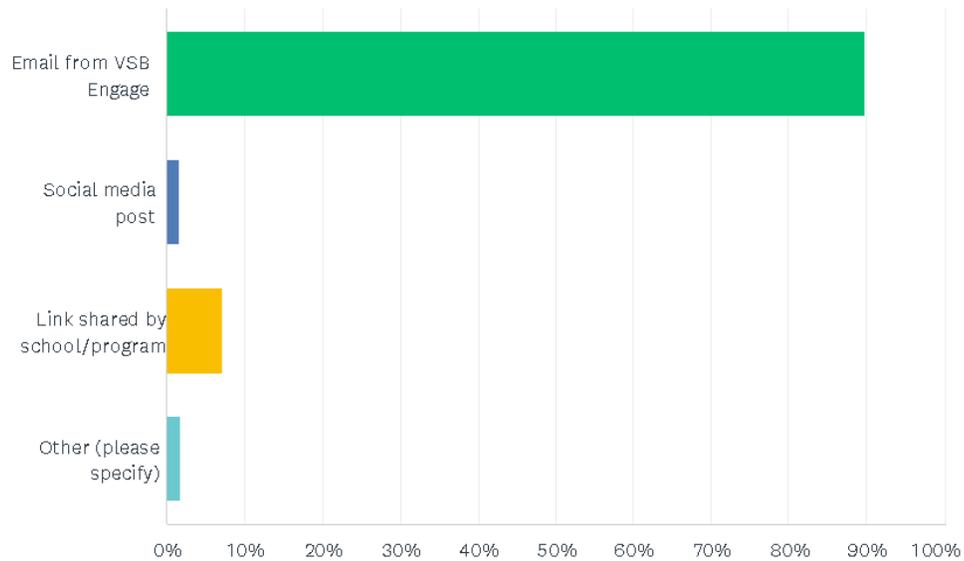
Answered: 876 Skipped: 364



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Elementary	76.94%	674
Secondary	40.41%	354
Vancouver Altemate Secondary School	0.57%	5
Adult Education	0.23%	2
Career Programs	0.11%	1
Vancouver Leaming Network	1.60%	14
Total Respondents: 876		

Q8 How did you get the link to this survey? Please choose one.

Answered: 869 Skipped: 371



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Email from VSB Engage	89.76%	780
Social media post	1.50%	13
Link shared by school/program	7.13%	62
Other (please specify)	1.61%	14
TOTAL		869

Appendix E: Written submissions to the Board

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: VSB budget proposal
Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 2:29:39 PM

Put it all on red.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: School funds use
Date: Thursday, January 15, 2026 8:02:11 AM
Importance: High

Hello,
I hope you are well.

I have found out [REDACTED], that for lessons, the teachers are giving them links to click on for class. And the students are just looking at lessons online. This completely lacks any real teaching, interaction between the teacher and students, asking of questions, assimilation of information via auditory or spatial pathways. This is inappropriate for teaching methods. And that the teacher is then merely spending their time trying to make sure the students are not playing games on the computer. Does that seem wise?

I vote to STOP funding personal computers, especially using wifi in the classrooms, which they have confirmed in research REDUCES the children's ability to learn. It is poor decision making by the VSB to move forward negligently with technology in place of real teaching. As well the typing and exposure to unnatural light from the computers further reduces the children's health, learning, brain development, creating of neural synapses ... most especially when these are CRUCIAL learning years for the children. Children from ages 6-12 are naturally in the Alpha brainwave, which is prioritized naturally for learning. It seems that the VSB is failing our children and parents with their important position in society with these types of decisions.

I wholeheartedly vote AGAINST the use of personal computers in Vancouver schools for all elementary and early high school years. This needs to be properly addressed in the VSB, rather than blindly moving with the masses who are asleep. Our jobs are to protect the children, not set them up for failure in life. Children are already struggling because of parents who may let them be overstimulated and their nervous systems overwhelmed, dopamine depleted from constant online exposure. I do not work on my end to minimize screen use, to then find out that [REDACTED]

Thank you for reading this. This is an essential matter. Let's improve the lives of the future population in Vancouver, not be asleep at the wheel and waking up too late.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: Comment on proposed 2026/2027 financial plan
Date: Thursday, January 15, 2026 6:39:21 PM

Good evening,

I am writing to share my comments on the VSB 2026/2027 financial plan. I initially tried to do this through the survey, but I received an "invalid format" error message for one of my comments; it was not explained to me why the format was invalid and I was not permitted to continue the survey. I would suggest looking into this.

My recommendation is to continue to invest in inclusive education. Hire more SSAs to maintain staffing levels. [REDACTED]

SSA support [REDACTED] facilitates peer interaction, group participation, sensory breaks and completion of [REDACTED] academic work. Last year, our school did not have enough SSAs and [REDACTED] support was often redirected to other students [REDACTED]

I want to emphasize how crucial SSA support is for children with designations; it has made a material difference to [REDACTED]

I trust the VSB will continue to make inclusive education a top priority in the forthcoming financial plan and for years to come.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: Fw: Help Shape VSB's 2026–2027 Financial Plan
Date: Thursday, January 15, 2026 10:14:29 PM

Simple suggestion: Add more student spaces to Lord Nelson. Kids in the immediate neighbourhood are not able to get in. That is not fair to the parents or the kids.

[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: VSB, Engage <sysadmin@myeducation.gov.bc.ca>
To: "engage@vsb.bc.ca" <engage@vsb.bc.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 09:22:14 p.m. PST
Subject: Help Shape VSB's 2026–2027 Financial Plan

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - PLEASE TRANSLATE	Informations importantes - Veuillez traduire	
这是一份重要信息 — 请找人为您翻译	महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी - कृपया अनुवाद करें	معلومات مهمة - الرجاء الترجمة
Mahalagang Impormasyon - Paki salin sa sariling wika	Información importante - Por favor traducir	اطلاعات مهم - لطفا ترجمه کنید
Thông tin quan trọng - Xin tìm phiên dịch	重要な情報-翻訳してください	Важная информация - переведите, пожалуйста
ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ-ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰੋ/ਕਰਵਾਓ	중요한 정보 - 번역 부탁드립니다	מידע חשוב - אנא תרגם

Dear VSB community,

We are planning the budget for the next school year. We want to hear from you so our budget reflects what matters most for student success.

Most of the funding provided to VSB goes to staffing based on collective agreements and legislation and to operating and maintaining schools. Your input will help trustees decide how to invest available dollars for student success.

Please take a few minutes to complete our short survey by Feb. 1, 2026.

Learn more: vsb.bc.ca/budget

Take the [survey](#)

Thank you for helping us build a financial plan that supports every learner.

From: [Superintendent](#)
To: [budget](#)
Subject: FW: Your voice matters: Share your ideas for the 2026-2027 budget
Date: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 1:47:22 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 1:00 AM
To: Superintendent <superintendent@vsb.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Your voice matters: Share your ideas for the 2026-2027 budget

Please put water to drink in old schools. For example: Prince of Wales has only 2 places to fill up water bottle for 800 students. Students can't drink from tub for levels of lead (it was measure)that are dangerous. Is there anything more urgent than to be able to drink water for children? The two places to get water are far away..some students can't get on time to drink.

Thanks

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Superintendent <superintendent@vsb.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 12:48:01 PM
Subject: Your voice matters: Share your ideas for the 2026-2027 budget

OUR VSB

Sent on behalf of Helen McGregor, Superintendent/CEO, Vancouver School District

Dear colleagues,

As we develop the 2026–2027 budget, we want to hear from staff across VSB.

Most of our budget is used to fund staffing required in collective agreements and legislation and costs to maintain our schools. Your input will help trustees make the best decisions about how to use available funding to support our education system.

Please complete the [survey](#) by Feb. 2, 2026 and share your ideas and priorities for next year's budget.

Survey link: <https://ca.research.net/r/FMG857B>

Learn more about the [financial planning process](#).

Thank you for your engagement.

Helen McGregor *(she/her)*

Superintendent of Schools and CEO

Vancouver School District

1580 West Broadway, Vancouver BC V6J 5K8

e: hmcgregor@vsb.bc.ca | p: 604-713-5100



vsb.bc.ca | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [TikTok](#) | [YouTube](#)

With deep gratitude and respect, I am honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: budget survey issues
Date: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 8:52:34 PM

Hi there,

I'd like to bring someone's attention the difficulty with the most recent budget survey, as it took me in excess of 20 minutes to get past the first page because I was not doing it exactly as the formatting required. It was very frustrating, and I almost gave up on the survey several times. Here were the issues I found:

1. There is a character count limit for each box on the first page, but there is no live-character count showing as you do it. So you don't know when you've exceeded the limit. You can't submit the page if you are over the limit. In the end, after countless deletions and paraphrasings, I found an online character counter. I was able to do this on a laptop—not every person will be doing this on a laptop, and it would be much more cumbersome on a mobile device.
2. It's unclear from the formatting as to which box is the "fault" when you get the error message.
3. The small boxes to write text in make it difficult to see what you have written and edit it, since you can only see like 8 words at a time. I was scrolling back and forth like mad, trying to delete characters to get within the limit, and then it also kept somehow resetting it to the full answer I had just deleted part of.

[REDACTED] but it seems these things would be easy to fix, and it would make the survey easier to complete, and ensure more equitable access to giving one's input.

Thank you for your time,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Friday, January 16, 2026 at 9:26 PM
To: engage <engage@vsb.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Help Shape VSB's 2026-2027 Financial Plan

Hi.

all of my attempts to complete the survey were rejected by your webpage " The comment you entered is in an invalid format."

so here are my comments. I
thanks.

1. provide pro D training for neurodivergence and alternative learning. 15-20% of the population is considered neurodivergent, the majority of those kids struggle at school. So please look at strategies to better integrate different learning styles
2. have enough support workers for your student population. The level of support currently available is a joke. one support worker for the whole school. So increase staff please
3. this is an easy one so you can have a win: stop giving candy out in schools. teachers should not be dolling out candy to kids, it's ridiculous, and seems like an epidemic at our school.

further comments:

overall I think our school is very open minded and the teachers are willing to learn about [REDACTED] the day to day help that lacks. so that's definitely a money/staffing issue. more support staff please. and allow your funding triage system (which is not transparent...i have asked about it) to better represent and include invisible disabilities. physical disabilities aren't the only thing out crushing the souls of kids in school

[REDACTED]

On Jan 14 2026, at 7:22 PM, VSB, Engage <sysadmin@myeducation.gov.bc.ca> wrote:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - PLEASE TRANSLATE	Informations importantes - Veuillez traduire
这是一份重要信息 — 请找人为您翻译	महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी - कृपया अनुवाद करें
Mahalagang Impormasyon - Paki salin sa sariling wika	معلومات مهمة - الرجاء الترجمة
Thông tin quan trọng - Xin tìm phiên dịch	اطلاعات مهم - لطفا ترجمه کنید
ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ-ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰੋ/ਕਰਵਾਓ	Важная информация - переведите, пожалуйста
	중요한 정보 - 번역 부탁드립니다
	מידע חשוב - אנא תרגם

Dear VSB community,
We are planning the budget for the next school year. We want to hear from you so our budget reflects what matters most for student success.
Most of the funding provided to VSB goes to staffing based on collective agreements and legislation and to operating and maintaining schools. Your input will help trustees decide how to invest available dollars for student success.
Please take a few minutes to complete our short survey by Feb. 1, 2026.
Learn more: vsb.bc.ca/budget
Take the survey
Thank you for helping us build a financial plan that supports every learner.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: How to spend money
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 5:03:49 PM

1) some schools like Prince of Wales have 2 available water fountains to fill up your bottle water and drink water for 800 students. Student can't drink water from any tub because of lead levels (they have been measured). But in each floor you can find a machine with sugar drinks. So, if we want the best for students, let's start for their bodies and brains. Let's invest in water supply.

- 2) outdoors trips in nature. (Forest therapy- Pacific Spirit)
- 3) exposure to theater and concerts to work critical thinking.
- 4) material for social-emotional learning.
- 5) classroom books for critical thinking. No screens.

- 6) critical thinking workshops and materials for each level.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: pro=d anti-ableism workshops for teachers
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 5:06:54 PM

I have just experienced at [REDACTED] Kitsilano Secondary School, the impact of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I believe that without the education of teachers in our secondary and primary schools, let alone the absence of any anti-ableism training in the the lead up to licensing teachers, we will simply reproduce ableism and violate the Charter of Canadian Rights and Freedoms.

Pro-day budget for anti-ableism coupled with an integrated approach on a par with Indigenous curricular and school-wide mandatory education of teachers would start the process of a dialog and conversation to move away from stigmatizing and unthinking classroom comments and practices by teachers to students of a shaming nature.

Inclusion is not another word for streaming in the classroom.

Please recognize this in your budget and seek advice from professionals who work in the area on a district-wide basis.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [engage: budget](#)
Subject: Re: Last Chance: Share Your Ideas for VSB's Budget
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 7:57:46 PM

Dear VSB,

We need to budget for hiring a professional to come into the schools to teach financial literacy to children every year starting in Grade 5 and going right through until Grade 12.

Teaching sexual education is important, but not more important than financial literacy.

[REDACTED]

On Thu, 29 Jan 2026 at 15:13, VSB, Engage <sysadmin@myeducation.gov.bc.ca> wrote:



Dear VSB community,

There's still time to share your ideas for VSB's 2026–2027 budget. The survey closes Feb. 2, 2026. Your input will help trustees decide how to invest available dollars for student success. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey or send your thoughts to budget@vsb.bc.ca.

Survey link: <https://ca.research.net/r/FMG857B>

Learn more: <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/budget>

Thank you for your input.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2026 8:02:44 PM
To: Helen McGregor <hmcgregor@vsb.bc.ca>
Subject: Re school survey.

I tried to do the survey sent to me on line but had trouble sending it in. This is why I am sending my own email.

[REDACTED]

No one can give me a straight answer as to why we have a private company (Lunch Lab) cooking 2 times a week in schools that already have a good & healthy lunch program. Why spend thousands of dollars to pay Lunch Lab rather than spend the money towards something that is more valuable for the children's education. This company is not teaching the children how to cook, they just go into the kitchen to cut the vegetables & serve lunch. They are there for 1 1/2 hrs, which might be better spent in the classroom. I do not know if funding for this program comes from Food Service, from the school, from the VSB or from a private donor. If the VSB wants to have a program that teaches the children how to eat nutritiously & healthy would it be better to have Lunch Lab hold a classroom session ([REDACTED]) where they could teach the children how to eat healthy. I totally agree with having this program, but do not agree with the program as it is right now, because Lunch Lab is not only feeding the children for free but also feeding the staff and everyone else in the building while many VSB schools has a fee to pay for the hot lunch. All we're doing here is helping this private company flourish at the expense of

the VSB
Sincerely, [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Parent workshops
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 8:20:01 PM

[You don't often get email from [REDACTED] Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

This email originated from outside of the VSB. Do not click on links, attachments or reply to emails from unknown sources.

Our children's behaviors are a direct reflection of what they see at home. Not all parents are equipped with positive experiences and we have seen a cyclical childhood traumas being passed on.

People are too quick to jump to diagnoses for kids behaving poorly but haven't thought that maybe there's a lot of parents (no teaching experience) struggling to provide the best parenting for their kids and we expect the economy and greater pressures to leave more kids ignored, unheard and under acknowledged which leads to behavioral issues at school and possibly mental health crisis which play out later in life in our communities.

[REDACTED] local elks and we want to work w the school board potentially to spearhead some sort of program for parents wanting to do better, To connect more w their children so we break these repeated traumas and bring happiness into every kid who is under-appreciated or feeling u seen and u heard.

[REDACTED] . I think the school Connecting w parents with the goal of improving parenting to gain the best behavior results at school (and at home) is a worthwhile cause.

I have no idea how this program could look or maybe how we can work together to find funding or support such an initiative but please consider my thoughts and we can connect!

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: [REDACTED] for additional funding
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 8:27:26 PM

Hi there,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Before and after School Care program. [REDACTED] usually hard to accept with the program because of lack of funding and cost too much [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] school care program but not in before school care [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] said that there is no enough funding [REDACTED]

Hopefully, you can help [REDACTED] to allocate funding for Before School Care program.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: Humanity in the AI era: Integrating Classical Music Education starting in Kindergarten
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 9:52:08 PM

Dear VSB Budget Committee,

I am writing to propose a strategic investment in classical music education starting in Kindergarten.

As we move rapidly into an era of generative and agentic AI, the goal of education must shift.

When machines can handle routine tasks and basic synthesis, the "human advantage" will lie in deep aesthetic judgment, long-form focus, and a connection to our cultural heritage—traits that classical music is uniquely positioned to cultivate. Classical music teaches children to navigate structural complexity and emotional depth. It builds the cognitive stamina required for high-level reasoning that AI cannot yet replicate. Pop music is often built on repetitive loops. Classical music introduces young brains to structural and harmonic complexity and build the cognitive architecture for long-form focus and pattern recognition.

If we don't provide this in school, aesthetic education becomes a privilege reserved for those who can afford private lessons. We have a moral obligation to ensure that humanity's greatest intellectual and spiritual achievements—from Bach to Mozart—are not treated as "niche" luxuries, but as a universal birthright.

Let's invest in the "human" part of the equation.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

I acknowledge that my place of work lies on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. The content of this e-mail is confidential and may be privileged. If you receive this e-mail in error, please contact the sender and delete it immediately.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: ideas for the budget
Date: Friday, January 30, 2026 1:01:57 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

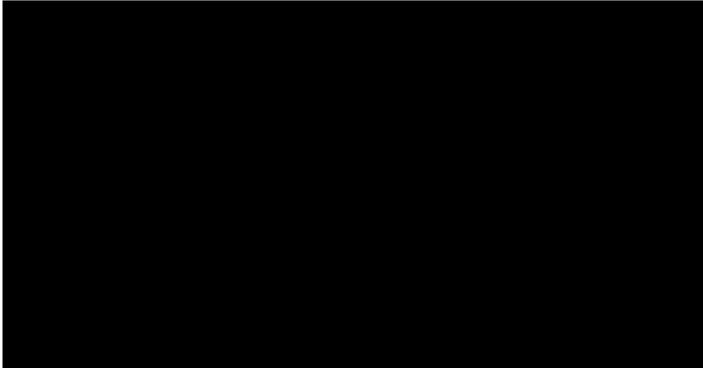
Dear VSB representative,

I am including a description of things that might be considered for the incoming budget.

Reasoning and critical thinking are crucial skills in an ai-driven social media age. The foster of independent reasoning and critical thinking provides the students with the tools necessary to assess the veracity of information provided in social media and by ai agents. Therefore the teaching on how to challenge in a respectful and mindful way the information provided in a classroom is something that the student will carry for in his future life.

The capacity of ai agents to act as a personalized tutor instead of a provider of unreliable information together with the teacher assistance could bring equity into the learning of the students. This will require training of teachers on how to teach to students the use of ai agents to act as personalized tutors .

--



From: 
To: [budget](#)
Subject: Budget 2026-27 Feedback
Date: Friday, January 30, 2026 4:42:53 PM

Dear Vancouver School Board Trustees and Staff,

I am writing to provide feedback on the stated priorities guiding the development of the upcoming VSB budget. I also completed the survey but it was markedly limited in the ability to meaningful feedback due to its structure.

I want to be clear at the outset that I strongly support reconciliation and Indigenous education, and I recognize these as essential and non-negotiable components of public education in British Columbia. My concern lies not with their importance, but with how they are framed as a discrete budget priority - particularly as the first listed priority - within the current context of significant strain on classrooms, educators, and students.

Reconciliation and Indigenous education are already a provincial mandate and are woven throughout curriculum development, learning standards, and professional practice expectations across BC. Presenting them as a standalone local budget priority risks feeling performative, as though reconciliation is something that can be “funded” separately rather than embedded meaningfully into the daily fabric of teaching and learning. In practice, reconciliation is not a line item - it is a lens through which curriculum, pedagogy, and relationships should be shaped.

At the same time, many classrooms are struggling with fundamental challenges: literacy gaps, increasing complexity of student needs, insufficient educational assistants, limited learning resources, and burnout among teachers who are doing their best with too little. When reconciliation is positioned ahead of core instructional supports - such as literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and classroom resourcing - it raises difficult questions about how budget priorities translate into tangible improvements for students and educators.

How does this framing directly support teachers with the basic tools, staffing, and supports they need to meet students where they are? How does it strengthen foundational learning in reading, writing, and math - areas that are essential for equity, inclusion, and long-term student success? These fundamentals are not separate from reconciliation; they are prerequisites for students to engage meaningfully with complex histories, perspectives, and critical thinking.

I would urge the Board to reconsider how priorities are articulated in the budget. Reconciliation and Indigenous education should be explicitly acknowledged as core values and integrated across all areas of spending, curriculum, and decision-making - not elevated as a specialized budget category that appears to compete with evidence-based foundational educational needs. Doing so would better reflect both the spirit of reconciliation and the urgent realities facing public education today.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback, and for the challenging work of stewarding public education during a time of constrained resources and growing need.

Sincerely,



From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: Autism funding
Date: Saturday, January 31, 2026 11:25:08 PM

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] - the funding for autism is not tracked to the child nor does the funding even reach [REDACTED] This is wrong.

“For the 2019/2020 school year, this extra funding is \$20,200.”

- “While these supplemental funds are not targeted for individual students, they are intended to [support inclusion](#). “

“School districts and independent school authorities receive the funding and then combine it to provide supports and services in the way they think is best suited to the needs of all students.”

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the money designated to help autistic students in BC. There is no accountability, or data, or tracking to show where this money is being spent or outcome-based evidence that it is helping.

In my opinion, this is a ridiculous waste of taxpayer funds because the money doesn't help the intended recipients, or the students who need it most.

Even if the funds were not tracked to a child, the money could at least be designated to the school where the child with special needs attends. There should be some form of accountability for how the money is being spent.

Funds “Intended to support inclusion” sounds vague enough to be a thinly-veiled slush fund that can be spent without any direction from actual autism specialists, without any evidence, or outcome-based tracking to show how the money is spent, or if it even benefits children with special needs.

Where does the money for special needs children go?

Our teachers and children need help.

Thank you for your consideration,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: 2017-2027 Budget
Date: Monday, February 2, 2026 6:30:31 AM

Good morning ,

Alternative programs are so important because they give students a learning environment that actually fits their needs, instead of forcing every child into the same mold. Many students thrive in smaller, more flexible settings where teaching can be personalized, relationships are stronger, and social-emotional growth is valued just as much as academics. When these programs are cancelled, schools risk losing students who are finally engaged, confident, and succeeding—

[REDACTED] Alternative programs don't lower standards; they remove barriers, helping students stay motivated, build skills, and remain connected to school. Preserving these programs means investing in student success, well-being, and long-term outcomes rather than giving up on approaches that are clearly working.

Thank you for your time

Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: 2026-2027 Budget
Date: Monday, February 2, 2026 6:37:48 AM

[REDACTED] here are our thoughts as regards the 2026-2027 budget

Alternative programs are so important because they give students a learning environment that actually fits their needs, instead of forcing every child into the same mold. Many students thrive in smaller, more flexible settings where teaching can be personalized, relationships are stronger, and social-emotional growth is valued just as much as academics. When these programs are cancelled, schools risk losing students who are finally engaged, confident, and succeeding [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Alternative programs don't lower standards; they remove barriers, helping students stay motivated, build skills, and remain connected to school. Preserving these programs means investing in student success, well-being, and long-term outcomes rather than giving up on approaches that are clearly working.

Thank you for your time

Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: Numeracy and VSB Budget
Date: Monday, February 2, 2026 11:42:16 AM
Attachments: [Stokke-VSB-presentation-nov 27.pdf](#)

Dear Vancouver School Board Members,

[REDACTED] I am unfortunately too late to complete the survey but hopefully I am not too late to contribute my feedback on the Vancouver School Board Budget and FESL concerns.

In the 2024-2025 FESL report the Vancouver School Board identified that numeracy results across all grades and all populations are "significantly lower than literacy results" (FESL, 37). The plan identified is to roll out Dr Marian Small's MathUp online program across the district.

MathUp is, I will agree, compliant with the BC Math Curriculum of big ideas and discovery method in teaching numeracy. The problem, however, is that the big ideas and discovery method for teaching math is not an evidence-based approach for supporting students in learning and retaining foundational math skills--especially in the early years of public school education.

I understand that the Vancouver School Board is somewhat constrained by the BC Curriculum, however, I strongly urge you to reconsider deploying MathUp across the district and instead redirect those resources towards supporting teachers in using explicit instruction techniques in teaching numeracy.

I have attached a slideshow delivered at a Vancouver DPAC General Meeting by Dr. Anna Stokke, a mathematics professor at the University of Winnipeg, that outlines the need for students to master foundational skills in math for success in numeracy.

I am grateful for your consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

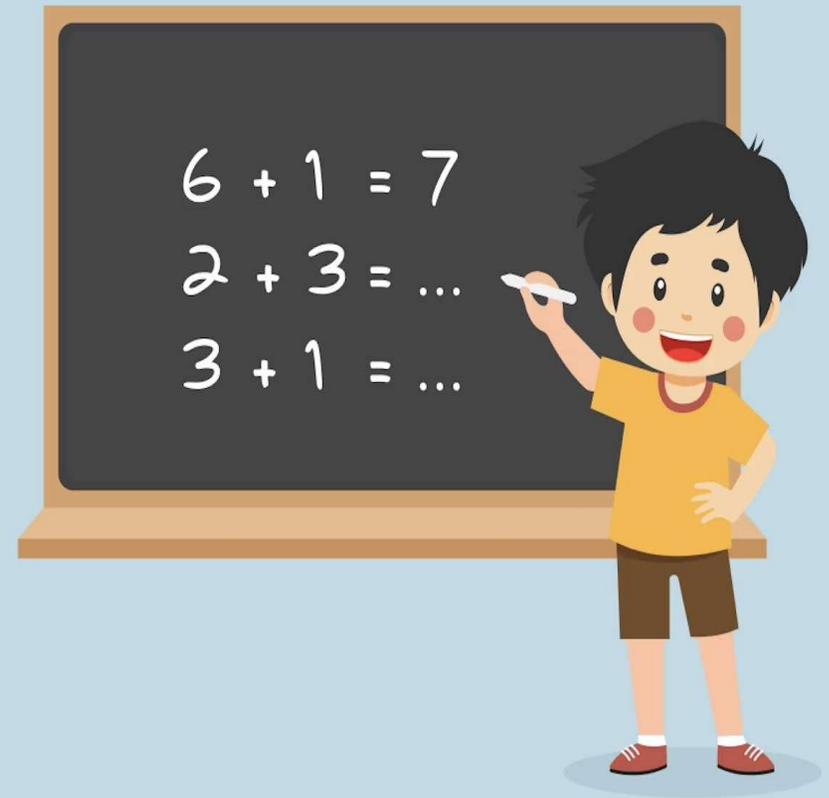
MASTERING MATH SKILLS IN K-12 EDUCATION

Dr. Anna Stokke, Professor
Department of Mathematics
& Statistics
University of Winnipeg

Chalk & Talk podcast:
annastokke.com/podcast

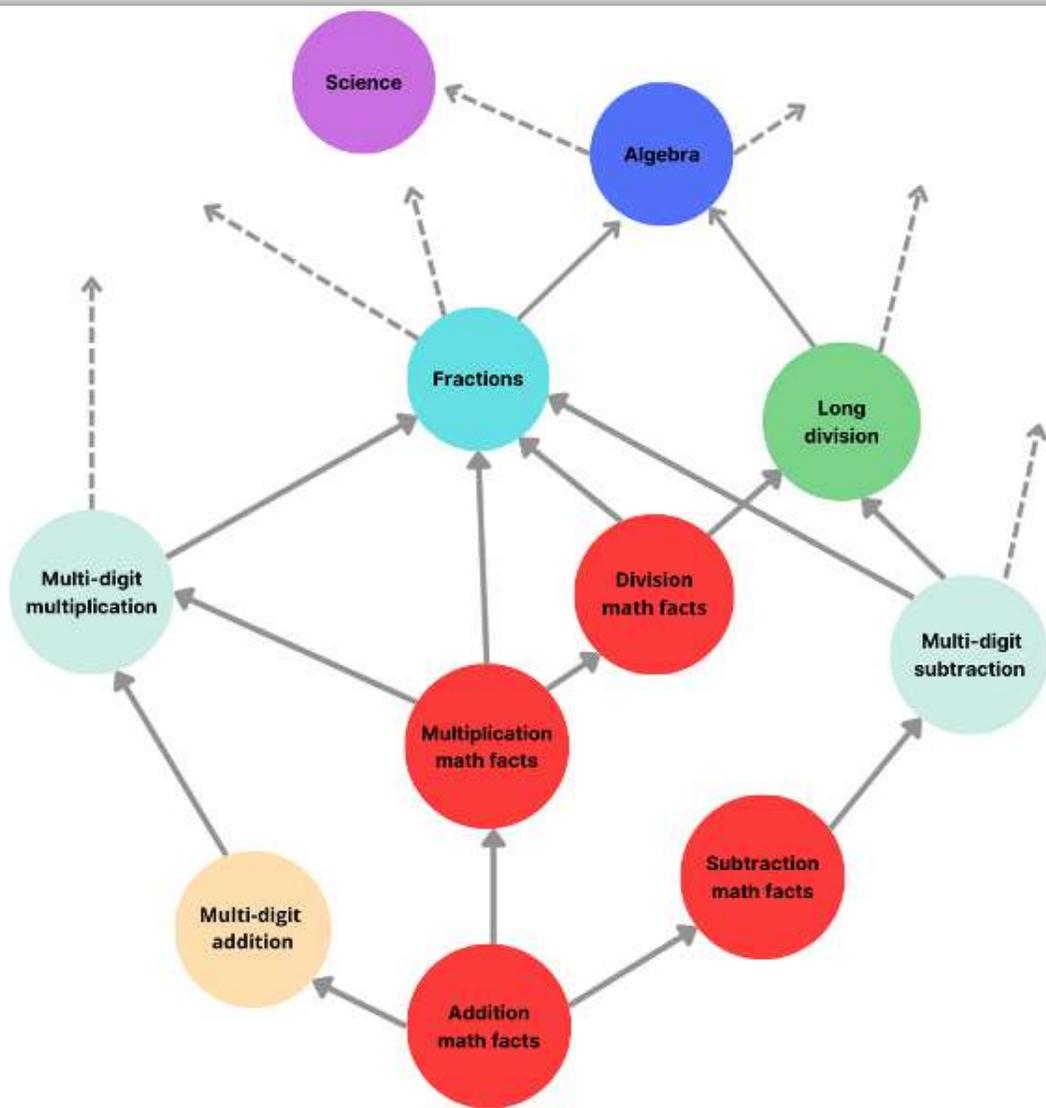


THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG



WHY EARLY MATH MATTERS

- Predicts later academic success
- Opens doors for future opportunities
- Early gaps → long-term struggles
- Competence leads to confidence



**MATH IS
HIERARCHICAL**

WHAT FOUNDATIONAL MATH MASTERY LOOKS LIKE

- For number facts (e.g., 6×7 or $7 + 8$)
 - ✓ Accurately
 - ✓ Quickly/instantaneously
- For procedures (e.g., adding $738 + 387$ or $1/6 + 5/8$)
 - ✓ Knowing an efficient, standard method
 - ✓ Accurate, effortless

WHY MANY CHILDREN STRUGGLE

- Not enough practice
- Too many convoluted strategies
- Focus on
 - “conceptual understanding” over procedures
 - problem solving w/o knowledge
- Advanced without solid foundations (e.g. add fractions w/o knowing times tables)

HOW LEARNING WORKS

- New learners need
 - ✓ concepts broken into component parts
 - ✓ explicit teaching
 - ✓ practice with feedback until mastery
- Working memory is limited
- Automatic skills free up working memory for more complex math

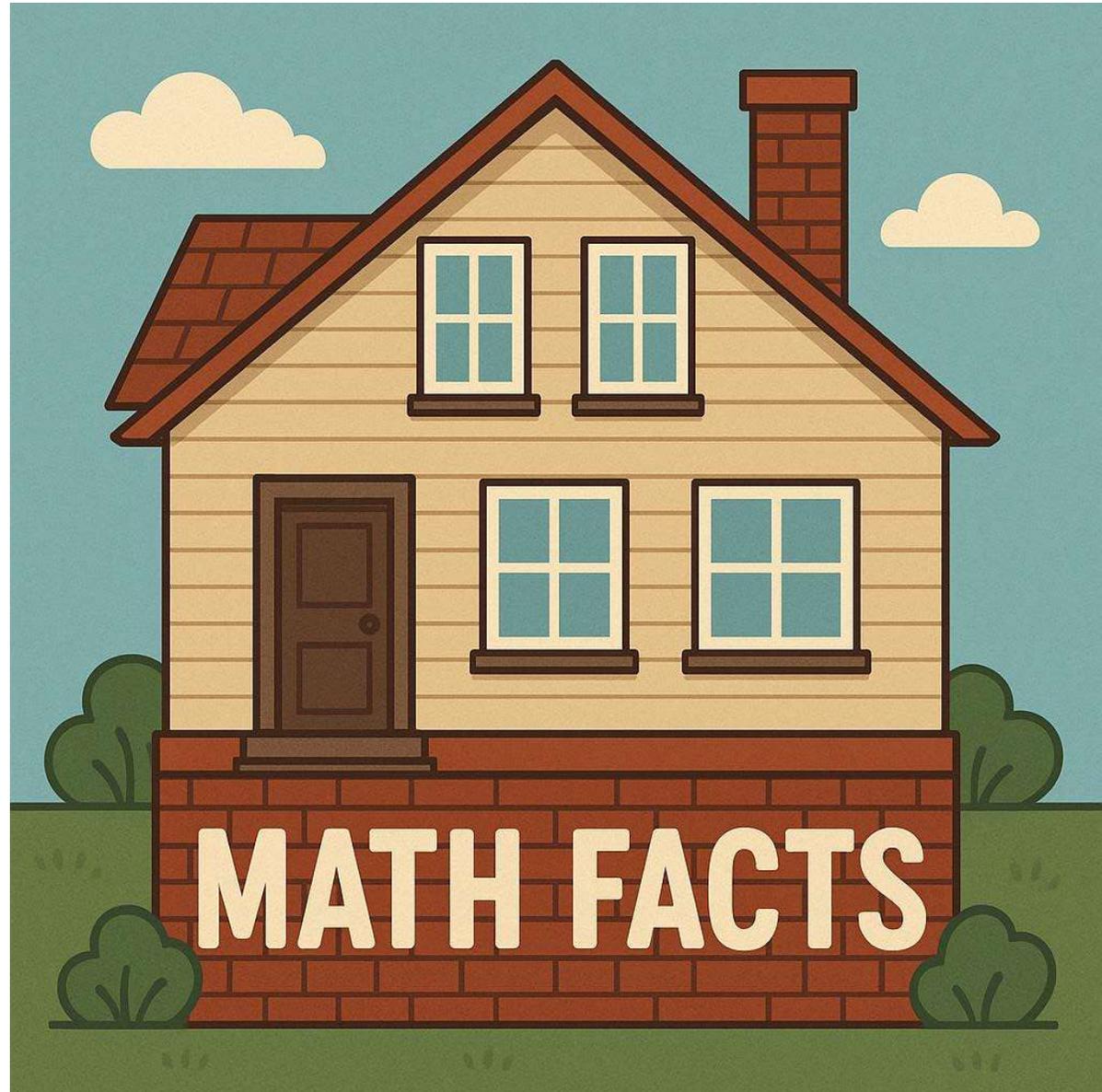
Working memory →

Long-term memory →



*Working memory
bottleneck*

**MATH FACTS:
THE FOUNDATION
FOR FURTHER
MATHEMATICS**



IDEAL GRADE LEVEL MILESTONES (CONT'D)

- Grades 5/6: add, subtract, multiply, divide fractions and decimals
- Grade 6: all operations with positive and negative integers
- Grade 7: all operations with positive and negative fractions
- Grade 7: percents, ratios



**WARNING: EVERY EDUCATION PROGRAM
CLAIMS IT'S RESEARCH BASED**

- Ask for evidence the program improves academic outcomes
- Engagement \neq learning

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Get kids to
 - memorize math facts (4 mins practice/day)
 - practice standard methods for arithmetic
- Free diagnostic assessment tool:
<https://acadiencelearning.org>

Advocate for your child. Don't wait.

RESOURCES FOR MATH FACTS / TIMES TABLES

- How to use flash cards: SOME Lab YouTube channel @LaTrobeSOMELab



- Ep. 36 How to build automaticity with math facts: A practical guide



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EVIDENCE-BASED MATH INSTRUCTION

- Episode 3. The Science of Math with Amanda VanDerHeyden
- Episode 29/30. Math fact crisis: Strategies for improving numeracy with Brian Poncy
- Episode 57. The power of explicit instruction with Anita Archer



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EVIDENCE-BASED MATH INSTRUCTION

- Episode 32. Identifying and education advanced students with Jonathan Plucker
- Episode 28. Autism and evidence-based math instruction with Katharine Beals



THANK YOU!

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: RE: Last Chance: Share Your Ideas for VSB's Budget
Date: Monday, February 2, 2026 1:05:37 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hello,

Just tried to complete the survey, and it is already closed. The invitation is worded such that readers will expect it to be open until midnight Feb 2. I hope this error can be corrected, and the survey re-opened until end of day today.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: VSB, Engage <sysadmin@myeducation.gov.bc.ca>
Sent: January 29, 2026 3:25 PM
To: engage@vsb.bc.ca
Subject: Last Chance: Share Your Ideas for VSB's Budget

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - PLEASE TRANSLATE

Informations importantes - Veuillez traduire

这是一份重要信息 — 请找人为您翻译

Mahalagang Impormasyon - Paki salin sa sariling wika

Thông tin quan trọng - Xin tìm phiên dịch

ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ-ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰੋ/ਕਰਵਾਓ

महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी - कृपया अनुवाद करें

Información importante - Por favor traducir

重要な情報-翻訳してください

중요한 정보 - 번역 부탁드립니다

معلومات مهمة - الرجاء الترجمة

اطلاعات مهم - لطفا ترجمه کنید

Важная информация -

переведите, пожалуйста
מידע חשוב - אנא תרגם

Dear VSB community,

There's still time to share your ideas for VSB's 2026–2027 budget. The survey closes Feb. 2, 2026. Your input will help trustees decide how to invest available dollars for student success. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey or send your thoughts to budget@vsb.bc.ca.

Survey link: <https://ca.research.net/r/FMG857B>

Learn more: <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/budget>

Thank you for your input.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: Fwd: Last Chance: Share Your Ideas for VSB's Budget
Date: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 8:11:52 AM

Please consider phone lockers for high school students.

Teens deserve the same right to the opportunity to build attention and learn in a device free environment - the same right that we adults enjoyed the benefit of. Teens deserve the same right to build skills needed to engage socially in person for the short breaks for lunch etc. It is not fair or developmentally appropriate for educators to expect teens to police themselves in this respect.

<https://vancouver.sun.com/opinion/op-ed/opinion-algebra-vs-the-algorithm-vancouver-school-boards-device-ban-isnt-working>

There is ample peer reviewed science backed evidence how devices are negatively impacting our youth and vsb is somehow using the ideas of "progress" and "encouraging digital literacy" and "using technology to manage workload for teachers" to back slow moving ineffective policies surrounding prohibition of personal devices during school hours.



Begin forwarded message:

From: "VSB, Engage" <sysadmin@myeducation.gov.bc.ca>
Date: January 29, 2026 at 3:26:36 PM PST
To: engage@vsb.bc.ca
Subject: Last Chance: Share Your Ideas for VSB's Budget
Reply-To: "VSB, Engage" <engage@vsb.bc.ca>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - PLEASE TRANSLATE

Informations importantes - Veuillez traduire

这是一份重要信息 — 请找人为您翻译	महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी - कृपया अनुवाद करें	معلومات مهمة - الرجاء الترجمة
Mahalagang Impormasyon - Paki salin sa sariling wika	Información importante - Por favor traducir	اطلاعات مهم - لطفا ترجمه کنید
Thông tin quan trọng - Xin tìm phiên dịch	重要な情報-翻訳してください	Важная информация - переведите, пожалуйста
ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ-ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰੋ/ਕਰਵਾਓ	중요한 정보 - 번역 부탁드립니다	מידע חשוב - אנא תרגם

Dear VSB community,

There's still time to share your ideas for VSB's 2026–2027 budget. The survey closes Feb. 2, 2026. Your input will help trustees decide how to invest available dollars for student success. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey or send your thoughts to budget@vsb.bc.ca.

Survey link: <https://ca.research.net/r/FMG857B>
Learn more: <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/budget>

Thank you for your input.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: Strong start centers
Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 11:49:40 AM

[You don't often get email from [REDACTED] Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

This email originated from outside of the VSB. Do not click on links, attachments or reply to emails from unknown sources.

To whom it may concern,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

I'm emailing you today about strong start centers in Vancouver. I urge you to reconsider closing more centers in the fall of 2026. Strong start plays a HUGE role in a toddlers development and help them become independent, help them learn fine and gross motor skills, help them assimilate to a school classroom and help prepare them for kindergarten. Not all parents can afford preschool, especially nowadays, so this is a great option for parents at no cost.

Closing more centers will not only hurt the development of our children, but it will also put more stress on parents at home.

[REDACTED] strong start plays a HUGE part [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Please reconsider doing this.

I know I'm not [REDACTED] who feels this way.

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [budget](#)
Subject: Request to Keep John Henderson StrongStart Open
Date: Thursday, February 12, 2026 6:01:25 PM

To ,

Vsb strong start ,

I hope you are doing well.

I am writing to sincerely express how valuable the StrongStart program at John Henderson Elementary School has been [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is an exceptional educator who truly cares about each and every child. [REDACTED] gives personal attention, teaches discipline in a gentle and positive way, and helps prepare the children for kindergarten. The children feel safe, welcomed, and happy in [REDACTED] class. It is clear that every child in the program loves and respects [REDACTED] deeply.

StrongStart is not just a program [REDACTED] it is a foundation for our children's early learning journey. It provides a safe, nurturing, and educational environment where children learn important social skills such as sharing, listening, following routines, and interacting with others.

If this location were to close, it would be very difficult and heartbreaking for many families. Other locations are far [REDACTED] especially in challenging weather conditions. This program is a huge support for families in our community.

I humbly request you to please reconsider any plans to close the John Henderson StrongStart location. It plays a very important role in shaping [REDACTED] supporting families in the neighborhood.

Thank you for taking the time to read my message and for considering our concerns.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]