



International Union of Operating Engineers (Local 963)

VSBC Operating Budget 2021-22 Submission

April 6, 2021

Dear School Trustees and Board Staff:

Please accept this submission as an addition to our March 2, 2021 report regarding the VSBC 2021/22 Operating Budget.

The matters raised in our March 2nd submission included:

- COVID-19 and the Impact on School Engineers and Custodians;
- Newspaper articles regarding the critical role of building maintenance and the important role of staff performing this work;
- Building maintenance, cafeteria services and student supervision are “core” educational services;
- Maintain Supervision Aide increase in hours from 2.5 per day to 4.0 per day, and re-offer to all permanent Supervision Aides;
- Make long-overdue investments in cafeteria equipment.

March 29th PowerPoint

“Consider overtime control”

Recent information provided by VSBC staff on March 29th included a PowerPoint presentation. The slide titled “Still to be done” contains the item “Consider overtime control.” This may sound like a simple expense to eliminate but it is not.

Firstly, in the case of IUOE 963 members, all overtime must be pre-approved by an excluded staff Supervisor. There is a work-related requirement for the worker to remain on the job.

Secondly, the vast majority of overtime is due to non-replacement of absences. This is a recruitment/retention issue that the union local has been raising at *Labour Management Committee* meetings for years.

Thirdly, there is a decades-old contractual provision in our collective agreement with the Vancouver School Board regarding overtime that includes the union’s support for holding overtime to a minimum.

When considering “overtime control” it is important to note the reason for the overtime request in the first instance. In many cases, absent the overtime being performed, a program or service would have to be cancelled.

Other areas that could be reviewed:

We respectfully submit that there are a number of other budget items that are not included in this list, including:

- A thorough review of the Attendance Support Program, analyzing the full cost of the program against the purported savings. Since the suspension of the program due to COVID-19, we have noticed improved morale concurrent with this moratorium and concur with our colleagues at CUPE that this program should be eliminated. As stakeholders have said repeatedly, employers have standard labour relations practices through which attendance matters can be effectively addressed without the need for a department at the VSB.
- The subject “Review Admin allocations” which we understand to be the allotment of Principals and Vice-Principals to schools, should include a “Review of Education Centre Administrative costs,” to include all non school-based District administration. The growth of excluded staff is evident in organizational charts (provided in earlier budget submissions) and to our knowledge there has never been an analysis of this growth.

Summary of Public Engagement

Section 3- Generating Revenue refers to revenue generation and with respect to “Cafeterias” we assert this should include cafeteria catering. Cafeteria catering is a necessary component of Culinary Arts courses and was needlessly cancelled a few years ago. Secondary school cafeteria catering needs to be restored, for both pedagogical and revenue generation purposes.

Section 4- Equity in Education and Prioritization of Spending references “Access to education for all students.” We again note there are no Culinary Arts Programs available for secondary students west of Main Street in Vancouver.

In the section titled **Prioritizing Funding for Equity** (page 47 Of 58) the public “called for funding to be directed to food programs...” IUOE supports this effort.

Finally, we endorse the letter below, written by the BC School Trustees Association, regarding adequate funding of building maintenance and encourage the VSB to vigorously support this effort. The theme of this letter, we submit, is that building maintenance is a “core” educational service.

BC School Trustees Association (“BCSTA”)

In a letter dated March 31, 2021, the BC School Trustees Association wrote BC Education Minister Jennifer Whiteside:

Dear Minister Whiteside,

Subject: School Life Cycle Funding

On behalf of British Columbia's boards of education, please accept the attached report titled "The Case for Increased School Life Cycle Funding."

This paper was written by BCSTA's Capital Working Group with input from every board of education in B.C. The report, endorsed by our board of directors, focuses on the province-wide need to address steadily increasing levels of deferred life cycle maintenance.

Due to a lack of adequate funding for building maintenance, board of education are currently unable to maintain consistent regular maintenance on school buildings. The implications of this have been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regular maintenance for facilities is critical to providing safe, efficient learning environments for children and that this can be best achieved with adequate annual funding.

BCSTA's board of directors looks forward to discussing the report with you at a future date, and we thank you for your consideration of this important area of concern.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Higginson

President, BCSTA

Thank you for your time.