

Office of the Secretary-Treasurer

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
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TO: The Board of Education

FROM: Katrina Stride, Secretary-Treasurer

DATE: February 29, 2024

RE: **Budget Working Groups 2024-2025 Annual Budget Recommendation**

Budget Working Groups

At the November 27, 2023 Special Open Budget Meeting, the Board approved the 2024-2025 Budget Development Process which included the creation of the following working groups:

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories we live, we learn, and we work.

English Language Learning

- In recognition of the expansion of the program and workload, including the opening of the Welcome Centre and increase in ELL students, move an additional 0.20 FTE of the District Principal, Multi-Language Learners, Mental Health and Multiculturalism into the ELL Operating Budget

School-Based Budget Working Group

The School-Based Budget Working Group did not reach consensus on recommendations. Recommendations, along with comments to provide additional context for Trustees to inform their deliberations and decision-making, received from individuals within the working group have been provided.

- **Determine what are Needs vs. Wants in the district**
 - What is needed just to educate students and keep the buildings functioning?
 - Technology technically is not funded except for students who “need” it (i.e., assisted speech technology)
 - When it is needed by students, the schools pay for it out of their budgets
 - Music was mentioned as a “want” not a “need”
 - Huge part of curriculum for students
 - What would the cost be to mental health if music were cut?
 - Cuts to music costs is teachers - less teachers for students
 - Music is a part of the curriculum; however, the music under discussion is over and above the curriculum requirement
- **Think about the most vulnerable kids and who they see in the day - those are the people most crucial. As well as the student’s space/environment. (Picture it)**
 - No one staff member is more important than the other. You take one away, someone else has to pick up the jobs.
 - How much is it costing Principals to do jobs vs. custodians, counsellors, EAs, etc.
 - If this is emergency time, guard those in schools as best you can.
- **Carryforwards in schools are not people/staff, is it possible to save money by reducing this?**
 - Maintenance and repairs to the interior of school buildings quite often come from the school-based budget (not always facilities)
 - There are general guidelines of what schools cover from their own funds, but these can get complicated, and specifics are sometimes tricky to navigate.
 - The general idea is that if something is already part of the building and needs repair, then typically facilities would pay. If it is something the school needs that is new (like sinks) or not a fixed part of the building, (chairs, tables, cupboards, blinds, appliances) then the cost usually goes to the school.
 - Carryforward is contingency - to be used to fix things in schools
 - The reduction to \$25,000/\$40,000 is just allowing schools to meet needs (no contingency for larger repairs and maintenance such as photocopiers, painting, shelving, blinds, etc.)
 - We will have some schools that run out of money in March
 - Would rather decrease the carryforwards than decrease another person in the school, even though it would be hard to manage supplies with the decrease
 - It is uncomfortable but that is the lowest amount we can make ends meet with
 - ***We are a very lean organization. We are barely making ends meet and we are finding creative ways to do it***
- **Mentorship and Orientation programs work**
 - The best Pro-D for teachers is **teachers** working together
 - Saves the district in \$\$, investigations, people going on leave
 - **Admin** dealing with issues - maybe another admin has already solved and can share their experience - save time and energy
 - We tend to silo - if we have 47 sites, undoubtedly that happens - collaboration reduces “siloeing”

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- If it means release time, it could be expensive
 - Orientation saves the district time and money
 - The cost to the district is TTOC's calling payroll to read paystubs - and other district staff for information
 - Can save on investigations
 - Same with EAs
 - Especially for out-of-province folks who do not know policies, curriculum, culture
 - Even if it is just money for a slideshow
 - **Don't see many areas as far as staffing that can be cut. The only way we are going to save money is on supplies of some kind.**
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