



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

**SPECIAL OPEN BOARD MEETING**

**AGENDA**

**Broadcasted via YouTube**

**<https://bit.ly/3czx8bA>**

**Thursday, February 29, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.**

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**A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING**

This meeting is being audio and video recorded. The video can be viewed on the District website.

**A.1. Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories**

*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 do our work.*

**A.2. Approval of the Agenda**

Recommended Motion:

That the February 29, 2024 Special Open Board meeting agenda be approved.

**B. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**B.1. Budget Working Groups 2024-2025 Annual Budget Recommendations**

**C. QUESTION PERIOD (15 minutes total)**

**D. ADJOURNMENT**

Recommended Motion:

That the meeting be adjourned.

**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 three Budget Working Groups. The Budget Working Groups were allocated the following areas of focus:

- Department Budgets
- School-Based Budgets
- Special Purpose Fund Budgets

The Terms of Reference for each of the Budget Working Groups can be found [here](#).

## **Budget Working Group Meetings**

The following Budget Working Group meetings were held:

### Budget Working Group Meeting #1 – December 13, 2023

- Held in-person at Tolmie
- Information packages provided on December 7, 2023
- Large group presentation included the following topics:
  - Budget Scope
  - Budget Responsibility
  - Operating Surplus
  - Structural Deficit
- Small group discussion specific to working groups

### Budget Working Group Meeting #2 – January 18, 2024

- Held via Zoom
- Additional information packages provided on January 16, 2024
- Large group presentation included the following topic:
  - Historical Spending Outside Funding and Contracts/Ratios
- Small group discussion specific to working groups

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- Department: International Education with Dr. Jeff Davis

#### Budget Working Group Meeting #3 – January 25, 2024

- Held in-person at Tolmie
- Additional information packages provided on January 23, 2024
- Small group discussion specific to working groups
  - Department: Indigenous Education with Dr. Shelly Niemi

#### Budget Working Group Meeting #4 – February 8, 2024

- Held in-person at Tolmie
- Additional information packages provided on February 6, 2024
- Small group discussion specific to working groups
  - Department: Inclusive Learning with Sean McCartney

#### Budget Working Group Meeting #5 – February 13, 2024

- Held in-person at Tolmie
- Additional information packages provided on February 9, 2024
- Small group discussion specific to working groups
  - Department: Multi-Language Learners with David Hovis

### **Recommendations from the Budget Working Groups**

To follow are the recommendations provided by each of the Budget Working Groups:

#### **Department Budget Working Group**

The Department Budget Working Group did not reach consensus on recommendations. Recommendations received from individuals within the working group have been provided.

International Education:

- staff FTE to student ratio to continue to be the same as for resident students as per the Board of Education's direction during the 2023-24 budget process
- staff to identify possible fee increases
- staff to confirm the additional revenue anticipated from the 2024-25 tuition fee increase of \$500 per student (staff to recommend possible use of this additional revenue, Board to give direction on how these funds will be allocated)
- staff to provide recommendations regarding permanent reductions in department operating costs
- staff to provide the Board with a recommendation regarding a further tuition increase for the 2025-26 school year
- staff to provide the Board with a report detailing the costs associated with providing school district facilities for the ISP (including but not limited to building maintenance and repair, utilities, supplies, furnishings, training, etc.)

Also, under International Education, the following recommendations were made to enable a sustainable International Education program and to ensure the 2023/24 and 2024/25 International Education Department budget will not operate in a deficit:

- Identify fee increases for the 2024/25 school year, including tuition and any other program fees
- Identify staffing reductions
- Continue to explore operating efficiencies

## 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”

- 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.**
  - Perhaps we can apply an 'economy of scale' among the lower districts (Sooke, Saanich)
  - We have equipment that we use but not at the same time - could we share it?
  - Shared purchasing power
  - Buying less quality furniture and supplies does not save in the long run (doesn't last as long)

### Special Purpose Fund Budget Working Group

The Special Purpose Fund Budget Working Group was able to reach consensus on recommendations. The working group recommendations are as follows:

After a review of Special Purpose Funds, the Special Purpose Fund Budget Working Group focused on CommunityLINK, as it was the only fund that had flexibility to realign services. By consensus, at the February 13, 2024 Budget Working Group #5 meeting, the following recommendations were put forward:

- Use \$500,000 of 2024-2025 CommunityLINK funding to realign services from operating funding.
- Use \$120,000 of unspent 2023-2024 CommunityLINK funding to realign services from operating funding in 2024-2025.