

2025-2026 ANNUAL BUDGET VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Strategic Plan Lens



Budget decisions will align to the District's Strategic Plan's goals and strategies and the District Framework for Enhancing Student Learning. Priority will be given to Strategic Plan and Framework for Enhancing Student Learning initiatives and will make financial connections to complete annual financial reports, such as the Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis (FSD&A) and the Multi-Year Financial Report (MYFP). As a result, the organization recognizes constraint and the ability to do many things, but not all things.

Students

Students are at the centre of all we do in SD61. Students are our primary stakeholder and must have voice and agency in their learning. The budget will focus on provision of service for every student to succeed, recognizing that all learners are unique and have differing needs. Quantitative and qualitative data are both important.

Relationships

Partnerships and relationships are strengthened by demonstrating mutual respect and cultural safety which includes the recognition of expertise, recognition of diverse opinions and ability to have civil discourse. We assume good intentions on all sides and for all ideas. Trust will be built by having authentic and difficult conversations with transparency and building understanding over time. The budget will be communicated clearly and regularly throughout the process.

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.

Indigenous Peoples

The budget process will be culturally respectful and responsive to the needs of Indigenous peoples and will include the Indigenous Education Council (IEC), and representatives of the Four Houses through the processes that have been established with the Indigenous Education Department.

The School Act requires each board to establish and maintain an IEC. The purposes of the IEC are set out at s. 87.00(1) of the *School Act*, and are as follows:

- a) advising the board on any matter relating to:
 - providing comprehensive and equitable educational programs and services to Indigenous students;
 - improving Indigenous student achievement; and
 - integrating into learning environments Indigenous world views and perspectives, in particular, those of the First Nation, the Modern Treaty Nations, or the Nisga'a Nation in whose territory the board operates.
- b) advising on grants provided under the School Act in relation to Indigenous students;
- c) approving plans, spending and reporting of targeted grants related to Indigenous students;
- d) advising the board in relation to the distinct languages, cultures, customs, traditions, practices or history of the First Nations, the Treaty First Nations, or the Nisga'a Nation in whose traditional territory the board operates, through advice from the Indigenous education council members representing those First Nations, Treaty First Nations or the Nisga'a Nation.

In addition to consulting with the IEC on budget matters relevant to Indigenous students, the Board and Staff will utilize the Indigenous Education Department's regularly scheduled meetings with the Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation, Urban Indigenous Peoples' House Advisory (UPHIA) and the Métis Nation of Greater Victoria as the conduits to share information, collaborate, seek input and direction. The Board and Staff will attend meetings with Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation, UPHIA, the Métis Nation of Greater Victoria and the Indigenous Education Department when invited and/or when any concerns and/or clarity is required.

Timelines

The Board will adhere to the Board approved budget process timelines in order for the organization to meet its system, staffing and collective agreement obligations to properly place human and financial resources in schools and provide stability in the organization. In the process, the learning community will be informed about the time constraints for the final budget approval. The Board will give third reading to the budget no later than April 9, 2025.

Collaboration

The budget will be an inclusive, collaborative and culturally responsive process where stakeholders and Rightsholders have the opportunity to understand the District budget, be made aware of positive and negative impacts of proposed budget options and to provide input on same, and where possible to co-create solutions. Participants should feel heard at the end of the budget process while also understanding that feedback and input are provided for the Board's consideration in its decision making. Quiet voices will require extra attention.

Sustainability and Ability to Withstand Change

To advance sustainability the Board will:

- commit to administrative and operational efficiencies, and appropriate management of risk including, but not limited to, the provision of safe and healthy learning environments and sustainable environmental practices;
- move toward matching revenues to expenses so the organization does not rely on surplus to balance on-going costs from year to year;
- spend surplus on one-time initiatives and priorities, and not on-going expenses;
- recognize that the needs of students change from year to year and so will the budget allocations;
- protect reserves and contingency even when there is pressure to spend in times of constraint;
- consider long term financial planning and three-year budget forecasts.