



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, BUDGET REPORT

Monday, June 3, 2024
7:00 pm
Board Room
Administration Building
133 Greenbank Road
Ottawa, Ontario

Trustees Present: Alysha Aziz (electronic communication), Justine Bell (electronic communication), Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Jennifer Jennekens (electronic communication), Nili Kaplan-Myrth (electronic communication), Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn (electronic communication), Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley (electronic communication), Lynn Scott, Emma Hong (Student Trustee) (electronic communication)

Staff Present: Pino Buffone (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director of Education), Randy Gerior (Associate Director of Business Operations), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Instruction), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Janice McCoy (Superintendent of People, Culture and Learning), Teri Adamthwaite (General Manager, Finance), Stacey Kay (General Manager, Learning Support Services), Diane Pernari (General Manager, Communications & Public Relations), Nicole Guthrie (General Manager, Board Services), Roxanne Sun (Team Manager, Financial Planning), Michael Guilbault (Multimedia Coordinator, Communications), Jacques Vezeau (Learning Technology Analyst, Business & Learning Technologies), Susan Baker (Acting Committee Coordinator)

Non-Voting Representatives Present: Anthony Wong (SEAC), Susan Rab (OSSTF OTs), Corinne Lassaline (PECCS/PSSP), Tracy Shapiro (OCSSAN), Jaimeson Dyer (OCEOTA), Stephanie Kirkey (OSSTF-TBU), Natasha Baines (OSSTF-SSP), Susan Gardner (OCETF)

1. Call to Order - Chair of Committee of the Whole, Budget
Chair Lyra Evans called the public session to order at 7:03 p.m.
2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

Chair Lyra Evans acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Homelands and thanked the Algonquin Nations for hosting the meeting on their land.

3. Approval of Agenda

**Moved by Trustee Blackburn,
THAT the agenda be approved.**

Carried

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were filed.

5. Delegations

There were no delegations.

6. Discussion Items

6.1 Report 24-080, 2024-2025 Staff-Recommended Budget (R. Gerrior)

Your Committee had before it Report 24-080, 2024-2025 Staff-Recommended Budget. Associate Director Gerrior provided a presentation that included a summary of revenues, expenses, net enveloping, capital budget, average daily enrolment (ADE), staffing, Learning Support Services, and Extended Day Program and Early Learning Centres. He noted that this is a net-zero, balanced budget.

During discussion, and in response to queries, the following points were noted:

- Although the budget does not reflect reductions in programs or services, there are some cost pressures and investments included;
- The Ministry removed approximately \$1.2 million in bridge funding, \$2.0 million in Partnerships and Priorities Funding (PPF), and \$0.5 million for temporary accommodations;
- The transportation funding formula was adjusted to provide more stable funding going forward;
- The District received \$1,169,323,005 in revenues in 2024-2025 compared to \$1,101,048,096 in to 2023-2024 representing an increase of \$68,274,909;
- Most of the increased funding is directed to the implementation of Bill 124 and collective agreement obligations;

- Underfunded areas, including Transportation and Special Education, are supplemented by unrestricted Core Education Funding (CEF);
- Recommended staffing investments include 10.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) educational assistants, 2.0 FTE general managers to replace two system principals, 2.0 FTE payroll positions to meet payroll obligations, 1.0 FTE senior disability management coordinator to manage overpayments, 1.0 FTE safe schools coordinator, and four term positions;
- A number of factors are considered when conservatively estimating enrolment for 2024-2025 at 548 additional students. A change in enrolment at this point in time would generate at least two additional weeks of work on the budget. If the District over-estimates enrolment by a significant amount, the District may apply to the Ministry for financial assistance;
- Although the Ministry has ceased funding menstrual products, the District will continue to provide the products at the same level of service as last year;
- The Special Education summer learning program will continue in 2024-2025;
- There is no change to the level of funding for French educational assistants;
- The Facilities Renewal Program (FRP) and School Condition Improvement (SCI) are approved annually in February. Improvements to ventilation and cooling systems are included;
- The District continues to be under Ministry supervision. It would be necessary for the Board to approve a surplus budget to be removed from Ministry supervision. The 2024-2025 budget does not generate a surplus;
- Classroom Staffing Allocations, other than the per pupil allocation, are based on the actual number of educators who meet the qualifications for specific programs and the number of students who are eligible for those programs;
- Apparent changes in budget allocations may be attributed to the new funding model which has reallocated a portion of the funding to different categories to more accurately reflect the intent of the funding. There is a net zero change in funding;
- The Student Achievement Through Equity (SATE) Inquiry is ongoing in a small number of schools along with existing programs

and services that are already in place in other schools. Before deployment to all schools in the District, there needs to be a coordination of work to ensure that there are no gaps in service;

- Committee members were encouraged to continue their advocacy efforts with provincial and federal members of parliament to increase Ministry funding with respect to mental health, replacement workers, special education, transportation, capital funding, and cybersecurity;
- There has been no reduction in funding for Indigenous education;
- Although the four key values of equity, community building, responsible stewardship of resources, and leadership development are reflected in this budget, it is not possible to quantify the total amount budgeted for these values;
- Funding for Special Education is based on total student enrollment;
- The allocation of \$3,500 for an Indigenous student trustee is in addition to the \$8,000 Core Education funding per student trustee. Funding for all trustees is approximately 50% of actual costs;
- Two central system principal positions were eliminated in favour of two new program managers to reflect the administrative nature of the work;
- The \$7.5 million expenditure for Labour Provision is attributed to additional staffing required following ratification of a collective agreement after the academic staffing was approved by the Board in March 2024;
- The Rural and Northern Education Allocation of \$212,656 is used to maintain WiFi infrastructure;
- The School Renewal Allocation of \$5.1 million for upkeep and maintenance has not been updated by the Ministry for several years;
- It is anticipated that any recommended changes arising from the Elementary Program Review would be approved in December 2024 for implementation in September 2025. Any changes would likely be phased in over several years in order to balance the budgets for 2025-2026 and beyond;
- The 2023-2024 budget included reductions of \$19 million. Additional reductions this year to generate a surplus would require fundamental changes to the delivery of programs and services;

- It is difficult to compare special education budgets with other school boards as each board determines the programs and services they provide. The OCDSB has historically overspent its special education budget and have used other funding sources to supplement the budget;
- Occasional teacher funding is provided on a per pupil basis. Occasional teacher costs are typically overspent and rely on the availability of occasional teachers to cover absences;
- Ministry funding has not kept up to the current rate of inflation;
- There is typically a 5% restriction on moving funding from one category to another category;
- Special Education equipment funding is claim-based with a maximum of \$5,000 per single item;

Trustee Lee assumed the chair.

- Mental health funding for students has decreased by approximately 25% while funding for student safety has increased by \$1 million to offset the reduction;
- Other Provincial Grants (including OYAP) have been reduced;
- The reduction in tuition fees for international students that occurred during COVID is expected to return to previous levels;
- The \$700,000 in interest expense is payable to the Ministry for loans provided for capital projects in the past. The Ministry no longer co-signs loans;
- Capital projects have contingency allowances built into their budgets;
- Business & Learning Technologies is moving to increase the use of technology in the future;
- Additional education assistants and early childhood educators were hired during the 2023-2024 school year and are now included in the 2024-2025 budget;
- The OCDSB is understaffed with respect to senior staff compared to other comparable school districts;
- Central staff provide support to principals, teachers, and students in schools;
- Professional development budgets that were underspent in the past may be attributed to the lack of available occasional teachers;

- Snow removal costs were lower in 2023-2024 due to a reduction in snow accumulation;

Trustee Lyra Evans resumed the chair.

- There has been no increase in school budgets to cover the cost of musical instrument replacement and other supplies; and
- Although funds raised for playground equipment should be expended in the year they were raised, arrangements can be made to carryover funding to the next year for exceptional circumstances.

The Committee requested that the following questions be addressed in the next Question & Answer (Q&A) document:

- What is the plan for implementing the Student Achievement Through Equity (SATE) Inquiry to all schools in the District?
- How are we preparing a balanced budget if funding does not keep pace with inflation?
- What are the key budget requests from the Indigenous Equity Council (IEC), Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE)?
- Does the 2024-2025 budget include the elements of the 2024-2028 Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap?
- Please clarify if the slide on page 4 of the presentation refers to Core Revenue Funding received or OCDSB estimated budget expenditures?
- Why was there such a large increase in central staff positions for the Extended Day Program?
- What is included in the \$6.4 million of “Other Operating and Capital Needs”?
- Does the Transportation budget include an allocation for the walking school bus?
- Please comment on the requirement for a housekeeper and a cook at the Early Learning Centres.

1. 2024-2025 Staff Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

The 2024-2025 Staff Recommended Budget Questions and Answers was provided for information.

7. New Business - Information and Inquiries

There was no new business.

7.1 Advocacy Briefing Notes

The advocacy briefing notes with respect to mental health, replacement workers, special education, transportation, capital funding, and cybersecurity were provided for information.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Donna Blackburn, Chair