



## MEMORANDUM

**Memo No. 20-077**

**TO:** Committee of the Whole Budget

**FROM:** Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board  
Mike Carson, Chief Financial Officer

**DATE:** 8 June 2020

**RE:** **Budget Development Update**

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At the Committee of the Whole Budget (COW Budget) meeting of 26 May 2020, staff acknowledged that the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, by both the provincial government and the District, has had a direct effect on staff's ability to present the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget.

The original plan was to present the staff-recommended budget on 26 May 2020 and have the budget approved by 30 June 2020; however, a number of factors have resulted in a delay in preparing a document for consideration by the Committee. These include:

- uncertainty around Ministry of Education and public health requirements for school operations for the 2020-2021 school year due to the ongoing public health concerns around pandemic planning;
- lack of information about the timing of the release of the Grants for Student Needs (GSNs) or the detailed calculations required to accurately estimate the District's revenue for the coming year; and
- uncertainty about enrolment levels due to parental concerns regarding what school environments will look like in the fall.

During the 26 May 2020 meeting, the Committee was presented with information regarding staff's many proposed investments which align with the Board's commitment to create communities of Innovation, Caring and Social Responsibility. The intention to use the District's accumulated surplus within Ministry restrictions was also confirmed. Lastly, a plan to present a provisional budget at the 8 June 2020 COW Budget meeting was conveyed.

The provisional budget had been suggested to ensure that necessary staff resources and other beneficial investments would be in place for the start of the new school year. Examples of the investments that would be included in the provisional budget are early childhood educators for new kindergarten classes and educational assistants to support

new specialized classes. The formal staff-recommended budget would follow once actual funding information was available.

Development of the provisional budget assumed a high degree of certainty regarding the amount of funding that would be provided by the GSNs. The Ministry has suggested that funding benchmarks will be increased to reflect compensation increases provided for by the new collective agreements, but it has also advised that the GSN announcements will not be released in the near term. The delay creates increased uncertainty regarding future funding levels and this has affected the ability to present a provisional budget on 8 June 2020. There are strong indications that the Ministry will defer the requirement to have a Board-approved budget by the end of June 2020.

Despite the uncertainties, a report will be presented to COW Budget on 22 June 2020 recommending a number of investments. The investments would have been included in a provisional budget, but the report will adopt a more conservative approach given the absence of funding information. The recommendations will focus on investments to meet mandated staffing requirements and those that are deemed critical for operational needs. The latter may include investments to enhance the security of the District's information technology network and to ensure necessary mental health supports are available for the District's students. Staff believes that the recommended investments will be sustainable in the long term.

Please be assured that staff remains committed to presenting a recommended budget based on the following principles:

- providing as much stability for students, staff, and school communities, over the coming school year;
- providing funds to support safe and effective learning spaces for students, while also preparing for more localized or less lengthy school closures in response to possible COVID-19 outbreaks in the fall and winter; and
- ensuring that progress continues on the ambitious work outlined in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, while continuing to reinforce the OCDSB commitment to the pursuit of equity for students, staff and the community.

Your continued patience and understanding in these unusual times is appreciated. More detail about the anticipated investments will be presented at the COW Budget meeting on 8 June 2020. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to explore the evolving timeline for the development of the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget.

Should you have any questions, please contact Mike Carson, Chief Financial Officer, at [michael.carson@ocdsb.ca](mailto:michael.carson@ocdsb.ca)

cc     Senior Staff  
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