



MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 20-074

TO: Committee of the Whole Budget

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

DATE: 26 May 2020

RE: 2020-2021 Budget Update

We would like to begin by offering our apologies for being unable to include the backup for a budget update ahead of Tuesday's meeting, however, the provincial and district response to the pandemic has created a shifting landscape for our work.

Originally, it had been staff's intention to present its recommended budget to the Committee on 26 May 2020, in accordance with the previously published calendars. Until 16 March 2020, staff were optimistic that a budget would be developed that allowed for continued investments in support of the Board's commitment to create Communities of Innovation, Caring and Social Responsibility and that the planned deficit would be within the 1% guideline. Committee members will recall that deficits of more than 1% require the approval of the Minister, which staff would not recommend.

We remain committed to presenting a 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 outbreaks in the fall and winter; and
- ensuring that progress continues, albeit differently, 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.

Budget planning for the coming year has been complicated by a number of factors including:

- uncertainty around Ministry 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
- impacts on enrolments due to parental concerns regarding what school environments will look like in the fall.

On Tuesday, 26 May, at the Committee of the Whole Budget Meeting, staff will provide the Committee with information about some of the anticipated financial impacts of the steps required for a safe return to school for students and staff.

While the Ministry has indicated that it will provide further guidance later in June, planning has already begun, assuming a need to respect physical distancing guidelines, and enhanced cleaning procedures. At this time, staff can only estimate some of the costs, provide some funding for other unanticipated costs and await the announcement of any supplemental funding from the Ministry to support districts with those costs.

To date, we have built our preliminary estimates of funding based on guidance from Ministry staff. This has included, for example, that funding for secondary staffing would be based on the 23:1 ratio. Additionally, the Deputy Minister has often advised that the District could expect status quo with respect to GSNs, which include funding for the anticipated costs of the various labour agreements.

Notwithstanding these uncertainties, we believe there will still be the opportunity to make some additional investments in staff and technology, and at this time are not considering any budget-related staff reductions.

We appreciate your patience and understanding in these unusual times. Staff will provide more details about the anticipated spending plans and possible ways to proceed at the meeting on 26 May.

Should you have any questions, please contact Mike Carson, Chief Financial Officer, at michael.carson@ocdsb.ca

cc Senior Staff
Manager of Board Services
Manager of Financial Services
Corporate Records