



MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 20-107

TO: Committee of the Whole (Budget)

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

DATE: 13 August 2020

RE: **2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget
Questions and Answers (Release 2)**

The attached document shows the questions received since the initial meeting of Committee of the Whole (Budget) on 26 November 2019.

Please direct questions or comments to Kevin Gardner, Manager of Financial Services, at kevin.gardner@ocdsb.ca

Attach.

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



2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

This document consolidates the responses to all questions received regarding the development of the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget. Responses to a number of questions are pending.

Release of 11 August 2020 - questions 1 to 30

Release of 13 August 2020 - questions 31 to 42



2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

- 1. Staff agreed to provide information regarding the provision and use of masks in schools; the amount of funding allocated to the walking school bus program; and details on the green climate fund.**

Provision and Use of Masks

The District continues to develop its school reopening procedures in consultation with the Ministry of Education and Ottawa Public Health (OPH). District staff have been working to establish a safe and caring learning environment responsive to the needs of all students and in a manner that will promote the safety of students, staff and their families.

The reopening plan will provide full-day, in-person learning opportunities for students in kindergarten through to grade 8. Students in grades 9 to 12 will attend on a modified basis to allow for a maximum class size of 15 students. Opportunities to continue with remote learning will also be available for students.

The District's approach includes a variety of changes that will reduce the risk of infection. The changes include monitoring the enhanced cleaning practices such as frequently disinfecting high-touch surfaces, minimizing interactions between students by using cohorting techniques and staggering recess times, encouraging physical distancing, managing access to washroom facilities and promoting good hand hygiene.

A key strategy to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 is the wearing of non-surgical masks. Studies have shown that this respiratory virus is generally transmitted by contact with droplets that enter the body through the eyes, nose and mouth. Wearing a mask has been recommended by public health authorities as an important measure to limit the spread of droplets by an infected individual. As required by the Ministry, the school reopening plan envisions that students from grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear masks while those in lower grades will be encouraged to wear one. Reusable cloth masks will be provided by the District or students may bring their own. Disposable non-medical grade masks will be provided to students who forget to bring their cloth mask to school.

Walking School Bus Program

The Walking School Bus (WSB) is designed to promote active transportation and healthy living. The program is operated on the District's behalf by the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority and serves seven elementary schools. Under this program, students walk to school with a group of up to ten peers and are supervised by a professional leader. Each WSB follows a specific route and schedule.

A \$156,000 provision has been included in the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget to operate the program. All routes are expected to operate and will employ safety precautions to reduce the potential transmission of the COVID-19 virus.



2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

Environmental Initiatives

As conveyed in Memo 20-090, Environmental Initiatives, addressed to Committee of the Whole Budget on 21 July 2020, the approved 2019-2020 Budget included a \$150,000 provision in support of innovative school and community-based projects that would align with the District's sustainability goals.

Staff from the Program and Learning K-12 and Facilities departments began meeting with community partners last summer to determine how this could be leveraged along with the usual work in the schools, with a focus on school-based projects. Work had progressed on the development of an application process and proposed communications but was paused during the various labour actions that occurred during the fall and winter. With the closure of school buildings in March 2020, priority shifted to the provision of at-home learning and planning for reopening in September. As a result, funds were not used and have been carried forward as part of the proposed 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget. Staff intends to move this process ahead as soon as practical.

2. Please provide information on the investments that have been put in place to manage the impact of COVID 19.

The staff-recommended budget included a \$4.0 million provision to offset incremental costs that may be incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The provision was divided equally between two categories: Instruction and School Operations.

Although specific amounts to support anticipated needs have not been identified using this provision, expected incremental costs would include personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning equipment and supplies, computer technology and minor modifications to work environments and additional supports for students. The provision would also be used to offset anticipated increases in staff replacement costs that may result from a cautious approach when assessing staff wellness in support of a safe learning and work environment.

In addition to the basic provision, the recently ratified central collective agreements have provided for incremental funding that may assist in providing necessary staff resources to assist with managing COVID-19 challenges. The new funding is referred to as the Supports for Students Fund (SSF) and, collectively, is expected to provide 84.4 FTEs across the various employee groups. From this amount, 16.6 FTEs have been identified in the staff-recommended budget to augment custodial staffing levels which will help address enhanced cleaning protocols that are now required.

Subsequent to the presentation of the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget, the Ministry announced new funding to assist district school boards. Details of the announcement were provided in Ministry memorandum 2020:B11 Investments to Support School Reopening in Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak, which confirmed additional resources totalling \$3.5 million and identified further allocations that would be confirmed at a future date. The following chart shows the composition of the new funding and includes estimates of future allocations.

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

Description	Provincial	District
	\$	\$
Confirmed Funding:		
Allocation for Technology-Related Costs	15,000,000	528,561
Allocation for Mental Health Supports	10,000,000	198,891
PPF Enhanced Cleaning Allocation (Supplies and Staffing)	4,000,000	140,798
PPF Additional Staffing Support (Custodial)	50,000,000	1,816,446
PPF Health and Safety Training for Casual Staff	10,000,000	369,988
PPF Additional Supports for Special Education	10,000,000	265,217
PPF Additional Mental Health Supports	10,000,000	198,891
	109,000,000	3,518,792
Anticipated Funding:		
Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	60,000,000	2,100,000
New Enhanced Cleaning Allocation	25,000,000	875,000
Student Transportation Cleaning and PPE	40,000,000	1,400,000
	125,000,000	4,375,000
Combined Total	234,000,000	7,893,792

Ontario's school reopening plan also includes a \$30.0 million fund to support the hiring of additional teachers, where needed. The District would have to submit an application to access this funding. The application would need to demonstrate that classes have been managed as close to the funded average class size as possible.

As requested by the Ministry, staff are assessing if the new funding may allow for a reduction of the \$4.0 million provision shown in the staff-recommended budget. Any reduction in the provision would reduce the draw on the District's accumulated surplus which would ensure continued capacity to offset adverse financial effects resulting from revenue shortfalls and incremental expenses relative to the operating budget that is ultimately approved.



2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

3. Please provide further information on the mental health and additional staff supports that will be put in place to respond to COVID 19 as well as a risk assessment.

Existing staff who promote and support mental health include regulated health professionals (social workers and psychology staff) and non-regulated health professionals (child and youth counsellors). These staff are assigned to specific schools and are members of each school's multi-disciplinary team. Multi-disciplinary teams, together with school teams, will review student needs to assess the level of support and access to services required.

Through Ministry funding for mental health, additional staffing will be available to manage the anticipated increase in students' mental health needs. Staff will be flexible and responsive in order to provide a continuum of services based on student needs. This will range from professional development/consultation/coaching for educators as they promote and support mental health and well-being in classrooms, to providing direct service to students and families, to facilitating access to culturally responsive mental health services in the community and to providing crisis intervention, as needed.

4. Are we replacing the funding that the province did not allocate to school councils through the PRO grant? Can you confirm what amount we received this year and does the \$500 per council continue?

Provincial funding for parent engagement has traditionally flowed through the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grants for both the District and school councils. Last year, the province consolidated the funding to provide it through the Grants for Student Needs (GSNs) and significantly reduced the funding. The current level of funding will allow the District to continue to support some key parental engagement initiatives such as the Parent Conference and Speaker Series; the delivery model for those things may look quite different in light of COVID-19 and we will work with the Parent Involvement Committee on that. Funding will continue for the \$500 annual allocation to each school council. In light of current budget constraints, the District is not in a position to replace the additional PRO grant application funding that was eliminated by the province.

5. What are the specific budget line items under Indigenous Education, in particular what is included other than staff salaries?

The 2020-2021 GSNs provide total funding of \$3,146,918 through the Indigenous Education and Program Leadership allocations to support Indigenous education. The Indigenous Education allocation provides \$2,281,311 based on expected enrolment in Indigenous studies courses, \$123,524 to support work relating to the Board Action Plan (BAP) on Indigenous education and \$649,644 as a "per pupil" amount based on the District's overall average daily enrolment (ADE). Funding provided by the Program Leadership allocation is \$92,439.

The Ministry requires that unspent BAP, per pupil and program leadership funding be treated as deferred revenue for use in subsequent years; however, the 2020-2021 spending plan anticipates full use of the funds. The funds generated by Indigenous studies are used to support overall instructional costs.

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

The District also receives funding through the Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF) grants. PPF grants are enveloped for specific purposes and may be announced prior to the start of the school year or provided during the school year. A report confirming the use of the funds must be provided to the Ministry. An anticipated PPF grant of \$69,600 to support an Indigenous graduation coach has been included in the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget.

The following table presents the 2020-2021 spending plan:

	FTE	Budget (\$)
GSN Supported:		
Vice-Principal (Program Leader)	1.00	136,212
Student Support Coordinator	2.00	173,652
Urban Aboriginal High School Teacher	2.00	214,384
Instructional Coach-Elementary (Itinerant)	1.00	105,219
Instructional Coach-Secondary	1.00	107,192
Native Studies-Inuit Centre Teacher	1.00	105,220
Native Studies-Inuit Centre ECE	1.00	56,116
	9.00	897,995
Supplies, Services and Release Time	-	166,909
GSN Total	9.00	1,064,904
PPF Supported:		
Indigenous Graduation Coach	-	69,600
PPF Total	-	69,600
Combined Total	9.00	1,134,504

Supplies and services commonly acquired using the Indigenous Learning budget include service contracts with community partners (Wabano, Innuugatigiit) who provide programs focused on historical teachings and cultural practices, transportation costs for students participating in programs run by community partners, support for the Indigenous Youth Forum, honoraria paid to Elders, release time for teachers to participate in Indigenous-focused learning, books and maps for schools, and office supplies.

6. What, if any budget is allocated to Indigenous mental health initiatives or efforts beyond that. Are there funds that could be shifted towards that end?

Currently, there are two student support staff whose role, while not specific to mental health, is connected to building student engagement and providing cultural support. Learning Support Services continues to seek representation from diverse populations when opportunities for a new hire arise for professional support staff. The District also collaborates with community partners in an effort to deliver a well-rounded model of mental health and well-being support for Indigenous students. In addition, the District's psychology and social work staff have been engaged in professional learning with the Indigenous Education team to build cultural competency and to increase the understanding of mental health & well-being through an Indigenous cultural lens.

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

- 7. A new central staff position to support school partnerships is proposed to be paid out of existing equity monies. What monies, what benefits will this displace? Why not new money if equity is a key part of the strategic plan? How will the success of this position be measured, in dollars fundraised /donated or school admin and other time displaced or partnerships inked? How will we know this was worth the new position and opportunity cost of redirecting equity spending in this way, i.e. apart from simply celebrating everything this person does as wonderful without looking at the opportunity costs involved?**

Underlying the use of the Resource Allocation Index based on Socioeconomics (RAISE) index is the concept of equity and resource allocation based on needs. The District uses the RAISE index as an indicator of school-level need relative to other schools within the District. The index incorporates various indicators from several data sources to identify where resources can be applied to enhance student success.

Use of the RAISE index resulted in priority schools receiving additional operating budgets of \$142,700 (\$18.70 per ADE) in 2019-2020. A separate centrally administered budget of \$252,500 has, in past years, been used to offset costs incurred by priority schools to provide enriched learning and engagement opportunities during the year.

The 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget proposes the creation of a 1.0 FTE community partnership officer position using the existing centrally administered budget. The position would directly assist RAISE schools with identifying sustainable community partnership opportunities. Staff believe that using the existing funds in this manner will result in tangible benefits which would include expanded learning opportunities, improved student achievement and enhanced student well-being.

- 8. Is the extra SSF funding part of staff planning or not? ... it seems to be very hard here to get a straight answer or read of the situation. It is to be extra to DSB-needs and spending plans on the one hand, but seems to be integrated with it on the other hand. Are these new positions indeed superfluous to our basic operation and also Covid needs and response - doing tasks not related to Covid risk reduction perhaps - or not? Do I write these positions and the work they do off as unimportant essentially then, or not? When we quote the number of custodians needed and in place or redeployed, for instance, will they be included or not, and if so then by what rationale? If they are fully or partially deployed to meet operational needs (and are not extra for additional unusual purposes supplementary to basic work) then is there Federation agreement for this, a de facto agreed working ambiguity, or something else, or what?**

SSF was provided to local school districts as part of the central agreement reached earlier this spring between the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, the Crown and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF). The funds are similar to the Local Priorities and System Investment Funds that were provided in the previous expired agreements. Funds from this system investment must be used to create additional permanent positions within the applicable bargaining units to address requirements for special education, unique learning needs, mental health initiatives, and to employ individuals who play a role in promoting safe, healthy and caring schools.



2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

The positions created using the funds are an integral part of the recommended budget; however, the types of positions to be established are to be determined in consultation with the respective bargaining unit as required by collective agreement provisions. For example, the District has identified the need to use the funding assigned to the Plant Support Staff Unit bargaining group to support additional custodial staff in recognition of the extraordinary pressures created by COVID-19 concerns. Similarly, the need for additional educational assistants is being partially supported by the new funding. These needs have been shared with the bargaining units.

Discussions with the bargaining units are continuing and all positions established will be assigned to meet the highest priority needs.

9. **Full on EDP is to restart as well as I understand it. At the start of Covid, the DSB took a financial bath on this as parents kept their kids home and, unlike Provincial funding based on an October report of those registered (whether actually keeping their kids at home or not), parents can exercise some flexibility as to when they keep at home or not, including paying or not, with EDP and with child care. This potentially large financial risk has yet to be called out in staff reports, and I'm seeing no tangible risk recognition yet in terms of budget shortfall provisions, as for OCENET - another area where we are dependent on non-Provincial external funding. Why are we making explicit budget provisions for OCENET revenues and expenses but not for EDP (and child care) revenues and expenses, especially in light of our very real tangle with non-trivial revenue short falls this way only a few short months ago? What plans do we have, if any, to flexibly staff in order to limit financial damage, or to limit parental registration flexibility? Will the back to school survey include EDP or will this be a separate demand survey? How will staffing planning be done in this area? What tangible risk recognition and planned shortfall are we looking at here?**

Operations

Effective 01 September 2020, all licensed child care centres and before and after school programs will be permitted to operate at full capacity. The extended day/before and after school programs will be required to follow standard ratios and maximum group sizes set out in the Before and After School Kindergarten to Grade 6 Policies and Guidelines.

After 01 September 2020, operators can begin charging fees once space has been accepted. If a parent chooses not to utilize the space, operators will be permitted to require payment to hold the space or will be able to offer the space to another family.

The Ministry is currently updating the Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak: Child Care Reopening document to support the full reopening of child care programs, expected to be released soon. We anticipate updates to the Before and After School Kindergarten to Grade 6 Policies and Guidelines to provide COVID-19 operational guidance.



2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

Staffing and Registration

We had projected our staffing for the 2020-2021 year based on last year's registration numbers. An additional 700 families have requested a new registration for this year. In anticipation that not all families may want to return, or some families may want to pay for their space and not yet attend, we will proceed with a registration process in phases.

With the new e-registration platform, we can both survey intentions and register participants at the same time. The planned phases are as follows:

- Phase one: Families that require full-time service, so 5 to 10 sessions will be registered first. This will also include families that choose to pay for their space but not attend;
- Phase two: Families that require part-time or flexible schedules less than five sessions will be registered. This will also include families that choose to pay for their space but not attend; and
- Phase three: Move to new families requiring space. We may proceed with the same process if required.

This process will permit the District to track the staffing needs based on legislative requirements (new guidelines as well as OPH measures) and also determine how many families want to return or reserve their space. The goal is to mitigate fiscal shortfalls as well as meet child care demands.

Financial Sustainability and Recovery

Even though the District could not access federal funding, we have been able to advocate to the Ministry and the City of Ottawa (the City) to secure an amount equal to 75% of what federal funding would have been. Accessing these funds from the province addresses the inherent inequities of the federal wage support program. Application for the funding which is funnelled through the City was completed in July 2020. The District will also be applying for funding to assist with reopening of the Extended Day and Infant, Toddler and Preschool (ITP) programs.

In addition, we are attempting to access General Operational (GO) funding through the City for EDP. We receive GO funding for ITP but not EDP. The City provides GO funding to licensed care providers only; however, through advocating again, our Ministry advisor confirmed all EDP could access GO funding through municipal dollars. We are in communication with the Ministry and the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) at the City of Ottawa to obtain additional funding.

The registration process will support our ability to run at capacity and we anticipate operating with a waitlist. We have begun the early learning assistant (ELA) hiring process, and OSSTF has agreed to permit the hiring of early childhood educators (ECEs) during the summer in the hope of hiring based on EDP and core day needs before the beginning of school. To note, this process, combined with the registration process, will support families but also may take time.



2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

- 10. The two B< TLs also seem to be touted as specific domain specialists (security, etc). Are these truly TLs or did we have to leverage the higher pay of the TL labour category essentially to attract and keep needed specialists in the absence of a proper agreed labour category here?**

The team leader for learning technology specialists (LTs) is responsible for supervising, modelling and coaching LTs, as we have redeployed 16 positions into these roles (former school-based instructional student support technicians). The team leader will also co-ordinate the day-to-day work of the LTs.

The team leader for security and identity will coordinate the work of the security and identity team including determining priorities, assigning tasks, communicating with clients, analyzing data, ensuring ongoing collaboration and communication between the team members, Business and Learning Technologies department staff and District staff and assisting in the coordination of incident response.

The rates of compensation for these supervisory positions were determined in consultation with the Human Resources department. Compensation is based on an evaluation of job duties using a standardized rating process applicable to all union exempt positions.

- 11. What will be the CUS shortfall or impact? If night custodians are redeployed to daytime cleaning or anyway CUS adds extra cleaning demands (and maybe risks to daytime?), will we even allow any CUS in schools (as opposed perhaps to office spaces such as 440 and Rideau and depot and admin and other such office type spaces)? What is the budgeted impact of reduced CUS? ... If keeping and redeploying the same custodial but no longer receiving the same revenue, then I imagine the impact has to be negative.**

The underlying assumption was for an early return to normal evening activities for Community Use of Schools (CUS). Accordingly, the revenues and associated expenses were budgeted as for a normal operating year.

Redeploying evening staff to support daytime operations would result in cost savings for CUS activities and would offset the revenue decrease. Compensation paid to the redeployed staff would be considered to be incremental costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.



2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

- 12. With substantially the same teaching staff, how will we support learn-at-home effectively without extra costs not covered so far by the Province? It is fine to say that teachers not feeling well or uncertain about their safety or that of their families may be redeployed to help with at-home learning or maybe centrally, but that still reduces the in-class workforce, which usually is tasked out to the max. I simply don't see how the math adds up. Please explain how this will work (or not work) from an HR and budget perspective.**

Students who participate in remote learning will be assigned to a class, and will receive instruction at home using technology. This will be a combination of live online instruction (synchronous) and posted instruction/learning activities and materials (asynchronous). Remote learning will cover required curriculum expectations. Student learning will involve a similar amount of time to what students would usually spend in the classroom learning and doing independent work. The expectation of students engaging in remote learning will be that they are online and present for scheduled instructional times.

The allocation of staff to support remote learning will depend on the number of families who opt for that model and the impact on the regular school organization. Staff are reviewing strategies to mitigate the additional staffing, for example, maintaining secondary students opting for remote learning in their current classes, supported through a combination of asynchronous and synchronous remote learning daily, with their cohort A and B classmates, adjusting assignments, and re-organizing classes to adjust class sizes based on students attending in person.

- 13. Per the July 30th Ministry guidance doc, we are on the hook to pay TVO \$250 / course, and where with HS cohorting we may not be in a position to offer as many courses as we might normally. If across our HS population (30-35K? - I forget) we have even just 4K courses with TVO over a year then that is \$1m of added expenditure. the number could end up being much higher, and I'm not sure our increased targeted Prov funding has this cost in mind. What budget impact do we see here or is this judged as absorbable?**

As stated in the Ministry guidance document, secondary students will have access to online courses available through the TVO Independent Learning Centre (ILC). The District will be required to approve student enrolment in ILC courses and must pay a \$250 per credit fee to TVO. The number of students opting to enrol in ILC courses is not readily determinable and there will be increased certainty of costs as the school year progresses.

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

- 14. It was stated previously in our prelim budget backgrounder that shortfalls 'would be absorbed centrally with a flexible staff response', or words to that effect. I see so very many risks to our bottom line, even with the extra recent \$s, that I'm uncomfortable with approving a budget based on this sort of wave of the hand. Specifically, (a) what is the reasonable absorbable shortfall and internal spending redirection amount we believe we can handle, due to all causes, and (b) and what would the major redirected monies likely be and what would be the major anticipated impacts of that?**

Despite the additional provisions included in the budget to address revenue losses and incremental costs as a result of the pandemic, there will continue to be a risk that the amounts fall short of what is needed for the entire year. For instance, the province recently announced that the District will receive \$528,600 in incremental funding to support the acquisition of computer equipment. Initial plans would be to use the funds to acquire Chromebooks.

- 15. What are the OT costs and are they reasonable? ... if staff are now to keep themselves home proactively on a hair trigger and get tested if they suspect they have any symptoms at all, we absolutely can expect our staff coverage needs to expand. I'm not sure I saw any Prov funding supporting this, though I may have missed it. Is Finance budgeting for a normal course year re OT use or non-trivially higher than normal OT use, and either way what is the rationale used to get there?**

The budget for staff replacement costs was maintained at historic levels for the upcoming school year, but additional funding to offset such costs would be supported using the \$4.0 million budget provision established to respond to extraordinary costs relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach was adopted because of the significant uncertainty that exists regarding the increased use of sick leave. Increasing the budgets for staff replacement costs would adversely impact investments in other areas.

An assessment of staff replacement costs will occur early in the school year. The assessment will reflect actual experience for the first three months of the year. Any change in budget provisions will be identified as part of the revised estimates that will be filed with the Ministry by 15 December 2020. The information is also shared with a number of committees of the Board.

- 16. If we are increasing airflow at all facilities where our blowers and systems have the capacity to do this, then there will need to be a heating / cooling, and energy use, cost to this? What plans exist this way, and where do I find this in the budget?**

Modifications to mechanical systems to increase ventilation rates are being made across the District. Based on initial estimates for increased energy consumption, it is anticipated that this will add between \$500,000 and \$750,000 to utility costs. Incremental utility costs will be managed within the Facilities department's approved operating budget. If necessary, the \$4.0 million COVID contingency provision shown in the staff-recommended budget may assist with defraying any cost overrun.



2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

- 17. We're looking at a greater than usual (>1%) deficit in addition to Prov monies I'm assuming. Assuming serious Covid impacts last only the coming school year, what is the multi-year pay-down plan, and what spending will be negatively impacted with respect to decisions taken today?**

The Ministry requires that a board approve a deficit elimination plan when a district is projecting an adjusted in-year deficit. The plan must identify how the adjusted deficit will be eliminated within two fiscal years. The adjustment relates to the amortization of Board-approved committed capital projects incurred between 01 September 2010 and 31 August 2019. The District's adjusted in-year deficit is projected to be close to \$16.5 million. The District's deficit elimination plan is shown on page 27 of the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Binder. The plan is influenced by the amount of accumulated surplus available that can be used to manage the elimination of the deficit. The deficit elimination plan will be updated to reflect adjustments that may be required as a result of the new funding and other changes that might result from budget deliberations.

- 18. A related question, what is the budget risk, given all of the unknowns, that our in-year shortfall will be non-trivially > than even the specially permitted planned shortfall? What is the estimated +/- range on this risk based on what we know now?**

The significant uncertainties arising from COVID-19 public health issues have made planning for 2020-2021 an unprecedented challenge.

As noted in the response to question 2, the staff-recommended budget included a \$4.0 million provision to offset incremental costs that may be incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent announcement by the Ministry has provided \$3.5 million in new targeted funding to further address COVID-related costs.

In addition to the basic provision, the recently ratified central collective agreements have provided for incremental funding that may assist in providing necessary staff resources to assist with managing COVID-19 challenges. The new funding is referred to as the SSF and, collectively, is expected to provide 84.4 FTEs across the various employee groups. Other realignments to staff assignments would also be considered as part of the District's response.

Staff acknowledges that the estimates will need to be updated as the year progresses. Incremental costs incurred by the District to respond to the needs of staff and students will be tracked and reflected in budget updates.

- 19. It would be useful for all Trustees and for the public if we had a 1-2 page summary of all the various Covid impacts expenses and revenues +/-.**

Please refer to the response to Question 2, which summarizes the new funding provided to support incremental COVID-19 related expenses.

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

20. It would be useful for all Trustees and for the public if we had a 1-2 page summary of all of the various equity strategy expenses and revenues +/-.

The District is committed to equity of educational opportunities and outcomes. To meet this commitment, policies and practices have been established to ensure the availability of programs, services and resources critical to the well-being of students, staff and the community. As a result, equity considerations are a key factor in the many decisions made by the District.

A number of examples of the work to promote equity and diversity are shown in the Equity and Diversity section of the District's website. These include:

- Hosting a student equity conference which asked students to undertake an "equity audit" of their schools;
- Ensuring the principles of equitable and inclusive education are incorporated into all policies, programs, procedures and practices;
- Reviewing resources, instruction and assessment/evaluation practices to identify and eliminate discriminatory bias and systemic barriers;
- Ensuring that hiring policies and practices are equitable and fair;
- Providing equity-focused learning opportunities with internal and external partners;
- Establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with diverse communities, including engagement through the Board's Advisory Committee on Equity; and
- Consulting with local community organizations and the Ontario Multifaith Council to identify days of significance to members of the faith communities in the District for inclusion in the Holy Days/ Days of Significance calendar.

Most of the equity considerations, including those shown above, are supported by budget allocations assigned to various departments as approved by the Board. However, there are a number of specific budget allocations that play an important role in furthering equity and diversity. These are:

Indigenous Education	\$1,134,500
The budget is used for enhanced programming and supports for Indigenous students. A detailed budget plan, including enhanced staffing, is presented in the response to question 6.	
RAISE Funding	\$395,200
As indicated in the response to question 7, the Resource Allocation Index based on Socioeconomics (RAISE) index is an indicator of school-level need relative to other schools within the District. The index is used to provide additional resources to enhance student success. From this funding, eligible elementary schools receive \$18.70 per ADE (totalling approximately \$142,700) to supplement their Board-allocated budget. The balance is available to both elementary and secondary schools based on funding requests. A proposal to use some of the funds to establish a community partnership officer position is shown in the staff-recommended	

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

budget.	
<p>Graduation Coach Program: Pilot for Black Students</p> <p>A PPF grant, initially received in 2019-2020 and renewed for 2020-2021, is focused on addressing systemic barriers to achievement and well-being and supporting the success of Black students. The pilot involves providing intensive, culturally-responsive support to Black students and hiring graduation coaches with connections to Black communities to act as mentors to Black students, with the assistance of school staff and Board leadership.</p>	\$224,200
<p>Urban Priorities Funding</p> <p>Two secondary schools (Gloucester HS and Ridgemont HS) have been identified by the Ministry for this supplemental Ministry funding. The funding is used to provide enhanced support and engagement activities at these schools. These include health services, homework clubs, additional in-school mental health supports and leadership building activities.</p>	\$588,400
<p>Rainbow Youth Forum</p> <p>The annual Rainbow Youth Forum (RYF) is a celebration of diversity and is a day for students in grades 9 to 12, staff and community to learn together. The RYF encourages safe and inclusive school environments by providing an opportunity to enhance knowledge and awareness about equity and diversity issues. Workshops and presentations build knowledge and understanding of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, as well as homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.</p>	15,000

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

- 21. Over the past weekend, I have received 100s of messages and emails, as I am sure you did too. Check out my facebook page @TrusteeBell for a sampling. The majority of which come from parents and teachers with regard to elementary school class sizes. They have expressed their fear that the average number of students in a classroom does not jive with the public health recommendations. I understand that this could be perceived as an operational issue, but if the OCDSB was to choose to limit the number of students (per foot) in the classroom there would be budget implications and when it comes to safety I believe that there are governance implications as well. Can we propose to limit the number of students in elementary school classes? What would be the cost implications? Space implications?**

Based on current projections and without knowing the number of parents/families who may opt for remote learning, staff has estimated that limiting class size to 15 students in grades 1 to 8 would require approximately 1,000 new elementary home room classes being established. Each home room would require hiring 1.19 FTE elementary teachers or reassigning teachers from non-classroom roles (e.g., learning support teacher, learning resource teacher, English as a second language teacher, instructional coach). This modelling assumes existing kindergarten classes could be further cohorted to groups of 15 or fewer, with each cohort being led by one member of the kindergarten educator team (ECE and teacher) at a time.

- 22. I understand that staff are working hard to develop an approach to communications today. I firmly believe in the power of communications to build trust. Reducing the real and perceived risks associated with the number of students in classes is paramount to building trust. Can we ask for a specific (and public) recommendation from Ottawa Public Health on the safest number of students per square foot?**

The school reopening plans have been developed in consultation with the Ministry and public health authorities, including OPH. Although there is general guidance on the need to promote physical distancing, it is important to recognize that other strategies will also be used to reduce the risk of exposure/transmission of the virus. These include good hand hygiene, cohorting to limit the number of direct contacts that a student has, the use of masks impede the spreading of respiratory droplets, and more frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces.

- 23. If money were not an issue, is it feasible to meet the required number of teachers and/or classroom support staff for such reduced class sizes? Are we at the point where we would accept non-credentialed individuals as teachers? Do we need to consider setting aside immersion requirements in the interest of student safety? What are we willing to do for smaller groups?**

The cost of the additional staff, as well as the classroom space considerations, are both significant issues/impediments to bringing elementary back with class sizes of 15 students or less. The focus of our planning has been to ensure the return to school is as safe, sustainable and equitable as possible, aligned with the Ministry's directions and available resources. As a result, we have not turned our minds to whether we would need to consider non-credentialed teachers or whether we need to make changes to FSL delivery.

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

24. Please explain how EDP and child care protocols and funding will work and whether in concert with K-6 cohorting, whether a similar demand survey is being done, what pivoting mitigations we will have in place for staffing, etc?

Operations:

Effective 01 September 2020, all licensed child care centres and before and after school programs will be permitted to operate at full capacity. EDP before and after school programs will be required to follow standard ratios and maximum group sizes set out in the Before and After School Kindergarten to Grade 6 Policies and Guidelines.

After 01 September 2020, operators can begin charging fees once families accept a space. If a parent chooses not to accept a space, operators will be permitted to require fees to hold the space or will be able to offer the space to another family.

Staffing and Registration:

We had projected our staffing for the 2020-2021 year based on last year's registration numbers. An additional 700 families have requested a new registration for this year. We anticipate that not all families may want to return, or some families may want to pay for their space and not yet attend, we will proceed with a registration process in phases.

Our registration process will allow us to track the staffing needs based on how many families want to return or reserve their space. We have begun the ELA hiring process, and OSSTF has agreed to permit hiring ECEs before the beginning of school.

25. If the K-8 demand survey shows, say 10% staying away, then what is the rationale for assuming that we will be at same or greater strength for EDP staffing needs as last year? (the assumption stated by Finance so far)? Indeed, how can staff maintain this posture? Will the Province float our shortfalls - is this why and are we confident of complete coverage this way?

The ability for families to pay to hold a space will be an option for those not ready to start the EDP. We are currently experiencing a high volume of registration requests from new families. By proceeding with a registration process in phases, this will support our staffing needs process.

On 07 August 2020, the Ontario government announced a partnership with the federal government to provide \$234.6 million in funding to keep children and staff safe in child care and early years settings. This announcement is a follow-up to the 30 July 2020, news release, which indicates that the province would provide funding to support enhanced cleaning costs and health and safety requirements set out to support the reopening of child care and early years programs.

The funding will support the District in reducing the financial impact endured during the closure and reopening periods for both EDP and ITP. The funds will also offset the additional cost in reopening the eight EarlyON Child and Family Centres.



2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

The District has already applied to the City for funding for the closure period. The City suspects that funds will be available for successful applicants after 30 September 2020. An additional process to access the reopening funding is expected to be shared shortly, and a new application format will be available by the end of August.

- 26. The TDSB is arguing now, as I understand it, that the province needs to get them additional monies than those announced at least to allow for space and teachers needed to spread out school populations in poverty or racialized (e.g. more PSW or frontline workers, fewer resources, greater need to be in school, etc), maybe including HS. Are we doing this? If not, should we? And if so, should we not make sure we're next in line for such funds?**

New information may be forthcoming on the afternoon of 13 August 2020. We will be making an application to the province for funding in this regard. In addition, school in-class enrolments will be reviewed upon conclusion of the "Confirmation of Attendance" survey. Deployment of staff will certainly consider the unique needs of underserved communities.

- 27. The TDSB also has published a deficit payback plan with the budget they just passed I believe ... it would be good to see what that was for us.**

Please see the response to question 17.

- 28. Can staff please describe in detail how the custodial complement will be successfully deployed to adhere to the minima (and maybe go beyond them) that have been set out by the Ministry (and maybe Sick Kids)?**

We are presently hiring 16.6 FTE custodial positions which will provide 3.0 FTE replacement custodians for day shifts and 13.6 FTE floater custodians for evening shifts. The additional \$1.8M in funding announced recently by the province for additional custodial staffing support will be used to hire casual staff to assist the chief custodians with the high-touch surface cleaning and enhanced cleaning requirements as outlined in the province's Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools. This will include regular touchpoint cleaning of surfaces such as door handles, railings, light switches, buttons, dispensers, accessibility buttons, faucets, and commonly touched items in the school. Evening staff will be completing a full clean/disinfection of all spaces once the students and staff have left for the day.

- 29. How much, on average, does it cost to add 1.0 FTE elementary teacher?**

The average compensation cost of an elementary teacher is \$106,300. This amount includes wages, the employer's share of statutory contributions (Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Ontario Health Tax, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board) and contributions to employee life and health benefit trusts.



2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

- 30. In a "normal" year, after the allocation of "needs" allowances and other staffing adjustments included in the board-approved academic staffing for the year, how many elementary classes in K and in Grades 4-8 have more than 2 students (for K) above the Ministry-funded average class size or more than 3 students (for Grades 4-8) above the Ministry-funded average class size?**

Ministry funding for kindergarten is based on an average class size of 25.57 students. Based on the September 2019 snapshot which is used to report class sizes to the Ministry, there were no kindergarten classes over the Ministry cap of 29 for the 2019-2020 school year. There were approximately 56 kindergarten classes with more than two students above the funded average.

Funding is based on an average class size of 24.5 students for grades 4 to 8. At the time of the September 2019 snapshot, there were approximately 182 classes that had more than three students above the funded average.

- 31. In reference to question 5 - The table shows a \$1.1M spend but we say we are to receive about \$3.1M. Is the remaining \$2M all spend on supplies and services? If so what kinds of things fall under this category?**

The question relates to the Indigenous Education allocation, specifically, the \$2,281,311 generated based on expected enrolment in Indigenous studies courses. This amount is not subject to enveloping and is used to support overall staffing and operating needs, which includes the secondary teaching staff and learning materials for Indigenous studies courses.

- 32. In reference to question 7 which notes "identifying sustainable community partnership opportunities", what do we envision these opportunities to be?**

Response pending.

- 33. In reference to question 9 - EDP registration Phase 3, Move to new families. Are we giving priority to parents/children who return to the program whether they want a space or are just "reserving" a space? Am I reading this correctly?**

On 02 July 2020, the Ministry Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak for re-opening of child care stated that "child care providers must give parents 30 days to indicate whether they want to keep their space. After the 30 days, payments would be required to secure the space, whether the child attends or not."

A 30 July 2020 child care sector memo re-emphasized that parents in child care before the closure must be given the option to keep their space and "if a parent chooses not to accept a space, (providers) are permitted to require fees to hold the space."

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

34. Why wouldn't we put the parents/children "reserving" on the waiting list and allow access to those using/needing right away rather than having a waitlist for parents willing/needing the spot now?

Legislation requires a one adult to 15 children ratio. Reserving a space requires us to provide them with care when they need it, this may not be possible if we cannot find additional staff to maintain ratios. Paying for the space guarantees that you have a space because we have the staffing in place. We have learned some lessons from last year's experience of maintaining a waitlist for many months due to the significant increase in demands and the shortage of human resources. However, the pandemic has added new complexities to the registration process. We are attempting to balance Ministry directives around returning families and accessibility to our new families.

35. Have we always given priority to returning parents/children?

We have always attempted to give priority to siblings of returning families. In past years, parent demands and the staffing requirements were easily managed; therefore, prioritization was not an issue. Last year, the increase in demand combined with the shortage of ECEs and ELAs required adjustments to our structure.

Additionally, we have not yet received the proclaimed revised Operational Guidance for Reopening. Until we are informed otherwise, we have been obliged to restructure our registration process to adhere to the child care sector memos for reopening.

We continue to communicate with child care parents on a bi-weekly basis about the process.

36. Current Question 13 - what do we currently pay for each ILC? If nothing, why are we now having to pay TVO and must we get our ILCs through TVO rather than our current supplier?

The Ministry's guidance document for school reopening essentially confirmed the existing process for students wishing to take a course offered by TVO's Independent Learning Centre (ILC). Students currently work with the school's guidance team as part of the enrolment process. If enrolment in the ILC course is approved, the District pays the \$250 course fee. Fees paid to ILC in 2019-2020 totaled \$21,250.

The number of students opting to enrol in ILC courses in 2020-2021 is not readily determinable, but there will be increased certainty of costs as the school year progresses.

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

37. Are we making sure we are separately accumulating COVID related costs in such detail that we will know if or how much of our planned/actual deficit is truly structural as opposed to extraordinarily COVID related, such that these COVID costs are easily presented to the Province, hopefully for reimbursement.

The District's response to the pandemic will be supported by both historical budget allocations and new allocations established using targeted Ministry funding. Consideration on how to best track incremental COVID-related costs is currently in progress.

As noted in the question, it is important to isolate COVID-related incremental costs as well as temporary revenue reductions to ascertain the true composition of the District's planned deficit. The District's deficit elimination plan shown on page 27 of the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Binder identifies two significant factors that combined to increase the planned deficit by close to \$7.0 million. The first is a net revenue decrease that will result from lower international student enrolment which is facilitated by the Ottawa-Carleton Education Network (OCENET). The second is the identification of a \$4.0 million provision to offset incremental expenses. The deficit elimination plan assumes that these two adjustments are temporary and that operations will normalize by the 2021-2022 school year. The plan also assumes that \$4.0 million of investments in furniture, equipment and technology which are supported by the use of minor tangible capital asset (MTCA) funding could be avoided once the pandemic subsides.

In the absence of pandemic impacts, the planned deficit would have been expected to be less than \$8.8 million. This amount is equal to 1% of the operating grants that is commonly referred to as the compliance threshold. This amount can be drawn from the accumulated surplus to balance the District's operating budget without further Ministry approval.

38. Have we considered a delay in school starting with the number of unknowns to date? If we were to delay opening until say October, what would be the impact on the budget and pros and cons to a later start?

The Ministry has encouraged school reopening in accordance with the approved school year calendars which are established in accordance with the *Education Act* and supporting regulations. The school year calendar was updated to allow school staff to receive additional training on health and safety protocols commencing 31 August 2020. The first day of school for students is 03 September 2020.

The Ministry would not likely approve any change to the recently approved calendar and, operationally, a delay would have a broad and adverse impact on both school-based activities and central support processes.

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

39. Please provide a risk analysis showing the possible impacts to planned revenues as a result of COVID-related effects.

The risk that planned revenues reflected in the staff-recommended budget will not be achieved becomes increasingly clear as the reopening of schools progresses. The following table presents an estimate of revenue reductions that could result as the year progresses. District staff will monitor revenue projections and provide updates during the course of the year. Reducing planned spending where possible will also be considered to mitigate lower revenues.

Revenue	Risk Reduction Range
Government Operating Grants Most grant revenue is tied to student enrolment. At this time, the enrolment is in line with projections. Accordingly, no risk adjustment has been shown. Additional grant revenue will be generated if enrolment exceeds the projections.	Nil
International Student Fees (OCENET) Enrolment is significantly influenced by both a student's ability to enter the country and comfort to reside in Canada during the pandemic.	\$400,000 - \$600,000
Provincial, Federal and Other Third Party Grants These types of grants are treated as deferred revenue and are used to offset direct expenses. Examples include PPF, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada funding, and contributions for the Breakfast Program. Revenue projections are directly tied to planned expenses. Accordingly, no risk adjustment has been shown.	Nil
Cafeteria Commissions The District receives a modest amount of revenue from cafeteria operations and the operating projections assumed a \$47,000 reduction reflecting that such food service operations in high schools would not be available until later in the school year. The risk range reflects full elimination of revenues.	Nil - \$35,000
Community Use Permits and Property Leases After school use of District schools and the leasing of space to third-party child care operators are important supports to the community. A return to normal operations was assumed and, particularly for permit usage, a delay would reduce associated revenues. The risk range reflects approximately a revenue reduction for four months. Custodial costs related to community use permits would be avoided.	\$750,000 - \$1,000,000

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

Revenue	Risk Reduction Range
<p>Continuing Education Department</p> <p>These programs are expected to operate as planned. Accordingly, no risk adjustment has been shown.</p>	Nil
<p>Program and Learning (PAL) Department</p> <p>A small amount of revenue is reported for PAL. These are generally for cost recoveries of expenses incurred. A \$20,000 reduction in planned revenues was assumed, but further reductions are possible.</p>	<p>Nil</p> <p>- \$70,000</p>
<p>Interest Earnings</p> <p>The District planned for reduced earnings as a result of lower interest rates. A further interest rate reduction would adversely affect interest earnings.</p>	<p>\$100,000</p> <p>- \$200,000</p>
<p>Extended Day Program (EDP)</p> <p>Fees are to be charged to registered EDP participants regardless as to whether a child attends the program. However, reduced participation is possible and user fee revenues could decrease, particularly if a second wave of infection occurs. Staffing levels would be adjusted to reflect reduced participation as permitted by legislation and Board policy. Government grants to offset revenue shortfalls would also be sought. A sensitivity range of 10% to 15% of annual revenues has been used for this analysis.</p>	<p>\$1,800,000</p> <p>- \$2,700,000</p>
<p>Infant-Toddler-Preschool (ITP) Child Care Centres</p> <p>The District's two ITP child care centres are expected to operate as normal during the year. However, reduced participation is possible and user fee revenues could decrease if a second wave of infection occurs. Staffing levels would be adjusted to reflect reduced participation as permitted by legislation and Board policy. Government grants to offset revenue shortfalls would also be sought. A sensitivity range of 10% to 15% of annual revenues has been used for this analysis.</p>	<p>\$180,000</p> <p>- \$270,000</p>
Total	<p>\$3,230,000</p> <p>- \$4,875,000</p>

2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Questions and Answers

- 40. Can you please confirm whether we will receive a run down of the COVID related expenses? I would like to see an analysis of what we are spending and where in order to reduce the risk of exposure and protect students and staff. I am particularly interested in how we will apply an equity lens to these expenditures.**

Staff is working to provide additional information on how funds will be spent to ensure the well-being of students and staff. Please refer to the response to question 2 which provides additional information on new financial resources that are focused on responding to the pandemic.

Investments in PPE, plexi-barriers, partitions, signage, decals and cleaning supplies have already been made. Work has also commenced to enhance ventilation in District schools and to augment custodial staffing.

- 41. What is the cost of keeping secondary schools open for 150 minutes of in-person instruction under the 2:3 3:2 model from September 3-December 31, 2020?**

Response pending

- 42. What is the cost of keeping secondary schools open from 8:45 am to 3:00 pm under the 2:3 3:2 model for full day in-person instruction from September 3-December 31, 2020?**

Response pending.