

From: [Susan Bauhart](#)
To: [Lee-Ann Tiede](#); [Board of Education](#)
Cc: [Lori Dawsonbedard](#); [Mary Hope](#); [Cupe President](#); [Copac President](#)
Subject: Re: SD 23 Budget Unknowns
Date: Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:37:01 PM
Importance: High

Thank you, Trustee Tiede.

I have been in BCTF Zone meetings the past two days, so have not had the chance to review fully the recently released '25-'26 Budget Proposal Report. That said, and in advance of the upcoming Finance meeting, I would like to initially comment on statements made on page four, specifically:

Response to the Ministry of Education and Child Care Operating Grant Announcement

The District anticipated a minimal increase to the 2025/2026 Operating Grant funding. If the District anticipated a minimal increase to the Operating Grant funding, and past practice has regularly seen the initial school budget be amended with healthy increases later in the year - perhaps now is the time to craft a budget that accurately reflects the reality of the district's operational situation - either that or submit two budgets to the Ministry, and release these to the media (one that reflects the true needs of our district, and the other that shows them how much their lack of funding is shortchanging our students) The slight increase (1.12% or \$100 per pupil) will not address the full impact of inflation, operating cost pressures and tariffs next year (inflation is projected to be 2% next year - just announced March = 2.6 %, and the Bank of Canada will be addressing interest rates on Wednesday)). As a result, the District will need to continue to efficiently staff schools while addressing growth (unfortunately, our growth is slowing down, and estimates are this could continue - so perhaps capacity challenges will decrease) capacity challenges and inflationary costs. The following on-going cost pressures continue to be challenging for the District: (but our district does have a very healthy investment portfolio that could be accessed to address some of these pressures - perhaps this is the Ministry's way to force districts to use these dollars)

- 1. Operating Grant funding did not address the escalated inflationary cost increases the District is expecting for next year. (as mentioned above, this is not new - so why are we not addressing this? We have the data...)*
- 2. Portable costs, to address enrolment increases and capacity limitations, continue to be funded from the District's Operating Grant funding. (this is indeed an unfortunate reality, but because the cost of living in our district is very high, our future student enrollment numbers could decrease and become more manageable) The District is currently at 112% capacity utilization District-wide.*
- 3. The cost of teacher and support staff illness continues to exceed annual budget allocations. (Have budget allocations been adjusted to accurately reflect the district's reality? This has been a concern for many years now and that might suggest the annual budget allocations are too low) In addition, the Employer Standards Act requires the District to provide 5 paid sick days for teachers teaching on call and casual CUPE staff. This is unfunded and adds a budget pressure of approximately \$200,000/year. (this is known now, and should be factored in to the annual budget allocations mentioned previously)*
- 4. Benefit cost increases, particularly those that were a direct result of Collective Agreement bargaining (extended health and dental) are not fully funded and continue to put significant pressure on the District's budget. Benefit cost increases are estimated to be \$2.1M for the 2025/2026 school year. (BCPSEA is the employers' association and accredited bargaining agent for the province's 60 public boards of education - as such, they have agreed to all of these increases, so is anyone asking them what they are doing to get funding levels increased?)*

While options are considered to achieve a balanced budget in a difficult fiscal scenario, the District will continue to prioritize safe and engaging learning environments for students and provide classroom support that addresses the increasing complexity and diversity of our learners.

Finally, two areas of staffing have 'yet to be determined' (page 21), specifically Senior Team and

Principals & Vice Principals - why are they not yet determined?

Thank you.

Yours truly,
Susan

Susan Bauhart
President, Central Okanagan Teachers' Association (COTA)
Traditional Unceded Territory of the Syilx/Okanagan Nation
Telephone # 250-860-3866

... the rain begins with a single drop

This e-mail and any attachments are only for the use of the intended recipient and must not be distributed, disclosed, used or copied by or to anyone else. This e-mail and any attachments may be confidential, privileged and/or subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. If you receive this message in error, please delete all copies and contact the sender by return e-mail. Thank you.

From: Lee-Ann Tiede <Lee-Ann.Tiede@sd23.bc.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, April 9, 2025 9:58 PM
To: Susan Bauhart <Susan.Bauhart@sd23.bc.ca>; Board of Education <Boardof.Education@sd23.bc.ca>
Cc: Lori Dawsonbedard <Lori.Dawsonbedard@sd23.bc.ca>; Mary Hope <Mary.Hope@sd23.bc.ca>; Cupe President <Cupe.President@sd23.bc.ca>; Copac President <Copac.President@sd23.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: SD 23 Budget Unknowns

Hi Susan,
Thank you for forwarding these links.
The report will be shared with all partner groups on Friday in preparation for next week's Finance and Planning Committee meeting.
Regards,
Lee-Ann Tiede
Chair, Finance & Planning Committee

From: Susan Bauhart <Susan.Bauhart@sd23.bc.ca>
Sent: Friday, April 4, 2025 1:54 PM
To: Board of Education <Boardof.Education@sd23.bc.ca>
Cc: Lori Dawsonbedard <Lori.Dawsonbedard@sd23.bc.ca>; Mary Hope <Mary.Hope@sd23.bc.ca>; Cupe President <Cupe.President@sd23.bc.ca>; Copac President <Copac.President@sd23.bc.ca>
Subject: SD 23 Budget Unknowns

Importance: High

<https://www.peacearchnews.com/local-news/surrey-students-plan-march-to-push-for-bc-school-funding-7918382>

<https://www.kelownacapnews.com/news/school-supplies-staff-could-be-cut-to-meet-vernon-budget-7925358>

Good afternoon:

I am hoping these above links work for all of you to read the articles yourselves, but basically, they are about the underfunding of public education that affects us all.

The first article talks about the fact that the Surrey school district and their Trustees are facing a 16M dollar shortfall - this has been out in the news for weeks now, yet here we are in SD23, not knowing exactly what we are facing.

The second article is from Vernon's Capital News which states Trustees were advised of their financial situation April 2nd. Specific details have been listed (true transparency), including the total dollar amount of the shortfall, and a list as to the recommendations that Trustees will have to decide on April 16th - and Vernon officials are asking for district input on their recommendations before that meeting on the 16th. The article also states that the Board has consulted widely on how best to do this with minimal impact on students - no such consultation has happened with the COTA at this point, yet SD 23 school staffing meetings have begun already. And again, here we are as stakeholders, not knowing exactly what we are facing. I admit, if the Capital News is reporting this in Vernon, I am surprised Barry is not doing the same here.

I would appreciate knowing exactly what challenges we are facing in SD 23 well before our finance meeting on the 16th - specifically how much of a shortfall we are facing as well as a specific list as to where staff are recommending to Trustees that the 'cuts' be made.

Thank you very much.

Yours truly,
Susan

Susan Bauhart
President, Central Okanagan Teachers' Association (COTA)

Traditional Unceded Territory of the Syilx/Okanagan Nation
Telephone # 250-860-3866

... the rain begins with a single drop

This e-mail and any attachments are only for the use of the intended recipient and must not be distributed, disclosed, used or copied by or to anyone else. This e-mail and any attachments may be confidential, privileged and/or subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. If you receive this message in error, please delete all copies and contact the sender by return e-mail. Thank you.