

**SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23 – BOARD COMMITTEE REPORT**

COMMITTEE: Finance and Legal Committee DATE: April 15, 2009

CHAIRPERSON: Trustee G. Given STAFF CONTACT: L. Paul, Secretary-Treasurer  
E. Sadlowski, Director of Finance

**Attendees:**

Trustee G. Given (Chairperson)  
Trustee G. Scanlan (Committee Member)  
Trustee J. Watson (Committee Member)  
Trustee M. Baxter  
Trustee R. Cacchioni  
Trustee W. Horning  
Trustee A. Hunt-Binkley

Staff:  
M. Roberts, Superintendent  
L. Paul, Secretary-Treasurer  
E. Sadlowski, Director of Finance  
H. Gloster, Assistant Superintendent  
M. Essler, Executive Assistant (Recorder)

**Partner Group Representation:**

COPAC No representative  
COTA Tom Potts, President  
COPVPA No representative – sent regrets  
CUPE Leanne Louie, Secretary-Treasurer  
DSC Sydney Snape, Executive Member

**Action Items**

**1. Superintendent’s 2009/2010 District Budget Recommendations**  
(attachment)

The Superintendent reviewed with the Committee his 2009/2010 District Budget Recommendations. The Committee discussed the reserve at the end of June 2008. The reserve is approximately .6 of 1% of the budget and is necessary in the event of an overrun in the utilities portion of the budget (i.e. electricity or natural gas), or in the event of an unforeseen major expense. The previous year’s unallocated surplus is included within this year’s budget and will be fully spent. The \$1,000,000 contingency fund as approved by the Board is shown as two line items in the year-end financial statements - \$600,000 and \$400,000 for carbon tax reserve and educational reserve. The Committee reviewed the “Reductions for Possible Consideration in Future Budget Years” as similar shortfalls are anticipated for the next three or more years. The Committee reviewed the partner group submissions, and in particular the request from COTA for \$9,000 for Vitality Workshop and the request from the Employee Wellness Committee for \$10,000. In response to a trustee query, the Superintendent confirmed that if the Board does not approve the recommendation for the reduction of the allocation to District busing totaling \$1,000,000, there would be the need for staff layoffs in the area of district level staff, totaling 14 positions at approximately \$850,000. The remaining \$150,000 would be included within the reduction of all general budget allocations.

The Committee reviewed the recommended expense reductions in specified areas:

1. Reduction in allocation of HRES/District technology - \$400,000  
The budget for HRES/District technology is currently \$7,000,000+, which includes the technology refresh program, curriculum resource center and various positions at HRES. This budget does not include Student Support Services, Career Prep or the educational coordinators at HRES. The reduction in technology could include the replacement of laptops every four years rather than every three years which is the current practice.
2. Reduction in allocation to District busing - \$1,000,000  
- *establishment of broad-based user pay busing for all students*  
Will be discussed after item 7.

3. Reduction of allocation to School Based Funding – Secondary Schools - \$600,000  
 Secondary Schools are currently funded according to their student enrolment as of September 30. At the secondary school level, throughout the school year the student enrolment continues to decline. An average of the decline in the number of students at each school over a five year period has been determined. There can only be a reduction in School Based Funding at the Secondary level as the class size averages at the elementary and middle school level are very close to the provincial maximums allowed.  
 In response to a query from Tom Potts, President of COTA, the Superintendent advised if the recommendation for the establishment of broad-based user pay busing is not approved, there may be further reduction in teachers, including coordinators.
4. Elimination of TOC coverage for non-enrolling teachers - \$200,000  
 Non-enrolling teachers include career prep, counselors, learning assistance and teacher-librarians. If approved, the coverage provided would be reviewed on an individual teacher basis.
5. Reduction of allocation to District Career Programs - \$100,000  
 At the District level, these positions include staff at Hollywood Road Education Services and the accounts provided for field trips, equipment, services, and support for career prep program projects. At the school level, this would include the career prep allocations to schools. The Director of Instruction supervising the District Career Programs, has indicated this amount could possibly be achieved through not providing a replacement for a staff member who will be going off on leave midway through the year (\$50,000), and reduction in funds available for equipment/supplies (\$50,000).
6. Reduction of non-enrolling teacher staffing to schools – all levels - \$300,000  
 The average cost of a teacher is approximately \$85,000. A reduction of \$300,000 would be the total of three and one-half teaching positions over the entire District. Each school will receive a small reduction in funding provided for the non-enrolling teacher staffing to their school, to an equivalent of one teaching position at the elementary level, one teaching position at the middle level, and one and a half teaching positions at the secondary level.
7. Reduction of all general budget allocations by up to 1% - \$400,000 to \$1,700,000

The Committee reviewed the mandate of the International Education Department and the causes of enrolment fluctuations.

Reduction in allocation to District busing - \$1,000,000

- *establishment of broad-based user pay busing for all students*

The Committee discussed the non-response from the public on the information provided at previous meetings and by the media on the Board's consideration of user pay busing.

The District is currently operating transportation at a \$1,200,000 shortfall. With 6,000 students, including courtesy riders, currently registered for transportation, a fee of \$20.00 per month per student would provide \$1,200,000 in revenue to cover the current shortfall. Only \$1,000,000 is indicated in the budget recommendations to provide \$200,000 for unrecoverable fees and/or administration expenses. If the user pay busing is approved, there would be no new buses or routes added. The recommendation is only to maintain the current bus routes. Parents would be advised via letter by the end of May, or early June, of the changes to the busing system. If approved, staff will convene a User Pay Busing Committee to prepare a draft Policy for User Pay Busing.

The Committee discussed the possibility of providing a Family Plan. The possibility of a Family Plan would be an item to be discussed by the User Pay Busing Committee.

**Outcome:**

THAT: The Finance and Legal Committee forward to the Board a recommendation that the board adopt the Preliminary 2008/2009 School District Budget, including the specific budget reductions as presented and amended at the April 15, 2009 Public Finance and Legal Committee meeting as follows:

- include funding of the Vitality Workshop as requested by COTA \$9,000
- include funding to the Employee Wellness Committee \$10,000
- reduce general budget allocations by up to 1% \$419,000
- the total budget reduction and reallocations \$3,019,000

**Recommendations/Referrals to the Board/Coordinating Committee/Other Committees**

April 22, 2009

- adoption of 2008/2009 School District Budget recommendations including amendments made at the April 15, 2009 Public Finance and Legal Committee meeting

**Items for Future Finance and Legal Committee Meetings**

- Draft New Policy 208 – Confidential Disclosure: Reporting and Investigating Allegations of Financial Irregularity – *May 2009*
- District Credit Cards – *May 2009*

**Meeting Schedule**

Wednesday, May 20, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 17, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.

**Questions – Please Contact:**

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Gail Given, Chairperson