



## **Feedback from Public Consultations**

**To:** Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee

**Date:** 13 June, 2023

**Report No.:** 06-23-4558

### **Strategic Directions**

- **Transform Student Learning**
- **Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being**
- **Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students**
- **Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs**
- **Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being**

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the report regarding the feedback from public consultations on the 2023-24 budget be received.

### **Context**

#### ***Background***

As part of the budget process, information regarding the 2023-24 budget was presented by staff as they attended 4 Ward Forums (representing 14 different wards) and 2 Budget Town Halls during the period from June 5 – 7, 2023. In total, the sessions were attended by approximately 350 members of the public. The presentation provided is attached as Appendix A.

In addition, there have been a number of delegates related to the 2023-24 Budget that have presented to the Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee since February 2023.

Based on a review of the above, staff have summarized the feedback by category and provided a transcript of the questions and answers from the two budget town halls on June 7, 2023, in Appendix B.

### **School Based Staffing Reductions**

There were several questions and comments related to the school-based staffing. Most of those that provided feedback were concerned about the reductions at specific schools. Vice principals and aquatic instructors, in particular, were mentioned. There were multiple questions related to the how the remaining school-based staffing was distributed.

In response to the feedback, staff provided more information related to the elimination of COVID-19 Learning Recovery Funding, the school based safety monitors and vice principals that trustees added back and the guiding principles that staff used to determine where the vice principals have been added back.

### **Special Education Support Staff**

During the ward forums, staff received some questions related to special education support staff. The participants were advocating for additional support or asking if there were any reductions.

Staff assured the participants that the only reduction to special education support staff is the reduction of 35.0 child and youth workers funded by the discontinued COVID-19 learning recovery fund. Staff pointed out that originally, as part of school-based staffing, an additional reduction of 14.0 special education support staff was proposed. Trustees did not support this reduction. No further reductions to special education support staff directly supporting students have been made.

### **Mental Health, Well-Being and Safety**

Many participants in the ward forums and town halls expressed the importance of mental health, well-being and safety supports. They highlighted how important it was to maintain resources to support these areas, especially coming out of the pandemic. There were also requests for supports to reduce racism.

Staff indicated to the participants that the reductions to mental health supports related directly to the discontinuation of COVID-19 Learning Recovery Funds. Staff also indicated that there have been no reductions to safety related budgets.

### **Facilities Related Issues**

As part of the consultation, a number of concerns were raised. Some participants raised concerns about the significant amount of deferred maintenance that is

outstanding in some TDSB schools. There were also questions about the ability of TDSB to deal with overcrowding in certain schools. In addition, there were specific questions about the closure of unused classrooms at schools and about secondary students sometimes not attending their neighbourhood schools because of depth of programming available at other schools.

Staff referred to the secondary program strategy developed by the Board and how the moratorium on school closures is preventing the Board from being able to implement the strategy. This impacts the ability to deal with excess capacity and to ensure that enrolment in secondary schools is high enough to support all strategies. Staff also discussed the funding for capital, whether it be renewal or new construction. The Ministry has not provided an opportunity in 2022-23 to request funding for new school construction.

### **Central Staffing**

Some delegations and public session participants had questions related to the reduction in central staff and the impact of these reduction. In addition, there were questions about whether additional reductions in central staff have been considered.

### **Advocacy**

There was a lot of interest from participants with regards to how to advocate both to the Board related to the reductions that impact them specifically but also how to advocate for the TDSB.

### **Action Plan and Associated Timeline**

Staff will present the final proposed budget to Trustees at FBEC on June 20, 2023, and to Special Board on June 22, 2023. The budget is due to the Ministry on June 30, 2023.

### **Resource Implications**

Section 231 of the Education Act requires school boards to pass a balanced operating budget each year. Budgets are intended to align both human and financial resources to system priorities.

### **Communications Considerations**

Not applicable.

## **Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)**

Not applicable.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Presentation for Public Feedback

Appendix B: Questions and Answers from Budget Town Halls

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