BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 17, 2024

PUBLIC MEETING

Roll call:

Trustees:	Staff:
R. Hutcheon (Chair) B. Godkin (Vice-Chair) G. Elliott -regrets J. Morning J. Brown K. Maracle -regrets K. McGregor S. Ruttan T. Lloyd J. Neill E. Eckloff (Student Trustee)-regrets A. O'Keefe (Student Trustee)-regrets A. Wang (Student Trustee)-regrets	K. Burra, Director of Education C. Young, Superintendent of Corporate Services C. Downie, Capital Planning and Community Use of Schools Supervisor P. Carson, Manager of Financial Services L. Benjamin, Assistant Manager of Financial Services
	Recorder: D. Burns, Administrative Assistant **Producer:** A. Andretta, Administrative Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Godkin read the Acknowledgement of Territory.

Trustee Godkin called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOVED BY: Trustee McGregor, that the agenda, as presented, be approved. Carried.

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

4. INFORMATION ITEMS

4.1 Budget Development Schedule

Superintendent Young presented the Budget Development Schedule, outlining future meeting dates and topics to be discussed.

Trustee Godkin thanked Superintendent Young and called upon Trustees for comments or questions.

4.2 2024-2025 Projected Enrolment and 10-year Enrolment Trend

Assistant Manager of Facility Services Downie presented the 2024-2025 projected enrolment and 10-year enrolment trend report.

Since amalgamation the enrolment dropped until around 2015 and has plateaued and slowly climbed since then. Enrolment numbers are increasing at this time although births are still in decline. The increase can be attributed to growth in population as more families move into our board's geographic region. Particularly in the last 5 years compared to 2018/2019 where our student population has grown by 757 students. Continued growth is projected for the next 5 years, and this is supported by projections from municipalities who are also projecting growth in their longer-term planning reports. The average daily enrolment (ADE – the average of Oct 31 and Mar 31 enrolment reporting) is projected for the 2024-25 school year to be 97 students higher. That is 38 secondary and 59 elementary students. Also in the report in Appendix B is the capacity and utilization of our schools. This is called On the Ground (OTG) capacity, and it is a Ministry calculation that measures space in schools based on a formula comparing classroom loading factors to enrolment to create a utilization percentage. Portables are not included in OTG which is why there are many schools with over 100% capacity. In those cases that is an indicator that there are students in portables. Temporary accommodation or portables and over utilization are a necessary part of the goal to achieve 100% utilization averaged across our district.

Trustee Godkin thanked C. Downie for her report and called upon Trustees for comments or questions. Discussion ensued.

4.3 Budget Survey Results Presentation

Superintendent Young presented the 2024-2025 budget survey results and stated that this was our fourth annual budget survey. The online survey was open from March 7 – 28, 2024. A total of 1,662 responses were received. Last year, 1,150 responses were received. The survey was advertised on LDSB webpage, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and was emailed to family, staff, community, and federation partners. Superintendent Young thanked the Trustees for making the survey available on their social media feeds.

Question No. 1 on the survey asked, "What is your involvement with the LDSB?" Predominantly, those who responded were family members or caregivers at a total of 74 %. 15% were LDSB employees, 5% were Community Members/Taxpayers, 5% were LDSB students, and 1% were Community Partners.

Question No. 2 required individuals to rank the importance of allocating financial and staff resources to a number of educational programs and services. From all the responses, people placed these programs as the most important: 1. Reading & Writing Skills, 2. Mathematics, 3. Mental Health and Well-being, 4. Early Interventions and 5. Supports for Students with Exceptionalities.

Question No. 3 on the survey asked, "How satisfied are you with the boards public budget consultation process?" 75% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied, and 25% were unsatisfied. We will solicit feedback from people to see how we can improve the survey to better capture needs within the system.

A ThoughtExchange question was added to the end of the survey. ThoughtExchange invites people to share their thoughts and allows others to rank those thoughts. The question asked: "Are there any additional priorities, or do you wish to elaborate on any program that LDSB should consider for the 2024-2025 Budget."

The top six thoughts shared were: No. 1. Enhanced Classroom support, Trustees will remember Superintendent Gillam and Principal Blackburn talking about revamping Educational Services and putting more resources into classrooms. No. 2. STEM education, early intervention and hands-on-learning. Throughout the course of the year various Superintendents bring forward reports on how LDSB is supporting and enhancing educational opportunities throughout the system. No. 3. Budget transparency and infrastructure. The Ministry is changing grants and reducing the number of grants and allocations and they are advising that it will have an insignificant impact on the bottom line. They are making these changes from a transparency standpoint at the provincial level and then filtering down to the school boards. At this moment the document has not yet been released. No. 4. Teacher engagement and leadership training, No. 5. Inclusivity and student support, and finally, No. 6. Practical life skills and language support.

ThoughtExchange allows respondents to rank the thoughts shared by giving stars. The number 1 starred thought was class sizes. The class size structure is provincially negotiated; LDSB's hands are tied with class sizes. The next two top thoughts starred were special education, and autism support. Trustees have spoken very strongly regarding Special Education in the past and how our most vulnerable students require additional support, and LDSB spends several million dollars over envelope within Special Education on an annual basis.

Trustee Godkin thanked Superintendent Young and called upon Trustees for comments or questions. Discussion ensued.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

None at this time.

6. NEXT MEETINGS

Trustee Godkin noted the upcoming Budget Committee meetings on May 22nd, June 5th, and a tentative meeting on June 12th, 2024.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY: Trustee McGregor that the meeting be adjourned. Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 pm.