
To: Board of Education

Prepared By: Jason Reid
Secretary Treasurer

Subject: Allocation of Funding Available for Impacts
of the Pandemic

Date: August 31, 2021

Purpose and Background

The purpose of this briefing note is to recommend allocation of funding targeted to pandemic impacts, prior to the regular September Board meeting in order to expedite implementation.

The importance of addressing the learning and mental health impacts of the pandemic in the 2021/22 school year was discussed a number of times last spring during budget consultation, strategic planning meetings, and in committee and Board meetings.

In May 2021, the Board passed two motions reflective of these broader discussions.

1. At the May 5, 2021 special budget meeting the following motion was passed: *“That, in September, pending further financial information relating to enrolment factors and government funding decisions, and following a review of the fiscal forecast as well as a review of internal discretionary budgets, monies be reallocated to the greatest extent possible to the education program priorities specifically to address needs identified including Indigenous Education, counsellors, ISTs, and student social-emotional health needs.”*
2. At the May 19, 2021 regular meeting of the Board the following motion was passed: *“That staff be requested to bring a report to the Board on possible additional strategies and budget allocations to support the mental and social health of students, together with community advocacy for youth resources.”*

The preliminary budget for 2021/22 included additional budget for daytime custodial support in elementary schools (\$143,000) and funding for educational program priorities (\$100,000). In May 2021, \$41,600 of the educational program priority funding was allocated to create a permanent Indigenous Coordinator position.

On June 17, 2021, the Ministry announced the K-12 Education Recovery Plan and additional funding for the 2021/22 school year. The funding announced included:

- \$18.1M in funding Province-wide to address the learning impacts of the pandemic. This funding was actually the anticipated distribution of “holdback funding” resulting from lower than budgeted provincial enrolment. The holdback funding is not legally targeted, but the Ministry has stated the funding is to be used to address the learning impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The total

funding confirmed for Saanich was \$234,849; however, \$76,979 (the portion confirmed in April) had been allocated to fund inflationary pressures in the 2021/22 preliminary budget.

- \$5M was allocated to the mental health impacts of the pandemic in 2021/22, and Saanich's allocation was recently confirmed at \$70,845.
- \$14.4M was allocated to Health and Safety in 2021/22, and Saanich's allocation was confirmed at \$181,289. Based on direction from the Ministry and BCCDC, this funding is being applied to masks, upgraded HVAC filters (Merv-13), and increased ventilation in buildings. This is in addition to the implementation of elementary school daytime custodial support (included in the 2021/22 operating fund budget).

In June 2021, the Board approved a preliminary allocation of \$93,000 in learning impacts funding to the following two priorities:

- Priority #1 (\$65,000): Indigenous EA and 0.25 Teacher FTE to support students transitioning to Stelly's. In comparison to other schools, Stelly's has a significant number of students transitioning back into school after learning remotely in 2020/21, with some students not having been in school for 18 months. This investment reflects feedback from students and community and focuses on all students who were disengaged from school during the pandemic. Specific responsibilities include:
 - establishing connections between school and home;
 - providing in-class support to address gaps in learning as a result of the pandemic;
 - providing tracking and support to ensure students stay engaged with the school and their learning; and
 - advocating for flexibility and alternate approaches when needed.
- Priority #2 (\$28,000): Youth and Family Counsellor (YFC) September to January. The increased need for social-emotional and mental health support has been a significant impact of the pandemic. Students returning from remote learning will need greater supports as they re-engage with in-person learning. Families will need greater support navigating community resources and liaising with school level counselling teams. The YFC position will focus on social emotional needs of K-12 for September to January.

Funding Available for Priorities

The financial results for 2020/21 were better than had been forecasted last spring, increasing unrestricted accumulated surplus by approximately \$1.5 million. This occurred primarily because of increased grant and other revenues, and because actual employee benefit costs were below forecast. The district is also experiencing net enrolment growth in excess of forecast and will need to increase enrolling divisions; however, enrolment remains uncertain and could fluctuate through September creating budget pressure as

occurred last fall. Allocation of unrestricted surplus to rebuild the contingency reserve will also be important to reducing the risk of future budget sustainability. Given enrolment uncertainty, I will not recommend allocation of net funding from growth (if any) or unrestricted accumulated surplus until confirmation of enrolment occurs in early October. However, considering the better than anticipated results for 2020/21, I recommend that the April holdback funding of \$76,979 be allocated to learning impacts of the pandemic as expected by the ministry (instead of applying to inflationary pressures in the 21/22 budget).

Reflecting this change, the funding available for additional priorities is summarized in the table below.

Funding Source	Amount	Type	Allocated	Unallocated	Notes
Educational Program Priorities	100,000	Continuing	41,600	58,400	Allocation to date: Indigenous Coordinator position.
Learning Impacts Funding (Holdback)	234,849	One-time	93,000	141,849	Allocation to date: transitional staffing support at Stelly's and district YFC to support returning students.
COVID Recovery - Mental Health	70,845	One-time	-	70,845	Funding confirmed in August
Net Enrolment Growth and/or Accumulated Surplus	TDB	Continuing and One-time	-	TBD	Allocation decision dependant on confirmation of enrolment in October
Total	405,694		134,600	271,094	

Allocation of Learning Impacts Funding and funding for COVID Recovery – Mental Health

Staff recommend that Learning Impacts Funding of \$141,849 and COVID Recovery-Mental Health funding of \$70,845 be allocated as follows:

1. Increase district counselling capacity by increasing YFC staffing and/or contracted counselling time, to support the mental health impacts of the pandemic (\$112,000).
2. Increase curriculum support teacher time by 0.3 teacher FTE to support the learning impacts of the pandemic (\$31,900).
3. Increase elementary school literacy teacher time by 0.5 FTE to support students returning from remote learning (\$53,150).
4. Support for other learning impacts as they emerge (\$15,644). As an example, this could include release time to allow one-on-one transition support for students.

Staff Recommendation:

That the Board approve allocation of Learning Impacts Funding of \$141,849 and COVID Recovery - Mental Health funding of \$70,845 to the recommended priorities outlined in the briefing note dated August 31, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Reid".

Jason Reid
Secretary-Treasurer

JR/klg