

**Upper Grand District School Board**  
**Board As Budget Committee - Minutes**  
**Monday, June 6, 2022**

The Upper Grand District School Board met as the Budget Committee on Monday, June 6, 2022, both in the Boardroom and virtually. The meeting commenced at 7:02 pm.

The Chairperson, Trustee Lustgarten Evoy presided and the following Trustees were present: Bailey, Busutil, Campbell, Edwards, Foley, MacNeil, Topping.

Present from the Administration were: Director of Education Sovran, together with, Executive Superintendent Regier, Superintendents of Education Heaslip, McCutcheon, Taha, Hamilton, and Donaldson, Communications Officer Loney, Executive Officer of Human Resources Pyke, and Manager of Budget and Financial Reporting Molnar.

**Confirmation of the Agenda**

Trustee Busutil moved that the agenda be confirmed as printed.

**The motion carried.**

**Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest.

**Opening Remarks**

Board As Budget Committee Chair Lustgarten Evoy provided opening remarks and presented an overview of the budget process to date, expressing thanks and appreciation to staff for their work in this regard.

**Overview of Budget 2022-2023**

Director of Education Sovran provided background information on the Draft Budget including the framework and process undertaken by the Executive Committee to develop this document. Director Sovran offered comments regarding the Upper Grand District School Board Re-imagine, Re-engage and Refresh elements reflected in the Draft Budget document, while also expressing that the balanced budget presented will serve to support key priorities of the Board's Multi-Year Plan. Director Sovran also expressed thanks to staff for their work in this regard.

**Review of 2022-2023 Budget Report**

Executive Superintendent Regier thanked staff and Trustees for a collaborative and successful budget process. He then reviewed the Draft Budget Report in detail highlighting changes in funding and year over year changes in expenditure budgets.

Trustees expressed thanks for the work completed by Board staff and asked questions of clarification as follows:

## General Questions

Trustee Busuttill asked for clarification regarding calculations for online learning and class sizes.

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that the total benchmark funded average credit load per pupil is 7.5 split between online learning (approximately 0.15) and in-person learning (approximately 7.35). Class size assumptions for secondary are based on 23 students per class for in-person classes and 30 students per online class.

Trustee Lustgarten-Evoy and Trustee Edwards asked for clarification regarding the use of accumulated surplus and if the Board is required to have a deficit reduction plan in 2022-23.

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that previously regulations stated that boards were allowed to enter into a deficit, provided that the budget was balanced within 2 years. Due to COVID, the 2-year time frame regulation was lifted in recent years, however, in 2022-23 the regulation has been reinstated and a school board would need to complete a deficit reduction plan if they did not have a balanced budget.

Trustee Busuttill asked if the board experienced enrolment loss due to COVID that did not return to us. Trustee Busuttill also noted that for clarification purposes it would be appreciated if staff provide a more comprehensive picture that lists adult-education credits (SWAF, Continuing Education programs) and asked for clarification as to whether adult-education credits are embedded in the Enrolment schedules found in the Draft Budget document.

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that adult secondary education is not included in the enrolment figures presented in the Draft Budget Report schedule. The Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) listed in the report is based students under 21 years of age; however, it was noted that staff can include this additional information in subsequent reports to provide clarification in this regard.

## Funding Questions

Trustee Busuttill asked for clarification regarding the COVID Learning Recovery Fund and its uses.

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that through the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) the Learning Recovery Fund amount is approximately 5.1 million and that these funds may be used for additional staffing, remote programs, or enhanced cleaning. The Ministry has also increased our school operations benchmarks to provide support for increased use of utilities and ventilation systems. There are also additional amounts available for Mental Health Supports within the GSN, as well as a Priorities and Partnerships Funding component for targeted Learning Recovery for September to December 2022 activities.

Trustee Busuttill asked if non-funded COVID spending from the past budget year will be reimbursed, as we did not receive full funding in 2021-22.

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that we did receive supports through the Priorities and Partnerships Funding, and what we are able to recoup will be reflected in our financial statements for the year.

Trustee Busuttil requested clarification regarding the language learning opportunity grants (FSL) and enhancements. In prior budget years there was increased visibility on the items funded (classroom, computers, transportation amounts broken down in previous years)

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that the French Language Grant can now be found on page 14 of the Draft Budget as part of GSN. The funding mechanism for this is generated by enrolment numbers for core French, extended French (if present) and French immersion in elementary and secondary panels. This is a benchmark amount in total based on enrolment numbers and breakout components are not identified.

Trustee Lustgarten-Evoy asked for clarification regarding the daycare and extended day revenue reflected in the Draft Budget report.

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that Before and After School (BASP) programs continued, as well as child care centres. It was reiterated that the numbers reflected are a comparative assumption over budget years. Actuals stated in the board financial statements will reflect revenue collected.

#### Program/Expenditure Questions

Trustee Edwards, Trustee Busuttil and Trustee Campbell asked for clarification regarding Outdoor Education Funding and the status of the Island Lake Outdoor Education Centre

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that this line reflects funding for all Outdoor Education programs in the board and that the Island Lake Outdoor Education Centre is one of these programs. The Island Lake Outdoor Education Centre facility and site are being evaluated for readiness to resume programming in 2022-23. Regarding resources available, Outdoor Education funds are in the budget; however, Superintendents of Program will determine the details of the program structure and Outdoor Education fund allocation for 2022-23.

Director Sovran added that there is a modest increase from previous years' Revenue allocated to Outdoor education within the Board. A combination of facilities and program staff are working to accomplish program operation for the coming school year. Our inability to use some of these facilities in recent years has resulted in upgrades required to some sites. We are using this opportunity to re-imagine, refresh and re-engage in some of these spaces, reviewed on a school by school and site by site basis.

Trustee Campbell requested that Director Sovran provide a report on the status of the Island Lake Outdoor Education Centre program to Trustees in the future.

Director Sovran noted that staff would be pleased to bring a report back to Board and to Trustees once information is available. Director Sovran reiterated that ensuring facilities are safe and maintained in such a way that continues to allow the board to offer high-

quality outdoor educational learning is a priority moving forward.

Trustee Busuttil requested clarification regarding secondary teaching staff and whether teachers have been retained, redeployed or increased.

Executive Superintendent Regier stated that there has been an overall increase in the FTE, reflective of enrolment numbers presented in April and the overall learning recovery strategy. As such, we have seen an increase in year over year budget comparisons.

Trustee Busuttil requested clarification regarding the restorative-practices resources category.

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that this is a new area of funding for the Safe and Secure Schools program, and the intention is to grow this component and allow for additional resources in this area.

Trustee Busuttil expressed appreciation for seeing this highlighted in the 2022-2023 Draft Budget and hopes that this area will grow in future budgets.

Trustee Lustgarten-Evoy requested clarification regarding the year-over-year difference in the Classroom Computers schedule, specifically whether the board is budgeting to continue to have the same level of access to student devices.

Executive Superintendent Regier noted that COVID supports did provide some additional funding related to student technology to support remote learning. We are not anticipating the same level of remote learning moving forward or devices being sent out to homes within the system. The objective in 2022-23 is to maintain a regular refresh of equipment.

Trustee Edwards, Trustee Bailey and Trustee Foley requested clarification and expressed support for an Environmental Lead in the budget.

Director Sovran stated that the issue of climate change and environmental sustainability is a very important part of the work done at UGDSB. Director Sovran further clarified that the board has re-imagined Program Services heading into 2022-23. A number of differing areas have been integrated. One of the positions does integrate with environment and sustainability. As we move through the re-imagining of program leads, further collaborating across the system, we will continue to look at how we maximize program offerings while also identifying future opportunities that align with Multi-Year Plan priorities. With respect to program, all of our curriculum areas are reflected here and environment/sustainability is connected with one of the existing program portfolios.

Trustee Busuttil requested clarification regarding the Student Success Lead role in 2022-23, as well as the Principal of Equity role.

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that the Student Success Lead and School Effectiveness Lead roles are from dedicated funding. Principal of Equity is included in one of the FTE positions embedded in the Coordinators and Consultants line.

Trustee Busuttil asked if the board has built in contingencies for any type of severance for

staff should Continuing Education programs be severed (such as ESL).

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that additional amounts over and above what is projected to run the programs is not embedded in the Continuing Education lines. While we are presenting a balanced budget, we will continue to monitor for risks moving forward.

Trustee Busuttil expressed concern in relation to Capital implications and Human Resource implications if there are changes to Continuing Education funding from other Ministries.

Executive Officer of Human Resources Pyke clarified that with respect to CUPE staffing for ESL, staffing is completed 3 times per year based on terms. Staffing notices are contingent on these terms and as such there is some flexibility built in due to the way the staffing process is conducted.

Trustee Busuttil asked for clarification regarding the Human Rights and Equity Advisor position and if there is a funding line for this.

Director Sovran clarified that the Human Rights and Equity Advisor position is funded for some school Boards across the province. When our board put in an application, UGDSB had qualified for funds for this role; however, as the budget was finalized a freeze was put on the number of positions to reflect positions granted by the Ministry of Education in 2021-22. As a Board, we have decided to self-fund this role moving forward. The individual in this role would have a legal background in Human Rights and Equity work, and would sit on the Executive Committee at arm's length. Staff will continue to advocate for this funding and feel that self-funding at this time demonstrates our commitment to the role, placing us in a good position to receive Ministry funding moving forward.

Trustee Busuttil requested clarification as to whether this position would be included in the 2023-24 Budget and so on until funded by the government.

Director Sovran noted that this is a process that has been followed by other district school boards: self-funding in early years, then submitting application, then funded by the Ministry. We feel strongly in the importance of this position and will proceed with seeking out the best qualified individual in this field to join our board. By following the criteria that is part of the funding from the Ministry of Education, we can move forward and should funds be available, UGDSB will be in a very strong position to acquire these funds in the future.

Trustee Busuttil expressed the hope that this role will also be active in planning and processes as we reimagine UGDSB.

Trustee Busuttil requested clarification regarding the Transportation budget and on the 45k recovered by UGDSB.

Executive Superintendent Regier clarified that transportation funding overall increased year over year in the GSN. The overall reduction in expenditures is a combination of cost increase (contractual) versus reduced costs for COVID support. The 45k recovery is due to UGDSB providing Human Resources support to STWDSTS, and we invoice for this

service under contractual agreement.

Trustee Lustgarten-Evoy offered thanks to Executive Superintendent Regier and his team, as well as the Executive Committee and Director Sovran for presentation of the Draft Budget Report 2022-23.

### **Dates of Future Meetings**

The following dates of future meetings were reviewed:

Monday, June 13, 2022      Delegations to the Budget, 7:00 p.m., Board Room

Tuesday, June 28, 2021      Budget approval, 4:30 p.m. Board Room

### **Adjournment**

Trustee MacNeil moved that the Board as Budget Committee be adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

**The motion carried.**