



BUDGET FORUMS 2008



**Budget Forum #2
February 13, 2008**

SUMMARY

2008/09 Board Goals

1. **To develop and implement a process for the renewal of the Board's Strategic Plan.**
2. **To improve literacy and learning for preschool-aged students, school aged students and adults.**
 - a) Open up libraries for family use.
 - b) Work on the early stages of the birth to adulthood mandate.
 - c) Continue with volunteer mentors (OWLS) Outreach Workers Literacy Supporters.
 - d) Continue encouraging parents to come in to schools with their children – eg. Math Fair.
 - e) Provide families opportunity to access electronic information (literacy).
 - f) Offer on-line learning for “preschoolers”.
 - g) Offer joint workshops/seminars with early years service providers and primary school personnel and families – re school entry. Eg. social/emotional development and attachment and their relationship to readiness to learn.
 - h) Build connection between kids much earlier, create a “Buddy System”.
 - i) Create more space for new and existing early learning initiatives.
 - j) Consider “Families of Schools” to share (scare) resources.
 - k) Provide early information to new parents re early learning/screening.
 - l) Engage all new parents – capturing invisible families.
 - m) Develop a faster process to start screening and provide intervention, especially to identify learning disabilities.
 - n) Be very clear about what children need prior to school entry. “Hardwire” them.
 - o) Offer assistance/training to parents to help them prepare their children for entry into school – and all through their school life.
 - p) “Roots of Empathy”
 - q) Continue with Alpha Buddies (older students reading to younger) and Bronco Buddies (peer support).
 - r) Continue with Ready Set Learn and PALS (including budget support).
 - s) Build on Strong Start program.
 - t) School Based Teams (critical)
 - u) Create link/bridge to other early learning teachers.

- v) Develop common language/terms to create understanding between the parent and teacher.
- w) Have programs structurally organized.
- x) Continue Care Teams.

3. To ensure that every student is meeting grade level outcomes by Grade 4.

- a) Continue and build early intervention by offering resources/support for vulnerable students and their parents/families.
- b) Increase school learning support for struggling students. (More TA's, learning assistance, parents in the classroom).
- c) Don't miss the 6-12 year old group – important group.

4. To increase secondary school completion rates for all learners.

- a) Support parents in transition from elementary to middle and middle to high school.
- b) Question – should we have so many transitions for students?
- c) Start staggered entry to middle from elementary.
- d) Provide feedback from middle (grade 7) back to grades 5 & 6 teachers.
- e) Expand role of district student services when students with needs transition to grade 7.
- f) Open up schools at middle/secondary to elementary – captivate interest.
- g) Put collaborative structures with agencies/services embedded in the schools – specialized services and supports.
- h) Continue transition process from elementary to middle – very positive.
- i) Continue articulation between elementary and middle school teachers, re: expectations, curriculum, etc.
- j) Offer multiple paths to school completion.
- k) Communicate actual percentage of students completing school (eg. kids who take extra semester or extra year to complete)
- l) Use students to talk to students about future career paths – PEERS.
- m) Involvement of Aboriginal students with Apprenticeship program.
- n) Focus groups of parents – ask how to support kids in terms of future goals/career paths – help parents understand role of counselors. DPAC? PAC?
- o) Stop defining graduation as a 6 year grade 8-12 completion.
- p) Continue school career planning – exposure to elementary students of possible career paths.
- q) Continue with work experience and Apprenticeship program. Advertise Apprenticeship program to parents/students.
- r) Continue with the advisory system.
- s) Hold Grad planning with teachers, students and parents.

5. To develop information and communication networks that promote a culture of inclusion, collaboration, ongoing learning, and partnership with parents and the community.

Community:

- a) What does the term partner really mean?
- b) Start offering shared Pro-D with community agencies.
- c) Train our staff in community relations.
- d) Offer CAPP days to allow kids to interact with all different members of our community, community members to come into our schools.
- e) Roles of schools and community services have been distinct but need to move to greater collaboration/linkage.
- f) Need to develop systems for using community expertise.
- g) We need to stop seeing issues as distinctly “school problems” or “community problems”.
- h) Continue with community schools.
- i) Clarify school/community agency roles.
- j) Embed community support services in the schools.
- k) Work with community partners to build parent resources in schools.
- l) Continue bringing community “experts” into schools to educate students and parents. (eg. bullying)
- m) Use community agencies to assist families/parents in gaining confidence in entering the school environment.

Parents:

- a) Use support staff to assist in parent inclusion, use community partners for the same purpose.
- b) Use Info 33 and School Planning Councils to encourage parent involvement.
- c) Need to create better communication between school and parents. Consider a variety of formats to reach all families.
- d) Need to develop an opportunity for parents to have one to one communication with teachers.
- e) Want to have school staff actually reaching out to parents.
- f) Find a way to draw more parents in as the same group of parents always come forward.
- g) Offer “coffee times” to draw parents to the school.
- h) Use technology to draw parents in outside the school day.
- i) Have DPAC sponsor round table discussions.
- j) Offer support for all families.

Departmental:

District Operations:

Operations & Maintenance:

- a) Explore opportunities for funding from Ministry for playgrounds.
- b) Increase custodial time, especially for Elementary schools.
- c) Standardize list of required building equipment and increase knowledge of buildings.
- d) Adjusting maintenance schedules to better meet the needs of schools/sites has been a good response.
- e) Use the services of Maintenance staff to build furniture, etc. instead of purchasing from outside companies.

Transportation:

- a) Work on traffic flow and congestion solutions for schools, eg. picking up and dropping off at peak times, safety for drivers and students.
- b) Reduce “walk” limits from the current 4.0 km and increase busing.
- c) Expand walking school bus to other schools.

Information Technology:

- a) Increase use of email, websites, etc. for communications.
- b) Need to improve equity between all schools to access technology, shouldn't be dependent on the ability and connections of PAC's to raise funds (have/have not schools situations).
- c) Need to standardize school websites. Consistency and standards need to be developed for websites – very critical.
- d) Configure website to include access to TOC availability.
- e) Implement intranet for school district.
- f) Provide training for support staff to match job demands.
- g) Provide opportunity for training for in-house advancement.
- h) Offer “first class” (email) for collaboration.
- i) Utilize email between school and home. Needs to be a support; not the only way to contact the home.
- j) A need for better communication on work requests and the status of those requests.
- k) Training for email use to achieve “all connected”. Develop protocols for use of technology and email.
- l) All staff should have email accounts.
- m) Need to provide funds for tech support to update websites.
- n) Make more funds available for software, hardware and tech support.
- o) Need to have immediate tech support for all software and hardware issues.
- p) Need to develop a better communication system with tech support on job completion or timeline for when it will be completed.

- q) Continue with Tech Help Desk.
- r) Continue with auto dialer system.
- s) Consider SharePoint software to package information.

Human Resources:

- a) Increase HR staff.
- b) Offer employees education and support.
- c) Start allocating funding for Pro-D.
- d) HR and financial funding relative to school/district goals.
- e) Continue recruitment strategies.
- f) Consider incentives for employees (non monetary).

Curriculum & Staff Resources:

- a) Formalize opportunities for teachers to discuss student achievement across the system.
- b) Bring teachers/TA's together for collaboration.
- c) Synergy is developing in the process of teacher collaboration.
- d) Engage support (non-teaching) staff in collaboration.
- e) Continue with collaboration framework/time.
- f) Schools need to have flexibility to make collaboration work for them.
- g) Stop using irrelevant data (or dated data) for decision making.
- h) Continue refining the process for school plans so that data is valid, relevant and current.

District Wide:

- a) Need to work on having clear, shared directions.
- b) Explore opportunities for funding from Ministry for sports equipment (Healthy Schools initiatives).
- c) Reinstate budget for extra curricular activities.
- d) Stop using so much paper and start going electronic.
- e) Develop standards to determine what starts the communication process.
- f) Continue using newspaper as communication tool.
- g) Continue with parent/student/teacher visits.
- h) The school level is provided with too much information.
- i) Stop exceeding school capacity.
- j) Review small school funding.