

**Upper Grand District School Board**  
**Board As Budget Committee - Minutes**  
**Monday, June 7, 2021**

The Upper Grand District School Board met as the Budget Committee on Monday, June 7, 2021, virtually. The meeting commenced at 7:14 pm.

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

Present from the Administration were: Director of Education Rogers, together with, Superintendents of Education Heaslip, Lindsay, McDonald, Slater, and Van Ooteghem, Acting Superintendent Hamilton, Superintendent of Finance Regier, Communications Officer Loney, Executive Officer of Human Resources Pyke, Senior Manager of Human Resources Rose, Student Success Lead Zen, Operations Officer Scinocca and Manager of Budget and Financial Reporting Molnar.

**Confirmation of the Agenda**

Trustee Topping 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. Thanks were offered to Dr. Rogers for her years of service and contributions to the budget process, as well as to staff for preparing a compliant 2021-2022 budget.

**Overview of Budget 2021-2022**

Director of Education and Secretary Treasurer of the Board Dr. Rogers provided background information on the 2019-2020 and the 2020-2021 Budgets, including a description of the resources used by the school board in response to COVID-19. Director Rogers described in more detail the 2021-2022 Budget Process and presented highlights of the 2021-2022 Budget. The overview of the 2021-2022 Budget included a description of the funding and expenditures related to COVID-19 and Director Rogers informed the Trustees that the school board is expecting updated information from the Ministry in August. Due to the uncertainty of the evolving nature of COVID-19, the budget reflects some flexibility in the expenditure budget. The Draft Budget presented includes a \$4,094,821 transfer from Accumulated Surplus to balance the Operating Budget. The \$4,094,821 transfer is equal to approximately 1% of Grants for Student Needs (GSN) Operating Allocations and is within Ministry guidelines.

## **Review of 2021-2022 Budget Report**

Superintendent Regier thanked staff for a collaborative and successful budget process. He then reviewed the 2021-2022 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:

Trustee Busuttill expressed concern in relation to funding due to changes in secondary online learning and the associated budget risk. Clarification was requested regarding the modeling assumptions for year 2 and year 3 to reflect online learning forecasts.

Superintendent Regier stated that the change in funding recognizes different class sizes for online courses versus in person learning. The Ministry has built in the funding assumption that 8% of students will take one online course in the 2021-22 school year. If our Board experience matches the assumption, funding and revenue assumptions will match. If there is a difference in actual experience versus Ministry assumptions, then the funding amount will not match resource requirements. There is also a projection to increase this modelling to 16% of students taking one online learning course in the 2022-23 school year and 26% of students taking one online learning course in the 2023-24 school year.

Trustee Busuttill asked for clarification regarding the \$12 million in Operating Revenue beyond Grants for Student Needs (GSN).

Superintendent Regier provided a description regarding the three major categories that comprise revenue beyond GSN. Priorities Partnership Funding (PPF) equals approximately \$4.8 million. This is specific, dedicated funding provided for the delivery of specified programs. Other Government Grants/Fees equal \$2.9 million. This is specific, dedicated funding for Continuing Education programs as well as the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP). Other Revenue/Expenditure Recovery equals approximately \$5.1 million and includes sources such as International Student revenue, investment income, sale of hydro from solar panels, and revenue generated from rental fees (Community Use of Schools, child care, and extended day programs).

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy asked for clarification regarding the 2.8 FTE reduction in elementary teacher librarians, wishing to confirm whether these staff members have been redeployed within the Board.

Executive Officer of Human Resources Pyke confirmed that all of the staff members have been redeployed and reassigned to continue supporting school sites within the Board.

Trustee Busuttill asked for clarification regarding the reduction in intermediate Guidance, citing their significance with the impact of COVID-19, the transition to high school, and the community expressing the need for additional mental health supports.

Superintendent Zen noted that Grade 7/8 Guidance Counsellors were redeployed to the Elementary Remote School (ERS) in Fall 2020, as a result of COVID-19 and role

considerations. The current group of Grade 8 students have not worked with these staff in the 2020-21 school year, and it was noted that the process of transition to secondary school is robust and has been revised and refined in recent years. School teams use this process to plan for transitions, including academic and mental health supports. With respect to mental health supports, there has been an increase in Ministry funding. As a result, the potential for additional child and youth counsellor and social work staff is being reviewed. Funding is also available for student re-engagement in 2021-22. Senior staff are currently working through what temporary roles will look like in this capacity, and positions will be reviewed again as part of the 2022-23 budget process.

Trustee Busuttil requested clarification regarding the teacher librarian role and whether the librarian role is diminishing.

Superintendent Slater noted that as part of the budget process the teacher librarian allocation was brought further into alignment with collective agreements and funding. The role has not been diminished. Part of the role is around the work of the Learning Commons and providing professional assistance to colleagues, while part is around planning time (the teacher librarian replaces the classroom teacher in this capacity). Any considerations in this regard will be reviewed in future budget processes to ensure priorities and needs of schools are met.

Trustee Edwards asked for information regarding the Island Lake Outdoor Education Centre, its programming, its inclusion in the 2021-22 budget, as well as the future of the environmental programs that were housed there.

Superintendent Lindsay confirmed that the Island Lake Outdoor Education Centre teacher will not be deployed to the Centre at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year. The teacher will instead return to their assigned home school. At this point in time, the Board does not know if field trips will be permitted. Schools have been asked not to plan field trips until further direction is provided. In Fall 2021, the Board is expected to receive further information from the Ministry of Education with respect to COVID-19 restrictions. The curriculum department has been sharing environmental education resources with school sites in the interim. Regarding the Centre, meetings with the Credit Valley Conservation Authority in relation to the building and site are ongoing at this time.

Trustee Busuttil expressed appreciation for the inclusion of the Data Researcher Position in the 2021-22 Draft Budget. Trustee Busuttil then requested clarification with respect to remote learning, the Ministry's expectation for the Board to offer remote choice in 2021-22, as well as the Ministry of Education's commitment to fund the administration of both the remote elementary and remote secondary schools moving forward.

Superintendent Regier confirmed that the remote option is available to students in 2021-22. As part of the funding received for additional COVID-19 supports, there is an allocation for additional staffing. A half year amount is reflected in the revenue portion, while a full year amount is reflected in the expenditures for Principal and Vice Principal roles in both the elementary and secondary remote schools. In August 2021, the Board will receive further direction from the Ministry regarding school start up, the projected second half of the school year and any additional funding aids to support this update.

Trustee Busuttil asked for clarification regarding transportation funding, professional development, as well as retention of our school bus drivers.

Superintendent Regier verified that we have strong retention levels for drivers in our consortium. There has been no percentage increase to reflect increase in costs, only adjustments associated with enrolment. Funding models are being reviewed provincially at this time. While the provincial government is completing this analysis, overall funding amounts will remain the same.

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy asked for clarification regarding assumptions for travel for coordinators and consultants, vehicle fuel (school operations), and public events.

Superintendent Regier clarified that the amounts reflected in the Budget Report compares year over year budgeted amounts and actual results may vary. Looking ahead to 2021-22, a potential return to regular activities is anticipated, and as such these types of expenses will continue to be monitored.

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy asked if decreased facility use in 2020-21 will have impacted building components/life cycles resulting in increased life span of equipment.

Operations Officer Scinocca noted that school systems, such as HVAC, are still running for staff and students in self-contained specialized classes and life cycles will not have changed in any significant manner.

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy asked if schools are allowed to request additional funding support from the Board for special circumstances, such as graduations, should school funds be unavailable.

Superintendent McDonald noted that in certain circumstances this is allowed. We hold an equity of access fund for schools that may experience difficulty in fundraising or difficulty in accessing funds that would support day-to-day school events. These requests are submitted and reviewed to ensure equity of access across the elementary system.

Superintendent Zen noted that this is similar in the secondary panel and that secondary schools have a robust budget that can support equity of access requests should they arise. It was also noted that Grade 12 graduations will occur in Fall 2021, therefore, no additional expenses will be incurred by secondary sites in June 2021 for such events.

Trustee MacNeil moved that the report entitled, "Draft Budget Report 2021-22" dated June 7, 2021 be received.

**The motion carried.**

### **Dates of Future Meetings**

The following dates of future meetings were reviewed:

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|------------------------|---|
| Monday, June 14, 2021  | Delegations to the Budget, 7:00 p.m., Board Room<br>(Cancelled – no delegations received) |
| Tuesday, June 21, 2021 | Budget approval, 5:00 p.m. Board Room   |

## **Adjournment**

Trustee Campbell moved that the Board as Budget Committee be adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

**The motion carried.**