



## Richmond Teachers' Association

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April 27, 2022

**Via E-Mail**

Board of Education  
 School District No.38 (Richmond)  
 7811 Granville Avenue  
 Richmond, B.C. V6Y 3E3

Dear Trustees,

### **Re: RTA Budget Brief – Response to RSD Potential Budget Consideration**

On behalf of the Richmond Teachers' Association, we thank you for the opportunity to submit an additional budget brief in response to the proposed or potential budget adjustments for the 2022-2023 District budget. This response is supplementary to the RTA's previous briefs that were submitted to the Richmond Board of Education in February and March.

### **RTA Recommendations to the Proposed 2022/23 RSD Budget**

#### **A. Trustee Led Advocacy and Delay the Budget Decision until the June Board Meeting.**

Advocacy Must be Bold and Strong

Key Ministry Operating Grants	2022/2023 Allocation	Impact of Necessary Provincial Budget Adjustments	
		Scenario A - Provincial Adjustment of 2 %	Scenario B - Provincial Adjustment of 4.3 %
Student Base Allocation*	\$160,165,599	\$3,203,312	\$6,887,120
Total Unique Student Needs*	\$32,038,929	\$640,778	\$1,377,674
		\$3,844,089	\$8,264,794
Current Surplus	\$7,564,553		
Structural Shortfall	\$ 3,920,023		
Proposed Ongoing Cuts	\$ 2,560,000		
% Fund Balance, End of Year	2.7 %		

The recent budget announcement on March 15 provided no inflationary adjustments for any of the of the operating grants, including the Student Base Allocation and Total Unique Student Needs.

It is the role of every trustee in BC to stand up for Public Education and highlight the challenges of chronic underfunding. The needs in schools are continuing to grow and each cut, even those that are indirect, will impact staff and ultimately students in Richmond classrooms.

**There are NO cuts that can be made.** What we need is additional funding to support students and staff and help to address the challenges of the last two years.

A glaring and recent example is the lack of funding for the recent Employment Standards Act changes that provides five (5) days of paid sick leave for casual employees. This change is welcome news, but one the Ministry has neglected to fund. What this means is the Board is once again faced with budget cuts when considering the current rate of inflation and increasing costs.

The RTA has analyzed and provided two different scenarios (see the chart) that show the impact of two different Provincial budget adjustments that would significantly change the budget landscape for Richmond.

#### **Scenario A - Provincial Budget Adjustment of 2 %**

An increase of 2 % to the identified grants\*. This would yield a total of \$3,844,089, which is an amount almost equivalent to the current structural shortfall (\$3,920,023). The result would be NO proposed ongoing budget cuts would be necessary.

#### **Scenario B – Provincial Budget Adjustment of 4.3 %**

An increase of 4.3 % to the identified grants\*. This would yield a total of \$8,264,794. The result would be NO proposed ongoing budget cuts rather the Board of Education could consider \$4,344,771 of budget enhancements that support student learning and the Board's Strategic Plan. Why 4.3 %? This was the amount of last years budget adjustments.

These are two reasonable and concrete advocacy options for Trustees to communicate openly and loudly within your fiduciary duty to protect Public Education in Richmond. This advocacy must be strong and immediate through letters and meetings with MLAs and the Minister of Education; but advocacy cannot stop with letters. Strong messaging must also be communicated through the media in partnership with other Boards of Education. The RTA acknowledges this action is consistent with the virtually unanimous resolution passed at the 2022 BCSTA AGM.

*"That the BCSTA urge the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education to fully fund all incremental payroll and other inflationary costs that have not been covered in the K-12 estimated operating grants announced for the 2022/23 school year.*

*And*

*The per pupil funding in the K-12 operating block funding announced for the 2022/23 school year be adjusted to cover all incremental payroll increases and other inflationary cost pressures being experienced by districts."*

**Carried by 99.5 %**

The failure of a Government to properly fund Public Education is wrong and in complete opposition to their own messaging about the importance of schools to students, families, communities, and the economy. The RTA implores the Board of Education to delay the Budget decision until June and to focus on advocacy for Public Education and for Richmond students and staff.

**B. Changes to the Proposed Budget Reductions – Reduce to \$900,000**

	<b>Proposed Option</b>	<b>RTA Proposal</b>
<b>Fund Balance, End of Year 2021/2022</b>	\$7,564,553	\$7,564,533
<b>Structural Shortfall</b>	\$ 3,920,023	\$3,920,023
<b>Proposed Ongoing Cuts</b>	\$ 2,560,000	\$900,000
<b>Fund Balanced, End of Year</b>	6,204,530	\$4,544,530
<b>% Fund Balance, End of Year 2022/2023</b>	2.7 %	2.1 %

If the Board of Education remains committed to passing a budget in May, the RTA recommends the budget cuts are reduced to \$900,000 and only comes at the expense of services and supplies. The RTA believes the current uncertainty in student population supports a delay in making any significant cuts to the 2022/2023 budget. This year, Richmond has seen unprecedented mid-year student enrollment growth, which is consistent with the provincial experience. In January, enrollment growth yielded approximately \$2.5 million in additional identified grants\*, and this growth in student enrollment has continued through the spring. A reduction of \$900,000 would leave a ‘% Fund Balance, End of Year’ of approximately 2.1 %, which is within the 2 % to 4 % Fund Balance required by current Board Policy. If enrollment and revenues improve then supplies and services can be restored. Cuts to people are not necessary and are not easily restored with current and continued recruitment and retention challenges.

Unequivocally the RTA does not support any cuts to Teacher Consultants, School Psychologist or Speech Language Pathologists. These roles are essential to professional learning and student support. In different budget circumstances, the RTA would be requesting increased FTE for School Psychologists and Speech Language Pathologists. These professionals are an integral part of school and district teams that provide consultation, assessment, and direct support to students with unique learning needs. These specialists, work together with school and district-based teams, help make decisions and recommendations that support student learning. In addition, they provide essential professional learning to school and district-based staff and their workload has not decreased, but has escalated with the increasingly complex learners in our schools. There is absolutely no way these positions can be cut as it will directly impact support for Richmond learners.

The RTA appreciates and supports the recommendation to increase Teacher Consultant time for Indigenous Education by 0.4 FTE. This is a necessary first step to support implementation of the new Indigenous Graduation requirement. Advocacy is still needed to ensure additional funding is provided by the government to support implementation, including further Teacher Consultant – Indigenous Education FTE.

The RTA continues to recognize the long-standing challenges presented to the Board with creating a balanced budget. These challenges must be addressed by the Provincial Government and the Board must continue and increase advocacy for the learners of Richmond.

It is time the Provincial Government honours their commitment to Public Education with additional funding to address long-standing and systemic underfunding as well as identified initiatives.

The RTA welcomes all opportunities to provide feedback and support your advocacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Baverstock', written in a cursive style.

Liz Baverstock  
President, RTA

cc: Scott Robinson, Superintendent of Schools  
Cindy Wang, Secretary-Treasurer  
Tim McCracken, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, RTA  
Steve Wenglowksi, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, RTA  
JW Cho, 3<sup>rd</sup> VP, RTA