



Richmond Teachers' Association

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March 12, 2025

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

Dear Ken,

Re: Budget Brief

On behalf of the Richmond Teachers' Association, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit a budget brief for the upcoming 2025-2026 District budget. The RTA recognizes the current budget situation is experiencing cost pressures due to rising costs for benefits, utilities, CPP, EI, EHT and is also facing significant uncertainty with tariffs. In our experience, these cost pressures are never fully accounted for nor fully funded by the Ministry of Education and Child Care. This impact the Board's ability to increase support for the classroom and meaningfully address teacher workload. Without specific attention to these needs, Public Education will have difficulty addressing recruitment, retention and daily staffing shortages. In 2024-2025, daily teacher shortages continue, resulting in specialist teachers being redeployed to cover classroom positions resulting in less support for classrooms.

Despite these funding challenges, the RTA will continue our advocacy to outline budget priorities that should be considered by the Board as part of the 2025-2026 Budget decisions.

1. Continuing to support recruitment and retention initiatives including

Supporting university partnerships and a Richmond cohort model for specialist positions, including counselling, LRT/LA/ELL positions and paid supervised practicum for counselling.

Enhancing university partnerships to support Teacher Candidates with access to workshops and expanded opportunities for extended practicums.

2. Support Literacy and Numeracy Initiatives in Elementary and Secondary

Support is needed to maintain initiatives that were introduced in 2024/2025 through a grievance settlement between Human Resources and the RTA.

Elementary: At elementary we request the Board maintains release time funding to allow elementary teachers to collaborate on specific literacy and/or numeracy initiatives. We recommend that the equivalent three hundred days of release time is made available.

Secondary: At secondary we request the Board maintains at least one block for Literacy/Numeracy Facilitators at each secondary school. 10 blocks are the equivalent of 1.429 FTE.

Throughout this year, the Board has been privy to presentations by schools that highlight the work of teachers on specific literacy and numeracy initiatives. These presentations have provided the Board with insight into the creativity, inspiration, passion, and vision of teachers who have been provided collaboration time to work on these projects. This request aligns with Strategic Priority 1 – Inspired Learner. If funding is not available, then the RTA requests further exploration by the district to find alternative ways to provide collaboration time within elementary schedules. This may include restructuring of the Inquiry grant process.

3. Continue and expand the Indigenous Graduation Coach pilot

As a priority population, this pilot is providing specific academic support to Indigenous Learners to increase graduation rates. Currently, two blocks have been provided to McNair Secondary to support this initiative and to augment the work of the Indigenous Success Team. The RTA recommends the equivalent of 1.0 FTE is added to support this initiative across Richmond Schools. This initiative directly supports Strategic Priority 1 – Inspired Learners, Strategic Priority 2 – Equity and Inclusion and the recommendations contained in the Equity in Action Project report that was supported by the Board at the January 2023 Board meeting.

4. Inflationary Pressures

Ensuring inflationary pressures associated with School Based Budgets continue to be addressed with additional focus on consumable supplies and learning resources.

5. Provide FTE support for Small Secondary Schools

Specific attention is required to address low enrolment pressures in secondary schools where block offerings are important in maintaining neighbourhood enrolment and addressing teacher workload and student access to a diversity of courses. This request is consistent with Strategic Priority 1 – Inspired Learners and Strategic Priority 2 – Equity and Inclusion.

6. Maintain support for Indigenous Focused Graduation Courses and First Peoples Principles of Learning

Targeted support for learning resources to support First People’s Principles of Learning across K-12 must be maintained and enhanced by the district. This includes the continued provision of authentic learning resources and funding to book guest speakers, pay honorariums and support field trips. Because Indigenous Community experiences and offerings are in high demand, we request a district wide approach to secure access to Indigenous focused field trips and experiences such as dance, musical/theatre groups, outdoor learning and other offerings. Teachers are looking for a multi-school approach in a Richmond venue such as Gateway Theatre that allows priority access for Richmond schools. This request is consistent with Strategic Priority 1 – Inspired Learners and Strategic Priority 2 – Equity and Inclusion.

Local Capital Projects

- 1. Support for Overcrowded Elementary Schools** including continuing to seek opportunities to help address space pressures, which includes access to meeting and learning support space, as well as additional multi-purpose space and playground equipment. In the longer term, these pressures will only be addressed by the addition of a new school in City Center. The RTA appreciates the continued and increased advocacy by the Board to secure land and funding. This request aligns with Strategic Priority 1 – “Inspired Learners”, Priority 2 – “Equity and Inclusion” and Priority 3 – “Optimized Facilities and Technology”.
- 2. Continued support for Sustainability and Climate Action Projects** such as solar panels, electric charging stations, and safe storage for electric bikes. We request these climate projects, innovations and successes be more broadly highlighted to the Richmond Community. These projects provide visible and tangible support towards climate action and sustainability. This

request aligns with Strategic Priority 3 – Goal 3 – “The district fosters energy efficient and environmentally sustainable facilities and practices.”

As part of this brief, the RTA also requests the Board continues their advocacy with MLAs, BCSTA and the Ministry of Education and Child Care to highlight the rising cost pressures and to draw specific attention to the election promises made by the NDP government including the provision of a counsellor in every school and an EA in every primary classroom.

The Premier has stated in every mandate letter to cabinet ministers that strong public services, such as health care and education, is a core priority for the government. Priorities for the Ministry of Education and Child Care reiterate the need to make progress on “work to ensure that teachers and schools have access to additional supports in the classroom and beyond, including the expansion of education assistants and counselling resources”. We also note priorities include increasing Indigenous graduation rates, SOGI anti-bullying programs to improve understanding, early interventions to improve numeracy and literacy, accelerating the delivery of new and expanded schools and expediting the certification of new and experienced teachers.

We recognize that these are priorities and values that we share with the Board of Education and the Ministry of Education and Child Care. As partner groups in education, it is our job to advocate for these priorities and to challenge the government to support these goals. The Richmond Teachers Association remains ready to work with the Board on this advocacy.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our suggestions for the 2025-2026 District budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Baverstock', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Liz Baverstock,
President, RTA

cc: Chris Usih, Superintendent of Schools
Cindy Wang, Secretary-Treasurer
Steve Wenglowksi, 1st VP, RTA
JW Cho, VP, RTA
Frano Marsic, VP, RTA