

Budget Priorities: Public Input

2023/2024 Budget Development

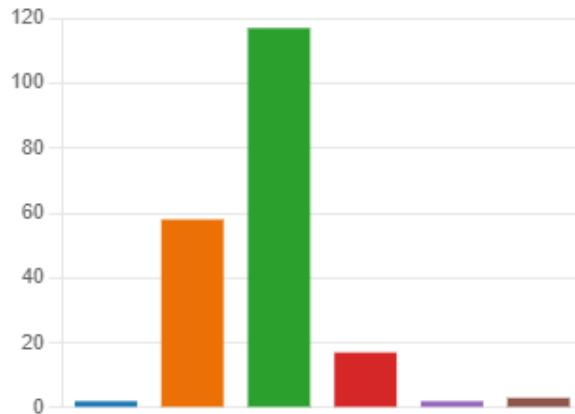
Survey question: Please share an initiative of importance to you, including how the initiative aligns with the school district’s strategic goals.

Survey results:

- 199 survey respondents (with the ability for each respondent to provide up to 3 comments)
- 9 emailed comments
- 387 total comments

Of the 199 survey respondents:

● Student	2
● Staff Member	58
● Parent/Guardian	117
● Parent/Guardian AND Staff me...	17
● Community Member	2
● Other	3



Student-Centred Education

→ Selected 132 times

Innovative Instruction

→ Selected 73 times

Welcoming and Inclusive Culture

→ Selected 48 times

Mental Health and Well-Being

→ Selected 118 times

Truth, Healing and Reconciliation

→ Selected 13 times

Environmental Stewardship

→ Selected 26 times

Below are seven common themes that emerged across strategic goals, with select comments included. Please refer to the [Budget Priorities: Public Input](#) web page for all comments. **Note:** comments are shared as they were received.

Student Support – 110 comments tied to student support (e.g. mental health and well-being, prepare for the future, teaching to diversity, preparation for the future)

“Focus on student (and teacher) Mental Health and Well-Being. Over the past 3 years, I have noticed (as a 17+ year teacher) significant changes in the mental health of our students. They need support and strategies to regain confidence, boost spirits, and to develop better work habits that are more conducive to academic success (which thereby reduces anxiety, stress and other mental health concerns that are exceptionally prevalent). The number of students requiring extra support in this area is significant.”

“Preparing or supporting students to be role models in their community. Dealing with adversity and diversity. Key benefits both inclusion and mental health goals.”

“A second initiative would be to help support and fund for students struggling academically. We need to help the students who are caught "in the middle" - not complex learners, but those who need a boost due to Covid issues, or due to mild learning difficulties. Please fund and develop a more comprehensive LAC system, separate from the LSTs. These students are losing out on valuable additional learning when personnel gets pulled to deal with big behaviour differences.”

Staffing & Staff Support – 36 comments tied to staffing and staff support (e.g., class size/composition limits; recruitment, training and development; mental health and well-being)

“Teachers need more comprehensive professional development on curriculum, UDL, new reporting. Not a "one off"; not a surface introduction.”

“Music and fine art should have a strong presence in the education system, and teachers who demonstrate a high degree of knowledge and expertise should be hired. Physical education, sports and teachers who have an intimate understanding in these areas should be hired as specialists leading classes in the benefits and value of life-long fitness, nutrition and good health.”

“Teachers are always trying to create innovative and engaging learning opportunities, individualized learning, and create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Now it is time for the district to work on the well-being of the learning communities by creating better boundaries with families by stressing the importance of home-routines, parents

PARENTING their children by supporting school expectations, and families respecting the school schedules and decisions of educators and administrators. This will in turn, help everything run more effectively AND support staff mental health and burnout. It's time that society start understanding that school districts employ experts and we want to develop strong and respectful relationships with the school community. All stakeholders are important, but we want our school staff to feel supported by the district reminding families of their roles.”

Facilities – 45 comments tied to facilities (e.g., child care, general maintenance, major capital projects, track and artificial turf fields (ATFs))

“Before and after school care on site. This supports the first four goals by providing access to quality care for students outside of school hours, removing barriers to access for lower income families, and increasing the number of available spots for care reducing stress on families.”

“General facilities/field/buildings improvements to ensure grounds are clean, safe, enriching, and positive.”

“All weather turf field and track in our high schools rebuilds should be a top priority in the Capital budget. It is imperative to the welfare of students from feeder schools as well as the high school itself. The community benefits greatly as well and as such municipal, provincial and if needed federal government should be aware of any financial shortfalls and pick up the slack. “

Funding – 38 comments tied to funding (e.g. classroom resources, library resources, Literacy Centres, technology in classrooms)

“As a Teacher Librarian I see everyday the importance of the library as a welcoming, safe and inclusive space for our students, especially our more vulnerable ones. I have been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to redesign the space I am working in. On a limited budget (Parent Support) we were able to add some flexible seating, new tables, carpets and a book shelf. Modernizing our library spaces is important because the spaces we create have an effect on how we feel. I have seen first hand the effect it has had on the students and how they feel when they walk into the new space. There are places for them to read, class management is easier, and they are calmer and more joyful.

“Our son completed a semester at the Lit Centre at Sherwood Park Elementary to support his quest to become a better reader. Although it has been almost two years

since he attended this program, we continue to see the tremendous benefits it provided for him. We, as his parents, would like SD 44 to continue to support this program and to actively pursue its expansion. There are many other children who would so benefit from this kind of reading and learning support. Furthermore, such a program did more than just improve his reading literacy it also provided skills around time management, emotional awareness and working well in groups.”

“Providing schools with the technology necessary to individualize instruction, increase innovation, and encourage digital resources instead of paper ones.”

Instruction – 114 comments tied to instruction (e.g., core academics, arts education, environment and climate change, outdoor education, real-world, STEM, trades, etc.)

“The school district should focus more the core academic programs, helping kids with strong STEM related courses and literature, reading comprehension, writing skill development. I saw too many co-workers who grow up in Canada but having a lot of writing skill challenges and even have grammar errors. Any tasks involve numbers are daunting to a lot of people.”

“Our youth require immediate, meaningful, practical education about Climate Change and how they must work towards slowing it down.”

“Outdoor education elective course focusing on land stewardship, sense of place as well as recreation. This could align with welcoming and inclusive culture, as well as mental health and wellbeing if it helped students build stronger relationships and a stronger connection to place. It could align with Truth and reconciliation goals if it were developed in collaboration with Indigenous communities.”