

North Vancouver School District
Historical cuts to organization
Incremental changes (without adjustments for enrolment)

Introduction

The North Vancouver Board of Education has consistently managed its operating budget in a proactive manner. Operational savings and administrative efficiencies have been effectively implemented, while revenue generation initiatives are continually pursued. As a result of careful management, due diligence, and the foresight to make difficult decisions on multi-year financial projections, the Board has achieved successive balanced operating budgets. This is a significant accomplishment when considering the imposition of provincially negotiated collective agreements, without commensurate funding, in addition to escalating costs associated with utilities and inflation.

This report highlights many of the measures implemented by the Board during recent years, the associated impacts, and considerations for the preparation of the 2015/16 Operating Budget. As 2009/10 was a critical year in the Board's management of operating budget challenges, this report provides perspective on budget measures implemented during the period of 2009/10 to 2014/15.

Supporting materials attached to this report include two spreadsheets itemizing the historical cuts, including 'add-back' items, and the DRAFT Administrative Savings Plan that identifies items being considered for the development of the 2015/16 Operating Budget.

Staffing reductions due to restructuring, school closures and CUPE Savings Plan

Since 2009/10, staffing reductions due to district restructuring, school closures and the required CUPE Savings Plan have been implemented to achieve a combined staffing reduction of 100.45 FTE and total budget reductions of **\$8.9 million**. These reductions in staffing were in addition to 25 teaching FTE attributed to enrolment decline.

The Board proceeded with significant restructuring of services within the School District during the 2009/10 and 2010/11 school years. This involved a reorganization of departments and changes to service delivery models. In 2010/11, the Board proceeded with the closure of two elementary schools, Fromme and Plymouth, with students being redirected to neighbouring schools for the subsequent school year. These closures were in addition to four previous elementary school closures in 2004 and 2005.

During 2011/12 and 2012/13 the Board proceeded with additional school closures including; Ridgeway Annex, Keith Lynn, and Balmoral Junior Secondary. Program restructuring was also implemented in 2012/13, 2013/14, and 2014/15 with the consolidation of alternate programs, the elimination of Continuing Education and a significant reduction in Summer School offerings.

Staffing reductions, beyond those related to declining enrolment, in the six-year period between 2009/10 and 2014/15 totalled 100.45 FTE including; Teachers (31.2 FTE), CUPE support staff (48.62 FTE), Administration (13.5 FTE), and Exempt staff (7.13 FTE).

While school closures implemented during the period of 2010/11 to 2012/13 resulted in operational savings and revenue generated through long-term leases, the savings and revenue were redirected to unfunded liabilities and escalating costs. The added costs of unfunded collective agreement settlements and the required CUPE Savings plan further impacted the Board's capacity to sustain established service levels.

Significant impacts identified through these measures have included;

- Increased class size averages
- Less time available to meet individual student needs
- Reduced special education services provided by professional and support staff
- Reduced time for teacher librarians to support cooperative teaching and literacy
- Reduced capacity to provide in-service for teaching and support staff
- Limited ability to support and train staff in revised service delivery models
- Increased teaching time required of Principals and Vice Principals
- Increased demands on Administrators to meet continued community expectations
- Reduced support staff services including custodial and clerical time
- Reduced levels of cleanliness in classrooms
- Reduced levels of supervision of students on playgrounds
- Increased absenteeism due to stress and workload demands
- Increased pressure on parents to raise funds for school and instructional supplies
- Increased reliance on parents to raise funds for equipment and technology
- Increased travel by parents in transporting students to schools
- Loss of community-based schools and decrease in close community connections
- Decreased flexibility to accommodate students in their neighbourhood school

Staffing reductions due to general organizational initiatives

Staffing reductions due to general organizational initiatives have been implemented by the Board to achieve additional savings of **\$400,000**. These measures have included calendar adjustments resulting in a two-week spring break, health and wellness initiatives, and delays in the hiring and replacement of staff and reductions in overtime costs. While savings have been achieved through these approaches, there have been direct and indirect impacts on families and students. Although the two-week spring break has enabled the Board to achieve savings related to reduced staff replacement costs, concerns remain that additional days of closure introduced through local calendars have a disproportional negative impact on a vulnerable student population.

Operational savings through school closures

Operational savings of **\$212,000** have been achieved through school closures, primarily as a result of reduced utility and custodial costs. Although savings have been achieved through closures, the additional revenues have effectively been consumed by rising utility costs.

Operational savings through energy efficiencies and shared services

Similarly, the energy savings resulting from the adoption of a local school calendar and the implementation of efficiencies and shared service initiatives totalling **\$283,000** have effectively 'offset' increased utility costs, and inflation for goods and services, rather than enabling a reinvestment in classrooms and students.

Revenue increases

The Board of Education has successfully negotiated long-term leases for a number of its closed schools. Although other revenue generating strategies have been effectively implemented, the achievement of revenue through leases has provided significant benefits during the period of 2009 through 2015. The additional revenue of **\$1.1 million** through these means has been used to balance the budget, avoiding reductions in other areas.

'Add-back' budgets of 2011/12 and 2012/13

As a result of district restructuring during the 2009/10 and 2010/11 budget years combined with school closures and the negotiation of long-term leases, the Board was able to 'add back' **\$2.6 million** in improvements during the 2011/12 and 2012/13 budget years.

While total reductions of **\$10.9 million** have been implemented since 2009/10, the 'add-back' budgets enabled the Board to redress some of the previous reductions on a priority basis, resulting in a net reduction of 73.88 FTE and **\$8.3 million**.

Staffing increases during the consecutive 'add back' budgets of 2011/12 and 2012/13 totalled 26.57 FTE including; Teachers (17.47 FTE), CUPE staff (6.6 FTE), and Administration (2.5 FTE). The net impact on staffing between 2009/10 and 2014/15 after accounting for the 'add back' budgets totals 73.88 FTE including; Teachers (13.73 FTE), CUPE support staff (42.02 FTE), Administration (11.0 FTE), and Exempt staff (7.13 FTE).

Summary

The cumulative effect of successive reductions to the operating budget have been identified throughout this report. Further impacts are related to the inability for the Board to reinvest in the services provided to students to meet the needs of our students and the expectations of our community.

Faced with continued budget challenges and financial uncertainty related to unfunded liabilities, there are significant human costs within the public education system that must be acknowledged. Reduced staffing and service levels, year after year, have a profound impact on every person in our School District.

We commend our staff for their continued commitment and dedication to public education while faced with diminishing budgets.