



Budget Priorities 2016/2017

For the consideration of the North Vancouver School District Board of Education; respectfully submitted by the North Vancouver Teachers' Association.

Priority 1:

Classroom-based supports – Class Size and Composition

Target specific funding to address **class size** and **composition** issues in schools beyond the base funding provided through general staffing.

North Vancouver schools have higher class size averages than the Provincial average, especially in the Intermediate grades.

However, averages only address one part of the issue. For students and teachers, it is the actual class size for their class that contributes to the learning environment. Specific funding should be targeted to reduce the number of Intermediate and Secondary classes with 30 or more students.

Even 28 or 29 students is a large class, especially with a split grade class in elementary schools. Over time, with the constant erosion of provincial funding, the common understanding and discussion over class size has shifted so that any class of 30 students is seen as appropriate for learning. By using the provincial funding available to focus resources on the classroom creates the best learning environment for students.

Class composition is equally important to the experiences of both students and teachers. Both identified and unidentified students with special needs have specific learning, behavioral, safety or medical needs that teachers must address. By providing more teaching staff in specific situations to address complex composition classes by creating another division, both class size and composition are improved for all students in the classes.

Additional specialist staffing to directly support students with special needs are needed. Both LAC and LST time needs to be increased to address the increasingly complex nature of the work. This staffing provides support directly to students but also to teachers and parents as they work with students.

In-service or professional development training cannot address issues of class size and composition. If teachers simply don't have time within the day to address the various needs and supports that could be addressed, more training will not provide this time.



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Teachers engage in on-going professional development throughout the year with a goal to improving their professional practice in many different ways. This ongoing professional development improves all aspects of the learning environment for all students but is not a miracle solution that can help teachers address all the complex needs of an ever-increasing number of students.

By budgeting specifically to reduce class sizes and address composition, the Board of Education can have a direct impact on improving the learning conditions for students and the working conditions for teachers in North Vancouver.

Other priorities:

School Cleanliness

The Board of Education should ensure that the budget provided for custodial work allows every classroom to be cleaned each day. The health and well being of students, teachers and all others who work in schools is impacted on a daily basis by the cleanliness of schools. Secondary classrooms can have over 100 students pass through in a given day. Elementary schools don't have as many different students in a day but those students spend more time in close proximity to one another and eat lunch in their classrooms. All students and school district employees should be entering clean classrooms each day.

Defibrillators

These should be installed at each secondary school as a minimum. There is no longer any question of their life-saving merit or their safety. The BC Heart and Stroke Foundation is willing to provide school districts with four machines including training. This funding from the BC Heart and Stroke Foundation significantly reduces the required financial cost to the District.

New Curriculum

With the gradual implementation of the new curriculum K to Grade 9 next year, funding should be specifically designated to support the process.

Part-time teachers and TTOCs should be paid to attend the day(s) set aside next year for teachers to continue their work on understanding and implementing the new curriculum. November 14, 2016 has been designated specifically for teachers to work on the new curriculum and January 20, 2017 may also include work on the new curriculum, as this is the annual district-wide Curriculum Implementation Day. As many part time teachers and TTOCs are just beginning their careers as teachers, providing funding specifically for this group of teachers to attend the day(s) provides



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these new teachers with an important opportunity to work directly with experienced teachers and develop materials they will use as they gain increased employment.

Also, teachers and students will need new classroom resources to address the new curriculum. Resources that may be specific to a learning outcome that has moved significantly up or down in grade level will no longer be useful if the reading and detail level is too high or low for the new grade. Additionally, new content has been added into the curriculum. Schools, especially elementary schools, have very little funding each year to buy classroom resources. These may include textbooks but also DVDs, storybooks, equipment for new hands-on activities, and many other types. Although websites and apps can support classroom learning, they cannot completely replace actual materials in the classroom for students to use to develop their understandings.

Thank you for your consideration of the budget priorities that are important to teachers. If you have any questions or would like any further details, please do not hesitate to contact Martin Stuible or Carolyn Pena at the NVTa office.