



Memorandum

Date: March 29, 2024
To: Finance and Audit Committee
From: Kate Cumming, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

Information: **2024/2025 Public Budget Survey Results**

1.0 BACKGROUND

On February 7, 2024, the District shared a survey link directly to all parents, staff and partner groups requesting feedback on the development of the 2024/2025 Annual Budget Bylaw. This link was also added to the District and school websites with a deadline of March 4, 2024. Responses were reviewed and themed and the feedback was considered as the Superintendent of Schools/CEO Budget Proposal Report for the 2024/2025 school year was developed.

The detailed responses to the public survey have been included in *Appendix A*.

2.0 BOARD MOTION/DIRECTION

None.

3.0 INFORMATION STATEMENT

Using the Thought Exchange platform, the budget survey had two distinct components. The first component consisted of the Thoughts which was the opportunity to provide a response to an overarching question which was then visible to all participants and could be rated. The second component was a survey of 2 additional open ended questions to obtain more directed feedback.

A total of 1,277 participants accessed the survey link, 525 Thoughts were shared, 1,237 participants responded to the initial role question, and 533 responded to at least one of the survey questions. In addition, participants provided 18,851 ratings on participant Thoughts.

As the District plans the 2024/2025 annual budget for the next school year, considering the educational programs and services that are currently provided at your school, what is most important and why?



1,277
Participants

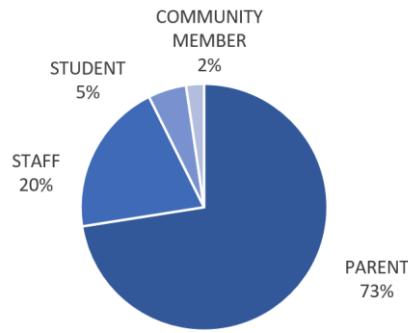


525
Thoughts



18,851
Ratings

Survey participants were from the following roles within the District:



The volume of responses by role follows a similar trend to the prior year's survey. With 525 Thoughts provided (2023/2024 – 352) and 598 responses to at least one survey question (2023/2024 – 588), the response rate was higher compared to the 2023/2024 and 2022/2023 Public Budget Survey results. The ability to interact with and rate other participant's Thoughts increased the overall level of engagement in the survey for the past two years.

The number of responses by role over the past three years is as follows:

DESCRIPTION	2024/2025		2023/2024		2022/2023	
PARENT	897	73%	871	74%	303	87%
STAFF	249	20%	223	19%	26	7%
STUDENT	62	5%	67	6%	6	2%
COMMUNITY MEMBER	29	2%	21	2%	14	4%
TOTAL	1,237		1,182		349	

Summary of Survey Responses

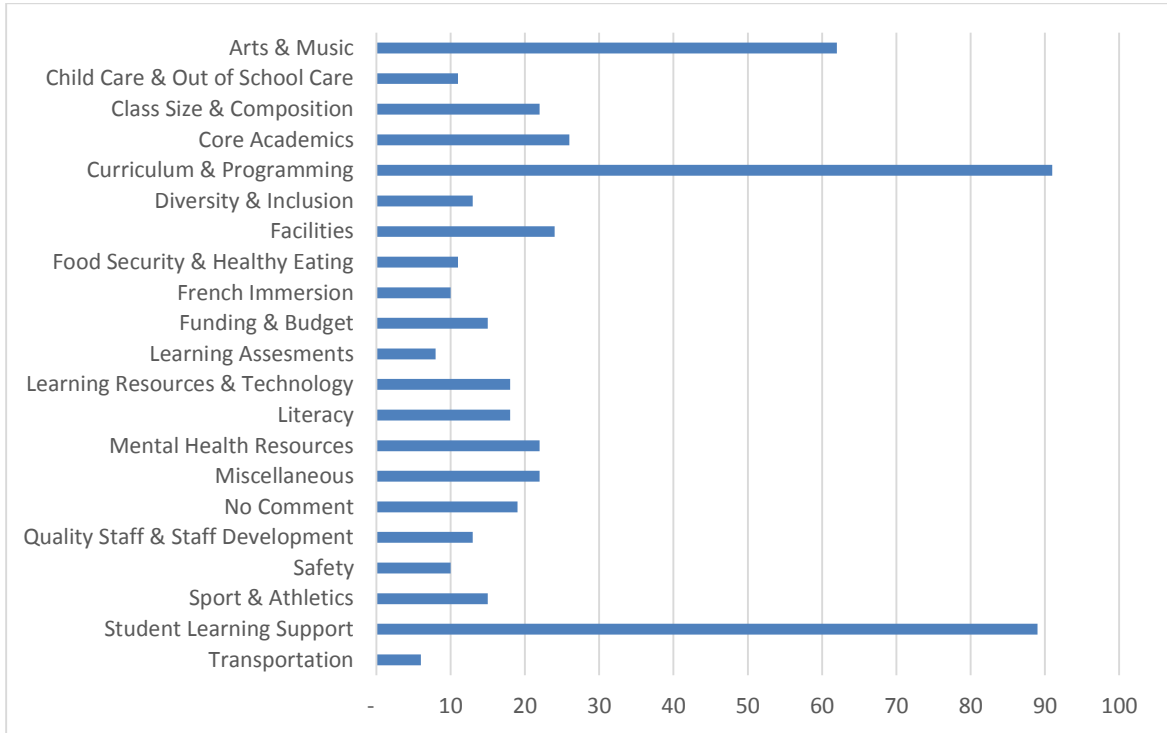
Question #1

As the District plans the 2024/2025 Annual Budget for the next school year, considering the educational programs and services that are currently provided at your school, what is most important and why?

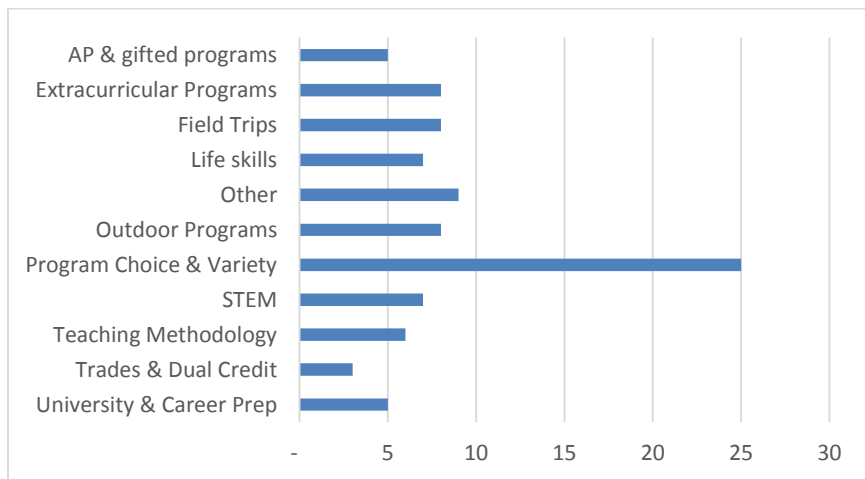
Response

The responses indicate a wide range of priorities for the 2024/2025 Annual Budget. 62 respondents emphasized the importance of music and arts programs, retaining or expanding existing programs and creating new programs, citing their role in enhancing the educational experience and fostering creativity. 89 respondents underscored the need for more support for students with higher needs, including the hiring of more Certified Education Assistants (CEAs), Learning Assistant Teachers or alternative supports. There was also a call for up-to-date technology in classrooms, with respondents highlighting the importance of keeping pace with technological advancements. Other priorities included outdoor learning, critical thinking, and a focus on core academic subjects like math, science, and literacy. Some respondents also expressed concern about the need for more schools and improved conditions in facilities to accommodate growing student populations.

The key themes in the Thoughts shared by participants are as follows:

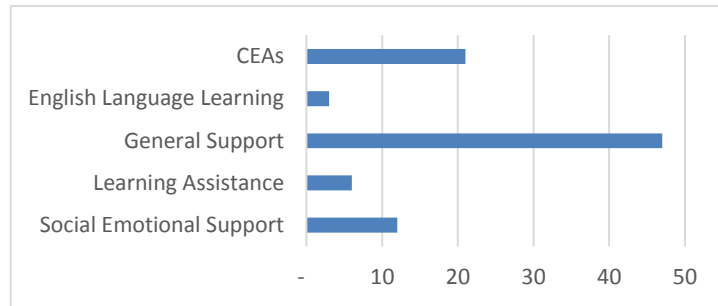


Within the theme of Curriculum & Programming above, respondents identified several types of school programs that they believe should be prioritized in the budget. These programs include:



In particular, 25 respondents highlighted the significance of providing students with a diverse range of programs that can support their educational and career goals and help them succeed in their future endeavors.

Within the theme of Student Learning Support above, respondents identified a few key areas in which they would like to see additional supports provided to students in need. These supports include:

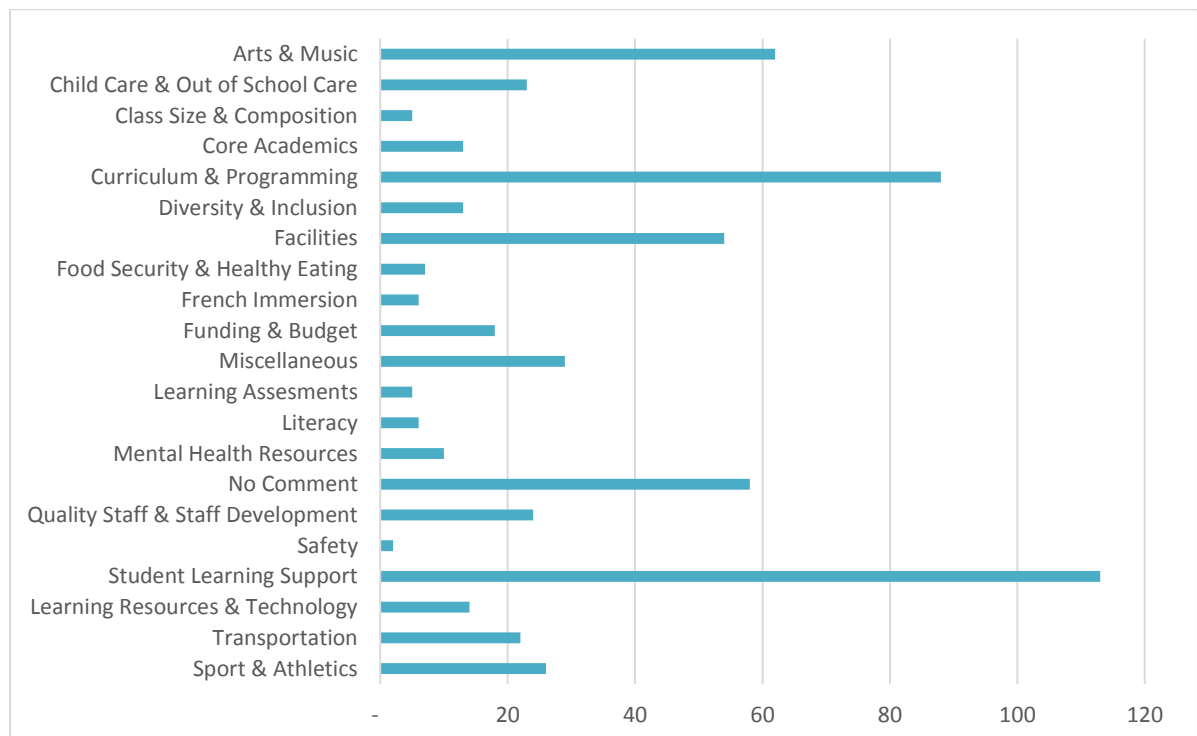


Question #2

What changes to programs, services and/or activities would you like the District to consider as the 2024/2025 Annual Budget is developed?

Response

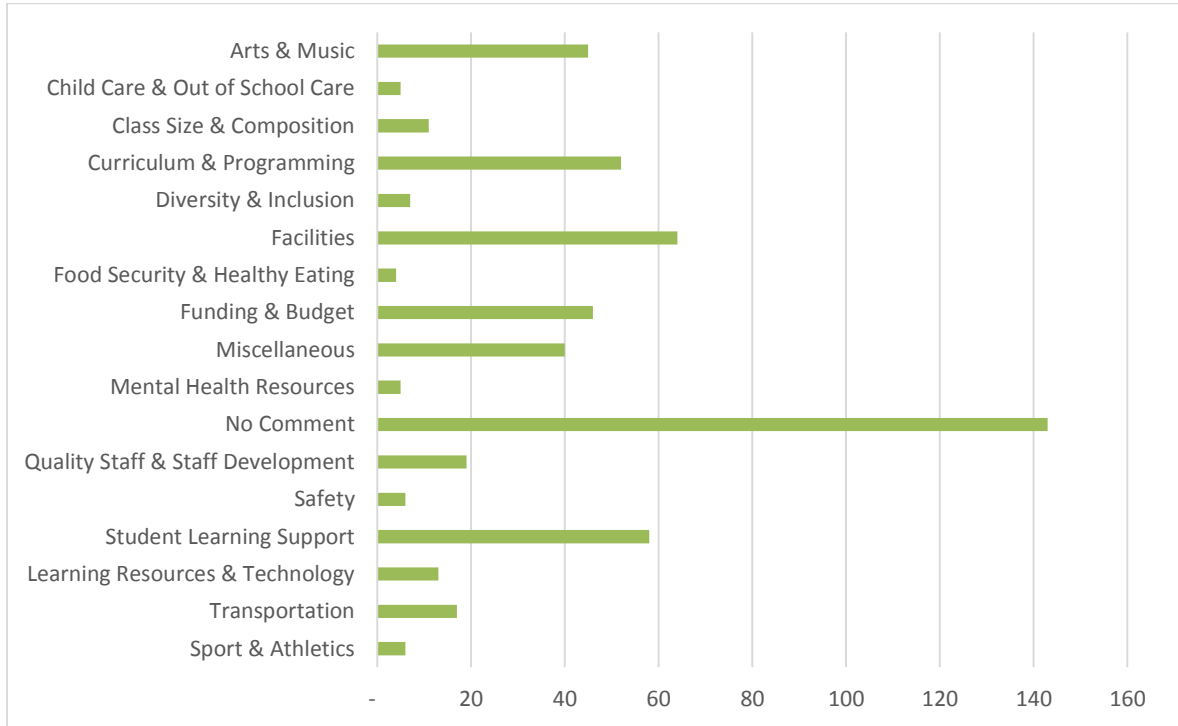
Responses from the second survey question continued many of the same prominent themes valuing the learning and behaviour supports for students. Requests for changes relating to curriculum and programming also included expansion of arts and music programs, emphasis on sports and athletic programs, increased extracurricular programs, enhanced program choice and variety, increased field studies, and additional programs for advanced students. 54 respondents also commented on the state of various facilities within the District and requested changes, additional maintenance, and significant renovations or construction of new school buildings.



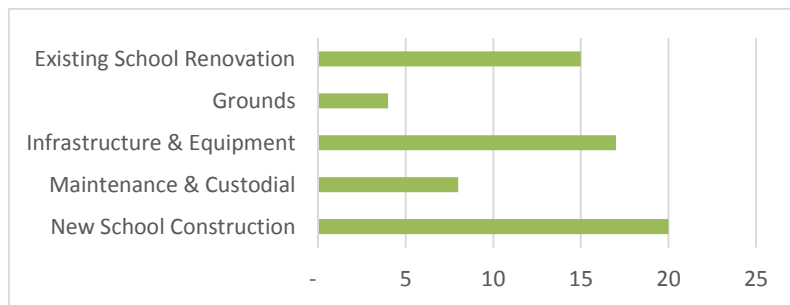
Question #3

What other information would you like the District to know that will help develop next year's (2024/2025) Annual Budget?

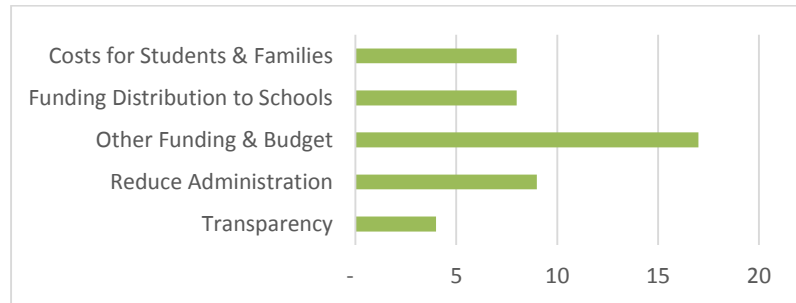
Additional information provided was in the following categories:



Responses relating to facilities highlighted the importance of construction of new schools due to constraints on existing schools from overall growth in the area and increasing density in key neighborhoods. A number of responses also requested changes or improvements to school infrastructure and equipment or recommended the prioritization of upgrades or additions to existing schools.



Responses relating to funding & budget recommended reducing district administration costs in favour of in school staffing and funding requirements, questioned existing costs for students and families, and requested greater funding distributions directly to schools.



4.0 ASSISTANT SECRETARY-TREASURER COMMENTS

The above survey results are being reviewed as part of the 2024/2025 Annual Budget Bylaw budget development.

5.0 APPENDIX

A. 2024/2025 Public Budget Survey Results (Detailed)