



Memorandum

Date: October 11, 2024
To: Finance and Planning Committee
From: Delta Carmichael, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
Prepared by: Rhonda Ovelson, Director of Instruction – Feeding Futures
Information: **Student and Family Affordability Fund Update at June 30, 2024**

1.0 BACKGROUND

In August of 2022, the Province of British Columbia announced a one-time funding of \$60 million to school districts to help expand school meal programs, provide school supplies, and cover any additional fees so that students in need can take part in activities. School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) (the "District") received a proportionate share being \$2,396,709. The expectation was that this funding would be fully spent by June 30, 2023, however the Ministry of Education and Child Care allowed districts to carry any unspent amounts into the 2023/2024 year.

As of June 30, 2023, \$2,019,298 (84%) of the Student and Family Affordability funding was spent, leaving \$360,541 (16%) to be carried forward into the 2023/2024 school year.

After staff consultation, a proposed plan of how the District's carry forward balance of \$360,541 would be spent was shared with the Board of Education as an information item at the November 8, 2023 Public Board Meeting. As a result, the carry forward funds were used during the 2023/2024 school year to support:

- The distribution of gift cards (for purchase of clothing and/or everyday essentials with priority given to families who were evacuated and/or lost homes as a result of forest fires).
- Waiving of school related fees.
(**NOTE:** Food security was addressed through Feeding Futures Funding).

District staff worked alongside school administrators to ensure these remaining funds were spent to support students in need. Deputy Minister's Bulletin – Questions and Answers (*Appendix B*) provides a list of questions and answers including purpose, who qualifies, how to access, how the funds can be used etc.

2.0 RELEVANT BOARD MOTION/DIRECTION

None.

3.0 INFORMATION STATEMENT

As of June 30, 2024, the Student and Family Affordability Fund carry forward of \$360,541 was fully allocated in support of the following:

- Funds were distributed throughout the year to school principals for the purpose of waiving school related fees and for the purpose of purchasing gift cards. First priority was given to families who had been evacuated and/or lost their homes to the forest fires.
- As of March 2024, approximately \$150,000 in funds were distributed to schools based on family affordability need. This was determined using a locally developed Vulnerability Index. 22 schools with the highest levels of family affordability need received a prorated amount based on school enrolment. These funds were placed in restricted surplus accounts and used for the purpose of waiving school fees and/or the provision of gift cards.

Appendix A provides a summary of how the Student and Family Affordability funding was spent during the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 school years.

As of June 30, 2024, the following statistics were reported to the Ministry of Education and Child Care with respect to how the District has supported families and students utilizing the Student and Family Affordability Fund carry forward amount.

- An estimated 594 students have been supported through offsetting costs for supplies and equipment because of the Student and Family Affordability Fund.
- An estimated 2,767 students have benefitted from fee relief because of the Student and Family Affordability Fund.
- 554 students have been supported with the provision of gift cards (for the purchase of clothing and/or everyday essentials).

In April of 2024, the Ministry of Education and Child Care allocated an additional \$18.9M to school districts to further support families. The District proportionate share was \$826,000 with the intent to continue to provide financial assistance to families in need.

As of June 30, 2024, the following plan was proposed to the Ministry of Education and Child Care with respect to how the District would be supporting families and students utilizing these funds:

- Every school to receive an allocation of \$15 per pupil.
- The Welcome Centre and Indigenous Education Department will also be given base funding to support families in financial need.

- The remaining funds will be distributed to 22 schools with the highest family affordability need. The locally developed Vulnerability Index will be used to prorate amounts distributed to these 22 schools. The Vulnerability Index was updated by the Assistant Secretary Treasurer and Planning Manager and took into consideration the following information from Baragar Software:
 - Percentage of lone parent families.
 - Percentage of lone income families.
 - Percentage of immigrated families.
 - It also took into consideration the percentage of SPED, ELL and Indigenous students in each school.

Once funds are distributed to school restricted surplus accounts, school principals will again use the funds to waive school fees and purchase supplies, clothing, eyewear, athletic wear, everyday essentials, for families facing financial hardship.

4.0 SECRETARY-TREASURER/CFO'S COMMENTS

The distribution of the \$826,000 is consistent with provincial funding guidelines and consistent with previous years' practice. Allocating and distributing funds in an equitable manner to schools allows for schools to be responsive to the needs of children and families in their communities. Schools, local teachers, and staff are best positioned to ensure that support reaches those students most in need within a process that reduces stigma.

5.0 APPENDICES

- A. Summary of Student and Family Affordability Fund Spending: 2022/2023 and 2023/2024
- B. Deputy Minister's Bulletin – Questions and Answers

APPENDIX A
SUMMARY OF STUDENT AND FAMILY AFFORDABILITY FUND
SPENDING FOR 2022/2023 AND 2023/2024

	2022/2023		2023/2024	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Carry Forward Balance	0	0	360,541	360,541
Revenue				
- MOE Funding	2,396,709	2,396,709	0	826,000
- Interest Earned	0	0	0	28,689
Total Revenue	2,396,709	2,396,709	0	854,689
Expenses				
- Athletics	0	82,701	0	44,827
- Cultural Support	49,370	58,550	0	2,300
- Field Studies	575,000	648,578	0	22,875
- Food Program	384,000	494,194	0	14,535
- Land Based Learning	20,000	4,378	0	2,143
- Supplies	1,348,339	730,897	360,541	272,282
Total Expenses	2,376,709	2,019,298	360,541	358,963
Capital				
- Furniture & Equipment	20,000	16,870	0	0
Total Capital	20,000	16,870	0	0
Net	0	360,541	(0)	856,267