



Memorandum

Date: April 10, 2026
To: Finance and Planning Committee
From: Kate Cumming, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
Information Item: **2026/2027 Public Budget Survey Results**

1.0 BACKGROUND

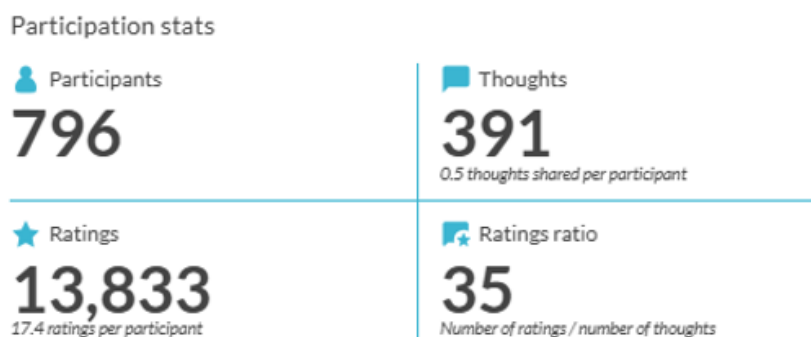
On February 4, 2026, the District shared a survey directly with all parents, staff and partner groups requesting feedback on the development of the 2026/2027 Annual Budget Bylaw. This survey was also added to the District and school websites with a deadline of March 4, 2026. Responses were reviewed and themed and the feedback was considered as the Superintendent of Schools' Operating Budget Proposal Report for 2026/2027 was developed.

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

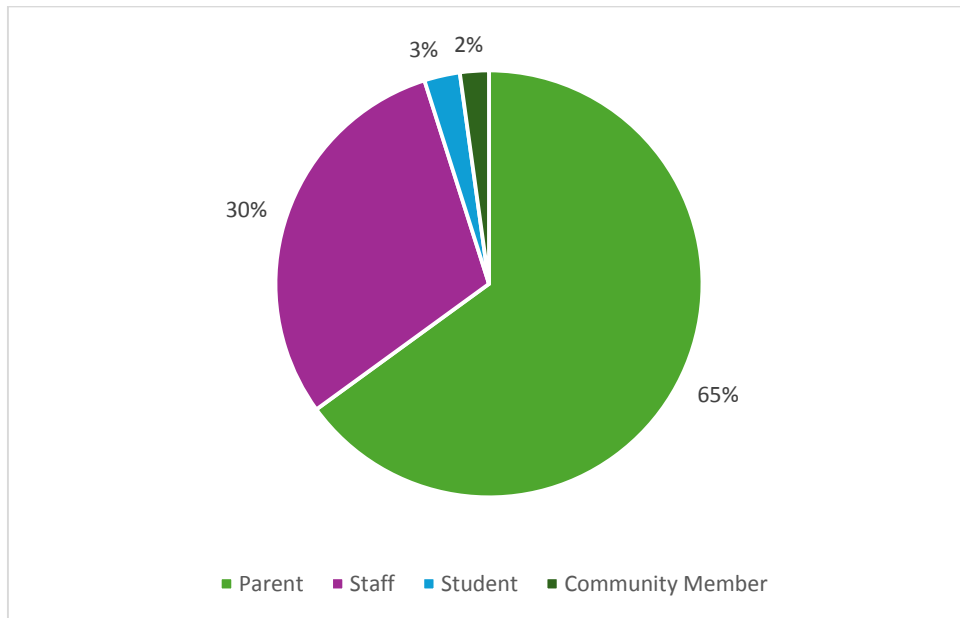
2.0 INFORMATION STATEMENT

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 two additional open-ended questions to obtain more directed feedback. A total of 796 participants accessed the survey link, 391 Thoughts were shared, 777 participants responded to the initial role question, and 459 responded to at least one of the survey questions. In addition, participants provided 13,833 ratings on participant Thoughts.

As the District plans the 2026/2027 Annual Budget for the next school year, considering the educational programs and services that are currently provided at your school, what is most important to you and why?



Survey participants were from the following roles within the District:



Overall participation in the 2026/2027 Public Budget Survey declined compared to the previous year, with fewer responses received across participant roles. This represents the lowest response rate since the survey has been administered through the Thought Exchange platform. Despite this decline, participation and engagement levels remained higher than those achieved using platforms prior to the 2023/2024 survey cycle.

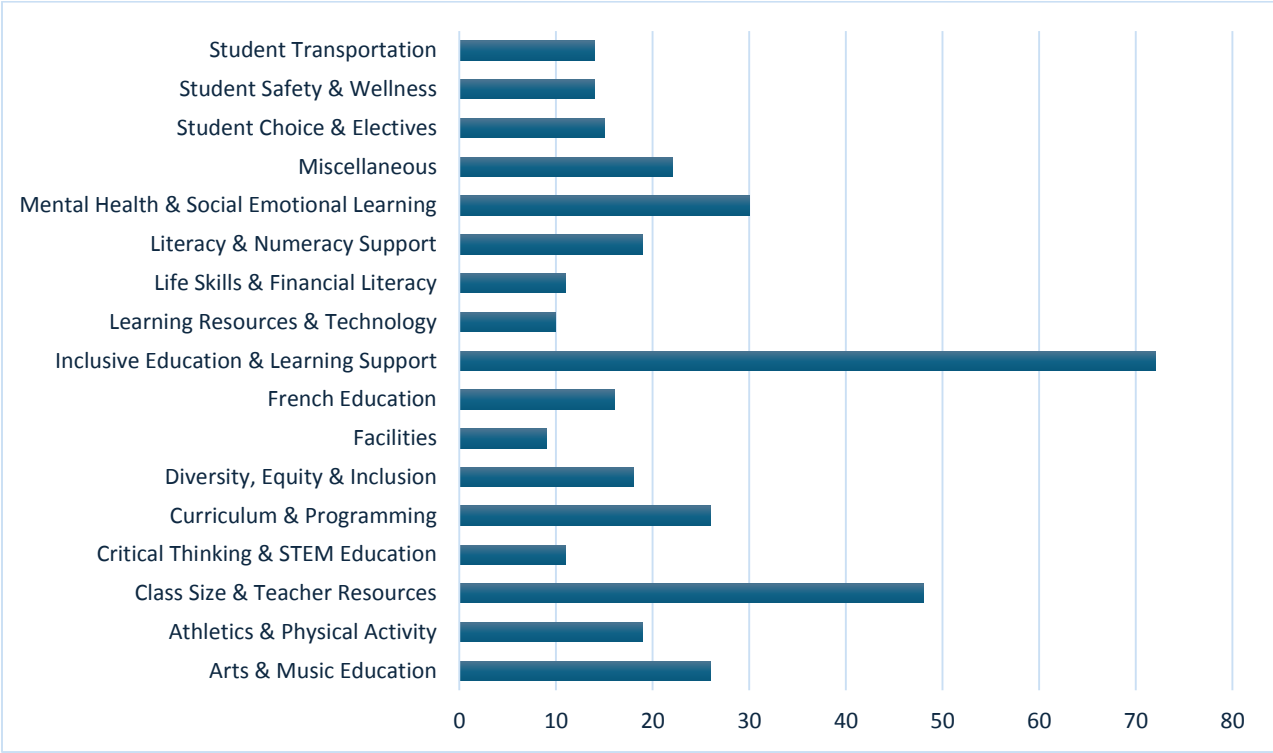
A total of 391 unique Thoughts were submitted (compared to 778 in 2025/2026), and 459 participants responded to at least one survey question (compared to 598 in 2025/2026). As a result, the overall response rate was lower than both the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 budget surveys.

While the volume of responses decreased, the ability for participants to review and rate the Thoughts of others continued to support meaningful engagement. This interactive component contributed to a broader understanding of shared priorities and perspectives, enhancing the qualitative value of the feedback received.

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

Description	2026/2027		2025/2026		2024/2025	
Parent	505	65%	1,346	67%	897	73%
Staff	234	30%	577	29%	249	20%
Student	21	3%	54	3%	62	5%
Community Member	17	2%	21	1%	29	2%
Total	777	100%	1,998	100%	1,237	100%

Many respondents highlight the importance of social-emotional learning and mental health support, advocating for more counselors and student wellness services. Concerns about equitable access to resources, such as transportation and nutritional programs, are also prevalent, alongside calls for better access to French immersion and other specialized programs.

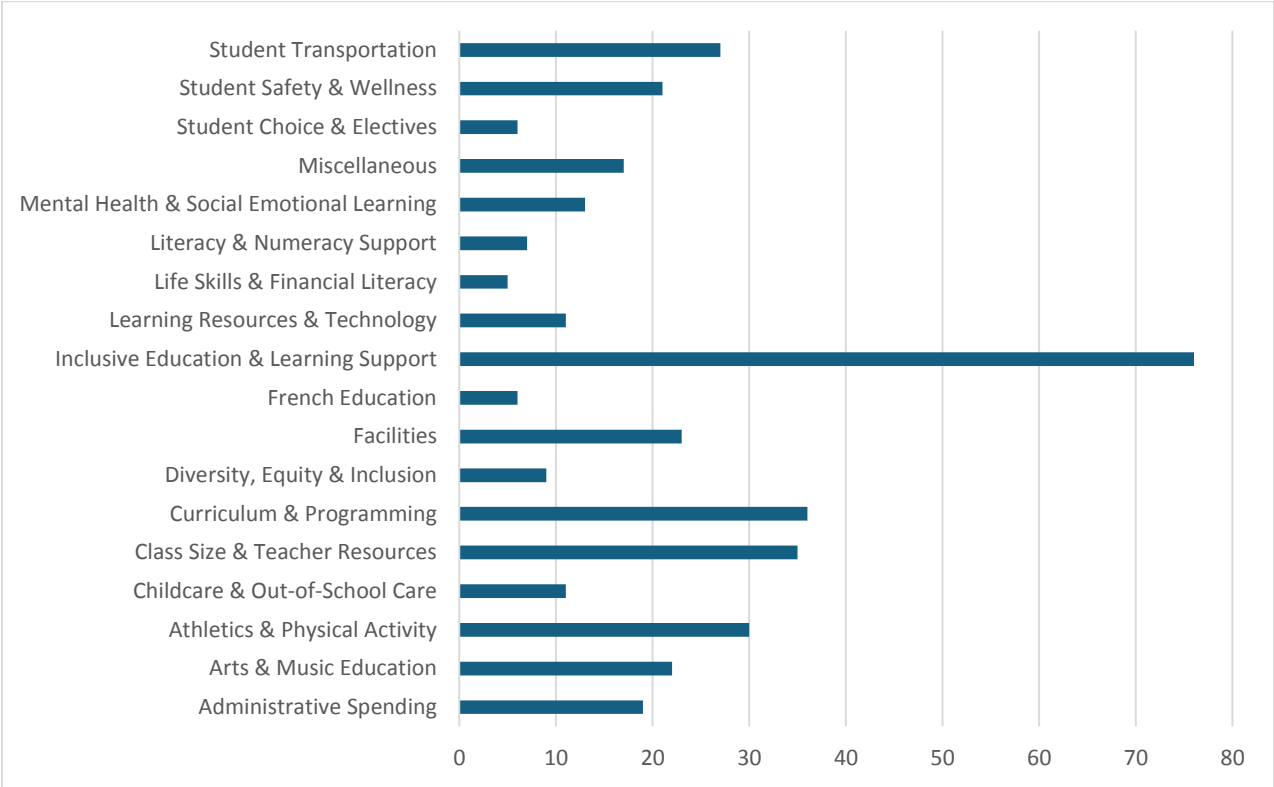


Question 2: What modifications to programs, services and/or activities would you like the District to consider as the 2026/2027 Annual Budget is developed?

Responses to the second question emphasized a desire to redirect resources toward classrooms and direct student supports while reducing district-level administrative costs. Across parents, staff, and community members, there was strong alignment on prioritizing smaller class sizes and increasing direct learning support from teachers, CEAs, and learning specialists.

Many respondents shared similar responses regarding prioritizing core academics with a focus on literacy and numeracy in school curriculum and programming as well as access to music and arts classes, physical education and sports, and maintaining a wide variety of electives and extracurricular activities.

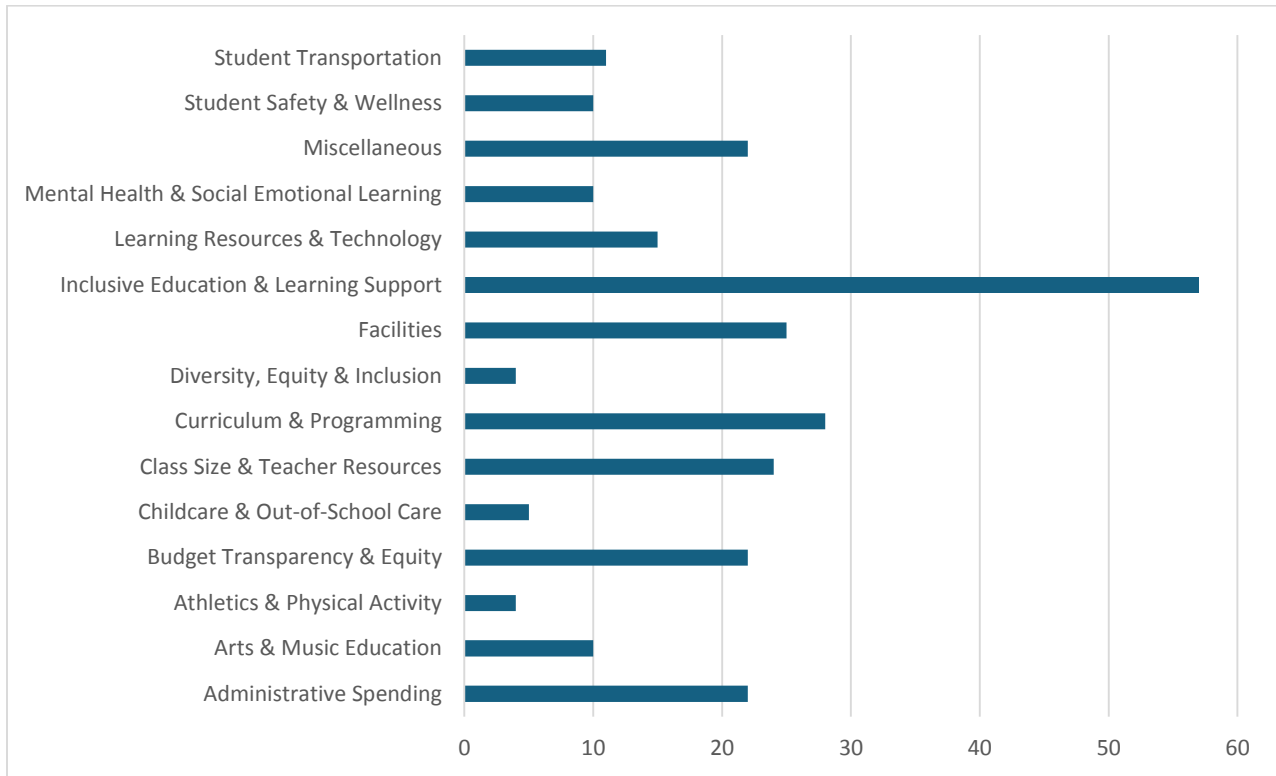
Additional recurring priorities included affordable and accessible transportation and childcare, improved school facilities and maintenance (including a reduced reliance on portables), enhanced mental health, food security and safety supports for students, and careful scrutiny of discretionary spending, consultants, and non-classroom initiatives to ensure budget decisions clearly and directly benefit students and schools.



Question 3: What other information would you like the District to know that will help develop next year's (2026/2027) Annual Budget?

Responses to this question reinforced several consistent themes that respondents felt were critical context for developing the 2026/2027 Annual Budget. Across all groups, respondents emphasized the importance of transparency, equity, and accountability in budget development, with a clear expectation that resources be prioritized for schools, classrooms, and direct student supports rather than district level administration. Many noted that despite enrolment fluctuations, classroom complexity is increasing, requiring sustained investment in CEAs, counsellors, specialists, and mental-health supports.

Additional recurring themes included addressing aging and overcrowded facilities, ensuring equitable access to arts, music, athletics, and core learning opportunities, improving affordability for families (transportation, childcare, food, and supplies), and engaging staff and communities more meaningfully so budget decisions reflect on the ground realities and demonstrably benefit students.



3.0 ASSISTANT SECRETARY-TREASURER’S COMMENTS

The above survey results are being reviewed and incorporated as part of the development of the 2026/2027 Annual Budget Bylaw.

4.0 APPENDIX

- A. 2026/2027 Public Budget Survey Results (Detailed)