School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake)
DPAC/CUPE/KLTF/PVP/Board of Education/Senior Leadership
Talking Tables
Budget 2016-2017
Thursday, February 4, 2016
5:00 pm
Location:Mary Hall, Selkirk College, Nelson BC

TOPIC #1

What must the budget address in order to attend to student needs that it has not accomplished in the past? For 16/17? in the next 3 years? In the next 5 years?

- Technology repair...evergreen supplies basic but not enough to fix
- more counselling time - counsellors are doing too many other jobs
- parental access to support personnel who are dedicated to supporting students with specific needs
- placement of International students - no spaces in schools and classes
- full classes; we need more flexibility to be able to welcome newcomers
- perhaps a maximum of 27 to 1 to start
- one of the major issues I see as a parent is I don't feel my children actually are the centre of the district values; I feel they are somewhat of commodities that are plugged into a system with fantastic teachers/principals, people with good intentions who are being taxed to provide education to our children
- transition to grade six we see a wider range of students in each class than at elementary schools - maybe more teachers or learning assistants at middle school grades
- How do you focus on children who want to do well, and support that passion
- not addressing special needs students in a timely manner - effect on school climate and staff wellness, school safety - delay of up to one year after identification for equipment/services/resources to come
- do a better job of making a bridge between early learning and their needs be they reach kindergarten
- lack of support staff on-call replacements
- I am challenged with a baseline for services...small schools don't offer many services and maybe a baseline for every school needs to exist

- increased fund to class size and composition - i.e. 33 in biology (tough to find resources)
- fluidity in September/October - have funds available the second week in September - October is too late and doesn't work
- would rather see a human in the call out system - SFE has been hard with the automation and not the knowledge
- staff allocation - PVP need to really know what is needed in the schools - 3 to 5 year stability in allocations
- May for allocation for hiring process for summer hiring
- PVP need to give accurate information for early allocation - nice to create the timetable and then staff
- elementary schools may not need more funds, but secondary schools do
- A vision for the small rural school needs to exist - if we value services we need to provide them (equity does not exist in our province/district - facilities/support/services) - music program?
- sharing instructional expertise between schools
- lack of technology for schools in lower socio economic communities
- staff need more time to implement new technology and curriculum
- Need to look at a different staffing model. One size fits all? Economies of scale?
- Special ed. teachers in the school?
- In elementary there is a directed focus on basic skills...middle school doesn't have the ability to provide designated support… EA time
- technology and infrastructure
- infrastructure is the issue
- diversity for student needs
- lining of courses with student need vs top down
- budgets for schools more secure earlier on so that hiring decisions can be made earlier
- -enough mental health support for students: counselling
- technology is not up to speed
- the engagement between teacher and student needs to remain
- are we ready for equipment that is going to be out of date three years down the road
- smaller class sizes for the early learners – saves money in the long term with less EA support etc. because they are gaining those skill sets
- general need for my EA support vs the number of special needs students
- student proper food habits increases better learning (links funding attends to this need)
- capacity building for PVP to be able to maintain the balance of using technology while meeting the needs of all students
- Concerns for parents with aging buildings with issues like sewage, asbestos etc.
- move forward with facilities issues concerning health and safety issues
- more help in the classrooms – EA support intensive behavior intervention assistance
- Counselling support for students and enough resources to align those resources for students

- District pro-d programs and enough support to see if students are succeeding or not
- Support for teachers/instructional staff to help students with mental health issues
- Counselling support
- Helping finding outside services for students outside the schools as well
- Help for first nations students/ab ed students – making sure everyone is on the same page – catch students earlier who are struggling
- Help with students' needs for flexibility: eg: more flexible options/multiple sites for options
- Technology – pedagogy in technology – how do you use it properly/successfully for students
- Neo-liberalism use technology to bring budget lines down but how does it enhance what we do with students – technology is not a fix
- How is technology used in schools versus how kids use handheld devices – eg on busses, unsupervised time, etc – social media. – how do parents help with use of technology – communication piece so parents can support teachers/staff instead of being in unknown territory
- Parent nights for technology for example –bring in outside help to delve into topics such as technology – parents need to understand – gap is widening between students and parents
- More information more readily available for parents
- Teachers/staff don't have any more knowledge than parents do in technology
- Idea about whether students or staff could film things going on in schools such as workshops, etc so that they can be put up on TED talk or similar
- Tech department create a parent website?
- Technology is about values and the values are diverse – need a district conversation about the technology values – could be part of the innovative learning budget
- Need to find out what student needs are. What are the student needs regarding technology?
- Students with special needs – they NEED technology in order to learn but it's hard to access technology for students eg: Google Chrome on computers – spent a lot of time and then can't use it – it's about infrastructure because of the deep freeze for computers
- Who makes the decisions about technology?
- Learning doesn't have to occur just in the classroom – need alternate learning environments – need to put money toward that – eg: too large groups of students, hard to take on field trip or community based program
- How to address learning environment from ground up rather than create the infrastructure first… Constructivist thinking: eg: Wildflower, etc. – create an opportunity for students in the higher grades – like a High Tech High – create a satellite program and see who is interested.

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TOPIC #2

How do student needs and staff needs align? How are they different?

- some students need EA support, and students need EA support
- Diversity of student ability is challenging for teachers - what about the students who can/want to move forward. Teachers and students need more support
- healthy, safe environments - how do we use our resources to redesign learning spaces
- Student's needs become teacher's needs; teachers are the pivotal person who can dictate student success...students can inform staff needs…
- the teachers I know are remarkable people who are tackling their jobs as best as they can
- Ministry initiatives….does what I do align with what is being required?
- curriculum changes...lead to alternate fear/confidence/need for resources
- at the end of the day I think a teacher needs to spend with my children and with me because we are all a factor in educational success
- teachers seem to have no time to talk to me (parent)
- to the extent there can be creativity with student focus is where I would like to see the Trustees and district move
- we can support our teachers when they are trying to help students who struggle
- the staff do want to do well and we need a safety net in our schools...for us to know that our students have time to fail and try again...the curriculum is so full it limits the creativity or imagination we have
- juxtaposition within those students who struggle academically yet who are incredibly talented...how do we see our students and our staff from an asset-based perspective
- less factory, more escape

- Wellness of students and teachers. Huge increase in students with mental health concerns
- How can we create structures that allow staff to feel meaningful in what they do
- too driven by timetables
- social-emotional learning
- collaboration time would support teachers - if built into a schedule -
- happy students and happy staff go well together
- students need to be engaged with something that's interesting and aligned with staff who are engaged, passionate and supported
- sense of belonging for everyone (ie staff feels comfortable and heard)
- wellness - physical and mental wellness - take the class outside and appreciate the environment
- TOC's wellbeing is important (under huge stress because of SFE)
- working conditions directly affect learning conditions
- becoming more transparent with staff on budgeting (involving staff in decision making)
- from Student Symposium - students want teachers that are qualified and passionate in their positions (ie art teacher) - complications with collective agreement
- need for more counsellors to help with student choices (maybe less of a teaching role - hard when emergencies arise)
- working conditions reflect the quality of learning in the classroom
- comfort for students (proper chairs, lack of resources, crowded classrooms)
- building awareness of funds
- need to take care of the caregivers
- students moving in and out of the buildings (ie credit for work done outside of school)
- share prep time / collaboration - need flexibility and resources
- Comprehensive and collaborative effort to ensure student success
- Common sense approach – when it comes to processes.
- Students need more staff
- Support and empowerment – how do we support both?
- The timeline of assessment for students at risk – needs more funding or a faster track to assessment
- Place at risk students with a smaller group
- Not placing at risk students in a multi-aged setting
- Empower teachers for multi-aged teaching
- Pro d for teachers to enable them to be in a multiage classroom with distractions
- If the learning has changed should the systems change – modeling different personalized learning and with constant change and fine tune these models
- Not referring to segregation – smaller class sizes like 12-15
- For teachers – it is a tough time when you are a biology teacher and not all students want biology – it's a fine line to support personalized learning
- How can we support staff to evolve? – What children are academic learnings, what students are engaging learners etc?
- Put money towards curriculum implementation

- Collaboration time for teachers
- Collaboration with parents to keep them educated on the changes etc and how to support their students at home
- Students need a healthy learning environment and staff need a healthy working environment
- Emotional health of everyone – staff and students
- Good working relationship would be nice
- Using technology that either works or doesn't work
- More and more needs of students – more and more complex – more and more issues – are all staff given the opportunity to say "I can't do this" and give it to someone else (eg: counselling services/teaching roles/etc.)
- Staff need to be supported / students both need to be supported
- Work environment needs to be positive for both staff and students- non-replacement of staff stresses students out and the staff gets really thin – and fragmented – really does impact the working and the learning
- EA support in one class or in a secondary class – if you're the second class that the EA supports, then you can't plan as if they are going to be there and if they are there you can't use them effectively – consistently and security of planning for day to day for planning and student purposes
- Planning earlier on for what kind of staffing students need – hiring late /halfway through the year for EAs when it's clear earlier in the year that staff is needed
- Both need people in the roles that they are meant to be in – need admin being admin, need counsellors doing what they are doing, etc – need non-enrolling people being in their roles doing what they are doing
- When you get stretched across domains you are not effective in any domain
- Do the class sizes meet the needs of the students and the parents?
- Depends on the makeup of the class
- Boils down to the level of support
- Is there a way to support even farther?
- What works in one school doesn't work in another and vice versa – no formula works – that has to be taken into account when we look at budget – need to look at individual schools and the needs in each/ each community – uniqueness of each of the sites
- How do we provide service in an area that is unique when we are in the same cookie cutter for funding as the larger centres
- How do we get services outside of school environments that meet student's needs (ie – social services, Ab Ed resources & availability), etc?
- Disconnect is Ministry not acknowledge
- Resources – technology, learning resources, equipment
- Staff also needs meaningful professional development
- Technology infrastructure – great to have the equipment but if don't have the infrastructure, can't move forward
- Alignment of community services with school services – a lot of networks that aren't tied well together – need to do more of that

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TOPIC #3

SD8's satisfaction survey indicates that students and adults are saying students don't necessarily feel prepared to transition out of secondary school. How should we focus resources to help students best transition to the worlds of work, career, post-secondary, trades, volunteerism, travel etc.?

- My son is graduating this year and I think the work experience piece is missing; we don't have that any more…
- grad transitions don't support work experience
- Is there other government funding to support work experience (similar to post-secondary experience STEP - World of Work Program)
- students want to be told what direction to take in post-secondary
- students don't know the world so don't know if they are ready or not
- What are last year's grads reflections?
- need to survey 20-25 year olds
- need for more co-op programs that help ensure a job at the end
- A lot more kids looking at trades, gap years
- more opportunities for students to experience all the different professions of interest
- students should try experiences that they don't think they would want to do
- give the students skill to be successful, not giving them the answers
- secondary schools are being asked to do way more than they should be
- change in marking - academic marks needed for post-secondary requirements - teachers need clear guidelines to measure
- variety of expectations that students have when they complete - gap years for example are becoming very popular
- how do we align student choice, with pressure to load up on academics or to pursue other post-secondary prep experiences

- Opportunities for travel within school earlier (ie grade 7, 8, etc.)
- schools do a pretty good job of preparing students for post-secondary
- past students attend school to present experiences
- I work in the technology sector; I am constantly learning;   are students learning how to learn? That's how kids will survive; it is so competitive
- how do you students advocate for themselves with regard to learning styles
- I don't think work experience is necessarily good
- kids are not limited to postsecondary experiences only in BC any more...they are looking around the globe
- anything trades, career, counselling related is needed
- I would not expect as a parent that the school would be responsible for all of this stuff frankly; schools are responsible for some of the other things we have talked about but not necessarily this…
- the whole think about learning how to learn...is really important
- how to use social media to keep current
- if you have a master teacher you can teach a whole group of kids the way they learn; that could be a real pro d activity
- The education plan is individualized program...the school board is trying to chip away at the other stuff….
- when I started teaching you taught 757 minutes of math a week...350 minutes of social studies...you don't have those parameters any more...content crosses over...we run out of time…
- there is a lot of talented people in this community that work in so many areas...that idea of mentorship is great; even to have mentors who come in a talk about what they do
- Some schools have exploration days….
- 80 credits - do we look at increasing the credits
- Why not ask previous graduates at age 24-25yr old to see what they felt were the pros and cons as opposed to asking current students in a symposium?
- Survey during the bursary process to ask students how they felt about their readiness – response was bursary applicants are too low to have proper results
- Use more community organizations and have students volunteer to gain the experience and integrate the students more like Rotary etc.
- Parent involvement is needed – the teachers are already doing their part and the onus cannot continue to fall on the teachers
- Resources within the community – where is the liaison
- Students job shadowing within the communities
- Chamber of commerce – would be the liaison
- There is not the same pressure for students to leave home and transition – so we should celebrate the fact that our kids should remain kids as long as they can instead of pushing them to be adults at 18
- Focus on more collaboration skills – for students
- Kids need to learn how to handle finances
- The onus does need to start with parents – and how do we support parents to keep up with the ever changing learning needs?

- Don't want a quiz, etc – needs hands on in a variety of area – eg: opening a bank account
- Do the satisfaction surveys need to be done at different times
- Students' own angst from themselves
- Differences between grade 10 and 12
- More about what's possible out there – students don't know what they are picking from – don't know the breadth of the options
- Teachers/staff don't know what is out there
- Should we not focus on transition to beyond school? Some said "yes" – can prepare them to open bank account, etc – but students need to explore
- Would still like to see the transition piece – but more on opportunities –
- Planning and GT programs are good – students plan their course – eg: life plan in Planning – far more in depth than the GT presentations – eg the three artifacts sometimes poorly planned by students
- What are the life skills that you need for any position: eg: critical thinking, presentation skills, public speaking, working together – need to start young, not at secondary
- Need to go to the grocery store, need to wash their clothes, need basic life skills – things that parents teach some students but not all students get that at home – or even have a home
- Feed, clothe, sexual health, personal health, etc.
- Not just the schools job – values –
- Value of experience – need authenticity – eg: in GT – need to experience things – get into community, need to get into real world – get students through the bureaucratic machine and give more hands on
- One thing to teach investing, teach loans, and just go and do it
- Can look at trades – help students get value out of their upper secondary – not repeating the same

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TOPIC #4

Given that students and parents expect choice and a wide range of educational opportunities, how does the need for flexibility impact the system and inform change in the future? Are there strategies to balance competing important needs in the district to provide flexibility and choice? Examples of competing needs might be facilities work orders and capital projects vs staffing in schools working with students, catchment and school choice vs staffing efficiently (too full/not full enough? Spreading staff too thin?), hiring tradespersons vs teachers, increased counselling staffing vs more course options etc.)

- this year our classes are so full one of my colleagues stepped on a student
- So many kids working in one area - are kids bigger now?
- we need to rethink the number and size of students need to be taken into account
- whatever you're doing...is it meeting your core objective
- at the end of the day it is the student who needs to be the success story
- we have to acknowledge we live in a small community - so the amount of choice may be limited; I accept that as a parent
- tough decision-making….we have lost 25% of our student population since 2005 but we have the same square feet of buildings
- you would have to decide your core schools in a radius to share opportunities
- maybe district programs are the themes for those sites
- Curriculum redesign for secondary has a lot of modular choices...how do we provide that range of choices...do we offer more courses? Who is going to do this? the promise of choice/the limitations we have
- we have a college here that has university access
- Why aren't we allowing students to do advance placement at college?
- Transitions courses...dual credit…

- Tech club in Nelson is an amazing place for age 5 and up. A great resource
- kids are loving that
- what partnerships are formalized
- when it is response time to staffing needs; when we know the classrooms are crowded and we know students are wait-listed...a shorter time of adding resources would alleviate a lot of stress
- faster response time
- need to spread our choices out to more locations throughout the district and allow more movement for students
- would it be possible that a reserve is set aside so that emergencies can be
- surplus spending in October/November is too late - need to take a leap of faith to spend the funds and hope we get the numbers - consult in the spring with estimate
- Is there too much consultation on surplus funds? Could roll out funds in August if less consultation (ie Board decision)
- this year didn't feel very comfortable - did not discuss bare bones for the 15-16 year
- parents need to make choices and compromise and find a way to make it work
- facilities plan review - would like savings to go to learning environments
- How do we value technology?
- trying to do too many things and then some don't get done well
- safety comes first
- doing too much consultation - management makes the final decision even after all of the consultation - not enough time to put nuts and bolts in place
- schools have trust accounts that chairs/tables could be purchased from
- schools need the flexibility to spend their allocation where it best fits the school community
- we have a lot of choice in this district
- We need to change the catchment areas of our district – we need to update
- More forward instead of talking – with what are already working on
- Unfair question – without having the whole scope/picture
- How much choice is too much choice?
- Choice is the key – without choice then we will end up with declining enrolment because those kids will go where they have the choices
- Capacity building – staffing for teacher advising for IDS courses
- Consultation and gathering information at all levels
- Keep offering the basic courses, math, English, science
- Giving the students too many choice is not beneficial to them in the real world –
- The core stuff needs to be learnt first – then what is the purpose of the whole system – what kind of independence do they have etc.
- Relevant learning like – grocery shopping = math, do more authenticity learning
- Connect more with the parents
- Make some decision – strong decisions based on this input that you have asked for – muddy the waters
- Trade show type idea for courses
- Awareness of other options

- Staff presentations so that students have opportunity to become involved in other courses
- Declining enrolment makes it hard to offer choice and flexibility – goes to structure of a school – access to different opportunities
- Change set timetables – if we want to give choice we need to change the way we are doing things
- Need to be open, willing to change
- Tend to recreate what we already have and need to instead get into the student wish for something different but students don't always know what they need/want
- Students sometimes just want something new, but don't know what they want
- Do we try to offer too much? If we try to do it all, we may eliminate choice students may only be able to get it one place and in the end, they don't get it
- Can't just put kids into a classroom and expect them to be able to work
- Kids are inundated with too many choices – get overwhelmed
- Kids though know more about what their choices are than the teachers did and they want those choices
- We are giving students choices based on our own adult academic environments – but what are we looking at – are we looking at moving them into academia, into trades, into global sustainability, etc.
- What choices can we offer that give students enough opportunities
- We are never going to be able to offer all the choices that students want – need to offer things as well beyond schools – eg: need to connect students beyond the school – community mentorships, etc.
- Seeing more and more kids wanting to take distributed learning courses