



**Qualicum School District  
Finance & Operations Committee of the Whole Report  
Tuesday, February 17, 2026  
Via Video Conferencing  
10:30 a.m.**

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Always growing  
Grandissons ensemble

**Facilitator: Trustee Carol Kellogg**

**Mandate:** *To discuss and make recommendations to the board on financial, facilities, maintenance, technology and transportation matters with a view to environmental sustainability.*

**1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES**

We would like to give thanks and acknowledge that the lands on which we work and learn are on the shared traditional territory of the Qualicum and Snaw-Naw-As (Nanoose) First Nations People.

**2. PRESENTATIONS (10 MINUTES)**

None

**3. PROJECT UPDATES**

None

**4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

None

**5. INFORMATION ITEM(S)**

**a. Process for Distribution of Playground Equipment**

Mike Souchuck Manager of Operations – Facilities, provided a summary of the current planning cycle for playground equipment. It was shared that the district's playground planning operates within a provincial funding model that provides approximately \$5 million in funding per year across all 60 school districts. Because of this limited capacity, districts generally receive funding every two to three years. With Springwood Elementary's playground recently completed, the district has submitted Errington Elementary as its next project for the 2026–27 funding cycle and expects to learn soon whether it has been approved. After Errington Elementary, the next priorities are the aging metal structures at Nanoose Bay Elementary and Arrowview Elementary, though these projects may still be several years away depending on the Ministry's schedule.

Once funding is confirmed, Operations Department works with suppliers to develop design options within the allotted budget. Any enhancements beyond core funding—such as specialized surfacing or additional equipment—are typically made possible through PAC fundraising or external grants, as seen at Springwood Elementary. Staff noted that both site preparation and project timelines often prove more complex and lengthier than expected, a common experience for school communities across the province.

Although the district has used Blue Imp Equipment for recent installations, it is not tied to a single supplier. Procurement Policy's ensure competitive sourcing and appropriate tendering for larger projects. Meanwhile, older metal structures throughout the district continue to be removed for safety as needed.

The False Bay School rebuild will reuse existing playground equipment when possible; if removal is required, a new playground will try to be incorporated into the project budget. Operations remains open to early engagement with PACs so that school communities can plan multi-year fundraising efforts in advance of their project's turn in the rotation.

**b. 2026/2027 Budget Development – Survey feedback**

Secretary Treasurer Amos reported that the district launched the public phase of its budget process last week, beginning with a daytime partners session and an evening public session that was recorded and will be posted online for those unable to attend. As part of this process, a budget survey was distributed to gather community input. As of this morning, 48 individuals—primarily parents and caregivers—have responded. Early feedback highlights several positive themes, including strong appreciation for the dedication of teachers, educational assistants, and support staff. Respondents also value outdoor and experiential learning opportunities, trades exposure, and the high level of engagement and community-building efforts undertaken by school PACs and DPAC.

Alongside the positive feedback, participants expressed concerns that align with long-standing themes in district consultations. The most significant is the need for increased in-class support, particularly more educational assistants and specialized services such as speech-language pathologists, occupational therapy, counseling, and additional access to assessments. Respondents also requested greater transparency and clearer communication regarding district spending, budget decisions, and financial documents.

It was encouraged that partner groups, including CUPE, actively encourage participation in the survey. The survey will remain open through May, with periodic updates provided as additional themes emerge to help inform upcoming budget deliberations on the Budget. It was shared that while there are several opportunities at public meetings, the survey allows for many others particularly parents to be engaged in the budget process.

**c. 2026/2027 Budget Development - Three-Year Enrolment estimates** Secretary Treasurer Amos shared the projections document. The district has submitted its three-year enrolment projections to the Ministry, informed by recent second-count data showing an increase of about 48 students since September. While positive, this growth is not enough to offset an unusually large graduating class of roughly 415 students compared with an estimated 235 incoming kindergarten students. Because net migration into the district has been modest over the past two years, projections have been adjusted conservatively, anticipating a decline of about 100 FTE for 2026–27 with smaller decreases in the two following years.

Kindergarten registrations remain low at approximately 155, though upcoming pre-K transition programming and community outreach are expected to boost numbers.

Staff explained that net migration—students gained across grade levels minus any outgoing students—has typically helped stabilize enrolment, but recent cohorts have not offset the large Grade 12 graduating classes.

Additional discussion covered special-needs projections, adult Dogwood enrollment, and childcare operations, all reinforcing the district's cautious, stability-focused budgeting approach.

**d. Energy Management and Capital Project planning**

Operations Manager Mike Souchuck provided an update on energy-management initiatives and capital projects. This year's CNCP (Carbon Neutral Capital Program) submission focuses on upgrading air-handler motors and heating-loop pump motors to improve system efficiency. Funding decisions from the Ministry are expected within the next one to two weeks.

For context, the district's energy-efficiency work has been guided by an ongoing partnership with energy manager Josh Munro, formerly of BC Hydro, who has helped Operations identify projects with strong cost-savings and emissions-reduction potential. His analysis has informed both CNCP submissions and prioritization within AFG (Annual Facilities Grant) projects, emphasizing upgrades that deliver the greatest long-term efficiency gains.

Trustee Young noted that this work builds on an earlier energy-consulting process involving Prism Engineering, which identified numerous smaller but high-impact improvements. While previous assessments covered five buildings, the district hopes to secure future grant funding to expand this work to additional sites.

It was noted that the Districts' acronym list (a list created to provide a summary for the various acronyms used within the School District) has been posted on the District website under *Parents/ Resources for Parents*.

**6. ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD****7. FUTURE TOPICS**

- Budget Development – refine pressures/priorities
- Annual Budget (April/May)
- Q3 Financial Summary
- Capital (Major/Minor) Program Announcement

**8. NEXT MEETING DATE:**

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 10:30 a.m. via videoconferencing

**9. ADJOURNMENT**