



FINANCIAL REPORTING AND OPERATING SURPLUSES

Context:

The Board of Education has a mandated obligation to care for and effectively use public funds to provide an educational program for all Qualicum School students. In order to ensure the financial integrity of the public accounts in its care, the Board requires the Secretary-Treasurer to develop and present to the Board quarterly financial reports at a Regular Public Board Meeting which outline the financial position of the School District. The Board also has a responsibility to effectively manage any accumulated surpluses. An accumulated operating surplus allows a School District to budget for expenditures in excess of revenues in a given year, and also serves to reduce financial risk that can result from financial forecasting uncertainty and unforeseen circumstances.

Policy Statement:

1. The Board expects management of current and future finances will be wise and prudent.
2. In all financial decision making, the interests of providing a quality educational program to students will be central.
3. Wherever possible, financial plans will consider environmental sustainability as an important short-term and long-term factor.
4. The Board expects (and is mandated) to prepare a balanced budget.
5. The Board will maintain an unrestricted operating surplus as a contingency reserve to be used to mitigate future budget shortfalls. If possible, the targeted amount of unrestricted operating surplus will be between 2% and 3% of the total operating expenses for that year.

Guiding Principles:

The Board believes that:

1. All school district business will conform with generally accepted best business management practices
2. To maintain an open and honest climate in School District 69, all financial documentation will be explainable and clearly understandable by trustees and the public.
3. Budget preparation will include planning, reviewing and decision-making phases. At each phase consultation with stakeholders and the public, including First Nations and Métis Nation BC, will be arranged and encouraged.
4. Budget planning will recognize needs of the students, the system, and new programs identified by all those involved in consultations and will align with existing policies, programs and initiatives [i.e. Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) and targeted funds for Indigenous Education].
5. Newly budgeted projects and programs will be fully reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis.
6. Financial reports will be presented quarterly at a public meeting of the Board.
7. An unrestricted operating surplus of between 2% and 3% of the preliminary budget should be built into budget planning.

Multi-Year Financial Plans

The Board annual operating budget is aligned with the three-year financial plan that the Board must develop, implement, and annually provide to the Ministry reflecting the implementation and maintenance of the Board's educational and operational objectives including enhanced student



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educational outcomes. The financial allocations included in the budget should support the strategic directions identified in the Board's Strategic Plan

Financial Reporting

The Board will also report the Board's progress on aligning funding and resources with their strategic plans and other operational needs of the school district, including enhancing student educational outcomes, by posting annual information on its website as part of its usual report out to stakeholders and the public.

The Board will use the existing Ministry financial reporting framework (including a Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis Report) to annually report on boards' progress towards meeting board objectives as outlined in their multi-year financial plans (for example, enhanced student educational outcomes and other operational needs of the board).

Definitions:

1. *Accumulated operating surplus*: The extent to which operating revenues from all previous years exceeds operating expenditures less Inter-Fund Transfers from current and prior years.
2. *Accumulated Operating Deficit*: The extent to which operating expenditures from all previous years exceeds operating revenues less Inter-Fund Transfers from current and prior years.
3. *Accumulated Operating Deficit*: The accumulated excess of Operating Expenses over Operating Revenues less Inter-Fund Transfers from current and prior years.

References:

- *The School Act*, Part 6 – Boards of Education

Dates of Adoption/Amendments:

Adopted: 79.11.21

Amended: 84.06.06: 87.10.28: 89.02.22: 94.02.22: 00.11.28: 16.04.26: 2021.01.26:
2022.05.24: **2023.06.27**



Financial Reporting

In order to ensure the financial integrity of the public accounts in its care, the Board of Education will be provided with quarterly financial reports showing the current financial status of the School District. These reports will include year-to-date summations of revenues and expenditures and will compare to the current budget and to prior year results.

Accumulated Operating Surpluses

The Accumulated Operating Surplus will be comprised of the following categories:

1. Internally restricted operating surplus

To support long-term financial planning the board can restrict operating surplus for use in future years within ministry-specified guidelines (see the [Ministry Companion Guide to the Accumulated Operating Surplus Policy](#)). To increase transparency, appropriations require a board motion. It is appropriate for some motions to be made in a closed board meeting (for example, related to land, legal or personnel matters), but the default should always be to a public meeting motion whenever possible.

Restrictions can be made for items that are identified by the board, have defined timelines, are directly related to a board's goals outlined in their strategic, operational and financial plans, or that meet the specified needs of the school district. The three streams of internally restricted operating surplus are:

- a. Restricted due to the nature of constraints on the funds;
- b. Restricted for anticipated unusual expenses identified by the board; and
- c. Restricted for operations spanning multiple school years

2. Restricted for future capital cost sharing

To support major capital projects that are identified in boards' 5-year Capital Plans, and approved by the Ministry for concept plan or business case development, the board may restrict operating surplus to satisfy capital project cost share expectations at the time the project is brought forward for funding approval. Capital cost share expectations can be found within the [Capital Planning Instructions](#).

3. Local capital

Local Capital includes the board's portion of any proceeds from the disposition of capital assets, transfers from operating funds and interest earned on Local Capital funds restricted for the purchase of tangible capital assets. Transfers from operating funds to Local Capital must be made only for specific initiatives that have a clear linkage to the board strategic goals, or that address capital assets investment, or that meet the specified needs of the school district.



4. Unrestricted operating surplus (contingency)

1. In conjunction with the Board's review and approval of the annual financial statements, the Board will recognize a portion of the accumulated operating surplus (if one exists) for the purpose of forming a reserve for contingencies.
2. The unrestricted operating surplus will be sufficient to reduce, to an appropriate level, financial risk that results from financial forecasting risk and/or unforeseen circumstances.
3. Effective multi-year funding of projects and programs requires the allocation of prior year revenues to fund future expenditures and is achieved through budgetary appropriation of accumulated operating surplus.
4. The unrestricted operating surplus is to be used only to fund additional cost pressures that result from circumstances beyond the School District's control or, with the Board's approval, in response to unforeseen circumstances.
5. Examples for use of the unrestricted operating surplus may include:
 - a. Elimination of any deficit arising at the end of the fiscal year
 - b. Incurring of new cost pressures in a fiscal year that were not known at the time of budget development
 - c. Settlement of legal action that is not covered by the School Protection Program
 - d. Initial one-time cost outlays for new educational programs
 - e. Coverage for disaster recovery expenditures
 - f. Extraordinary unknown utilities cost pressures
 - g. To appropriate to balance the next year's budget
6. When use of the unrestricted operating surplus reduces the balance below what is determined to be sufficient, the Board will adopt strategies for replenishing the unrestricted operating surplus within an appropriate timeframe.

5. Reporting

The board will use the existing Ministry financial reporting framework and the sample reporting template in the Companion Guide to annually provide the Ministry with an annual report on their budget allocation decisions, (including operating surplus and Local Capital), demonstrating that approved allocations support boards' strategic objectives.

Process

1. In conjunction with the Board's review and approval of the financial statements, the Secretary Treasurer will present for the Board's review and approval the internal restriction of accumulated operating surplus for:
 - a. Multi-year funding of projects and programs; and,
 - b. Capital project cost sharing



2. Prior to adoption of each annual budget and amended budget, the Secretary Treasurer will present for the Board's review and approval, allocation of budget for the purpose of unrestricted operating surplus, and when applicable, strategies for replenishing the unrestricted operating surplus, or opportunities for allocation of accumulated surplus to support annual program expenditures.

References:

- Board Policy 106: Financial Reporting and Operating Surpluses

Dates of Adoption/Amendments:

Adopted: 18.08.28

Amended: 2021.01.26: 2022.05.24: **2023.06.27**