



Financial Plan 2026-2029



Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

With gratitude and respect, we acknowledge that we live, learn, and work on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish: T'Sou-ke Nation, SĆIΛNEW (Beecher Bay) Nation, and the Nuu-chah-nulth: Paaʔčiidʔath (Pacheedaht) Nation. We also recognize that some of our schools are located on the traditional territories of the MÁLEXEΛ (Malahat) Nation, and the Ləkʷəŋən peoples of Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

Executive Summary

The Sooke School District Board of Education presents this financial plan as a multi-year framework aligning resources with the priorities of the Strategic Plan 2025–2029. It outlines projected revenues and expenditures from 2026 to 2029, ensuring that financial decisions are purposeful, transparent, and focused on supporting student success and the systems that sustain it.

Guided by our [Strategic Plan](#), we focus on three defining priorities: learning, engagement, and growth. These commitments shape our decisions and inform how resources are allocated across the organization.

The financial environment in which this plan is developed is increasingly complex. Inflationary pressures, rising capital demands, and global uncertainty continue to influence costs and funding assumptions. These are immediate and evolving pressures that require careful planning, disciplined stewardship, and a strong commitment to long-term stability.

At the same time, slowing enrolment growth presents additional challenges that require adaptability and thoughtful planning. The plan also assumes full provincial funding for recently negotiated collective agreements with both teachers and support staff.

Within this context, the financial plan reflects a balanced approach: managing limited resources responsibly while remaining responsive to the needs and priorities of our community. It is grounded in long-term thinking, collaboration, and a shared commitment to educational excellence.





Creating the Budget

The Board of Education has established a budget process rooted in collaboration, purpose and transparency. It ensures that the priorities of the Strategic Plan are fully supported by the resources required to bring them to life and that we are fulfilling our mandate in the School Act.

This process invites meaningful engagement through communication and consultation with partners and the public, while reinforcing trust by reporting decisions back to the community. At every stage, it remains aligned with the requirements of the *School Act*, collective agreements, Board Policy and all regulatory obligations.

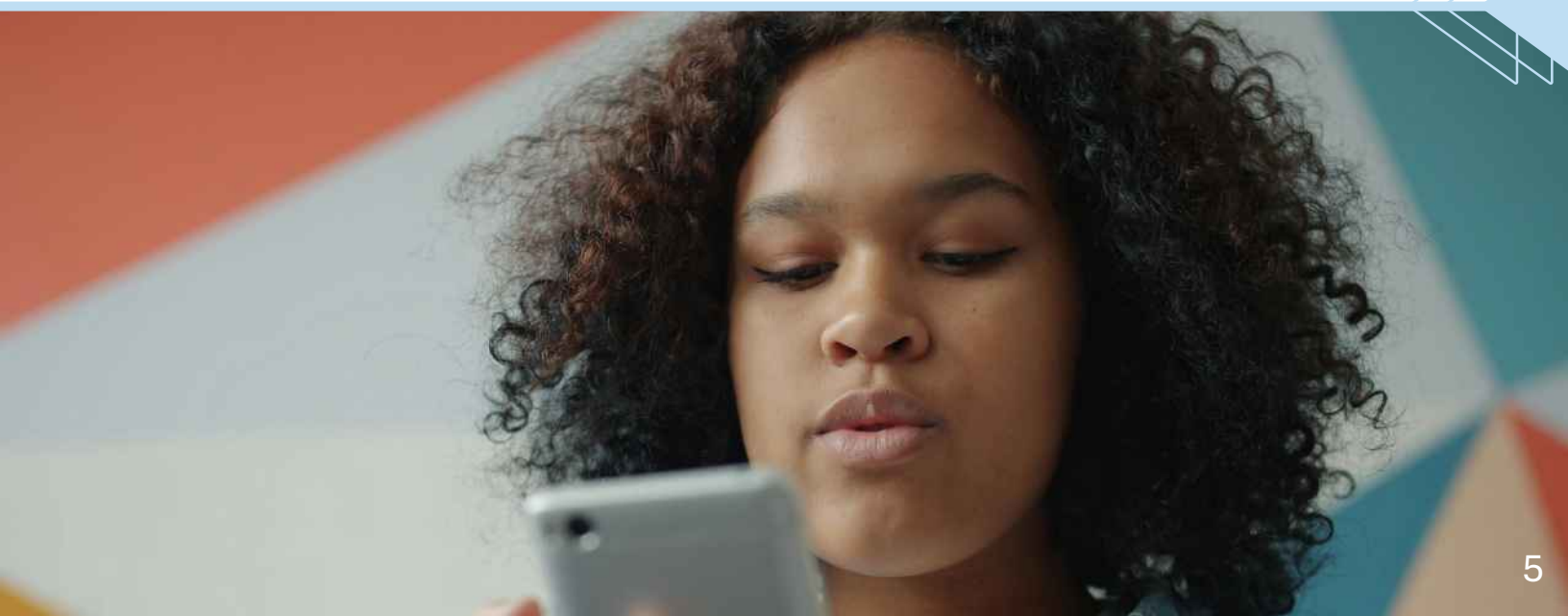
In a complex and evolving environment, this approach ensures that financial decisions are both responsible and responsive, grounded in integrity and focused on the needs of those we serve.

Timelines

As per the *School Act*, the Board must adopt an annual budget on or before June 30 of each year for the next fiscal year. The District started the budget process in November with the first reading of the budget planned for May. Through the Resources Committee, a special Education Committee of the Whole meeting in May, public Board Meetings, surveys, and communication through the District website and social media, the process is transparent and provides multiple consultation opportunities for partner and public input.

Partner, Public and Student Engagement

GROUP	ENGAGEMENT	DATES
IEC	Budget Presentation Written Submission	February 3, 2026 March 31, 2026
CUPE STA	Written Submissions	February 13, 2026 February 17, 2026
SPEAC SPVPA	Partner Budget Presentations	February 18, 2026
Leadership Budget Working Group	Advisory	February - March, 2026
Public	Survey	March 11 - April 2, 2026
Students	Survey	March 13 - April 17, 2026
SPEAC	Presentation	April 15, 2026



Board Engagement

TOPIC	COMMITTEE	BOARD TABLE
Budget principles, assertions and process	Resources Committee November 18, 2025	November 25, 2025
2026/27 Fees	Resources Committee February 10, 2026	February 24, 2026
Budget Development Update	Resources Committee April 14, 2026	April 28, 2026
Presentation of Draft Budget	Education Committee of the Whole May 19, 2026	N/A
1st & 2nd Reading of Budget	N/A	May 26, 2026
3rd Reading of Budget	N/A	June 23, 2026

Budgeting Strategic Priorities

Our budget allocations are intentionally aligned with the priorities of our Strategic Plan, balancing operational needs with Ministry mandates and the unique values of our community. This alignment sharpens our focus from the district level to each individual learner, fostering a cohesive and responsive environment that delivers on our mission.

PRIORITY	ACTION
Learning	Develop and support adaptable learners who are creative, critical, and social thinkers with the capacity to be educated citizens.
Engagement	Foster a strong sense of community and belonging among students, families, staff, and the wider community, encouraging a shared responsibility for education.
Growth	Strive for operational excellence by using sustainable practices and constantly improving our ability to meet the needs of our growing community.





Budget Fund Types

The District’s Budget is comprised of three separate Funds: Operating Fund, Special Purpose Fund, and Capital Fund. The District’s total budget bylaw amount includes expenses and asset purchases from all funds. The Operating Fund is where the majority of the District’s expenses are reported and is driven by domestic and international student enrolment.

OPERATING FUND

Revenue

- Operating Grant Revenue
- International Revenue
- Other Revenue

Expenditures

- Instruction
- District Administration
- Operations and Maintenance
- Transportation

SPECIAL PURPOSE FUND

- Classroom Enhancement Fund (CEF)
- Annual Facilities Grant (AFG)
- Feeding Futures Fund
- Community Link
- Academies
- School Generated Funds

CAPITAL FUND

- New Schools
- School Enhancement Programs (HVAC, Roofing Upgrades)
- Seismic Mitigation Projects
- Bus Purchases
- Playgrounds
- Land Purchases



Operating Grant Allocation

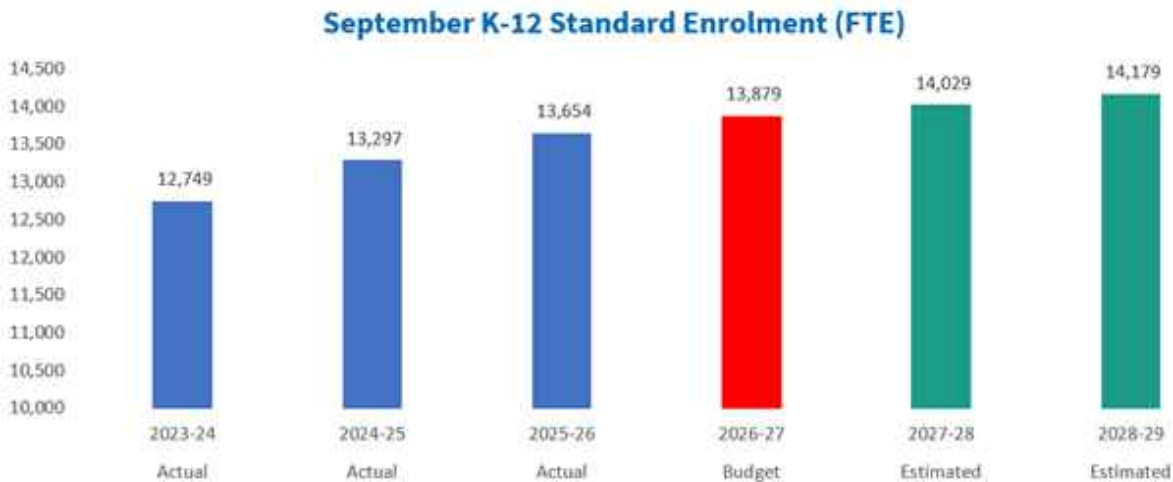
In March 2026, the Ministry announced the preliminary operating grants for school districts for 2026-2027 based on enrolment estimates provided by school districts. The District's preliminary operating grant allocation is \$177.63 million. These grants do not include any increases to address inflationary cost pressures or estimated labour settlement costs. As such, each of the per FTE funding levels remained unchanged from the 2025/26 funding levels, including the Basic Allocation for standard, continuing education and alternate schools at \$9,015 per school age FTE.

Basic Allocation per FTE



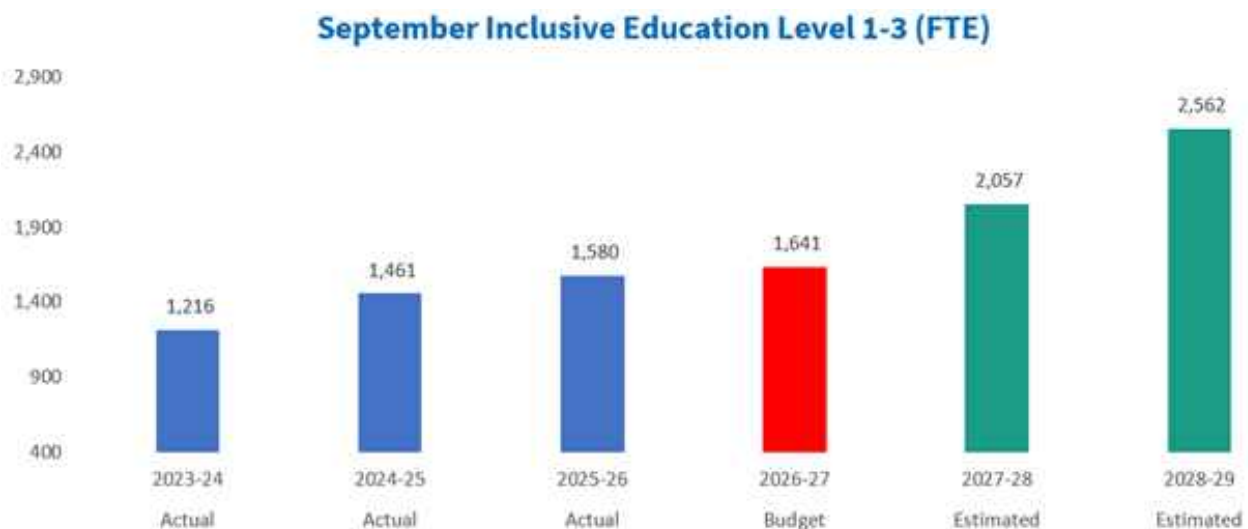
September K-12 Standard Enrolment

The chart below shows 3 years of historical September K-12 Standard Enrolment, and the projected enrolment for the next 3 years. At 13,879 FTE in 2026/27, enrolment is expected to increase by 225 FTE over the prior year which is 1.65% of anticipated growth from the prior year. This growth is contrary to the estimated enrolment decline of 5,442 FTE (4.13%) across the province. Enrolment growth is expected to continue to slow with an increase of 150 FTE in 2027/28 and another increase of 150 FTE in 2028/29.



September Inclusive Education Enrolment

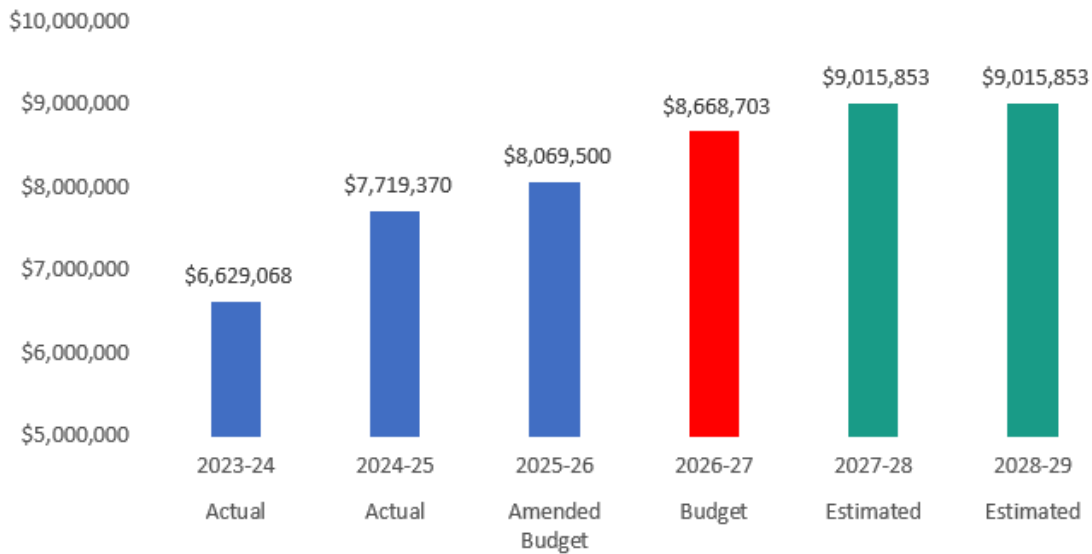
School districts also receive supplemental funding in the Operating Grant for those students with disabilities or diverse abilities in order to provide additional supports and resources. The enrolment count of students with disabilities or diverse abilities is reported in September and February. With an estimated September enrolment of 1,641 FTE in 2026/27, the chart below shows a budgeted increase of 61 FTE (4%) from the prior year. Based on Ministry projections, enrolment is expected to increase with another 416 FTE in 2027/28 and an increase of 505 FTE in 2028/29.



International Student Program

The International Student Program (ISP) generates additional tuition revenue separate from the Operating Grant and helps fund existing infrastructure and services elsewhere in the District. Due to the competitive nature of the international student programs around the world as well as the current geopolitical climate and space constraints within the District, the projected enrolment is estimated to remain relatively static at 262 FTE in 2026/27 and for the subsequent two years. Additionally, to pay for program cost increases, the ISP fees are increasing by \$1,325 per FTE to \$31,650 in 2026/27, and another \$1,450 to \$33,100 in 2027/28. As the tuition rates have yet to be set for 2028/29, they are estimated to remain the same as the prior year.

International Student Program Revenues



Operating Fund Expenses

Staffing levels take various factors into consideration including student and educational needs, funding availability, enrolment growth, and organizational capacity. As student enrolment is projected to increase so will staffing levels. For the 2027/28 to 2028/29 years, teacher staffing increases assume additions at a 1 to 24 teacher to student ratio. Staffing for educational assistants is still to be determined and will depend on the distribution of identified student needs and available resources.

Staffing Chart - Total FTE - Operating Fund

	Actual 2023-24	Actual 2024-25	Amended Budget 2025-26	Budget 2026-27	Estimated 2027-28	Estimated 2028-29
Teachers*	653	649	678	691	697	703
Principals and Vice Principals	71	70	74	75	75	75
Educational Assistants	452	520	567	TBD	TBD	TBD
Support Staff	297	294	295	296	296	296
Other Professionals	48	49	56	56	56	56
Total	1,521	1,581	1,670	TBD	TBD	TBD

*Total teachers (including CEF) for Budget 2026-27 is 900 FTE

NOTE - Final staffing for educational assistants in 2026/27 is estimated at an additional 10-15 FTE from prior year

Staffing Chart - Year over Year Changes in Total FTE - Operating

	Actual 2024-25	Amended Budget 2025-26	Budget 2026-27	Estimated 2027-28	Estimated 2028-29
Teachers*	(4)	29	13	6	6
Principals and Vice Principals	(1)	4	1	-	-
Educational Assistants	68	47	TBD	TBD	TBD
Support Staff	(3)	1	1	-	-
Other Professionals	1	7	-	-	-
Total	60	88	TBD	TBD	TBD

*Total teachers (including CEF) year over year increase for Budget 2026-27 is approximately 13 FTE

NOTE - Final staffing for educational assistants in 2026/27 is estimated at an additional 10-15 FTE from prior year

As labour settlement funding was not released in the preliminary operating grants in March 2026, the 2026/27 budget assumes collective agreement costs will be fully funded by the Province and will be reflected in the 2026/27 Amended Budget in February 2027.

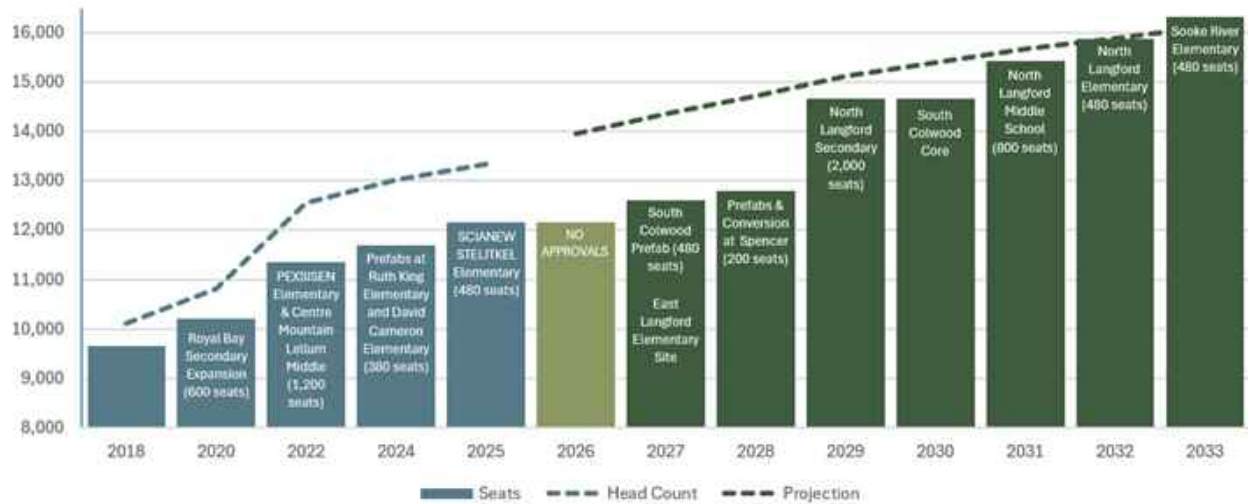
Interfund Transfers and Capital Planning

When capital assets are purchased with operating funds, they must be transferred from the Operating Fund to the Capital Fund in order to be properly capitalized and amortized (expensed) over the life of the asset. This transfer is reflected as an inter-fund transfer.

The District is not anticipating any inter-fund transfers for 2026/27.

The response from the Ministry to the District's 2026-27 Annual Five-Year Capital Plan submission did not include support for any new expansion program capital projects. Despite the additions of the new SCÍĀNEW STEĪĪTĪKEĪ Elementary School and 18 prefabricated classrooms at David Cameron Elementary and Ruth King Elementary, the District is anticipating continued space challenges in the future as a result of estimated future growth until the new secondary school in North Langford becomes operational.

Head Count vs. Seats



Accumulated Operating Surplus

The use of the operating surplus enables the Board to engage in long-term planning, mitigate financial risk and support consistent services. The Board believes that the maintenance of a strong financial position is fundamental to the District's overall fiscal strategy, and as such, an appropriate level of unrestricted surplus funds should be established. The Board has a policy to build and maintain a unrestricted surplus of 2% of operating expenses.



Multi-Year Operating Fund Financial Plan Summary

The following table is a detailed financial plan summary for the Operating Fund. It considers the projected enrolment and related effects on staffing and expenditures, interfund transfers, and the Accumulated Operating Surplus.

	Actual 2024/25	Amended 2025/26	Budget 2026/27	Estimated 2027/28	Estimated 2028/29
Revenues					
Provincial Grants					
Ministry of Education and Child Care	167,904,326	175,076,663	178,631,875	188,631,525	200,493,555
Other	145,071	169,121	142,050	142,050	142,050
Tuition	7,840,268	8,276,500	8,758,703	9,105,853	9,105,853
Other Revenue	2,050,040	2,116,219	2,092,515	2,092,515	2,092,515
Rentals and Leases	610,131	589,114	589,114	589,114	589,114
Investment Income	1,093,499	853,875	889,286	889,286	889,286
Total Operating Revenue	179,643,335	187,081,492	191,103,543	201,450,343	213,312,373
Salaries					
Teachers	63,672,448	67,197,647	69,035,990	70,445,572	71,855,154
Principals and Vice Principals	10,528,971	11,510,769	11,729,673	12,001,363	12,273,053
Educational Assistants	19,926,893	21,984,311	22,995,311	29,745,700	37,949,912
Support Staff	16,228,256	16,791,318	16,317,836	16,382,836	16,382,836
Other Professionals	6,251,259	6,926,937	7,146,433	7,317,930	7,489,427
Substitutes	7,569,033	7,212,657	7,217,120	7,247,120	7,277,120
Total Salaries	124,176,860	131,623,639	134,442,363	143,140,521	153,227,502
Employee Benefits	32,196,907	35,639,587	37,781,332	41,199,211	45,005,647
Employee Benefit Rate (as a % of Total Salaries)	25.93%	27.08%	28.10%	28.78%	29.37%
Services and Supplies					
Services	8,379,961	9,650,459	8,794,474	9,141,624	9,141,624
Professional Development and Travel	1,316,892	1,270,035	1,321,488	1,321,488	1,321,488
Rentals and Leases	486,248	394,114	445,809	445,809	445,809
Dues and Fees	198,420	188,596	200,456	200,456	200,456
Insurance	557,648	740,451	618,154	618,154	618,154
Supplies	5,649,412	5,763,808	4,954,252	4,999,252	4,999,252
Utilities	2,038,580	2,346,344	2,266,344	2,336,344	2,336,344
Bad Debt	15,432	25,800	15,800	15,800	15,800
Total Services and Supplies	18,642,593	20,379,607	18,616,777	19,078,927	19,078,927
Total Operating Expense	175,016,360	187,642,833	190,840,472	203,418,659	217,312,076
Net Revenue (Expense)	4,626,975	(561,341)	263,071	(1,968,316)	(3,999,703)
Interfund Transfers					
Tangible Capital Assets Purchased and Work in Progress	(436,749)	(2,328,094)	-	-	-
Local Capital	(300,000)	-	-	-	-
Total Interfund Transfers	(736,749)	(2,328,094)	-	-	-
Total Operating Surplus (Deficit), for the year	3,890,226	(2,889,435)	263,071	(1,968,316)	(3,999,703)
Operating Surplus, beginning of year	3,746,823	7,637,049	4,747,614	5,010,685	3,042,369
Total Operating Surplus (Deficit), for the year	3,890,226	(2,889,435)	263,071	(1,968,316)	(3,999,703)
Operating Surplus, end of year	7,637,049	4,747,614	5,010,685	3,042,369	(957,334)
Operating Surplus, end of year					
Internally Restricted Operating Surplus	3,907,014	-	1,193,876	-	-
Unrestricted Operating Surplus (Contingency)	3,730,035	4,747,614	3,816,809	3,042,369	(957,334)
Total Operating Surplus, end of year	7,637,049	4,747,614	5,010,685	3,042,369	(957,334)
Contingency as % of Operating Expense	2.13%	2.53%	2.00%	1.50%	-0.44%

As labour settlement funding was not released in the preliminary operating grants in March 2026, the 2026/27 budget assumes collective agreement costs will be fully funded by the Province and will be reflected in the 2026/27 Amended Budget in February 2027.



Special Purpose Funds

Contributions restricted from an external party are reported as Special Purpose Funds (SPF). The annual funding received varies from year to year and the funding is not always confirmed at the time that the budget is prepared. The more significant SPF of the District include the Classroom Enhancement Fund (CEF), Learning Improvement Fund (LIF), Community LINK, Official Languages in Education French Programs (OLEP), Strong Start, Academies, School Generated Funds, and the Feeding Futures Fund.

Capital Funds

The Capital Fund includes capital expenditures for land, buildings, buses and other tangible capital assets that are funded from the Ministry capital grants, local capital, the Operating Fund, and Special Purposes Funds.

The 2026/27 budget includes \$7.5 million in anticipated total capital additions that are to be amortized (expensed) over the useful life of the asset.

Some of the more significant capital projects include:

- Expansion Program (EXP) – An initial \$2.1 million for the construction of the new secondary school in North Langford. This will grow in future years.
- School Enhancement Program (SEP) – \$1.2 million for HVAC upgrades at John Muir Elementary and \$0.8 million for HVAC upgrades at Willway Elementary.
- Carbon Neutral Capital Program (CNCP) – \$0.5 million for HVAC upgrades at Sangster Elementary.
- Food Infrastructure Program (FIP) – \$0.125 million for a new kitchen and equipment upgrades at various schools.
- Playground Equipment Program (PEP) - \$0.2 million for a new universally accessible playground at Sangster Elementary.
- The new childcare centre at Hans Helgesen Elementary, with project costs of approximately \$1.0 million in 2026/27, is expected to be completed in Fall 2026.



Summary of Budget Bylaw Changes

Summary of Budget Bylaw Changes 25-26 Amended Budget to 26-27 Budget (in \$ millions)

Type	Strat Plan Link	FTEs	Operating	SPF	Capital	Total
25/26 Amended Budget (net of carry overs)			186.064	39.845	15.371	241.280
Inflation and Growth						
Targeted:						
Inclusive Education Services	Learning	TBD	1.294			1.294
Na'tsa'maht Indigenous Education	Learning		-0.016			-0.016
Indigenous Education Councils	Engagement		-0.069			-0.069
International Student Program	Learning		0.461			0.461
Child Care	Learning		0.029			0.029
Seamless Day	Learning		-0.089	-0.055		-0.144
Staffing:						
Teachers	Learning	13.00	1.774			1.774
Port Renfrew Elementary Vice Principal	Learning	1.00	0.177			0.177
Bus Driver - accessible route	Growth	1.00	0.051			0.051
Other pressures:						
Employee Benefits	LEG		1.355			1.355
Increments	Learning		1.292			1.292
Inflationary	LEG		0.139			0.139
Ratios - enrolment driven services and supplies	LEG		0.223			0.223
NA'TSA'MAHT Indigenous Education Department	Learning		0.025			0.025
Other:						
Feeding Future Fund SPF	Learning			0.021		0.021
Learning Improvement Fund SPF	Learning			0.034		0.034
Early Care and Learning Fund SPF	Learning			0.053		0.053
Classroom Enhancement Fund SPF	Learning			0.107		0.107
Academies Program	Learning			0.075		0.075
Various SPF	Learning			-0.008		-0.008
Annual Facilities Grant non-capital expenditures	Growth				-0.532	-0.532
Amortization Expense	Growth				0.184	0.184
Reallocation						
Administrative savings	LEG		-1.307			-1.307
Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program	Learning	-11.00	-0.562			-0.562
26/27 Budget			190.840	40.072	15.023	245.936

NOTE - Final staffing for educational assistants in 2026/27 is estimated at an additional 10-15 FTE from prior year.