



Rainy River District School Board

2023-2024 Budget Report



Together, we empower all students to believe in themselves, to achieve, and to dream.



Rainy River District School Board

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Trustees and Administration



Jeffrey Lehman
- Chair



Kathryn Pierroz
- Vice Chair



Mike Walchuk
- Chair Finance Committee



John Fuhrer
- Trustee



Michael Graham
- Trustee



Sarah Creed
- Trustee



Tammy Ryll
- First Nation Trustee



Charles Watts
- Student Trustee, 2021-23



Avery Lundgren
- Student Trustee, 2022-24

Board of Trustees

The Rainy River District School Board of Trustees consists of seven trustees: six elected and one appointed First Nation representative. There are two student trustees, representing student voice from across our three secondary schools.

Administration

Heather Campbell

Director of Education

Meghan Cox

Superintendent of Business

Allan McManaman

Superintendent of Education

Elizabeth Fairfield

Superintendent of Education

Kevin Knutsen

Executive Officer of Employee and Labour Relations

Key Statistics



Students

Elementary: 1,563.00

Secondary: 819.75



Personnel

Instructional: 374.47

Support: 54.92

Trustees: 9



Schools

Elementary: 11

Secondary: 3

Community Partnerships &
Alternative Education: 3

Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Mission:

Together, we empower all students to believe in themselves, to achieve, and to dream.

Vision:

The Rainy River District School Board is an innovative community, nurturing hearts, and minds, to build a foundation for tomorrow, today.



Budget Process

January-
February 2023

- **Pre-budget Preparation** - budget plan was communicated to Trustees
- **Enrolment Projections**

March 2023

- **Stakeholder Input** - requests for feedback to School Councils, Union partners, and Board Advisory Committees. Student Voice was gathered through the Student Senate representatives. Parents/guardians, staff, and students were invited to provide feedback through key questions asked through a Thought Exchange.
- **Enrolment Determination**

April 2023

- **Grants for Student Needs** - Ministry of Education announced details for the 2023-24 school year.
- **EFIS Released**

May 2023

- **Revenue and Expenditure Determination**
- **Budget Balancing**

June 2023

- **Budget Presentation**
- **Trustee Approval**
- **Ministry Filing**

Budgetary Roles

Trustees: Approve annual budget that is in compliance with Board and Ministry requirements

Director and Superintendents: Prepare the budget to align with Strategic Plan priorities and Ministry requirements

School Administrators: Advise on school priorities, staffing needs, and enrolment

Department Managers: Advise on system needs and requirements

Finance Department: Prepares preliminary budget documents based on input from administration and Ministry guidelines

Stakeholders: Provide budget feedback through venues such as the ThoughtExchange survey



Budget Considerations

General

- The 2023-24 budget reflects a focus on providing our schools with the resources and supports necessary to support the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan of the Board.
- Stakeholder input was gathered through requests for feedback to School Councils, Union partners, and Board Advisory Committees. Student Voice was gathered through the Student Senate representatives. Parents/guardians, staff, and students were invited to provide feedback through key questions asked through a Thought Exchange.



Revenues

- The budget has been developed using the enrolment projections for 2023-24 school year as a key driver for determining funding.
- Provincial Funding is based on the 2023-24 Grants for Student Needs GSN released in April 2023.
- Other revenue sources including Reciprocal Education Approach (REA) base fees, Priority and Partnership (PPF) funds, and miscellaneous revenues have also been reviewed and included in the budget accordingly.
- Priorities and Partnership Funding (PPF) have not been included unless they have been confirmed.

Expenses

- Salaries are based on contractual obligations, with consideration of Ministry of Education parameters.
- Benefits are based on projected costs and contractual agreements.
- Transportation is based on contractual agreements and service requirements.
- Expense categories requiring adjustments due to cost pressures have been reviewed.
- As well, with declining enrolment and staffing limitations, the impact on revenues and expenses must also be considered in this decision-making.

Key Challenges:

Staffing

The availability of qualified staff has been challenging in 2022-2023, and we are currently seeing this challenge continue for the 2023-2024 school year. This challenge has a potential to impact outcomes for our students and create additional stress for the staff that cover for these vacancies. Going forward, the Board will need to carefully evaluate any specialized programming opportunities to ensure that core programming is not compromised.

The province has provided funding for additional positions; however, there is not a sufficient pool of qualified candidates from which we can draw. There may be some risk associated with staffing these new positions and achieving the outcomes the province wishes to see. Regular communication with the province is ongoing, and these are known risks for all school boards.

Cyber Security and Information Technology

The risk of falling victim to a cyber-attack is one of the greatest risks school boards face. A cyber-attack can disable the system, affecting teaching and learning, payroll, finance, human resources, our Student Information System, records management, and even life safety systems. While the direct risks have been insured, being compromised carries reputational risk and takes a toll on all stakeholders. In order to reduce cyber risk, the Board continues to engage in a variety of cybersecurity strategies to ensure the protection of our computer systems, networks, and data from unauthorized access, disruption, or destruction. A large constraint in having an effective cybersecurity strategy is having suitable resources available to ensure the most current technologies are used, training is carried out, and specialized staff are employed. Funding for these areas is limited in the public sector. This budget provides for resources in IT Fees and Contracted Services beyond the amounts previously incurred to support the implementation of our cyber security strategy.



Other Considerations

Other items which pose additional risk to the proposed budget include supporting students with high needs who enroll after the school year begins, rising staff attendance costs, inflation, post-pandemic pricing and the availability of goods and services, and legislative changes. Conservative budgeting based on internal financial models, historical trends, and known changes in our environment is our best defense and thus, has been employed in the drafting of this budget. All non-salaried accounts will be monitored, and funds re-prioritized to address the operational needs within the system for the 2023-2024 school year, as necessary.

Our Plans

Highlights in the 2023-2024 budget are aligned with the Strategic Plan pillars of a Culture of Caring and a Culture of Lifelong Learning.

The Culture of Caring Pillar is supported with the following:

- Continued support for mental health professional services in all schools.
- Increased support for Autism Support Workers and the continuation of Behavioral Therapists for our elementary schools.
- Increased funding for Youth Outreach Workers and the continuation of the FFHS Indigenous Grad Coach position to engage students and embed culturally relevant and responsive programming in our schools.
- Continued funding for the work of our Equity Committee, to provide equity-focused professional development and resources, to create culturally responsive, identity-affirming learning environments.
- Maintenance of enhanced support for field trips and secondary athletic excursions in light of rising fuel costs.
- A reinvestment in school nutrition funding in the 2023-24 school year, in addition to funds to address student support needs (e.g., clothing, personal care items, extracurricular supports, etc.).

A Culture of Lifelong Learning has been supported by:

- A continued focus on literacy interventions and supports that align with *The Right to Read* report. In the 2023-24 school year, the Heggerty program will expand from all Kindergarten classes to include all classes up to Grade 3, and two additional schools will implement the Empower Reading Program, which was piloted at Robert Moore School in the 2022-23 school year. These Ministry-approved programs will provide interventions and instruction in phonics, reading fluency and comprehension strategies.
- A focus on building capacity in literacy instruction and interventions, with staffing allocations for literacy supports at some of our elementary schools based on need. Working with our Literacy Lead, these schools will work to build teacher capacity and to champion best practices for literacy intervention and instructional strategies.
- A continued focus on numeracy with the hiring of Superintendent of Education focused on improved outcomes with respect to math. Working with the STEM Coordinator, this position will support the consistent implementation of high-impact instructional practices and facilitate job-embedded professional learning opportunities for educators.
- Support for the Ojibwe Language Strategy, Anishinaabemodaa and expansion of Ojibwe language instruction. Students from the Anishinaabemowin Ojibwe Language Program

will continue to support our Ojibwe language classes and will help to expand our Ojibwe Language program.

- Funding to support ongoing training and professional development for school staff, through the following positions:
 - a Literacy Lead focused aligning literacy intervention and instruction practices throughout the Board.
 - an elementary STEM Coordinator working with the Math Lead to continue the implementation of the elementary Math curriculum.
 - an Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program/Experiential Learning Coordinator and a Technology Enabled Learning (TELT)/ Secondary Curriculum Coordinator
 - A TechWays Coordinator, to provide programming to students in Grades 7 and 8 that focuses on career/pathway planning support along with opportunities for increased hands-on/experiential learning and an emphasis on the skilled trades
- Continued work to embed First Nation, Métis and Inuit history, culture and perspectives across the curriculum, with funding to support:
 - an Indigenous Education Leader, Indigenous Graduation Coach, Ojibwe Language Coordinator, and Youth Outreach workers to share knowledge of Indigenous culture and Anishinaabemowin with our learners,
 - schools to invite Elders, Senators, and Knowledge Keepers to share their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives,
 - schools to provide rich land-based learning opportunities.

As the previous increase to base school allocations was in the 2017-18 school year, school allocations have been increased, reflecting the rise in GSN benchmarks over the same period and enrolment. Additional allocations have been released that include funding to continue the provision of swimming lessons for all Grade 1 students and to support transportation costs associated with field trips for all schools and secondary athletics, especially in light of the increasing costs related to transportation outside of home to school.

An additional priority identified for the coming year was the need for funding to alleviate costs related to our school nutrition programming and to address other barriers facing our students to succeed at school (e.g., personal care items, adequate shoes and clothing, application fees for post-secondary education, etc.). Schools will have discretion to utilize these funds in the way that best meets the needs of their school community.



The top-ranked priority in the Student Support Foundation Ad Hoc Committee ThoughtExchange was a need for robust School Nutrition Programming at our schools. To address this identified need, the proposed 2023-24 budget includes a School Support Navigator (SSN) position. This position will play a key role across the Board with respect to establishing student supports. The most significant focus of Board SSN will be to support schools in establishing consistent nutrition programming at little to no cost to our students. The SSN will also assist schools in applying for and accessing grants supporting nutrition and other school-based needs.

Enrolment projections that were updated for the 2023-2024 school year reflect the following:

	2022-23 Budget	2023-24 Budget	Variance
Elementary	1,522.00	1,563.00	Increase 41.00
Secondary	839.00	819.75	Decrease 19.25
TOTAL	2,361.00	2,382.75	Net Increase 21.75

We saw a significant increase in our JK/SK registrations over the summer/fall of 2022, which resulted in increased enrolment of approximately 61 students from Estimates during that time period. As compared to Revised Estimates for 2022-23, there is a net enrolment decrease of 35.73 for the 2023-24 school year. The enrolment projections above have been provided in consultation with our schools, with a review being completed by central staff and then updated for current confirmed registration information.

The 2022-23 budget included an allocation of Student Achievement Teachers funded through the COVID staffing fund. Within the expiration of the COVID staffing fund, the overall elementary teacher allocation is down slightly as compared to last year, as the Student Achievement Teachers (SATs) initiative has been discontinued. The intention of this initiative was to support at-the-elbow support and capacity building related to literacy across elementary; however, the intention was undermined by the need to redeploy SATs to cover unfilled teacher absences with a qualified teacher throughout the school year. Secondary staffing has increased by approximately 1.7 FTE over the prior year. This can be attributed to an increase in the secondary-specific Supported Schools allocation, as well as to the expansion of Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) sections; these allocations are now included in the GSN and can be staffed at the outset of the year, rather than in previous years where these allocations were provided through a PPF grant once initial staffing had been completed. The 2023-2024 budget has an increase of 4.0 FTE in the Paraprofessionals line, with an additional Youth Outreach Worker, Autism Support Worker, School Support Navigator, and IT Technician to support students across the system.

Northern Lakes K-12:

Below is a chart that illustrates the change in FTE based on the consolidation of North Star Community School and Atikokan High School to Northern Lakes K-12 beginning in fall 2023.

	2022-23 North Star FTE	2022-23 Northern Lakes 7-12 FTE	2023-24 Northern Lakes K-12 FTE	Variance Decrease (Increase)
Elementary Teachers	10.80	2.70	13.50	NIL
Secondary Teachers		12.50	12.00	0.50
Early Childhood Educators	2.00		2.00	NIL
Principals / Vice Principals	1.00	1.00	2.00	NIL
School Office	1.00	1.50	2.00	0.50
Operations & Maintenance	1.60	4.00	4.00	1.60
Total	16.40	21.70	35.50	2.60

Though the consolidated has resulted in an overall lower staffing compliment, there has been no individual job loss/redundancy. Through attrition, both a caretaker and school secretary moved from a part-time allocation to full-time allocations, and there are currently a full-time caretaker and teaching vacancies to be filled for the coming year.

Grants for Student Needs Summary

The Ministry of Education announced 2023-2024 funding on April 17, 2023. Funding to the sector is estimated to be \$27.1 billion, a 2.7%-point increase over the 2022-23 school year.

Highlighted grants announced:

- **New Funding Formula for Student Transportation:** The Ministry has implemented a new Student Transportation Grant funding framework based on common reference standards for the province.
- **Safe and Clean Schools Supplement:** The Ministry is providing additional funding within the Learning Opportunities Grant for additional services that support student well-being and that maintain clean schools.
- **Labour-Related Changes:** Updates to salary benchmarks and other funding elements are being made based on the expected increases for expenses related to the labour provisions, subject to the outcome and conclusion of negotiations.
- **Realignment of Indigenous Education Funding:** Funding realignment to better support Indigenous education priorities is reflected through changes to the First Nations, Métis,

and Inuit Studies and Board Action Plan allocations within the Indigenous Education Grant, and a one-time realignment mitigation fund.

- **Other PPFs Transfers to the Grants for Student Needs:**

- Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Expansion Funding
- Early Math Intervention for Students with Special Education Needs Funding
- Demographic Data Gathering Funding

- **Capital**

- School Renewal Allocation: The RRDSB allocation is \$1,274,713.
- School Condition Index: The RRDSB allocation is \$3,081,084.
- Temporary Accommodation Allocation: The RRDSB allocation is \$21,474.
- Capital Planning Capacity: The RRDSB allocation is \$83,285.

Notable Budget Considerations:

Indigenous Education

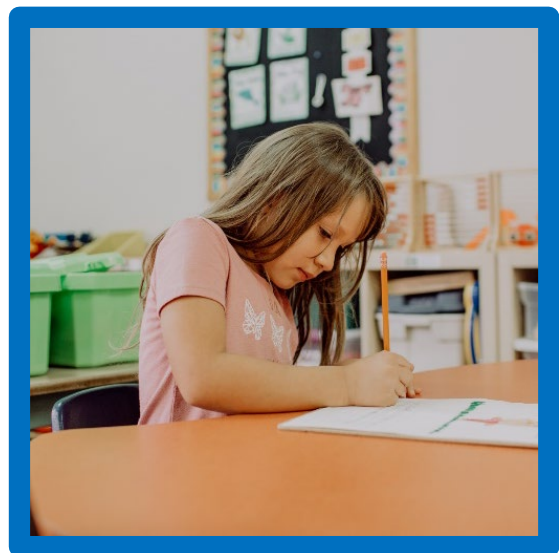
Funding for Indigenous Education has been realigned for 2023-2024. The impact of the funding changes has resulted in an overall increase to our Indigenous Education funding allocation of approximately \$240,000, largely attributed to the increase in the Board Action Plan funding allocation.

De-streaming

The province is continuing to support secondary de-streaming initiatives. A new \$106,800 investment from the province will allow staff to begin to work with Grade 7 and 8 students prior to their transition to high school. There is also a guarantee of funding for de-streaming beyond the 2023-2024 school year.

Transportation

The Ministry is implementing a new funding model for transportation beginning in the 2023- 2024 school year. This formula provides funding to boards based on the province's collection of boards' transportation data and subsequent modelling of routes using standardized benchmark costs for fuel, vehicles, driver wages, training programs, and other relevant cost areas. Funding has increased by \$228,684; however, costs have increased by \$270,387 per the current contract rates. Much of the new funding is a direct flow through to school bus operators, for fuel, driver retention bonuses, and driver wage enhancements. Further, the funding formula does not recognize the use of passenger vehicles (e.g., taxis and mini vans), or vehicle idle time between runs as



cost drivers. Feedback has been given to the province with a request that these oversights be addressed. The Ministry will release further information on next steps as they relate to implementation.

Labour Enhancements

While provincial labour negotiations are not complete, the Ministry has provided boards with some funding to support potential enhancements. Given this, administration has built in an expense to reflect the potential settlements. Although the funding benchmark has increased for Education Assistants under the Pupil Foundation Grant, due to our limited enrolment levels, this equates to an FTE of 0.30 to the system. In order to maintain support and supervision at our schools, administration will look to fund the wage/benefit increase from other grants available (e.g., Special Education, Supports for Students, Geographic Circumstances, etc.). Both provincial and local negotiations have concluded for the Board's CUPE staff (Caretakers, Clerks, Designated Early Childhood Educators, Maintenance, School Secretaries).



Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF)

The Grants are focused on learning and well-being to support students with a significant focus on math, literacy, mental health and well-being, and student pathways. PPFs are time limited and reviewed annually by the Ministry of Education. The total projected provincial grants amount is \$516.22 million, with \$372.2 million released to boards for planning purposes; the remaining \$144.02 million is to be allocated later in the year. Grants that have been announced to date for the Rainy River District School Board are:

Key Priority	Objective	Program	Amount for Rainy River
Indigenous Education	To support the academic success and well-being of Indigenous students	Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program (AYEP)	\$26,000
Indigenous Education	To support the academic success and well-being of Indigenous students	Indigenous Grad Coach Program	\$141,400
Indigenous Education	To support the academic success and well-being of Indigenous students	Ojibwe Language Revitalization Strategy	\$1,408,500
Math	To support Ontario's students in meeting provincial math standards	Math Recovery Plan – Board Math Lead, Digital Math Tools, School Math Facilitator	\$458,800
Mental Health and Well-Being	To support the critical linkage between mental health, well-being, and student success.	Heath Resources, Training and Supports	\$6,200
Mental Health and Well-Being	To support the critical linkage between mental health, well-being, and student success.	Summer Mental Health Supports	\$86,000
Special Education	To improve support for children and youth with special education needs.	Professional Assessments	\$104,000
Special Education	To improve support for children and youth with special education needs.	Special Education Additional Qualifications (AQ) for Educators	\$7,000
Special Education	To improve support for children and youth with special education needs.	Summer Learning for Students with Special Education Needs	\$79,400
Student Pathways	To support students throughout secondary school and as they transition to post-secondary destinations, including apprenticeship, community living, college, university, and the workplace.	Entrepreneurship Education Pilot Projects	\$10,000
Student Pathways	To support students throughout secondary school and as they transition to post-secondary destinations, including apprenticeship, community living, college, university, and the workplace.	Experiential Professional Learning in the Skilled Trades for Guidance Counsellors	\$11,500
Student Pathways	To support students throughout secondary school and as they transition to post-secondary destinations, including apprenticeship, community living, college, university, and the workplace.	Skilled Trades Bursary Program	\$10,000

Supporting Student Potential	To provide supports for students to be successful in de-streamed learning environments.	De-streaming Implementation Supports, Staffing to Support De-streaming and Transition to High School	\$129,100
Supporting Student Potential	To ensure that all young learners receive the necessary foundational skills and early interventions in reading that are critical to future success.	Education Staff to Support Reading Interventions, Early Reading Screening Tools, Licenses for Reading Intervention Supports	\$269,600
Total Allocation released to date			\$2,747,500

Accumulated Surplus:

School boards are required to pass balanced budgets. When boards are in deficit positions and have accumulated surplus, an in-year deficit may be permitted. The use of the accumulated surplus cannot exceed the lesser of:

- The accumulated surplus for the preceding year or
- 1% of the Board's operating revenue.

If the use of accumulated surplus exceeds this level, approval from the Ministry of Education is required. There are certain accumulated surplus draws that are not included in the Ministry's balanced-budget compliance calculation such as amortization of board-funded capital project and amortization of board asset retirement obligations (ARO). The Board-approved draws from accumulated surplus within this draft budget do not exceed the 1% or \$423,277 of the Board's operating revenue. Therefore, the Board does not have to request further Ministry approval.

For the 2023-24 budget, the impact of proposed reinvestment on the Board's accumulated surplus and compliance calculation would be as follows:

Accumulated Surplus Draw	Value (\$)
Amortization of Board-funded Capital Projects	\$205,084
Amortization of Board Asset Retirement Obligations (ARO)	\$52,669
Reinvestment in Student Nutrition	\$95,000
Reinvestment in Mental Health Supports	\$97,247
Reinvestment in Speech Language Supports	\$110,000
Total Accumulated Surplus Draw	\$560,000
Adjustments for Compliance Purposes	\$(257,753)
Total Accumulated Surplus Draw for Compliance Purposes	\$302,247

Financial Overview

Rainy River District School Board 2023-2024 Preliminary Budget			
	2022-2023 Preliminary Budget	2023-2024 Preliminary Budget	Decrease / (Increase)
<u>Revenues:</u>			
Grants	43,695,013	43,667,163	27,850
Priorities and Partnerships Funding	2,360,249	2,747,500	(387,251)
Other Revenues	9,301,334	9,721,689	(420,355)
Capital Debt Allocation for Operating	718,641	678,742	39,899
GSN for Deferred Capital Contributions (DCC)	(1,677,657)	(1,888,713)	211,056
Amortization of DCC	3,566,900	4,476,979	(910,079)
Accumulated Surplus Draw	400,978	560,000	(159,022)
	58,365,458	59,963,360	(1,597,902)
<u>Expenses:</u>			
Operating Expenses	54,540,895	55,171,455	(630,560)
Amortization	3,824,563	4,791,905	(967,342)
	58,365,458	59,963,360	(1,597,902)
Net Surplus/Deficit	-	-	-

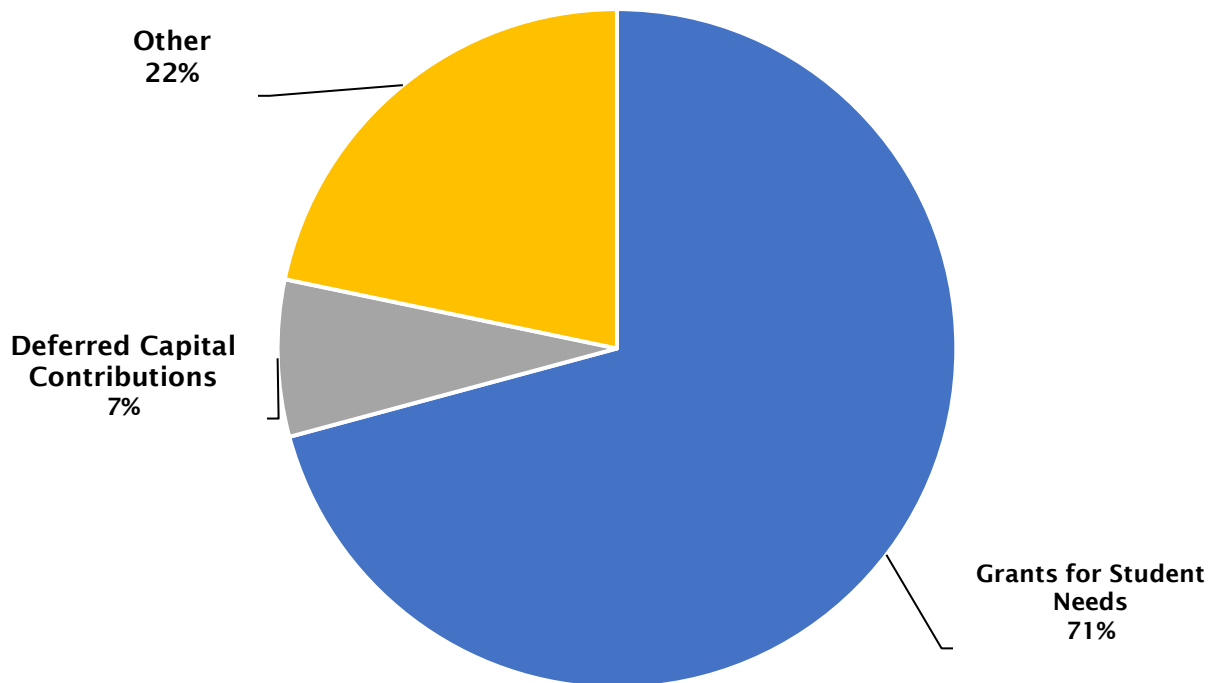


Revenues

Revenue Analysis for 2023-24 - Preliminary			
REVENUE CATEGORIES	2022-2023 Preliminary Budget	2023-24 Preliminary Budget	Decrease (Increase)
GRANTS FOR STUDENT NEEDS (GSN)			
Pupil Foundation:			
Elementary	6,747,628	7,080,469	(332,841)
Secondary	4,288,071	4,244,517	43,554
School Foundation	2,880,187	2,808,728	71,459
Special Education:			
Special Education Per Pupil Amount	1,494,442	1,568,383	(73,941)
Special Equipment Amount	95,805	96,771	(966)
Net High Needs	2,652,751	2,650,856	1,895
Local Special Education Priority Amount	117,895	121,845	(3,950)
SIP	57,606	57,606	-
Multi-Disciplinary Teams	467,239	477,926	(10,687)
Section 23	356,442	242,716	113,726
Behaviour Expertise	254,599	264,429	(9,830)
Early Math Intervention Amount	-	107,361	(107,361)
Language - FSL/ESL	265,348	242,667	22,681
Supported Schools	2,599,347	2,290,918	308,429
Remote and Rural	2,422,334	2,473,518	(51,184)
Rural and Northern Education Fund	256,120	258,634	(2,514)
Qualifications & Experience	2,766,723	2,689,433	77,290
New Teacher Induction Program	56,588	56,855	(267)
ECE Qualifications & Experience	126,232	106,291	19,941
Restraint Savings	(38,628)	(38,628)	-
Transportation	3,175,804	3,404,488	(228,684)
Administration & Governance	2,404,249	2,470,244	(65,995)
Pupil Accommodation:			
Operations	3,404,999	3,436,833	(31,834)
Community Use of Schools	51,474	50,902	572
Renewal	1,089,657	1,274,713	(185,056)
Temporary Accommodation	-	-	-
Learning Opportunities	765,985	1,049,970	(283,985)
Declining Enrolment	299,837	102,230	197,607
Indigenous Education Allocation:			
NSL	421,013	409,849	11,164
Native Studies Amount	91,577	71,750	19,827
Board Action Plan Amount:			
Min Amount	87,618	90,318	(2,700)
Per Pupil Amount	125,625	134,071	(8,446)
Supplemental Amount	-	265,953	(265,953)
Mental Health and Well-Being:			
Safe Schools Amount	91,027	94,680	(3,653)
Mental Health Workers Allocation	517,952	535,380	(17,428)
Well-being Allocation (School Climate and Student)	36,662	38,289	(1,627)
Program Leadership Grant	938,796	952,294	(13,498)
Supports for Students Fund	478,258	496,290	(18,032)
COVID-19 Learning Recovery Fund	860,137	-	860,137
Perm Financing NPF	987,614	987,614	-
Total Operating Allocation	43,695,013	43,667,163	27,850
Capital Allocation for Operating	718,641	678,742	39,899
GSN Revenues Transfer to Deferred Capital Cont (DCC)	(1,677,657)	(1,888,713)	211,056
NET GRANTS FOR STUDENT NEEDS (GSN)	42,735,997	42,457,192	278,805

REVENUE CATEGORIES	2022-2023 Preliminary Budget	2023-24 Preliminary Budget	Decrease (Increase)
OTHER REVENUES			
Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF)	2,360,249	2,747,500	(387,251)
Tuition Fees	8,560,380	8,302,518	257,862
Other Grants and Special Program Revenues	251,932	354,170	(102,238)
Other (incl. School Generated Funds)	489,022	1,065,001	(575,979)
Accumulated Surplus Draw	400,978	560,000	(159,022)
TOTAL OTHER REVENUES	12,062,561	13,029,189	(966,628)
AMORTIZATION OF DCC	3,566,900	4,476,979	(910,079)
TOTAL REVENUES	58,365,458	59,963,360	(1,597,902)

Revenue for 2023-24

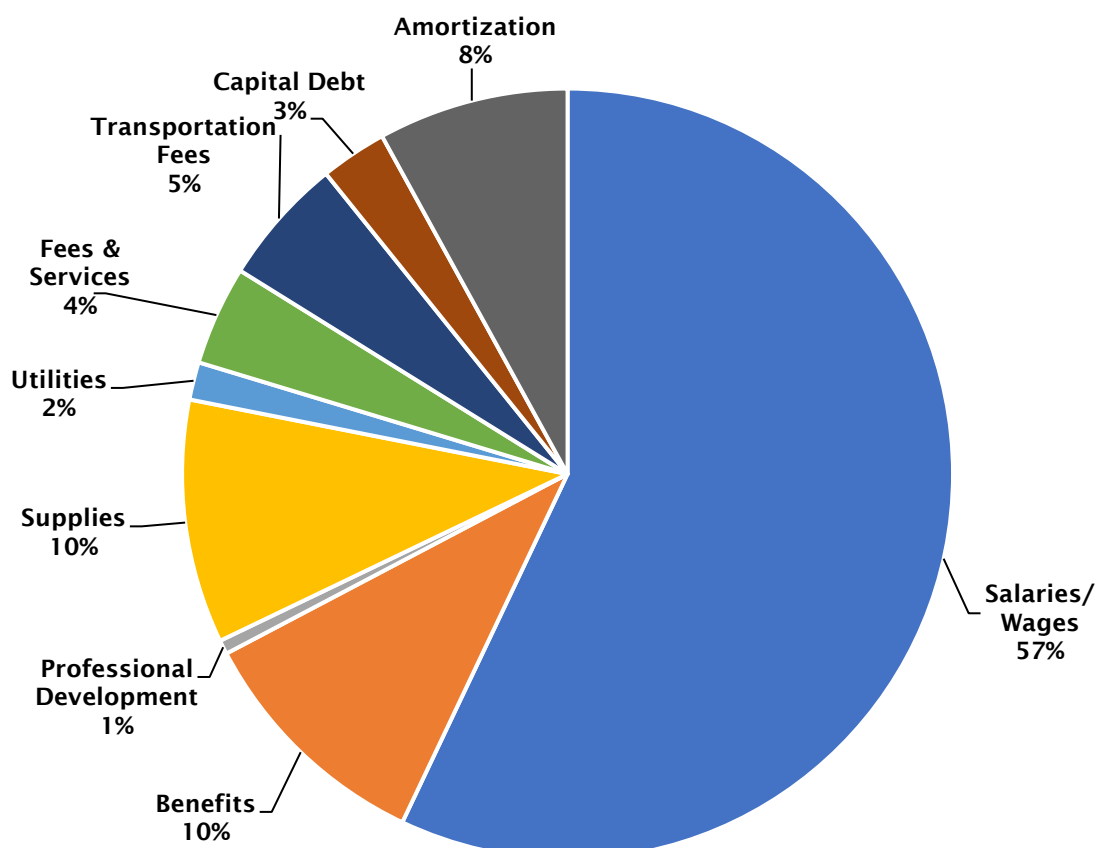


Expenses

Summary Expense Report for 2023-2024

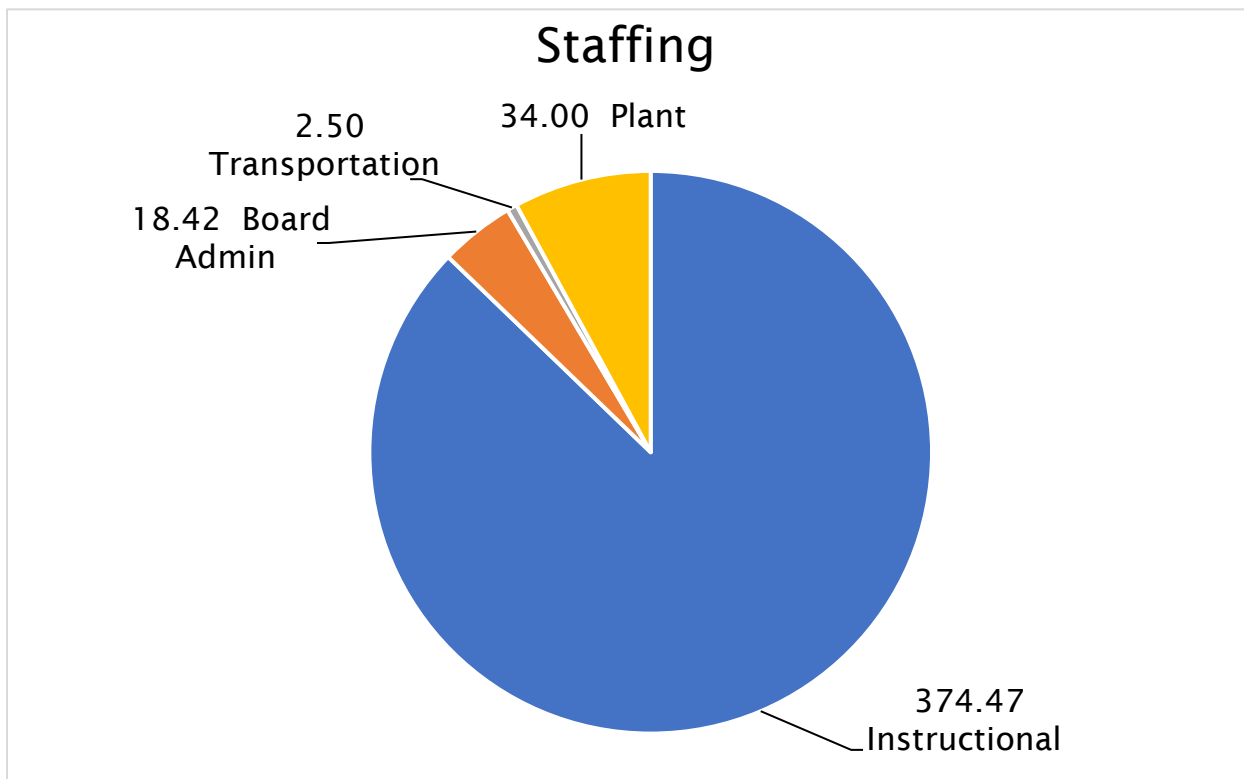
	2022-2023 Preliminary Budget	2023-2024 Preliminary Budget	Variance Decrease (Increase)
Salaries/Wages	33,551,379	34,209,366	(657,987)
Benefits	5,852,089	6,139,841	(287,752)
Professional Development	448,614	353,867	94,747
Supplies	6,546,598	6,128,687	417,911
Utilities	901,700	946,995	(45,295)
Fees & Services	2,557,311	2,500,456	56,855
Transportation Fees	2,948,500	3,218,887	(270,387)
Capital Debt	1,734,704	1,673,356	61,348
Amortization	3,824,563	4,791,905	(967,342)
TOTAL	58,365,458	59,963,360	(1,597,902)

Expenses for 2023-24



Summary of Expenses and Staffing FTE for 2023-2024						
Expense Categories	2022-2023 Preliminary Budget		2023-2024 Preliminary Budget		Variance Decrease (Increase)	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
INSTRUCTIONAL						
Elementary Teachers Salary/Benefits	116.17	12,872,731	115.77	13,069,403	0.40	(196,672)
Secondary Teachers Salary/Benefits	67.18	7,960,248	67.84	8,064,302	(0.66)	(104,054)
Education Support Personnel Salary/Benefits	91.46	3,992,495	90.95	4,502,788	0.51	(510,293)
Early Childhood Educators Salary/Benefits	11.00	670,882	12.00	733,455	(1.00)	(62,573)
Supply Teachers Salary/Benefits		826,284		532,759		293,525
Computers						
Supplies/Services		413,000		290,000		123,000
Fees/Contracted Services		289,770		412,700		(122,930)
Capital		543,000		514,000		29,000
Texts and Supplies						
Supplies/Services		3,301,236		3,129,008		172,228
Fees/Contracted Services		60,000		60,000		-
Capital						
Professional / ParaProfessionals						
Salary/Benefits	27.00	2,404,327	31.00	2,663,507	(4.00)	(259,180)
Supplies/Services		479,430		498,963		(19,533)
Fees/Contracted Services		2,082,541		2,027,756		54,785
Library / Guidance						
Salary/Benefits Teachers	2.16	260,891	3.16	387,880	(1.00)	(126,989)
Salary/Benefits Assistants/Techs	10.70	447,861	9.70	461,177	1.00	(13,316)
Supplies/Services		25,900		15,500		10,400
Fees/Contracted Services						
Staff Development						
Salary/Benefits		245,199		75,652		169,547
Professional Development		203,530		114,122		89,408
Principals and Vice Principals						
Salary/Benefits	16.30	2,323,584	17.30	2,461,644	(1.00)	(138,060)
PD		25,000		25,000		-
Supplies/Services		13,000		13,000		-
Fees/Contracted Services		70,000		-		70,000
School Office						
Salary/Benefits	16.70	1,035,474	16.50	1,073,876	0.20	(38,402)
PD		10,000		10,000		-
Supplies/Services		251,270		217,240		34,030
Fees/Contracted Services						
Coordinators and Consultants						
Salary/Benefits	10.50	1,353,288	10.25	1,393,715	0.25	(40,427)
Supplies/Services		33,874		1,200		32,674
Fees/Contracted Services						
TOTAL INSTRUCTIONAL	369.17	42,135,711	374.47	42,748,647	(5.30)	(553,832)

Expense Categories	2022-2023 Preliminary Budget		2023-2024 Preliminary Budget		Variance Decrease (Increase)	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
BOARD ADMINISTRATION						
Trustees		162,043		161,303		740
Director and Supervisory Officers	2.00	373,917	2.00	373,883	-	34
Administration						-
Salary/Benefits	15.10	1,403,461	16.42	1,540,195	(1.32)	(136,734)
PD/Supplies/Services		446,023		426,498		19,525
Fees/Contracted Services		501,000		367,379		133,621
TOTAL BOARD ADMINISTRATION	17.10	2,886,444	18.42	2,869,258	(1.32)	17,186
TRANSPORTATION						
Salary/Benefits	2.50	260,117	2.50	268,534	-	(8,417)
Supplies/Services		76,500		76,500		-
Fees/Contracted Services		2,948,500		3,218,887		(270,387)
TOTAL TRANSPORTATION	2.50	3,285,117	2.50	3,563,921	-	(278,804)
OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE						
Salary/Benefits	35.60	2,920,264	34.00	2,692,878	1.60	227,386
PD		7,500		7,500		-
Supplies/Services		1,930,100		1,985,895		(55,795)
Fees/Contracted Services		153,400		144,000		9,400
Capital		45,000		100,000		(55,000)
TOTAL OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE	35.60	5,056,264	34.00	4,930,273	1.60	125,991
CAPITAL						
Renewal		1,089,657		1,274,713		(185,056)
Capital Debt Obligations		1,706,255		1,673,356		32,899
TOTAL CAPITAL		2,795,912		2,948,069		(152,157)
TOTAL OTHER		-		-		-
CAPITAL EXPENSES TRANSFERRED TO DCC		(1,677,657)		(1,888,713)		211,056
AMORTIZATION		3,824,563		4,791,905		(967,342)
TOTAL EXPENSES	424.37	58,365,458	429.39	59,963,360	(5.02)	(1,597,902)



Special Education

Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA)

The Special Education Per Pupil Amount provides assistance to students with special needs. The SEPPA is allocated to boards based on enrolment. In 2023-24, the SEPPA amounts are as follows:

Grade Range	Amount Per Pupil
Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3	\$1,087.90
Grades 4 – 8	\$835.65
Grades 9 – 12	\$549.95

Special Education Amount (SEA)

Special Education Amount (SEA) funding is provided by the Ministry of Education to acquire equipment needed to support identified students with special needs. This amount is separated into two components: a per pupil amount including a base funding amount that has remained consistent at \$20,000, and a student claims amount, where the Rainy River District School Board pays the first \$800 of each student claim.

For 2023-24, the SEA per pupil amount has remained stable at \$39.461. Previous to the increase in 2022-23 the benchmark had remained stable for several years.

Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount (DSENA)

This funding model attempts to address the variation among boards with respect to students with special education needs and the board's abilities to meet those needs. In 2023-24, the DSENA is made up of the:

- Measure of Variability Amount (MOV), which includes the inclusion of the Northern Support Initiative,
- Special Education Statistical Prediction Model (SESPM),
- Base Amount for Collaboration and Integration,
- Multi-Disciplinary Supports provides funding to help build Board capacity, assisting educators, Education Support Personnel, and other support staff to better understand and adapt to the unique needs of their students.
- Local Special Education Priorities Amount, formerly a PPF, is allocated to address local priorities (special education staffing, evidence-based programming, and interventions, as well as transition supports).

- Early Math Intervention Amount intended to help to close learning gaps and ensures students are prepared for the transition into a de-streamed Grade 9 curriculum.

Behavior Expertise Amount (BEA)

The Behavior Expertise Amount (BEA) is funding provided by the Ministry of Education to assist boards with the hiring of staff with Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) expertise. The funding has increased this year with the movement of the After-School Skills Development (ASSD) funding from a PPF to the GSN. Funding is estimated at \$264,429 for the 2023-2024 school year.

Special Education 2023-24						
	2022-2023 Preliminary Budget		2023-2024 Preliminary Budget		Variance Decrease (Increase)	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
REVENUE:						
SEPPA (per pupil base)		1,494,442		1,568,383		(73,941)
Special Equipment (per pupil base)		95,805		96,771		(966)
Net High Needs Amount		2,652,751		2,650,856		1,895
Multi-Disciplinary Teams		467,239		477,926		(10,687)
Approved SIP		57,606		57,606		-
Behaviour Expertise Amount		254,599		264,429		(9,830)
Section 23 Classrooms		356,442		242,716		113,726
Local Priority Funding - Spec Ed		117,895		121,845		(3,950)
Early Math Intervention Amount		-		107,361		(107,361)
Special Education - Other Grants & Revenues		110,100		317,703		(207,603)
Total Grant Revenue		5,606,879		5,905,596		(298,717)
Tuition Fees		1,184,115		1,210,113		(25,998)
TOTAL REVENUE		6,790,994		7,115,709		(324,715)
EXPENSES:						
Salary/Benefits:						
Teachers	14.11	1,567,432	14.26	1,652,616	(0.15)	(85,184)
Supply Teachers		10,000		10,000	-	-
Educational Assistants *	91.46	3,742,495	90.95	4,252,788	0.51	(510,293)
Casual Educational Assistants		250,000		250,000	-	-
Professionals/Paraprofessionals/Consult.	14.00	1,163,717	15.50	1,246,216	(1.50)	(82,499)
Total Staffing	119.57	6,733,644	120.71	7,411,620	(1.14)	(677,976)
Departmental Expenses:						
Supplies and Services		199,079		304,800		(105,721)
Equipment		95,805		96,771		(966)
Total Operating Expenses		294,884		401,571		(106,687)
TOTAL EXPENSES	119.57	7,028,528	120.71	7,813,191	(1.14)	(784,663)
Projected Surplus (Deficit)		(237,534)		(697,482)		(459,948)

* In order to support the supervision needs at our schools, all ESPs will be offered at 6.50-hour day for the 2023-24 school year. This increased day (from 6 to 6.50) would equate to an additional 3.50 ESPs as compared to last year.

School Allocations

Schools are allocated budget funding, based on formula and enrolment:

Formula	Elementary
\$201.41	Per every FTE
\$3,000	Small School Allocation for schools under 50 FTE
\$1,500	Additional Phone Allocation
\$27.12	Per every FTE for Furniture and Equipment (F&E)
\$3,000 or \$5,000	Field Trips

Formula	Secondary
\$504.85	Per every FTE for small schools (RHS and NLS)
\$355.54	Per every FTE except small schools
\$27,500	Per Secondary School for Extra-Curricular Transportation
\$1,500	Additional Phone Allocation
\$1,050	Additional Office Allocation
\$10,000	Additional Outers funding at NLS
\$27.12	Per every FTE for Furniture and Equipment (F&E)
\$20,000 or \$40,000	Field Trips

Field Trip and Extra-curricular Transportation

Field trip and extra-curricular transportation continues to be an area of risk for the coming year. Increasing costs and ongoing driver shortages pose risks to the breadth of extra-curricular athletics and competitions, as well as to the ability to plan and provide field trips.

Administration has entered into vendor of record agreements with transportation providers to encourage competition among proponents in order to generate the lowest cost solutions for field trips and extracurriculars. Additional funds have been allocated in the budget to support field trips and to offset the costs for students to compete in secondary athletics, specifically in the area of transportation.

Stakeholders identified access to the Late Bus as a need in the District in order to enable students to fully participate in extra-curriculars and school-based programming. Procurement took place in the 2022-23 school year, and operators are available to provide Late Bus runs for students. Funds have been allocated to support this area, and further information and promotion of this support will be communicated to schools and students in the fall.

Student and School Support

School Support Navigator

The greatest need identified through the Ad Hoc Committee ThoughtExchange was robust nutrition programming. Student access to clothing, shoes, and personal care items was also identified as important to supporting improved student success.

To address these identified needs, the proposed 2023-24 budget includes a School Support Navigator (SSN) position. The Northwestern Health Unit currently funds a similar position, the Student Support Navigator, at Fort Frances High School, a position which complements the role of the FNMI Grad Coach. The School Support Navigator position expands this equity work across the District, with a particular focus on establishing supports to help students to overcome obstacles to regular attendance and success at school. The most significant focus of the Board SSN will be to support schools in establishing consistent nutrition programming at little to no cost to our students. The SSN will also assist schools in applying for and accessing grants supporting nutrition and other school-based needs.



Nutrition Reinvestment

In 2022-23, the Board allocated \$500,000 to support school-based nutrition in future years; these funds will be purposely accessed to address the challenges facing our students. For the 2023-24 school year, schools will be supported from this fund with a draw of \$95,000 to support school-based nutrition programming in light of decreased external grants and rising food costs.

Other Needs

Through the work of the Student Support Foundation Ad Hoc Committee, a number of challenges facing our schools and students have been identified. In the 2023-24, an additional budget allocation of \$36,500 has been allocated to schools to support students with other needs, whether supplying basic personal needs, eliminating attendance barriers, supporting future pathways, or participating in school activities.

In order to address the second greatest need identified through the Student Support Foundation Ad Hoc Committee ThoughtExchange, administration is proposing to develop a School Grant program beginning in the 2023-24 school year. Schools will have the opportunity to apply for funding to support initiatives such as extracurricular/intramural clubs and activities (e.g., arts, music, chess, sports); initiatives promoting physical and mental health and well-being; and other school-based initiatives, particularly where existing grants and funding are not available. An amount of \$20,000 has been allocated to this initiative in the proposed budget.

Capital Projects

The Rainy River District School Board is responsible for operating and maintaining its schools as effectively and responsibly as possible with an emphasis on programming that will support student achievement and well-being.

The capital budget is comprised of interest on long-term debt and amortization of capital assets. The costs of assets are reflected on the balance sheet, although not reported for budgeting purposes. Instead, the amortization of assets is shown as the expenditure over the expected life of the asset.

The Board's long-term debt principal and interest payments are fully supported by the Ministry of Education through the GSN.

There are several sources of capital funding available to the Board. The Board's Facility Master Plan, which will be updated in the coming months, will play a key role in determining upcoming projects based on needs.

Some major capital projects that are planned for the current and upcoming budget year are as follows:

<div><div>Rainy River K-12</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• 47,921 sqft• Budget: \$30,173.882• Projected Completion: Fall 2024</div></div>	<div><div>Nestor Falls Modular</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Projected 6,700 sqft• Budget: \$2,638,903• Projected Completion: Fall 2024</div></div>	
<div><div>FFHS Renovations</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget: \$1,895,000• Projected Completion: January 2024</div></div>	<div><div>FFHS Roofing</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget: \$1,635,890• Projected Completion: October 2023</div></div>	<div><div>Sturgeon Creek Roofing</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget: \$925,495• Projected Completion: July 2023</div></div>

Trustee Expenses

Trustee and Governance for 2023-24

	Budget	
	2022-23	2023-24
<u>Revenue</u>		
Grants	106,100	105,983
Assoc Fee *	58,084	58,745
Tuition Fee	37,607	37,022
Total Revenue	201,791	201,750
<u>Expenses:</u>		
Honoraria	64,459	63,058
Conferences	23,000	23,000
OPSBA *	58,084	58,745
Metrage	7,000	7,000
Miscellaneous	9,500	9,500
Total Expenses	162,043	161,303
Net Position	39,748	40,447

Note:

* Association Fee - Grant has been recognized for trustee association fee. Expense has been matched.

Stakeholder Input

Stakeholder feedback is used to inform the development of the Board’s annual budget. Advisory committees, community and union partners, staff, school councils, parents/guardians, and students were invited to provide feedback as well as participate in a Thought Exchange this spring, which asked participants the following:



As we plan for the 2023-2024 school year, what are the most important things our Board needs to think about in order to support all students?

The Thought Exchange had 360 participants and generated 170 thoughts, with 7,959 ratings. In addition to the Thought Exchange, we received written feedback from the Parent Involvement Committee, the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Advisory Committee, and the Student Senate.



Of the respondents to the Thought Exchange, the following illustrates the breakdown in stakeholders:

What is your involvement with Rainy River District School Board? Please select all that apply.

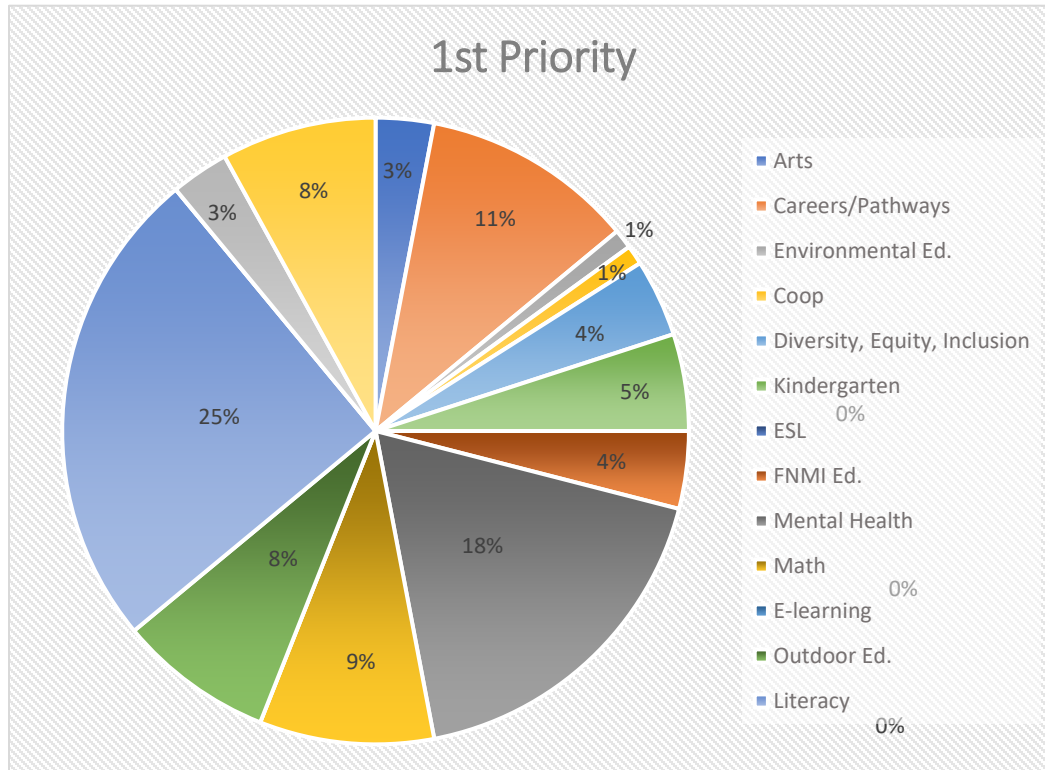
 338 Responses	%		Answer (Multi-select)
	2%	(9)	Student
	61%	(208)	Parent/guardian
	36%	(123)	Staff member
	14%	(49)	Community member/partner

The responses outline several priorities to ensure that students are receiving the best education possible:

- increasing mental health awareness and supports,
- providing students with experiences outside of the classroom,
- teaching students the basics of reading, writing, and math, and
- ensuring that all students have access to meaningful and relevant learning.

Thought Exchange Survey Results

The first part of the Thought Exchange looked to ask participants to rate which areas were priorities when drafting the 2023-2024 budget. The following graphs display the priorities as indicated by all participants.



Specific stakeholder groups had different rankings for the above categories for their first priority:

- Parents/guardians rated Literacy (Reading/Writing) as the highest first priority, followed by Mental Health/Student Well-Being and then Careers/Pathways (Support for the Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship).
- Staff similarly rated Literacy as their highest first priority, followed by Mental Health, and then Special Education.
- Community members also ranked Literacy as their first priority, followed by Mental Health, and then Careers/Pathways.
- A small number of students participated in Thought Exchange so most of their results are suppressed; however, overwhelmingly, all students who participated ranked Literacy as their first priority.

With respect to stakeholders' second priority:

- Parents/guardians identified Math, followed by Mental Health, and then Literacy.
- Staff members, instead, looked to Literacy as their second priority, followed by Mental Health and Math (tied).

- Community Members ranked Math as their second priority, followed by Mental Health and Special Education (tied), and then Careers/Pathways.

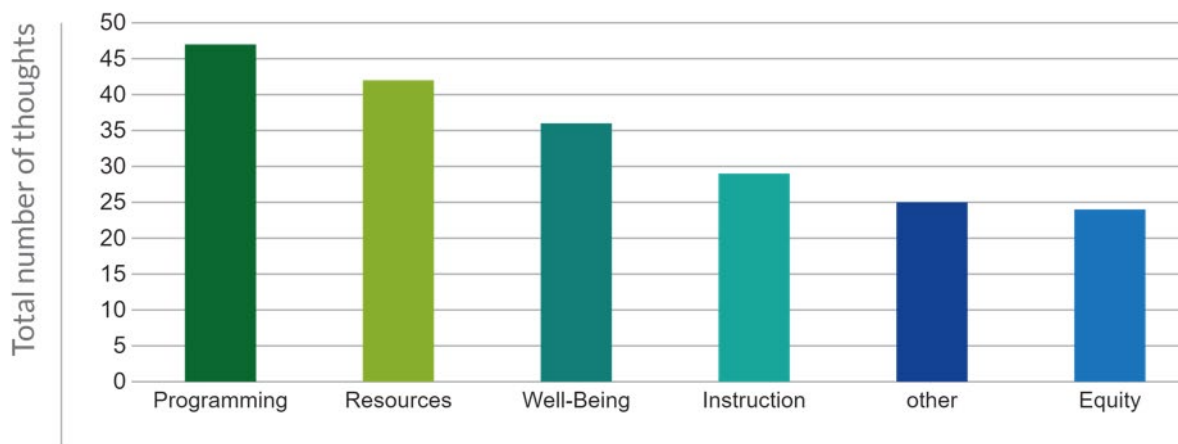
With respect to the third priority:

- Parents/guardians identified Careers/Pathways and Literacy (tied), followed by Mental Health.
- Staff identified Mental Health, Math, and then Literacy in that order of ranking.
- Community Members ranked Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, then Literacy and Careers/Pathways.

Thoughts

The top three “thoughts” starred or rated by all participants included the following:

Literacy needs to be a priority As a fundamental building block of learning, we need to prioritize literacy at the elementary and secondary level	4.3 ★★★★★ (69) Ranked #1 of 151
Provide learning opportunities in the community (field trips). Some of the best learning happens outside of the classroom.	4.3 ★★★★★ (52) Ranked #2 of 151
teaching them to be independent so they can be successful when they graduate.	4.2 ★★★★★ (71) Ranked #3 of 151



Thought Exchange groups thoughts into themes. The themes encompass the following:

- Programming - Careers/Pathway Planning, Special Education, First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education, and Experiential Learning
- Resources - Staffing, Instructional Resources, Capital, and Transportation
- Well-Being - Mental Health and Student Safety
- Instruction – Literacy, Math
- Other – Professional Learning, as well as thoughts on student behavior
- Equity – De-streaming and Student Needs

Within the Resources theme, the most frequent thoughts related to staffing levels, with comments related to the need for more Education Assistants, the importance of having qualified teachers in classrooms, and the requests for more paraprofessionals, particularly in the area of mental health. The Capital section of Resources focused on air conditioning in all schools and further investments in playground equipment. Please note that in 2016, the Board of Trustees invested significant surplus funds in renewing all schools' playgrounds and sports fields; however, some schools, due to the timing of construction projects, have just seen the installation of playground equipment.

The summary theme of Instruction includes Literacy and Math, while the "other" theme overwhelmingly focused on feedback related to staff professional development. In the summary theme of Equity, comments focused on supports for student success (e.g., nutrition) and de-streaming, with the latter receiving negative sentiments about this provincial initiative of de-streaming all Grade 9 courses.

Thoughts related to the priorities identified by stakeholders in the survey section are shared below:

Literacy

- Literacy needs to be a priority** As a fundamental building block of learning, we need to prioritize literacy at the elementary and secondary level 4.3 ★★★★★ (69 🧑)
- Increase math and literacy education especially to catch up those years impacted by covid** Students are behind and are struggling to catch up, this is not only evident in their education, it is evident in their mental and overall health 4.1 ★★★★★ (71 🧑)
- Teach children the basics. Reading, writing and math. Follow up with arts, drama, music. These secondary subjects can incorporate social skills, et** Children need the basics. Give them the basics to move forward from. 4.1 ★★★★★ (67 🧑)

Math

- Teach children the basics. Reading, writing and math. Follow up with arts, drama, music. These secondary subjects can incorporate social skills, et** Children need the basics. Give them the basics to move forward from. 4.1 ★★★★★ (67 🧑)
- More focus on fundamental learning** Children are in school to learn skills to help with life, math, science, trades. 4.1 ★★★★★ (63 🧑)
- Getting math skills to the level they should be at. Back to basics. Multiplication tables, long division, mental math.** We are behind. Students are not able to quickly and readily do basic calculations. 4.0 ★★★★★ (67 🧑)

Programming

- The board should be paying attention to how the difficulties of students affect classroom environment and learning for all students.** The violence and poor self-regulation of students affects everyone. 4.2 ★★★★★ (67 🧑)

- Giving students lots of hands-on learning experiences** Preparing students for future careers 4.1 ★★★★★ (73 👤)
- Provide opportunities to explore and support career paths in the trades.** Constrution, manufacturing and service sectors are experiencing worker shortages. 4.1 ★★★★★ (72 👤)
- Sharing opportunities for high school students for careers/co-ops and training in the community.** Students need to know what is available to them in the communities as well. 4.1 ★★★★★ (36 👤)
- Swimming lessons for all younger grades. Can't learn how to swim just taking it in Grade one.** Kids not from Fort don't have an opportunity outside of school. 3.4 ★★★★★ (66 👤)
- Have the space and resources (staff included) to offer the diverse programming we should be** We have students not attending and a big rerason is anxiety. They cannot function in the current set up. We need to offer something different. 3.3 ★★★★★ (51 👤)
- Indigenous language and culture in all schools.** Indigenous language needs to be incorporated earlier than 4th grade. Small schools also need the same level of opportunity as the larger schools. 2.9 ★★★★★ (69 👤)
- The native students need to be supported by way of having their language and culture taught within the school curriculum.** The native students need to be constantly reassured that they are not forgotten in the schools. 2.9 ★★★★★ (56 👤)

Well-Being and Equity

- Provide a safe nurturing learning environment: this requires adequate staffing including qualified education and support staff to ensure supervision,** Children need to feel safe and confident enough to explore their environment. Qualified teachers, education support staff, administration, custodians. 3.9 ★★★★★ (68 👤)
- More mental health awareness needs to take place. Anti bullying and making schools a safe space for students** The past 3 years have been a struggle for most students to make sense of what's been going on . Many students became fearful of public places 3.5 ★★★★★ (48 👤)
- Students need access to more tools that can be used to support them. Sometimes digital tools are not always the answer to some problems. We need more** Mental health is a huge issue and we need more than a part time person to support the students mental health needs 3.8 ★★★★★ (73 👤)
- Ensuring all students have the supports in place to reach their full potential.** Training for all staff to understand the issues facing children today in regards to mental health 3.8 ★★★★★ (67 👤)
- Inclusion** Not all students have the opportunities like others in the school due to parents status, financial means, supports, advocacy 3.4 ★★★★★ (64 👤)
- Items for the students.** Helps keep students involved across all incomes. 3.4 ★★★★★ (55 👤)
- Supports for less unfortune families that can't afford school pictures, hot lunch, school shirts and sweaters, book fair ect.** So kids don't feel left out. Maybe have little fundraisers to help with the costs. 3.2 ★★★★★ (68 👤)

Professional Learning

Ensuring all students have the supports in place to reach their full potential. Training for all staff to understand the issues facing children today in regards to mental health 3.8 ★★★★★ (67 👤)

Implement meaningful, engaging instructional practices that develop students' ability to manage their own learning high school students are bored and disengaged from class. It's important to teach "real world", relevant, and things that matter to them 3.8 ★★★★★ (64 👤)

A variety of teaching methods that support all types of learning styles Mandates seem to support one learning type or another not all. There are many different ways to get to the same answer in math/sciences. 3.6 ★★★★★ (69 👤)

An Appendix of all the feedback provided through the ThoughtExchange is attached for information.

Letters from Advisory Committees

Three committees provided feedback to inform the 2023-2024 budget development: the FNMI Education Advisory Committee, the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), and the Student Senate. In light of the Thought Exchange and the following advisory committee letters, administration has drafted the budget linking the priorities identified by stakeholders with budget priorities. Specifically, this is seen in funding dedicated to

- increased staffing for Education Assistants, to support the supervision needs at our schools, with all Assistants to be offered a 6.50-hour day for the 2023-24 school year, an increase in hours; as noted earlier in this report, this increased workday equates to an additional 3.50 Education Assistants as compared to last year.
- the support for a 1.0 FTE Literacy Lead, a 1.0 FTE STEM Coordinator (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), and a new position, Superintendent of Education – Math Lead, all demonstrating the focus on building educator capacity on the "basics" of reading, writing, and math.
- additional support for literacy with the addition of another Speech Language Pathologist (1.0 FTE) and reinvestment request for further funding for Speech Language services.
- the expansion of Empower™, a literacy intervention developed by Sick Kids Hospital for students requiring intensive assistance in developing foundational literacy skills through the science of reading.
- the continuation of TechWays, which provides Grades 7 and 8 students with career education and experiential learning with a focus on the trades, a priority identified by the Parent Involvement Committee, and a 1.0 FTE Experiential Learning/Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program Coordinator will help to extend this focus on the skilled trades, career pathways, and experiential learning from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

With the challenges associated with offering professional learning without supports for release time, we are looking to support principals and vice principals in their instructional leadership so that they, in turn, can assist and support teachers in the classroom.

Also, in the Thought Exchange and in the feedback from the FNMI Education Advisory Committee is the mention of alternative education, to support students who are not experiencing success in the mainstream classrooms. With the addition of a 1.0 FTE principal assigned to the United Native Friendship Centre Alternative Secondary School, this leader will help to update our curriculum delivery and alternative programming across the Board, looking to create more flexible options for students attending alternative programming while also exploring other wrap-around supports for greater long-term student success.

Further feedback from the FNMI Education Advisory Committee and from the Thought Exchange identified Ojibwe language programming. In addition to the continuation of Anishinaabemodaa, the Ojibwe Language Strategy, the Board is continuing its partnerships with Seven Generations Education Institute in the hiring of language facilitators, students and soon-to-be graduates of the Anishinaabemowin Adult Immersion Program. These facilitators will help to expand Ojibwe language programming within our Board while working alongside other teachers to build capacity in Ojibwe language fluency.

As for resources, administration has already earmarked existing school year funding to replenish bistro tables, used by students, especially in high schools, for a place to work outside of the traditional areas such as the school library. This was a request from the Student Senate, who also identified a wish to increase technological education courses, specifically Manufacturing, at the two smaller high schools. At this time, we are working to maintain current course offerings in technological education at all three high schools, due to the staffing challenges associated with this in-demand teaching area. It is hoped that with the introduction of this program at Lakehead University's Faculty of Education this coming summer, we will be able to maintain these important subject areas. However, we have continued to support technological education programming at all three high schools, with updated shop equipment purchased through previously allocated Board surplus funding for the two smaller high schools.

We appreciated the thoughtful feedback provided by our stakeholders and have worked hard to review all feedback, to look at 2023-2024 funding priorities, and to align needs with supports. As such, we recognize the importance of our students feeling safe and supported, particularly in the area of their mental health, we are committed to increasing math and literacy education and achievement, especially to catch up those years impacted by COVID, and we are dedicated to ensuring all students have access to meaningful education and the proper skills to succeed in the workforce, as evidenced by this draft budget.



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DIRECTOR

Heather Campbell

Rainy River

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

April 27, 2023

Meghan Cox, Superintendent of Business,
Rainy River District School Board

Dear Meghan Cox,

Re: 2023-24 Budget Preparation

The First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Advisory Committee met on March 20, 2023 to discuss and suggest feedback to inform the development of the 2023-2024 budget.

With respect to programming and resources that support student achievement and well-being, the Committee identified the following priorities

- Increased Speech Language supports
- Continued mental health counselling for students
- Continued specialized programs to support pathway planning and interest in the skilled trades
- Continued staffing levels for Education Assistants
- Consideration of adding transportation for students who require this support in order to be enrolled in a cooperative education placement
- Provision of transportation between Fort Frances High School and the United Native Friendship Centre Alternative Secondary School Program so that students attending UNFC can have more flexible programming options
- Continued support for family engagement
- Literacy supports targeted for struggling intermediate students
- Continued support for Anishinaabemowin programming

The Committee also suggested that the Board consider advocating for Grade 12 math to be a requirement for graduation, in light of the ongoing focus on math across the province.

On behalf of the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Advisory Committee, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the budget process.

Sincerely,

Dan Bird & Ashlee Grimard

Dan Bird and Ashlee Grimard, Co-Chairs, FNMI Education Advisory Committee

c. First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Advisory Committee

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Heather Campbell

Rainy River

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

April 28, 2023

Dear Meghan Cox:

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Parent Involvement Committee with respect to your request for feedback to inform the development of the 2023-2024 budget. The Committee met on March 21, 2023 and reviewed your letter specific to the priority areas.

As our mandate is to promote parent engagement, we recommend the purchase and distribution of resources to assist parents/guardians in preparing their children for entry into the school system, such as materials that support the development of early reading and math skills.

Schools across the Board have welcomed families into the schools this year through various events focused on building parents/guardians' knowledge and familiarity with the Ontario curriculum and teaching approaches. These events are not only helpful to families but also critical to building strong relationships in support of student well-being and achievement. While the Ministry of Education has provided dedicated funding for these events through the Parents Reaching Out Grants, we ask that the Board allocate funding to support these activities in the event that the Grant is discontinued or decreased.

Transitions are an important process to ensure success for students throughout their education. Many schools offer transition programming for students and for parents/guardians, such as Kindergarten Play Dates and Grade 8 Transition Sessions (for students and for their parents/guardians). We suggest that funding be set aside for each school to offer transition information sessions for parents/guardians wherever a critical transition occurs (i.e., for students entering Kindergarten, for students changing from one school to another).

To support students with special education needs, we request continued staffing levels of Education Support Personnel within schools. We also suggest increasing school office budgets to accommodate the mailing out of important documents, such as Individual Education Plans, to ensure privacy and to reduce the chance of stigma.

As a result of the pandemic, we continue to see an increased need for speech language services and request that the Board look to expanding its speech language supports for the 2023-2024 school year. Further to these early years supports, we would like to see Reading Recovery programming continued for those learners experiencing difficulty in developing foundational literacy skills, along with the purchase of Handwriting Without Tears, a program designed to support students' early fine and gross motor skills.

The Parent Involvement Committee members also identified the continued support for Ojibwe language teachers and Ojibwe language programming, as well as land-based learning opportunities for all grades.

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Finally, pathway planning is an important early process. Programming that allows students to explore potential post-secondary programs and career paths, as well as supports for parents/guardians (e.g., information sessions on secondary specialized programming, career exploration, and course selection at the secondary level) are priorities for the 2023-2024 budget.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the budget process.

Sincerely,

Helena Guertin *Alexa Wideman*

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Helena Guertin & Alexa Wideman,

Co-Chairs, RRDSB Parent Involvement Committee, 2022-2023

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DIRECTOR

Heather Campbell

Rainy River

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

May 4, 2023

Meghan Cox, Superintendent of Business
Rainy River District School Board

Dear Ms. Cox:

RE: 2023-2024 BUDGET FEEDBACK

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Student Senate to help to inform the development of the 2023-24 budget. The Student Senate met on April 18, 2023, to consider priorities for next year's budget and identified several priorities.

We recognize the importance of supporting all students' success in school. Students need a quiet place to complete their work, and some need a quiet space when overwhelmed by the classroom environment. In addition to space within our high school libraries, we recommend that schools provide other areas for students needing a quiet space.

We appreciate the mental health counseling that is available within our schools. We recommend increasing counseling supports available in the smaller high schools. We also recommend that all schools promote the availability of these supports, including regularly communicating when the school counselor(s) is/are available in the school, and how students can access these supports.

We are aware of the government's recent announcement on increasing the skilled trades workforce. If possible, we ask that the Board consider increasing access to manufacturing programming within Northern Lakes School and Rainy River High School. We recognize that this programming is dependent on the availability of a teacher to provide welding instruction, as well as to the resources.

On behalf of the Student Senate, thank you for this opportunity to provide input into the 2023-2024 budget process.

Sincerely,

Charles Watts Avery Lundgren

Charles Watts and Avery Lundgren,
Student Trustees and Co-Chairs, 2022-2023 RRDSB Student Senate

TOGETHER, WE EMPOWER ALL STUDENTS TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES, TO ACHIEVE, AND TO DREAM.