

2020-2021 Budget Questions and Answers

Question

Our school completed the 2020-2021 Budget Consultation and made several recommendations. What was done with our response?

Responses were studied and consolidated in order to determine common themes, concerns and suggestions. These documents were shared with the audit committee, administration and further discussed with the Council of Commissioners during budget workshops.

The Council of Commissioners of the Lester B. Pearson School Board reviewed and considered all the responses prior to approving the 2020-2021 budget.

Responses to the budget consultation can be viewed on the Lester B. Pearson School Board website under Council of Commissioners, Consultations, Budget Consultation 2020-2021

https://boardsite.lbpsb.qc.ca/Modules/FileManagement/files/Root/Consultations/Consultation_Responses_on_the_2020-2021_Budget_2.pdf

Question

What are the changes between the 2020-2021 budget and the 2019-2020 budget?

There are minor changes between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school board budgets.

- Additional funding for feeding students in the youth sector,
- A new grant of \$200,000 for safe and active elementary school yards,
- An extra one million dollars for additional technology in schools including chromebooks and tablets,
- \$54 million in capital investments in schools and centers including upgrading of bathrooms, new roofs and windows, additional bottle fillers and interior improvements,
- 22 new full day 4-year-old kindergarten classrooms bringing the total to 36 full day kindergarten classes for 4-year old across the territory of the school board,
- \$ 1.8 million to offer extracurricular activities at the secondary level. The grant for secondary extracurricular activities is to encourage students to develop a sense of belonging at school while developing new skills in sports, arts and cultural activities, robotics, socio education and science activities and community involvement. Exceptionally for the 2020-2021 school year the ministry is permitting high schools to use the grant for additional support.

Question

Why doesn't the school board increase the amount of integration aids, psychologists, speech therapists and other professionals in schools?

Funding for support services to students comes directly from the Quebec government.

During the past few years, the ministry has decentralized additional funding to schools and created a grant of \$6 million for direct support to students for the 2020-2021 school year. With 48

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elementary and secondary schools and 20,000 students, this amounts to approximately \$300 a student or \$125,000 a school for the equivalent of an additional resource teacher or professional and a part time integration aid or librarian. The additional funding is greatly appreciated but does not satisfy all our student needs throughout the system. Principals and teachers work with the student services team to determine how to best use their resources.

Question

Are schools and centers permitted to carry over their surplus'?

The Ministry of Education does not permit the carrying over of most unspent grants. Whatever grant is not spent must be returned to the Ministry by June 30th. Due to the COVID -19 shutdown on March 13th, the school board is permitting schools and centers to carry forward the surplus' they might have accrued from school board allocations which they were unable to spend due to the shutdown.

Question

What is the Board doing to support a green environment?

On June 22, 2020 the School Board launched a consultation on the Environmental and Sustainability Policy with the consultation closing on September 15th 2020. The policy which can be reviewed at https://boardsite.lbpsb.gc.ca/Modules/FileManagement/files/Root/Consultations/LBPSB_Environmental_and_Sustainability_Policy_June_16_2020_final.pdf

The school board continues efforts to reduce water and energy consumption. As buildings are upgraded sinks and toilets have been replaced with new models which use less water. Walk in refrigerators in centers and high schools are being refurbished from water cooled to air cooled. Pilot projects in cafeterias have begun to replace single use dishes and cutlery with reusable tableware.

The school board continues with the use of mass messaging to reduce the use of paper in our buildings. Report cards, daycare and lunchtime fees and school fees are available online. The school board is in the second year of online payments for school fees and plans on having this type of payment available for all schools by 2021-2022.

The school board has increased the amount of water bottle filling stations in schools and centers to encourage healthy habits while reducing the amount of single use plastic bottles used in our buildings. There has been concern regarding lead in Montreal schools drinking water. Large buildings don't have lead service lines. However, other pipe components in schools (e.g. taps, water fountains and soldering) can contain lead, but their levels are much lower. By upgrading water fountains, removing brass fixtures and lead soldering which might leech lead, the school board has eliminated a possible lead contamination source.

In 2017, Montreal's regional public health department conducted a study on lead concentrations in 51 schools. The study showed that drinking the water at school does not significantly increase blood lead levels in 5 and 6-year-old children in elementary schools on the island of Montreal. The greatest source of lead in children's blood are lead levels in homes with lead service lines. Replacing lead service lines in homes is the most efficient way to reduce children's exposure to lead. The study on lead in Montréal elementary schools is available at

<https://santemontreal.qc.ca/professionnels/drsp/publications/publicationdescription/publication/plomb-ans-leau-potable-de-lile-de-montreal-concentrations-deplomb-dans-leau-potable-des-ecole/>

Schools off the island of Montreal do not have Lead Service Lines.

Question

What will happen if there is a second wave of COVID-19? Will schools and centres be closed again?

The School Board works closely with the Minister of Education and is following all guidelines for the Back to School Fall 2020 plan. <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/answers-questions-coronavirus-covid19/questions-answers-education-families-covid-19/#c62686>

Schools play a crucial role in children’s education, development and their mental and physical health. The school board is being prudent and preparing should there be a second wave and the Ministry imposes a school and center lockdown. Some of the preparations include

- Purchase of over \$ 1 million in teacher laptops to continue online learning
- Purchase of over \$ 1 million in student chromebooks and l pads if students do not have access to hardware
- Purchase of additional caretaking equipment and cleaning supplies including Electrostatic Spray Disinfectant Systems to sanitize classrooms
- Professional development for teachers to provide online teaching for students

The Minister of Education has indicated that additional expenses incurred due to COVID will be reimbursed to school boards.

Question

Are the Board’s financial records audited by the Quebec government?

Quebec school boards are audited twice a year. As the provincial government year-end is March 31st, school boards are required to close their books to have their financial records integrated into the province’s financial statements. Independent auditors are hired to apply the audit procedures specified in the “Mandat de verification externe pour l’exercice financier 2020-2021 – Commission scolaires”.

Independent auditors audit the financial statements of the Board as at June 30, and the statement of earnings, the statement of accumulated surplus (deficit), the statement of changes in net financial assets (net debt) and the statement of cash flows for the year ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information. Their responsibility includes expressing an opinion on the financial statements based upon the audit which is conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards.

Since the inception of the Board, the opinion of the independent auditors is that the financial statements of the Lester B. Pearson School Board present fairly, in all material respects, its financial position.

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The Lester B. Pearson School Board financial statements are available online at <http://www.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/financial/indexV2.asp>

Question

Why doesn't the Board reduce elementary and secondary class sizes?

Class sizes are determined by the Quebec government which finances teachers' salaries based upon the defined class ratios. A reduction of 2-3 students per class would require an additional \$13,500,000 in teacher expenses and additional schools to be built to house the extra classrooms. The provincial class ratios are indicated below.

	Average	Maximum
Elementary Schools		
4 year old kindergarten	14	17
5 year old kindergarten	17	19
Grade 1	20	22
Grade 2	22	24
Grade 3	24	26
Grade 4	24	26
Grade 5	24	26
Grade 6	24	26
Secondary schools		
Secondary 1	26	28
Secondary 2	27	29
Secondary 3	30	32
Secondary 4	30	32
Secondary 5	30	32

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Question

What is the Lester B. Pearson School Board’s annual budget? What is the breakdown for revenue and expenditures?

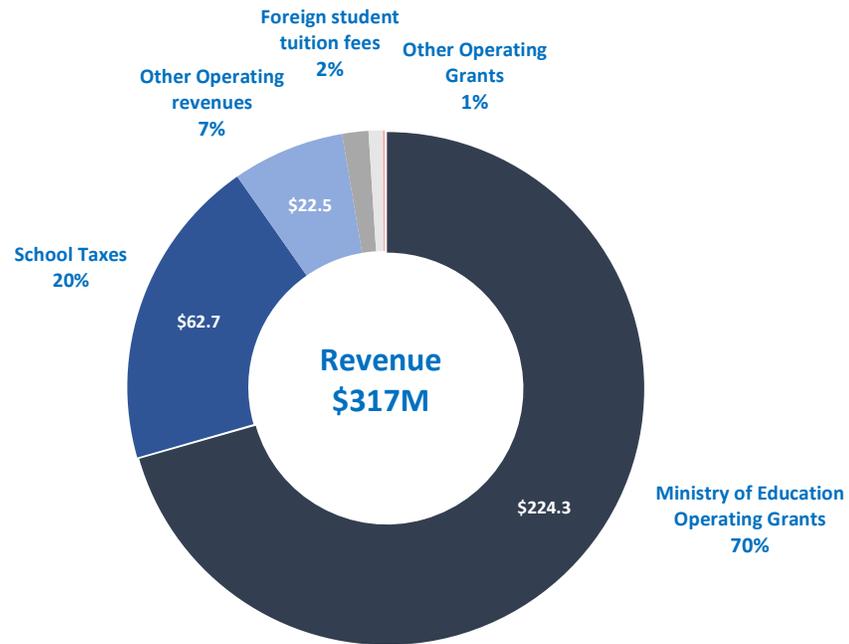
The Lester B. Pearson School Board has a balanced budget for the 2020-2021 school year of \$317,894,805 in revenues, and \$317,894,805 in expenses.

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Budget 2020-2021: Revenue & Expense Summary for the period ending in June 30th

	2018-2019 Actual	2019-2020 Budget	2020-2021 Budget	Budget variance 2020-2021 vs 19-20
REVENUES				
MEES operating grants	208,054,545	212,191,475	216,458,675	4,267,200
Other grants	2,869,731	2,830,336	2,830,336	0
School taxes	64,987,262	63,372,168	62,650,995	-721,173
Other operating revenues	27,125,126	30,194,413	27,703,900	-2,490,513
Transportation grants	6,246,244	7,930,396	8,250,899	320,503
Total revenues	309,282,908	316,518,788	317,894,805	1,376,017
EXPENDITURES				
Teaching services	143,280,393	157,125,943	149,081,179	-8,044,764
Educational support	75,997,593	71,734,348	78,542,515	6,808,167
Extracurricular activities	13,304,829	13,326,657	13,175,549	-151,108
Transportation	13,882,048	13,958,746	14,711,056	752,310
Administratives expenses	13,320,258	15,625,981	13,112,232	-2,513,749
Energy	5,596,881	5,400,000	5,065,000	-335,000
Amortization of property and equipment	14,458,266	13,529,956	14,724,010	1,194,054
Maintenance and caretaking	16,210,075	14,082,029	15,117,952	1,035,923
Financing costs	11,525	200,000	200,000	0
Subsidized schools in the public interest	10,919,348	11,451,345	11,334,976	-116,369
Other	2,718,853	856,000	2,830,336	1,974,336
Total expenditures	309,700,069	317,291,005	317,894,805	603,800
Net results for the year	-417,161	-772,217	0	772,217

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2020-2021 Budget Revenue (\$M)



2020-2021 Budget Expenses (\$M)

