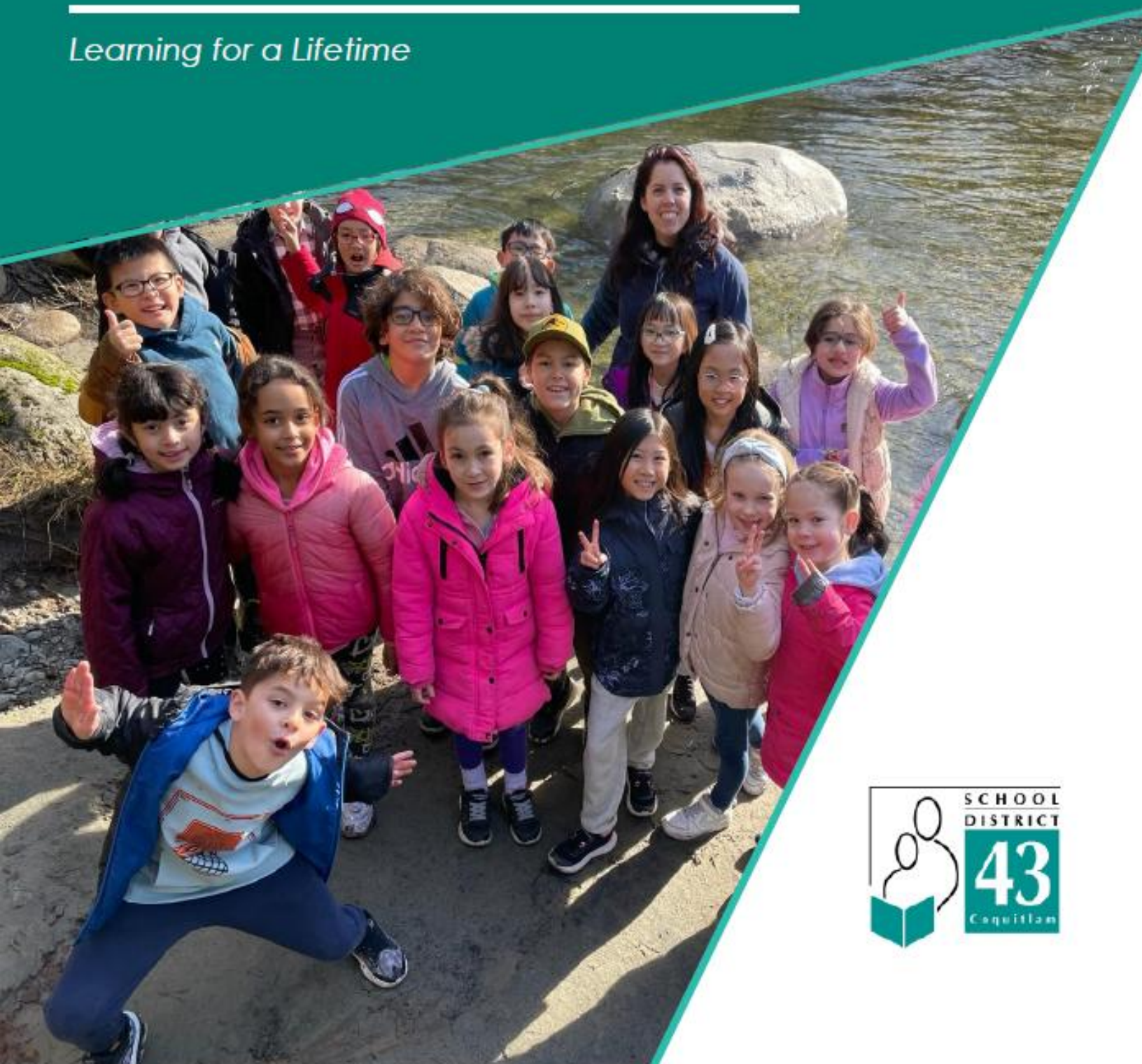


For the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2025

BUDGET CONSULTATION GUIDE 2025/26

Learning for a Lifetime



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Welcome to the partner group and public consultation/engagement process for the 2025/2026 budget for School District No. 43 (Coquitlam). As the third largest school district in the province of British Columbia, we have a diverse and growing population which includes young families, new Canadians, professionals, and others who choose to relocate here for the quality of life and a thriving and successful public education system. Our student achievement levels are consistently above the provincial average and rank near the top among all 60 school districts.

The Board of Education is committed to having a consultative budget process that gives partner groups and the public an opportunity to provide input and key priorities to consider when developing the preliminary budget. The consultation is conducted in mid-February, in advance of Ministry funding announcements and before district staff present the preliminary budget to the Board in April. We value all comments and input into the budget while we work closely with our partner groups within the confines of our contracts and available resources. To ensure broad and thorough input, the Board also engages in a series of meetings with all partner groups and makes several presentations throughout the year to inform our school district community about the budget.

The Board is committed to transparency through adherence to the *Taxpayer Accountability Principles* (page 7) in the preparation of the preliminary annual budget.

Each year, we strive to deliver a budget that provides certainty, long-term stability, and sustainability. This ensures we can overcome any unforeseen challenges and circumstances throughout the fiscal year. Guided by the goals and objectives within our strategic plan, *Directions 2025*, we are fully committed to achieving student success, developing educated citizens, and continuing to foster a sustainable educational organization – all within a changing landscape of provincial funding.

We invite you to **learn** about the budget process, **engage** in consultation and **contribute** feedback. This helps deepen our collective understanding and identify challenges and opportunities. It allows you to share your ideas for how we can make the best use of the funds available for our children, families, employees, and communities, while advancing our school district and sustaining our mission. Your input helps guide the Board's decisions and actions.

Sincerely,

Board of Education
School District No. 43 (Coquitlam)



(Front Row, L-R), Christine Pollock, Michael Thomas (Board Chair), Patricia Gartland (Superintendent), Zoë Royer, Craig Woods.
(Back Row, L-R) Chuck Denison, Lisa Park, Randy Manhas (Secretary-Treasurer), Vacant Position, Kerri Palmer Isaak, Carol Brodie (Vice Chair).



BUDGET PROCESS 2025/2026

The Board of Education will continue to utilize a comprehensive strategy in creating the 2025-2026 budget to:

- identify potential cost pressures as well as areas of possible budget and related expenditure misalignment
- consult with partner groups and the public on how the Board can use or realign available resources to continue to foster a high achieving school district and sustainable organization for many years to come
- engage with partner groups and the public during the initial stages of budget development to encourage comments and suggestions so the Board can consider these prior to the finalization of the draft budget
- provide the public an opportunity to reflect and offer feedback on the proposed draft budget during the April budget deliberations

Our Goal

The Board of Education will embark on the budget process through a transparent, inclusive, and accountable process that engages the community for input.

This budget strategy will consider the following:

Students First

Aligning decisions with a thriving public education system for students is a community value. As stewards of public education, School District No. 43 (SD43) must demonstrate a financial commitment to improve the learning environment for students.

Fair Access for All Students

Committing to deliver fair, effective, and positive learning environments for students today and in the future. All financial decisions must consider the current and future needs of students and employees.

Lifelong Learning in Our Communities

Delivering lifelong learning in our communities is part of the SD43's vision. We envision high quality, diverse, personalized and enriched education opportunities for all students of all ages. Ongoing financial review and community engagement will support this.

Changing Landscape of Provincial Funding

Funding from the provincial government has not kept up with rising costs despite increased per student funding. Inflation continues to create financial pressure, and the province has not adequately provided additional funding to offset increased costs in all areas. Hydroelectricity, gas, and health benefits have all increased, with school boards funding most of these inflationary and new program costs. In addition to the changing landscape of additional cost pressures and provincial funding not keeping up with inflation, there are increasing expectations from the Ministry of Education and Child Care that school boards contribute operational funding towards significant capital projects, previously funded by the province.

Long Term Strategic Vision

Aligning the budget process and connecting the allocation of resources with our strategic plan, *Directions 2025*.



DIRECTIONS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



VISION

Increasing Success in Life for All

MISSION

Our mission is to ensure quality learning opportunities for all students of all ages.

PURPOSE

The Board of Education accepts its responsibility to provide a quality and equitable public education for the success of all learners, within the limits and resources available.

CORE BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES

The Board of Education believes in:

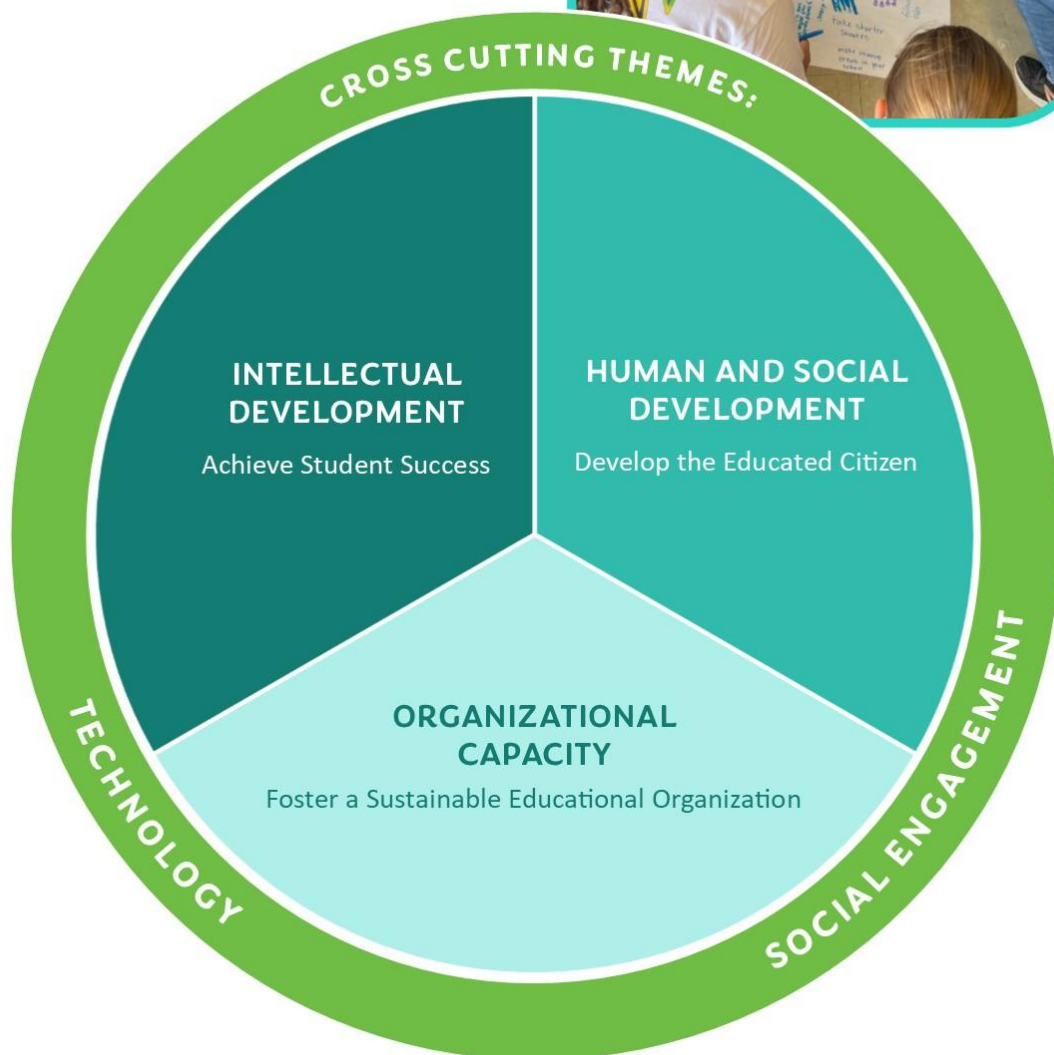
- Public Education and the need to advocate on its behalf;
- Instilling a passion for learning;
- Learners as the most important focus;
- High quality and equitable learning opportunities;
- Innovation, creativity, problem solving, critical thinking and sustainability;
- The essential value of District/Community/Global Partnerships;
- Safe, inclusive and socially responsible learning communities.

The Board of Education is committed to:

- Creating a culture of care and shared responsibility where every learner matters;
- Engaging and empowering lifelong learners;
- Providing flexible, integrated, diverse, and active learning environments;
- Developing shared leadership through innovative, sustainable professional learning.

DIRECTIONS 2025

Strategic Goals and Objectives



LEARN

ENGAGE

CONTRIBUTE



ALIGNING BUDGET PLANNING WITH DIRECTIONS 2025

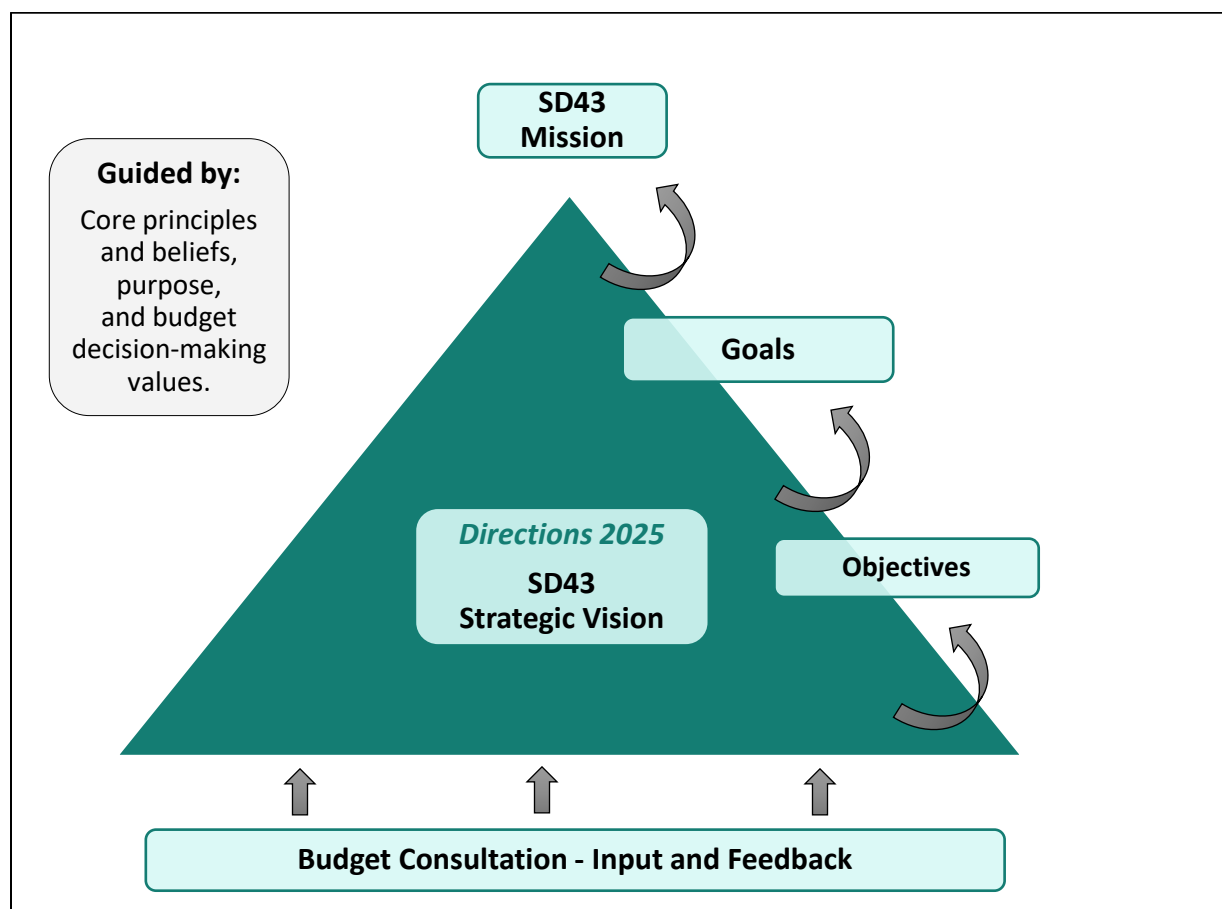
SD43 is committed to a model of transparent budget planning and resource allocation that is directly aligned with our strategic plan, *Directions 2025*.

It is a consultative model that coordinates budget planning and resource allocation activities with inclusive partner group consultation and feedback based on the vision, goals and objectives identified in *Directions 2025*.

The model includes:

- articulating *Directions 2025*
- providing timely and accurate budget information
- receiving budget input and feedback
- prioritizing budget requests for the upcoming budget year
- allocating available resources to best meet requests that align with the vision, goals, and objectives
- communicating the outcomes effectively for transparent accountability

The model will ensure that budget input and resource allocations are connected to and aligned with *Directions 2025*. This model is an integral part of the SD43's operating culture.

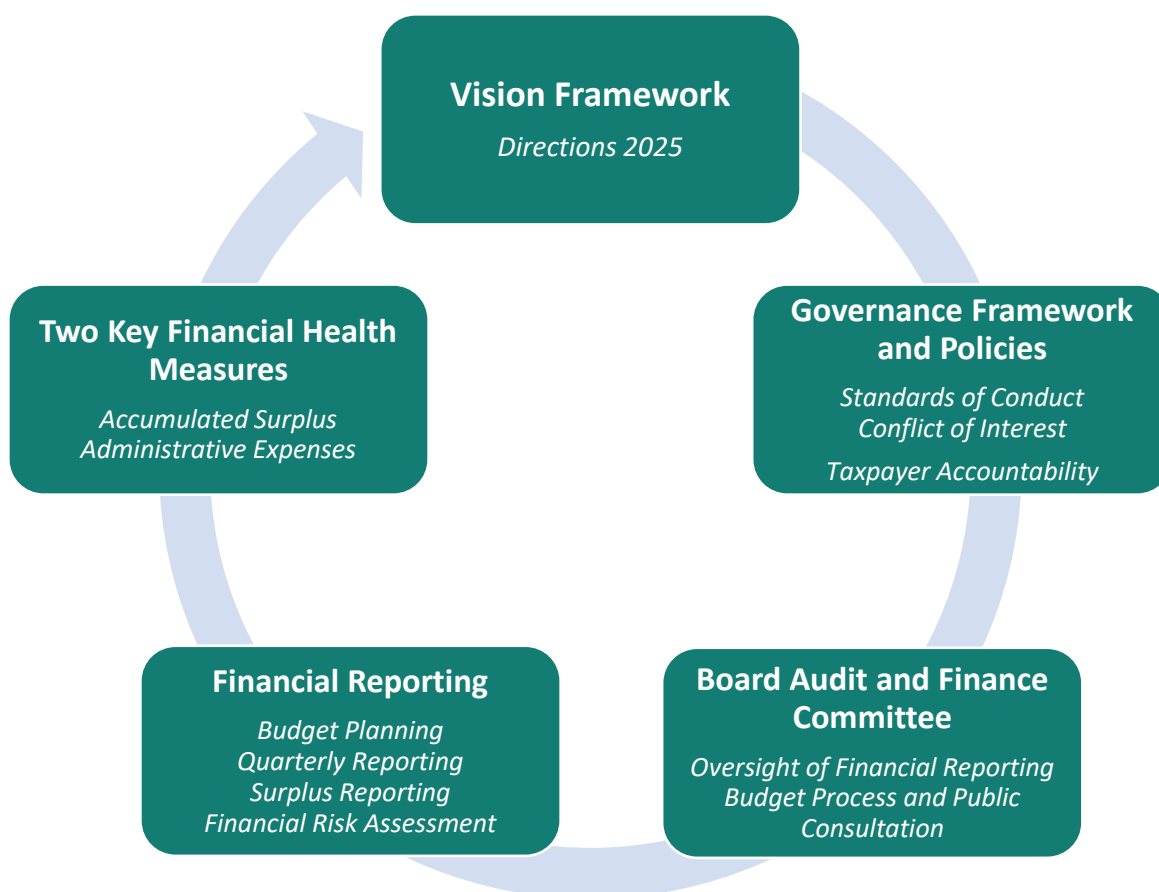




FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Board has fully adopted the Ministry of Education and Child Care’s recommended requirements pertaining to financial governance and accountability. This includes the following measures that the Office of the Auditor General of BC would define as best practices:

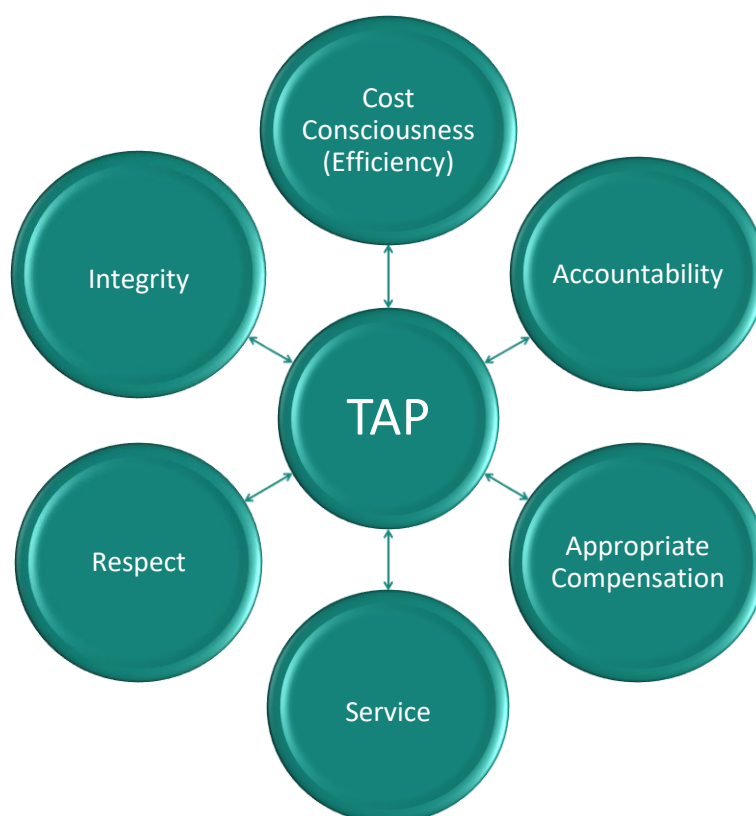
- a strategic plan and vision (*Directions 2025*) with clear goals and expectations
- a robust governance framework including standards of conduct and conflict of interest reporting requirements
- accountability practices including regular financial reporting
- an established Finance and Audit Committee
- direct engagement with external auditors
- a balanced budget with policy provisions (Policy 23 – Accumulated Operating Surplus) to address unforeseen and emergent issues





TAXPAYER ACCOUNTABILITY PRINCIPLES

The Board has adopted and incorporated the six **Taxpayer Accountability Principles (TAP)** which are embedded within the *Directions 2025* strategic plan. Applicable to all provincial public sector organizations in B.C., these principals are designed to strengthen accountability, promote cost control, and ensure that the public sector operates in the best interest of taxpayers.



1. **Cost Consciousness (Efficiency)** – Strengthen cost management capabilities by providing educational services as efficiently and effectively as possible.
2. **Accountability** – Transparently manage responsibilities and enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness in planning, reporting, and decision making.
3. **Appropriate Compensation** – Comply with a standardized approach to performance management and employee compensation.
4. **Service** – Maintain clear focus on positive outcomes for student success.
5. **Respect** – Engage in equitable, compassionate, respectful, and effective communications.
6. **Integrity** – Make decisions and take actions that are transparent, ethical, and free from conflict of interest.





BUDGET GOALS

SD43’s objective is to provide long-term stability and sustainability through multi-year financial planning.

Carefully planned and responsible multi-year changes in measured amounts allow for long-term budget stability and sustainability, that:

- allows for long-term sustainable planned budget additions
- smooths large fluctuations in budget changes
- helps manage unforeseen funding risks

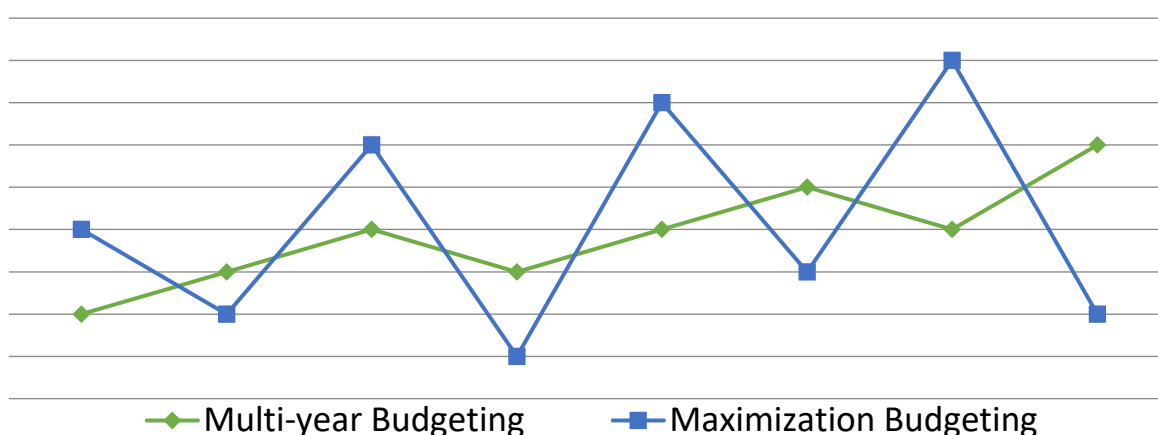


More consistent funding is required for schools to support and enhance teaching and learning.

In general, school district budgeting is extremely complex due to the lack of multi-year funding certainty, inadequate Ministry funding for inflation, changing expectations from the province on the further utilization of school district operational funding towards significant capital projects and new provincial initiatives (e.g., child care), and the frequent adoption of new and unfunded initiatives.

Multi-year financial planning is a strategic budget management method of making carefully planned and responsible changes in measured amounts over several years to smooth out large fluctuations in year-to-year resource and staff additions or reductions due to unforeseen costs and other circumstances.

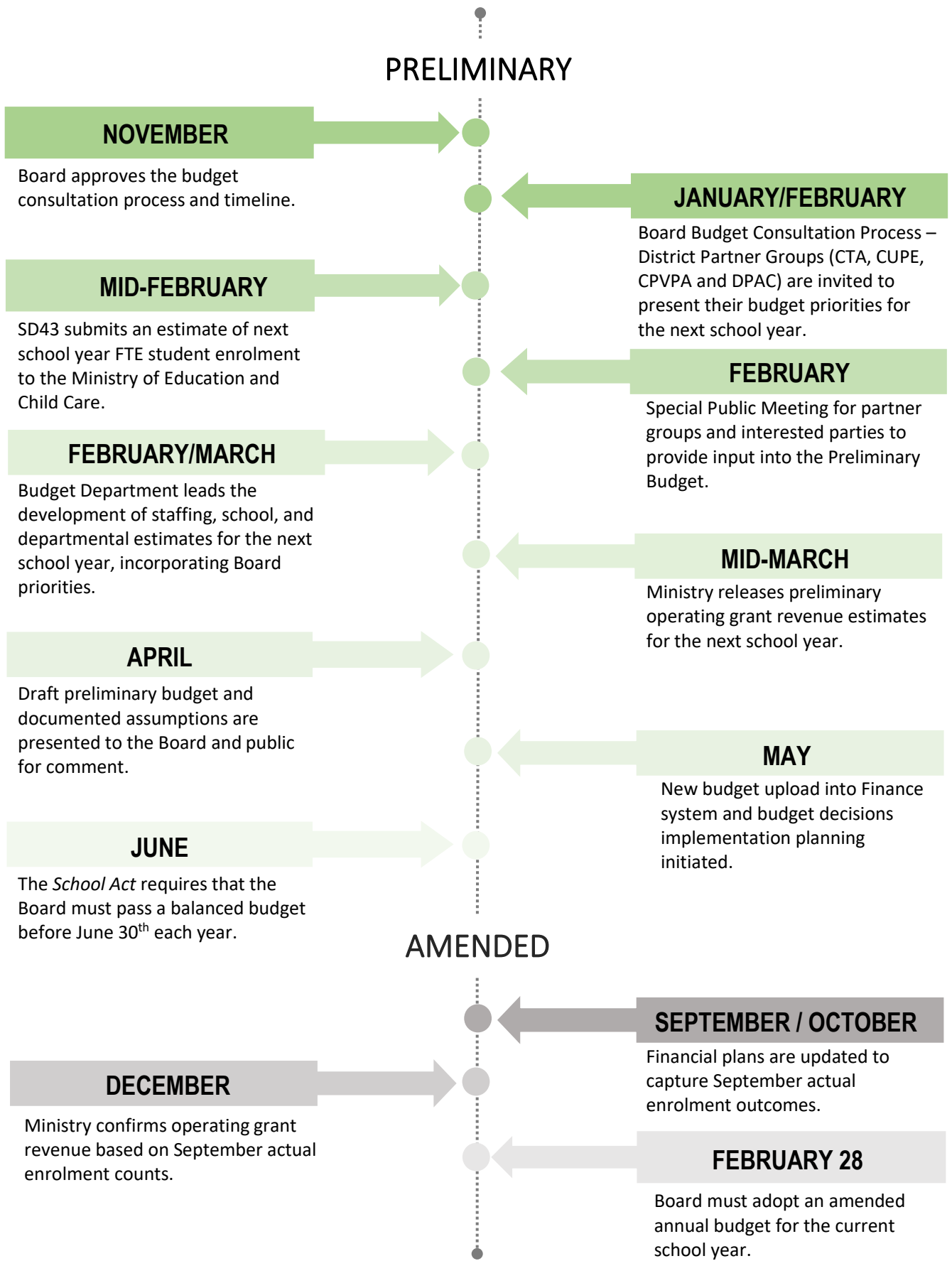
Multi-year financial planning as a budgeting framework will build SD43’s long-term stable financial position, help manage future risks from unforeseen situations and, most importantly, allow for the planning of ongoing responsible and sustainable positive changes to the education system.



As shown in blue in the graph, maximizing an annual budget surplus each year can lead to a pattern of adding and reducing resources which creates an unstable and uncertain education system for students, parents, and employees. As shown in green, a multi-year distribution of annual budget surplus over the medium term helps to smooth funding changes and avoid sudden and frequent program changes.



BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLANNING CYCLE





THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BUDGETS AND FUNDS

As one of the major employers in the Lower Mainland, SD43 has a large and complex budget. The budget comprises three separate funds.

OPERATING FUND: The operating fund includes Ministry grants and other revenues used to fund instructional programs, school and district administration, facilities operations, maintenance, and transportation. Over 90% of the operating budget is funded by the Ministry of Education and Child Care through allocations of grant funding. The remainder is funded through revenues generated by our International Education Program, facility rentals, investment income and other miscellaneous proceeds.

SPECIAL PURPOSE FUND: The special purpose fund is made up of various targeted funds that are intended for a specific purpose or program and may be provided as ongoing funding or one-time only. Approximately 75% of the funding comes from the Ministry of Education and Child Care, and the remaining comes from school generated funds, the Federal government and various other organizations.

CAPITAL FUND: The capital fund includes a combination of Ministry capital grants, locally generated funds (e.g., proceeds from disposition of unused SD43 sites, and transfers from the Operating Fund to the Capital Fund for local capital needs, such as portables), and school site acquisition charges collected from developers through local municipalities. These funds are used for facility operations including construction, enhancement, and maintenance of buildings, fields, infrastructure, and land purchases for future school development.

The budget process primarily focuses on areas where the Board can make changes, within the operational budget.

Funds within the capital budget may not be used for operational budget items.

Special purpose funds are for designated purposes that can supplement operational activities. Like capital funds, they may not be used for operational budget items.

SCHOOL DISTRICT FUNDING

SD43 receives a basic student operating grant per full time equivalent (FTE) student and receives additional funding for unique students and other school district factors.

Provincial funding has not kept up with inflation over the years. Furthermore, because the Ministry provides funding protection for school districts experiencing declining enrolment, SD43 and the other districts not experiencing declining enrolment are funded less to make up the difference.

Unfortunately, when comparing based on total funding allocated to each school district, SD43 has historically ranked in the bottom 10 for per student funding levels among the 60 school districts in the province.



A HISTORY OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Throughout the budget process, SD43 seeks to build on our past successes to maintain a high achieving and sustainable organization. We continue to pursue new and innovative ways to deliver our services to maximize the use of our budgets and ensure quality learning for all students.

SD43 has a history of student success; our student achievement results have regularly exceeded provincial averages on every measure.

The Board of Education’s goals are, and will continue to be, focused on helping students acquire a series of attributes to help them become learners, thinkers, innovators, collaborators, and contributors. Our budget process will provide the answers needed for the difficult challenge of meeting our financial pressures while ensuring the continued success of our students.



ENGAGE



BOARD OF EDUCATION VALUES

The following values will guide the Board of Education in budget decision making.

1. **Inclusiveness:** We invite all partner groups and interested parties to participate in discussion and provide feedback.
2. **Integrity:** We respond to partner group and interested party input in an honest and forthright way, balancing the multiple needs of the various partner groups while meeting the legal requirement of maintaining a balanced budget under the *School Act*.
3. **Commitment:** We commit to first defining the issues, followed by reviewing engagement with partner groups and interested parties, then summarizing information and research, and finally reporting on decisions.
4. **Accountability:** We demonstrate that the results and outcomes of the process are consistent with the commitment made to partner groups at the beginning of the process.
5. **Transparency:** As decision makers, we ensure partner groups have opportunities to understand the scope, constraints, and process for a pending decision.

BUDGET ENGAGEMENT COMMITMENT

What is Budget Engagement?

Budget engagement is a two-way dialogue to allow the Board and our school district community to define opportunities and challenges and work together on solutions. It allows for valuable input to the School District's direction and decision making.

Your Role as an Interested Party

To make the budget consultation process a success, your role is to learn, engage and contribute. Start by visiting the SD43 Budget website at www.sd43.bc.ca/budget to:

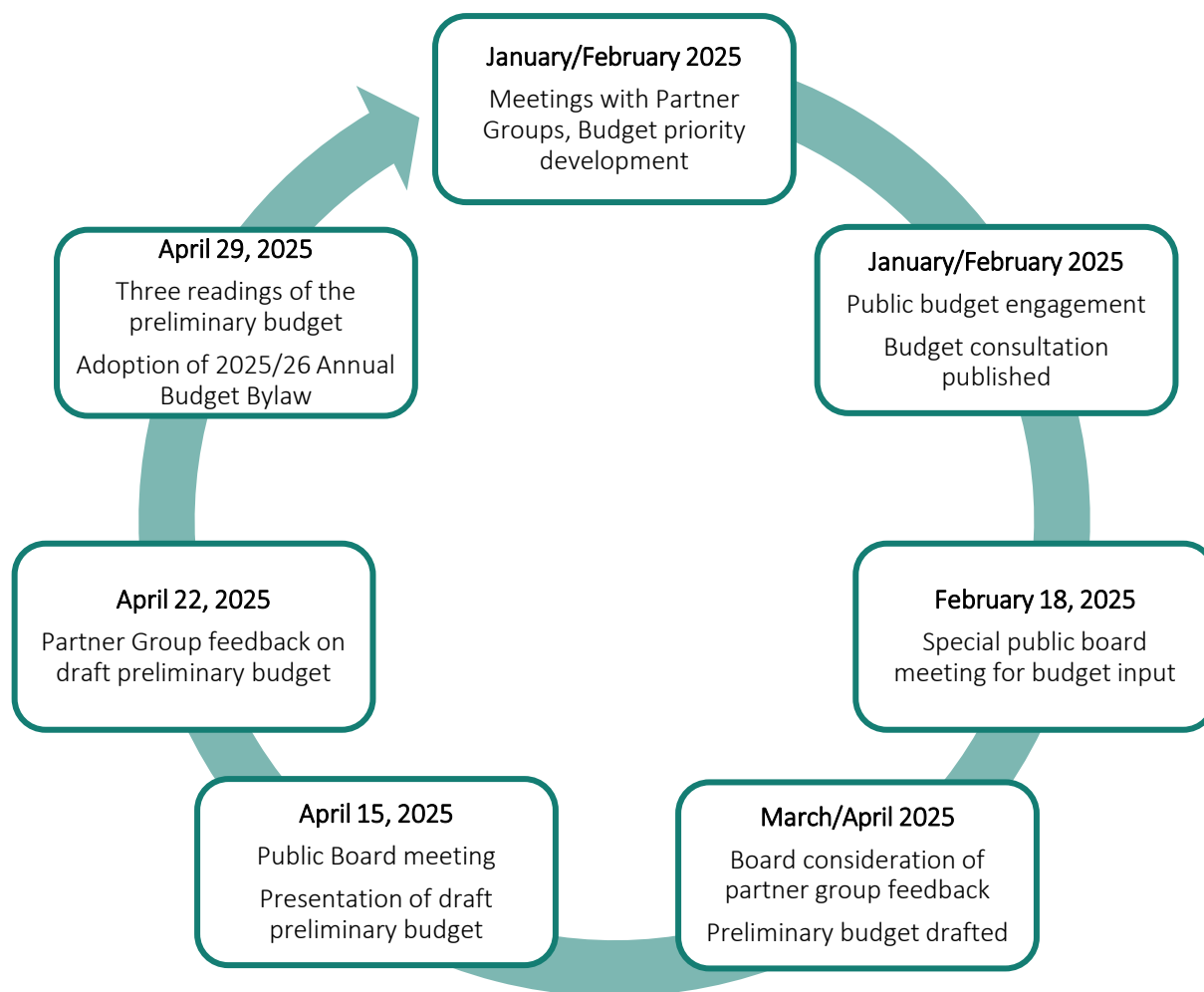
- learn about government funding and allocation
- learn about the SD43 budget process
- learn about *Directions 2025*, SD43's vision
- engage in the consultation by asking questions about the budget
- expect responses to your concerns and input
- contribute ideas that align with the goals and objectives from *Directions 2025* on how to address the opportunities and challenges

The Role of Trustees

Trustees are accountable to the interests of public education and our role is to:

- listen to you
- respond to your questions and concerns
- consider your ideas and input
- propose action and report back to you

PARTNER GROUP ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



Board Decision

There will be three public events leading up to the Board communicating its decisions on next steps for the budget. All partner groups and interested parties are invited to attend.

Who We Consult

Everyone is invited to comment on SD43's activities and initiatives. Here is a sample of interested parties we hope to hear from:

- Parents and students
- Community partners
- Business groups
- Local and provincial governments
- First Nations
- Diversity groups
- Educators and administrators
- Community members and neighbours
- Local health authority
- Non-profit groups
- Recreation commissions and sports groups



LEARN



ENGAGE



CONTRIBUTE

CONTRIBUTE

LEARN. ENGAGE. CONTRIBUTE.

We use a variety of methods to help you **learn**, keep you informed so you can **engage** in this process, and provide several opportunities for you to **contribute**.

Your Local Newspaper

In print or online, look for notices about public events, times, and location in the Tri-City News. We also keep local reporters informed and request that they share stories and provide their independent insights and perspectives.

School District Website

All information on this process is available at www.sd43.bc.ca/budget.

Board Meetings

We have a series of Board meetings where budget information is shared and discussed by the Board of Education.

Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook

Budget information and event reminders are communicated through SD43's Facebook, Instagram, and "X" channels:

www.twitter.com/sd43bc
www.instagram.com/schooldistrict43/
www.facebook.com/sd43bc

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The Board values all feedback and considers it carefully in making budget decisions. The input will shape the options considered during the 2025/2026 budget process. As the elected body representing the school community, the Board will make the final decisions.

Three-Phase Budget Planning Process

1. **Research** (ongoing through April 15, 2025): This phase includes background research, meetings with departments and partner groups for input, questions and answers, and public board meetings.
2. **Reporting** (April 16-25, 2025): This phase includes the presentation of the preliminary budget, feedback, report on findings and results, as well as early recommendations on the vision, planning ideas and overall direction.
3. **Next Steps** (April 29, 2025): This phase presents the final budget to the Board for approval.

Evaluation

The Board makes decisions based on its strategic goals and objectives outlined in *Directions 2025*.

PROVIDING YOUR FEEDBACK

Wish to Provide Feedback to the Board?

The Board welcomes partner group feedback.

Email: budgetfeedback@sd43.bc.ca

Mail: Attn: Board of Education
School District No. 43 (Coquitlam)
1080 Winslow Avenue, Coquitlam, BC V3J 0M6

In Person: by attending one of the meetings detailed below.

PUBLIC EVENTS SCHEDULE

Budget input and consultation events take place in April as outlined below.

- **Special Public Board Meeting – Input into the Budget Process**

Tuesday, February 18, 2025, 6:30 pm

This will be an opportunity for partner groups and interested parties to present input into the formulation of the 2025/2026 budget to the Board. If you or your group would like to present feedback, please review the *Guidelines for Budget Input* and submit the required information by 9:00 am on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, to budgetfeedback@sd43.bc.ca. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer at 604-939-9201.

- **Public Board Meeting - Presentation of 2025/2026 Preliminary Budget**

Tuesday, April 15, 2025, 7:00 pm

The preliminary budget will be presented at this regular public board meeting. This is also an opportunity for trustees to ask questions of the Finance Department staff regarding the budget.

- **Special Public Board Meeting – Budget Feedback**

Tuesday, April 22, 2025, 6:30 pm

This will be an opportunity for partner groups and interested parties to present feedback to the Board on specific aspects of the budget. If you or your group would like to present feedback, email your intention to budgetfeedback@sd43.bc.ca by 9:00am on Thursday April 17, 2025. There is no need to provide a written submission to the Board of Education.

- **Public Board Meeting - Final Budget Presentation and Board Approval**

Tuesday, April 29, 2025, 7:00 pm

The annual budget will be presented to the Board for approval at this regular public board meeting. This final budget will incorporate changes requested by the Board based on partner group feedback.

There will be an opportunity for questions at each of the meetings outlined.



CONTACTING MANAGEMENT

This consultation guide is designed to provide the SD43 community with a general background of the framework that leads to a preliminary budget. Its purpose is to provide increased transparency, and accountability to the public.

You are encouraged to review the Board’s strategic vision and plan [Directions 2025](#).

If you have questions about this guide, please contact the Office of the Secretary Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer at 604-939-9201.

School District No. 43 (Coquitlam)

1080 Winslow Avenue
Coquitlam, BC V3J 0M6

www.sd43.bc.ca

