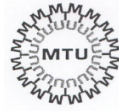




MTU Report on School District #75 Deficit



#100-33344 2nd Ave.
Mission, B.C. V2V 1K3

Website: www.bctf.ca/local75
e-mail: mtu@telus.net

Phone: 604-826-0112
Fax: 604-826-3435

At the Committee of the Whole Meeting on January 14th, 2020, the Secretary Treasurer spent considerable time outlining the deficit facing MPSD. She stated the budget has a deficit of almost eight hundred thousand dollars, not including the cost of the consultant hired by the board to aid in presenting the case for a new high school (as that amount would be reimbursed by the government at a future date). The Secretary Treasurer focused on two main avenues of discussion in regards to the deficit: first, the reasons why the deficit has ballooned and second, where efficiencies could be found to address the deficit. The MTU has some insight on both of these questions as outlined below.

The Why:

1. Upping the reimbursement for mileage from 54 cents a km to 59 cents.

- The board uses Revenue Canada recommendations to set mileage reimbursement.
- January 2020 Rev Can recommended 59 cents
- This is only a recommendation and the Board did NOT follow the recommendation last year or the year previous
- Why increase this year in the face of such a deficit?

2. Arbitration settlement

- There have been significant Arbitration costs and settlements

- Why are these not accounted for in the budget?
- Four-party meetings to find solutions would be more cost effective.

3. Costs of grievances, harassment and investigations

- The number of grievances is also on the rise and can be costly.
- Pursuing more grievances at the Step one level (or at the school level) is faster and more cost effective. HR and the MTU are discussing this approach
- In terms of investigations, there are definitely matters that require a teacher be off work, with pay, pending the outcome of investigation but there are a number of matters that do not require escalation. Just as some grievances can be solved at the school level, many investigations can also be resolved with a conversation. For example, parent complaints shouldn't automatically require investigations. The MTU is interested in discussing this approach further.

4. Increases in Management, SBO staff and Administrators

A. SBO staff

- We compared the SOFI reports from 2017, 2018 and 2019 (obtained from the Board's website) which tracks employees making in excess of \$75 000.

- Senior administrators and management positions increased by 3 between 2017-2019.
- During the same two years the salaries for these employees increased by over \$1.1 million. This seems excessive for a two year period, while in deficit and it doesn't include increases for employees not reported on the SOFI.

B. Administrators (principals and vice principals)

- 28 Principals and Vice Principals (excluding District Admin) in 2017.
- June of 2019 there were 32 Administrators. (source: SOFI reports 2017-2019)
- Why was there an increase of 4 administrators with no corresponding increase in student population?
- Please note we understand the need for an administrator at Stave Falls, but the MTU also questions the need for a full time administrator a full year before Stave Falls opened.
- Over the two year period from June 2017 to June 2019 the cost of school Administrators' salaries rose by \$953 055.49. (Source: SOFI report 2017-2019)
- Again, when we are being told that the budget is tight, this seems excessive for a two year period and while in deficit.

5. Failure to fill

- There is a teacher shortage in our province and this district seems to be unduly effected by this shortage.
- It is the MTU's belief the District has created substantial barriers to filling open postings, exacerbating an already dire situation
- Everyday the first 10-20 TTOC callouts are to fill positions that have no teacher.
- If these positions were filled, there would rarely be a shortage of TTOCs to

cover the normal absences (source: daily absence reports)

- Currently, we are short TTOCs on a daily basis causing a constant loss of prep time, loss of library time, loss of LST/ISP services.
- Every day that teachers lose prep time increases the work that must be done at home or on a weekend. This is a constant erosion of the work/life balance for staff. We are experiencing extraordinary rates of teacher burnout, medical leaves and the loss of new teachers to the profession.

***Although not monetary, we should also consider the effect not having a teacher in every position is having on students' learning.

6. Owed lieu time

- Owed lieu time is time that is owed when teachers are pulled from their job or give up their prep time to cover for a shortage of TTOCs.
- We have been short TTOCs every day in this district since September 19th (with two exceptions) (source: daily absence reports)
- In elementary Non-enrolling teachers are pulled from their jobs to act as TTOCs, closing libraries, cancelling LST/ISP support to students and cancelling music programs
- These specialist teachers are being used as expensive emergency TTOCs and this time must be made up for prep minutes and days owed, creating more need for TTOCs
- In high school /middle schools, teachers are regularly giving up their prep blocks to cover for the shortages, creating more time in lieu.
- Teachers can cash in owed blocks at any time with the bulk of requests happening in June.

- MTU members accrued over 1000 days in lieu from September 2018-December 2019. The obligation is not accounted for in the budget. It is definitely a contributing factor to why there is a deficit.

7. Bargaining Costs

- According to the Collective Agreement, the board is required to cover the TTOC costs for the MTU bargaining team during bargaining. There were 9 bargaining sessions, at an approximate cost of \$1935 each, that the Board failed to budget for. TTOC costs for the Bargaining team, totaling \$46 935, were simply added to the TTOC budget line. CUPE has a similar arrangement and was also bargaining at the same time. Considering this was a known cost, it should have been accounted for on a different budget line, ahead of time.

Areas for efficiencies:

1. Professional development initiatives

- There are a large number of professional development initiatives that are available to staff in Mission. This is an area that could see cut backs without directly affecting the classroom. Offerings such as Joyful Literacy, Numeracy, teaching teachers to use vertical surfaces have been plentiful, each with extraordinary TTOC costs. In addition, numerous speakers have been brought in for evening sessions, with food provided. In times of plenty, pro-d offerings such as these are welcomed and appreciated. However, when there is a looming deficit, perhaps shifting some of the offerings to the District Pro-d day and reducing the amount of pro-d opportunities offered as time in lieu for

the May Pro-D day should be considered. The MTU proposes a shift in District policy to accepting weekend teacher chosen pro-d activities as in lieu time for the May Pro-d day, allowing the district to save money on TTOC costs while not diminishing Teachers choices and opportunities.

2. Supplies (color printing)

- The MTU has noticed a significant number of handouts are printed in full color for board meetings, Pro-d sessions and Committee of the Whole meetings. There really is no need for color printing. Not a hugely significant savings I am sure but it could start a shift away from frivolous spending in supplies.

3. Equity scan

- The district is currently one of 10 districts running an Equity scan on itself. This scan is an initiative from the Ministry. It is not mandated, it has no power to enact changes in the district and it has no end goal beyond information gathering. The MTU fully appreciates the district's commitment to promote and ensure indigenous contributions and participation in the district. However, the Equity Scan garners a mere \$3000 from the Ministry for costs. This seems like an expense the district can ill afford at the moment, especially considering the Equity Scan has no detailed goal, no power to enact change and will surely cost more than 3000 dollars? Perhaps more could be done using the Enhancement Agreement?

Summary:

At the Committee of the Whole meeting where the budget deficit was discussed, it was brought up that teacher costs are the largest obligation of the board. This is an area that the board was looking at and from what we could tell, TTOC costs especially were of great concern. We respectfully suggest that if the board filled the vacant teaching positions, TTOC costs would be greatly reduced. First, the cost of teachers in unfilled positions would be shifted to the total FTE cost that is sent to the government for funding, removing those costs from the TTOC budget which the board is responsible for. Second, there would be more TTOCs available to cover the ordinary sick days and leaves. This means we would be incurring far less lieu time, reducing board obligations even further. This also includes the added bonus of reducing teachers' stress levels and burn out. Third, a reduction in board driven pro-d initiatives would see a reduced demand on TTOCs over several days each year, further decreasing TTOC costs. A policy shift to accept work done a weekend as lieu time for May pro-d would also reduce costs.

By the MTU's observation, there have been significant increases in board, management and administrator staff over two years, in addition to significant increases in salaries for these employees. We have seen a huge amount of money spent on board driven pro-d initiatives. There has been a failure to fill positions, creating a huge backlog of owed lieu time, increasing burnout and illness not to mention loss of support for students.

By comparison, the average teacher (Category 5, step 10 teacher) has gone up \$3 134 in three years compared to the average principal's salary which has increased by \$16 574 in the same time period. The result of these increases is that the average administrator now makes

50% (or \$44 698) more than the average teacher (Category 5, step 10). The question is are these kinds of raises appropriate given our deficit?

Please note that the MTU's concern around the salary increases for management and administrators is not indicative of teachers begrudging our fellow employees raises. Our concern is twofold. First, the increases in the number of School Board and Management personnel seems out of step with the lack of increases to our student population. Surely, student population increases or lack thereof should be the determining factor in how many administrators and School Board staff are or are not added to district. Second, the increase in wages for administrators and School Board staff have not been in line with either the deficit or the mandate that the government has set out for the education sector.

The MTU recommends:

Application of efficiency staffing to Board of-
fice exempt staff and administrators before re-
ducing teaching, TTOC and CUPE supports in
the classrooms.

Fill all vacant teaching positions.

Reduce Board initiatives for professional de-
velopment and accept pro-d activities that oc-
cur on the weekend as lieu time for the May
pro-d day.

No increase to mileage this year.

No color printed handouts.