

Committee of the Whole (ZOOM Meeting): September 17, 2020; 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Transcript

[Slide 1]

Scott Benwell - Well, thank you Chair. Thank you, trustees. Just a warm shout out and welcome to our students, families and community that are joining us this evening. I want to take a break and just take a deep breath and I join anyone out there that wishes to do the same.

We recognize the emotion, the energy, angst for some, as we move through this process as we fill this space together. And in fact, it is no different for us here this evening, bringing this presentation to you. I'd like to start off by recognizing and respecting the vision and honesty of our previous Board. A time before Jesse and I were here.

[Slide 2]

They set in motion a necessary process, back in October 2018, the motion that's in front of you: that the district initiates a community based consultation process, to review configurations that support the best educational outcomes for students in addition to maximizing cost effective education delivery. The Board had wisdom (*you have to go back Jesse. Sorry.*) And I apologize in advance to everyone out there. It is hard in Zoom land to do multiple presenters, so if we get a slide ahead or a slide back then

Rob Pingle - Scott, one other item as we take in the emotion of the moment, is my remiss to acknowledge that this meeting is being recorded. The intention of recording this meeting is to provide a full transcript that will be published on our website within two weeks so that participants, who did not attend this meeting, can review the words that are stated by staff and our partner groups, as questions, as we move through this meeting. And so just acknowledging that the record feature is on, sorry for that.

Scott Benwell - That's OK, just nudged my anxiety. Respect for the previous Board, they saw this coming. Respect for our predecessors, Rod and Lisa that help guide our thinking and help guide initial steps as we understood the challenge that was out in front of us. And to this Board, as you came together as a new Board. We were confronted together with a large challenge. You've led consultations. You've led review. And you've directed staff appropriately.

My gratitude to our board office staff, our school staffs, support services, for the job that you do day in and day out, regardless of distractions, regardless of what's going on around focusing your attention on the most important thing we do. And that is to interact with students and guide them and help them in their learning.

[Slide 3]

(*Thanks Jesse*). We come forward to June, through consultation through review. Then on to June with that the Board of Education directs staff to undertake a financial and operational feasibility study of the scope of opportunity presented by staff. As we (*got to stay there, sorry Jesse*). most of this presentation will be conducted by Jesse, so she has control of the presentations. I do want to, at this point, to do a special mention to our board office staff. Many of you are joining us this evening from your living rooms and it's with your support that we've been able to pull this off in a complex time, and you have my, and our, deepest admiration for your skills and talents as you come in and dedicate your professional lives to public education. And to my colleague, Jesse...

From the Southern Gulf Island of Saturna, born and raised, a GISS grad, and an external auditor of this district for six years before we had the great fortune of having her join us. You are experienced and committed, and we are lucky to have you.

The presentation that is coming is an objective overview of our expenditures, our funding and the choices that have been made in this district. While its objective, we have searched for options to find ways to balance our needs and wants, with our funding. We've challenged ourselves to do this work, over the summer and since this motion, do it with integrity and focus. We do understand the consequences. We do understand the challenge that's out in front of this Board and ourselves as we come together. *(We can switch now. Thank you).*

[Slide 4]

As we undertake to examine how we are configured. To examine how our budgets and our expectations of delivery come together and interact, we've also had to be mindful of so many other things. As we go through, we recognize that school districts are simultaneously complex and quite simple. They operate with some autonomy. But limited by *the School Act* requirements for a balanced budget. Boards have the autonomy to determine programs we want and are required to do so within the means of our funding. Boards may set values and aspirations and make choices about how we achieve them. In our district, we need to balance our cost pressures with our drives and passions for how learning is optimized. We've done this work considering *the School Act*. Considering the Board's policies and procedures, its Strategic Plan, the Enhancement Agreement, commitments to climate action, and the funding formula, which we just found out about the details of last March. And it has changed and it has changed in a beneficial way for us. And Jesse will explain that a bit later. *(Next slide).*

[Slide 5]

So this presentation and the report that you can find on our website with an accompanying data booklet is divided into 4 areas: an exploration of our challenge, the objective data, the modeling that we were asked to present to the Board, and next steps. This evening, the challenge, the data, and the modeling will be largely handled by myself, mostly Jesse, with supports from Boe and D'Arcy, who are our trusted directors of instruction here at the board office. *(Next slide).*

[Slide 6]

So, we start with the challenge. We have as we speak, a \$1.1 million-dollar structural deficit in our district. Although this is less than we had anticipated and we talked about last spring, and Jesse will explain the reasons for that, it is still significant for a small district. It requires that we consider, carefully and judiciously, the options we have in front of us. The goal now is as it was in October 2018: the best educational outcomes within a cost-effective delivery. It is important that we make this work successful locally. We don't want to lose our autonomy to make decisions. We don't want our future determined by outside forces. We hope that the report and this presentation allows some insight into this Board's challenge, allows some consideration of the opportunities that are in front of us, and allows us, over the coming days and weeks and months, an opportunity to dialogue. An opportunity to think deeply about the next configuration, perhaps the next 25 years, as that is the time period since the last configuration associated with the introduction of a brand-new building at GISS. With that, friends and colleagues, I'll turn it over to Jesse, who is going to expertly walk us through the modeling that she's done, and we have done, over the last months and again, appreciate trustees, Chair, having the patience to allow us the time to do this work. It's complex work, and we hope that this serves a purpose for us this evening, and in the days and weeks to come. So, thank you. Take it away, Jesse.

Jesse Guy - Thank you everybody. Thank you for the time. Thank you for the interest. When we left in June, we were having discussions around the challenge of about \$1.6 million. Since there, we've re-looked at the number and I think we're in a place that it is more comfortable for all of us because it means less change and we move from 1.6 to 1.1 from a few things. One of them, Scott brought up, was that, with funding model review that the Province undertook and released the information on March of 2020, it actually benefited our district to some degree because we are quite dependent on unique geographic factor funding, and that increased for our district, so that actually had a positive impact.

And other areas: cost cutting measures, around the closure of Windsor House, have been felt, so we've had a year to say, OK, that has made a positive difference, because now we've had the financial statements done for the prior year. Structural cost cutting measures that were done at the district regional level, have also taken effect, so that gets us to a better place. And the other is looking is there possibly some changes in the future that may bring in some revenue so we can look at different ideas. And that has allowed us to work within a range that's slightly smaller for the challenge of the deficit reduction. And \$1.1M is where we've landed. So, we'll work with this number throughout. Another thing I'll add, is the other number we work with a lot is dividing by the total number of students in our district – so our student FTE. That brings us back to the place, regularly, when we are comparing ourselves to other districts, they are divided by their student FTE or when we are looking at our individual schools. It's the number which allows for some comparability because we bring it down to a level. And it's also how we're funded, for the majority, through the number of students, and also, it's the whole purpose of Education. So, I think it's a good number, so you'll see that coming out quite a bit.

And I'm going to take us onto a slide that Scott and lots of people in this board office worked on, and it's kind of a history movement of the challenge that we are facing out of the historical background to it. And it also brings us back to the four-day week, which is another measure when there were historically issues around the deficit.

[Slide 7]

So we call this slide “finding balance” and I'll just do a quick movement through it. There's a timeline at the bottom, and on the far left side, this is when the district introduced the four day week and that was a cost cutting measure and it did cause change and controversy in the district and it has moved to a place where people actually, I think, see it as a lifestyle benefit that they do enjoy. At some point, the cost of living caught up to the district again, and so there is the expense line, which is the red, got above the black line again in the 2010s. Windsor House was brought on at that point, which increased the enrollment, and therefore the revenue in the district.

There was also a more flexible approach to enrollment of students which increased revenue. This then did result in an enrollment audit, which is how the Ministry comes in and determines whether or not the appropriate amount of funding is being provided to the district. That is different than a financial statement audit, which is annual and looks at how the money was spent and whether it's calculated and presented accurately before it rolls up into the provincial financial statements. That resulted, as you can see in 2017, with a claw back of revenue and reduced revenue going forward. So, there's a change in that.

That brings us then, when we look at 2019, there was a Windsor House closure, which as you can see, our expenses drop below the black line, which is where we should be, and a lot of that is the result of reductions in students, so we have less costs associated with running a school program in Vancouver. But we still have retained the funding. And that's the reason that it's called funding protection. So, we're in an era where we have funding protection because the Ministry will not

allow operating grants to drop below 1.5% per year. So, we're actually overfunded for our current geographic residential enrollment. We have a window of time where we have additional funding and we can adjust because, at some point, we will come down to where we are only funded for the students in our district. This allows us to see movement overtime and where we have to go. (Scott - *Is there any items you wanted to add on in this one?*)

And what we're looking for is stability and sustainability in a different approach going forward. And that's why these configuration questions are really important. Because we want a stable environment where there's not ups and downs, and where there's not sudden cost cutting measures that have to occur, which is stressful for the district and stressful for providing education to students. And we feel the best approach is a stable environment for student achievement.

[Slide 8]

This is looking at the historic facility space compared to student enrollment in the district. We went and analyzed and looked at how many student, and just one other thing with this report, we've moved it back to only students who are resident in the district and who are not international. Windsor House and International have always been removed from our numbers. So, in this slide, if you look at the 1980s, it went from 1000 to 1500 students and there were 8 buildings. Then we went through to the 90s, to the late 90s, to early 2000. This district reached its large resident population of around 1800. Since then, it's been sloping off into the 14 and 1500s, but we have the largest number of facilities. And the district is funded for students, not for facilities, so this results in us having under capacity buildings, but we're still heating them. We're still providing propane and cleaning them. We end up spending a lot more on buildings than we actually have students anymore. That brings us to a discussion on space.

[Slide 9]

This is another slide that says a similar thing. The blue outline is the size of capacity of the district and the students in the middle indicate total population. As you can see, in the 1980s, we had much less facility space, but a similar population size. So, it just illustrates the discussion that we've been having.

[Slide 10]

This also talks about projected enrollment. Where we are going is important to know for enrollment, it's always going to be within a range, and so we want to ensure that we're working within a range that's reasonable. The top line is the provincial estimate for this district, and it's actually quite stable, with a little up, a little down. We have gone and looked for the next five years. We looked at StrongStart on Mayne, Pender, Saturna, and Galiano since their small populations and most are enrolled in our StrongStart programs, or our StrongStart facilitators would know who's around on the island. On Salt Spring, we looked at birth rates. This allows us to create our own graph. So, my expectation is we will arrive somewhere between the two, but I think it's really important that we plan and configure for anywhere landing in that range to ensure that we are stable and we are planning well. So, if we have less enrollment, we're still OK. And if we have more enrollment, we still can expand our capacity.

[Slide 11]

And I'm going to pop it back over to Scott for this one. Thank you, Scott.

Scott Benwell - Thanks Jesse. I've been working on being able to control my mute function here, so I think I'm good now. So, thanks for that overview, Jesse. You know part of the challenges are geography. The space we have in the district, enrollment decline and funding.

And I think, we're going to have to lean into this term, equity, over the next little while. What is equity to some, may seem like a loss to others. Our intent is always to find the least impactful action on all. I think as the presentation moves forward, we're going to see some of this dynamic tension - between equity lens through access and equity lens through funding. We also want to, at this point, for some that may have joined the call with a particular interest, a special interest, we want to assure people that in the modeling that is to come, that we see a pathway to including and continuing many of the programs that we hold really close and dear. That we won't be modeling for the discontinuation of French Immersion, or GIPSA, or other programs we hold close. With the right scenario - different scenarios - will determine the delivery of those programs. So, we will need to continue discussions with our coordinators, with our staff, with our parents, about how best to do this.

But there is utility in the feedback forums that have been made available to people and I think this Board, and we certainly, as staff, have listened. For now, the modeling allows us for continued special programs in our district and we just wanted to make sure that anyone that is joining us this evening, to hear that news, that we got that out early with some caution that we need to make wise and judicious choices moving forward. *(And Jesse, you had some additional explanation of this slide).*

Jesse Guy - *(Rob, you mentioned you'd like to pop in for a second).*

Rob Pingle - *(Yeah, just temporarily).* In learning how to use Zoom, we have learned that this meeting has a 100-person capacity. It was not our intention to limit the meeting, it's our inexperience with the platform. As was stated, the meeting is being recorded in a transcript will be provided to all who are not able to enter. Anyone who is potentially in a household with multiple screens of the meeting that could gather around one screen to create more room for other households, it would be greatly appreciated. We apologize for this inconvenience and, as stated, we will provide a transcript within two weeks of this meeting.

[Slide 12]

Jesse Guy - Thank you Rob. Sorry, I'll just pop back in. I think I'll move to the next slide, which has to do with data analysis. Scott gave a very good point, which is access and funding. When we increase access, especially in a district with great geographic expanse, then funding is pulled on, and how does that impact. That seems to be the key discussion point for tension.

[Slide 13]

The next section will be data analysis, and so it's a little technically heavy, and I will try to go slow to allow for people who haven't spent much time with it as some people here at the board office. We wouldn't normally ever look at schools as individual entities within a district. We would never look at them from the revenue and expense and where they land. But, to broaden the discussion and a once-in-a-25-year configuration, we felt it was good to take a temperature point to see if we were equitable and how things had landed. All the district, as we've said in the slide before, is looking for a combination, especially in this district, between equity of access, and equity of funding. And that is a challenge in this district. So, we felt, in this rare circumstance, it was worth taking the time, which is not normally done. Because normally, you want to look at the district as an entire entity that supports itself. This is a variation, but we have chosen to do this.

The funding formula is not set up to naturally do this, so we had multiple conversations with the Ministry, to check in to know if our assumptions, especially around the funding formula and unique geographic, were reasonable for how we were allocating funding and expenses to different schools. I'm going to take you to the technical side, the larger equation, before we talk about

individuals and the impact it has on the deficit. I'm going to switch screens here. Let's hope it works.

[Reference Data Booklet] One of the complexities is the unique geographic, but one of the more straightforward areas is basic. There are three main types of funding, and then funding protection, as I've mentioned before. The first is basic, so every student across the province makes receives about \$7500 per student, no matter where you are. Unique student is a different bucket, it is individually attached to designations, but it is treated as one block to support all students who do need and require support. I've allocated that out per FTE of school. Once again, I've returned to the student FTE as the item with which we divide to allow for comparison and consistency. Salary differential is also one of those things that we've allocated out. Where unique geographic is more complex is when it comes to how to allocate it. Certain ones, like small community supplement, are attached specifically to a school and based on enrollment at different ages. And a few of them are very district specific, so they have been allocated out for FTE across the whole district, and that would be rural and climate factor - essentially, where you reside and the temperatures of your region where you reside in the province.

How I worked on this is I removed every student/every school from the modeling, and I put it back in and saw the change and impact on unique geographic. That information came in and was allocated out per school. That's the majority of the funding side. Other items were treated similar. On the expense side, it is was allocated out, I found a universal cost per student for items that could be allocated across the district, and that was brought in. Teacher in PVP could be looked at for how many FTE of teachers were in each school and principals. So those were brought in.

The item that was pulled out completely was from Function 7, which is transportation is function 7, and that's bus, water taxi and boarding. And that was then allocated out per school. The buses were done in a logical fashion. If there is or isn't a bus - Mayne and Saturna don't have buses, and GISS and SIMS have the majority of students so they got two buses each. Cost of water taxis was allocated based on the average number of students arriving from the specific island to Salt Spring.

I'm going to go back to the larger one **[Slide 13]**. What this slide does is bring the revenue and expense in and looks at whether or not there is a surplus or deficit position per school. I then looked at it by region, because I thought it would be interesting to see for equity because there is going to be some similarity with regions and costs , since we know we're in a deficit position, so we would be in a deficit, not a surplus position, because this is based on our 20/21 annual budget. With revenue and expense from international students pulled out since that is based on Ministry funding, and that's not impacted by Ministry funding. The average across the district would be \$850 per student of deficit held. Salt Spring actually comes out to \$670. And outer islands is, as a whole where I brought Mayne, Saturna, Galiano, and Pender in and divided them by the total number of students from there, is \$2,060. So, three times the amount of the deficit is held by outer islands and the individual outer island student than on a Salt Spring student. That gives us a temperature of where we are across the district, which means about three times the amount of deficit is accumulated over a smaller number of students. So that is where, really, the crux of equity and access comes in, is how we're going to allocate and what is equitable, and how to find a balance between those is, I think, a good starting point for thinking and talking.

And as Scott said, we're working to provide an objective approach to information and scenarios. We've been asked to model, and the modeling is trying to give a broad (view), of five scenarios of ways the district could be configured. Looking at the impact of unique geographic on that configuration. Look at unique cost associated with each configuration and see if we can remove the deficit and what would it take to balance the deficit with each different configuration. Some

scenarios are more financially beneficial. Some scenarios have more access possibilities, so I think it was important to give a broad range. Some were going to be less or more optimal, but it allows us to see the different possibilities instead of just a narrow range of what we have been doing and what we think of, to allow the conversation to unfold.

[Slide 14]

This next section is helping us look at different Functions within the district, what they do and how we line up to different districts of a similar size across the Province. So, a district between 1000 and 2000 is a good comparator for us. There's been lots of discussion and this is an opportunity to look at whether we're balanced well in Functions to other districts. Our trustees asked our outside auditor, KPMG, to analyze us against similar sized districts and they've done that.

There are four Functions within a school district. Function 1 is called instruction. It's everything that happens in a school, including school-based administrators, principals and vice principals. Function 4 is district administration. It's everything that happens in the board office, from accounting and payroll to cost around configuration, costs around connecting with the ministry, costs between schools. It is your senior staff and also our accounting and payroll all come into this function. Function 5 is maintenance and is everything from BSWs to plant workers to taking care of small projects. Function 7 is transportation and housing, which in this district is boarding, water taxis and buses. So those Functions everybody who works within them ends up in a Function and every cost associated with, whether it's paper here at the board office or in the school, lands within those Functions. The analysis we were looking for is to understand if we fall within a reasonable range in each Function with districts that are relatively comparable. We started with FTE, some districts are actually quite comparable, like Boundary, who was the only other district in the Province with a four-day week. Revelstoke, even though it's within the right range, is not a great comparison in some ways because it's one small region served by a few schools. So, there's high density, there's not much geography, so their transportation costs and other items are not going to be similar. In some other comparison, we've chosen to use Port Alberni, even though it's in the 3000 student range, because they have similar geography to us and that they have a diversified region, they have Port Alberni, and then they have you Ucluelet and Tofino, which provides issues like water taxis and bussing. So, in other areas we've swapped out Revelstoke for Port Alberni, which is actually called Pacific Rim. When we look at district administration function 4, so the board office, and we looked at the salaries and benefits comparable to other districts per student we were right in the middle range. I'll just move through these slides quickly now that I've given you the overlay of what we're looking at.

[Slide 15]

District administration, so once again Function 4. This is everything that happens at the board office, services and supplies included. As you'll see, we move farther to the right. Part of that is because a huge amount of the work done at the board office is done by staff and people in the board office, whereas in some districts certain areas maybe hire off to a contractor, like manager of finance or to prepare certain reports. The majority is done by so us. As this moves along, we're a very efficient board office per student for the size of the district.

[Slide 16]

This one looks at transportation and housing, so Functions 7 - all of it - salaries, benefits and services and supplies, divided by our number of students, we are quite far to the left and that, other than Gold Trail, which is quite a small district with a lot of length of bussing. You can see Revelstoke, which is a city region, is far to the right. So that's where we land on transportation which is pretty far to one side.

[Slide 17]

This is transportation and housing in comparison to instruction, which is everything that happens in schools. Gulf Islands spends approximately for every \$10 we spend 9 to one and when you get down to Revelstoke, you're just in the cents difference. This just allows you to see that gradually the Functions to each other in comparison to size of expenditure.

[Slide 18]

This is what I think is quite interesting and it takes all four Functions – that's instruction, operations and maintenance, district administration and transportation and housing - and compares them in relation to the total expense. As you can see, these are lined up across here based on instruction, and we are far to the right. But really, what you're looking at, I think, is the most important one is that you look at our transportation and housing and we are the highest in comparison to the other ratios. So, it allows you to see the impact of district expenses and transportation and maintenance and operative maintenance to instruction. The largest in here is instruction and if you move any of the others, it doesn't have as much impact as it was. That's where if we, often in this district, where extra transportation funding would come from, is out the larger bucket of instruction.

We are funded broadly, we are not funded saying you have to spend this much in this one, this much in this one. But school districts aren't actually funded for transportation, so any funding that comes out of that, it comes out of the main bucket.

[Slide 19]

We asked them to look at, specifically, principals and vice principals with school-based administrators and how we land comparatively between our comparative districts. And once again, school-based administrators are in the instruction Function because that is where their job category is occurring. It's occurring in the school and working out of there. We still arrive actually quite well in the middle and I point that out even with the fact that this district has a strategy of making sure we're working to grow VP'S and principals on Pender, Mayne, Saturna and Galiano because it is hard to have somebody - if you have a school there and you need a person in that administrator position to actually have someone to move or be a part of the community and be responsive and available to the committee. So, there has been /and work to have VPS who, through mentorship, will raise up to be principals and there's more stability in those schools. Revelstoke on the other hand, if they had a principal retire, it would be much easier to have somebody if all you have to do is drive in the different direction from your house to be in a new role at that school. So, there's some strategy there that the district has worked on over the last little while, but we still remain within the reasonable middle.

Scott Benwell - Jesse on this slide, are you going to mention just that, regardless of teaching time, Principals and Vice Principals all end up in that Function. I just think that's an important piece before you move on to, I know this illustrates it but yeah.

Jesse Guy - So regardless of whether a principal is .9 teaching and .1 administration, most of our principals are teaching principals. It means a good part of their day is spent in the classroom. Every part of their salary and benefits ends up within this category. So regardless of the role at the time with which they are playing and that this next slide illustrates it.

[Slide 20]

We have a 15 headcount of principals, 47% of it is teaching time and 53% of it is administration time, so it just allows for that. I'd like to invite Boe to step in and talk about the role, if she has a moment.

Boe Beardsmore – Great, thank you Jesse. I just wanted to talk a little bit about the complexities of administration. So, the roles and responsibilities of principals have changed significantly over the years. Growing complexities in the student population in administrative, managerial and operational responsibilities, technology advancements, instructional leadership, social and cultural influences have all contributed to the increased complexities of what principals do every single day. These complexities significantly add to the daily volume of the workload and with the advancement of technology, there exists an expectation that principals are accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week via email, phone, in person, and that their work can and has taken place on and off site before and after official school hours. This of course was more than evident during the pandemic of our current times.

Along with administrative responsibilities in our district, 14 out of the 15 principals have teaching assignments. With all that, principals, of course, are addressing emerging issues that arise, and at times, involving crisis management. It has been voiced by some teachers that administrative time be increased for principals. When principals are teaching, they're not accessible to support students or teachers, or deal with emerging situations.

Lastly, I just wanted to comment a bit about the Director of Instruction positions within our district. We have two Director Instruction positions, each director's portfolio is comprehensive, complex, and continuously expanding. The responsibilities of the Directors here are the same as in other districts, but unlike other some other districts, in our district, each portfolio is located in one individual and not in a department.

Jesse Guy - Thank you Boe. In the same way we're looking at district configuration over 20-25 years, it's important to look at the changes in some of the roles and the complexity which has arrived for our principals and vice principals and also the board office. All roles have changed over the last 25 years, so we can't quite compare everything in the same way, but I still feel with this assessment from KPMG, and I'm glad we did it, to see and to feel like we ride within a range that we're comfortable in and acceptable with. I think that's important.

[Slide 21]

The next area we're going to move on to is modeling, and modeling involves the scenarios with which we've been talking about. It will bring in the revenue side and the expense side, and talk about different ways that it can be modeled to allow for possibilities going into the future. So, I'm going to move to some documents behind that allow their calculations, that allow me to speak to it a little bit better [reference data booklet]. These have been modeled to look at the impact on unique geographic on our district which, as I've said before, is quite important to our district. It's about more than 5 million of our approximately \$20,000,000 that we received in operating grant. We can't change the number of students we have, but where those students go to school does impact how much revenue overall the district does or doesn't bring in. So, to compare that for doing scenarios, I've modeled where students would be in two years and this is, we pointed out earlier, I worked on some modeling projections to see. I looked at Island Health totals for births in the last five years and then StrongStart in our outer islands to create some estimations of what would be in the next cohorts coming up for the next five years and brought that into our district projection. So, if it's in purple, it's an estimate based on those enrollment numbers and these of course have been moved along by two years. The reason I used two years out is, whatever configuration the Board chooses or doesn't choose to do 2 years from now, will probably be settled and so we could have a sense of what the revenue impact for that would be.

So, scenario one, because you always need to have a comparator to compare positive or negative movement, is our current configuration. Our current configuration in two years would provide us

approximately 5.5 million dollars in unique geographic. That is the one that we can look at that we can change. The number of students in our district we can't change, and that were the Ministry of Education and the funding formula do per student. So that's not going to impact, regardless of how we configure our district, but unique geographic does. So that's why we're using that as a determiner if it's less or more revenue brought into the total district.

The second scenario is K to 7, all neighborhood schools and all students from across the district come to GISS from Grade 8 to 12. This results in approximately \$280,000 per year less unique geographic revenue. The other scenario that this also requires is because we're creating an entire other cohort, which would be grade 8 on the water taxis. We would need to provide an entire other boat. So that's an additional cost you can't get away from if we go to this configuration model, which is about \$400,000 extra per year.

The next scenario we looked at was K to 9 at all our outer Island neighborhood schools, and K to 7 and then the high school, it gets 8 to 12 for Salt Spring and then 10, 11 and 12 for Saturna, Pender, Mayne and Galiano. This reduces the revenue by about \$100,000. It does not require an additional water taxi. The reason the revenue reduces, even though students are in the outer islands longer, is those high school 10,11, 12, which currently we have a few at Pender, no longer part of it. So there is a reduction, and an additional cohort, but not an additional cohort for a water taxi.

So, scenario four would be K to 9 students are required to stay on the outer islands. We would end up with two high schools: a junior high at the high school here on Salt Spring and junior high on Pender. The graduation program, which is 10,11,12 would be a choice for all students in the district. You could attend Pender or you could attend GISS. This would result in 8 and 9 from Pender, Galiano traveling or Mayne, Galiano, traveling to Pender. Currently, the Saturna students, starting in Grade 6, already traveled to Pender for their 6, 7 and 8 there. This scenario would result in an extra \$230,000 in revenue, unique geographic, and no additional water taxi. I have made the assumption that one in four students would wish to carry on in Grade 10, 11 or 12 at the Pender School, plus any students who traveled from Salt Spring to Pender would be counted within that.

Scenario 5 is fiscally the most beneficial, but it would be the most significant change to the district. It is allowing us to see the parameters of where we could go and what the possibilities with the funding formula in the unique geographic modeling are. This would be K to 12 at Pender, Mayne, Saturna and Galiano schools and no change to the current configuration of Salt Spring. This would result in an extra \$130,000 or \$120,000 (misspoke: additional revenue is \$1,030,000 to \$1,020,000) in unique geographic to the whole district and there would not be a requirement for water taxis which would be a savings of approximately \$1.07 million. The reason I've walked through these is so we can see where the change in revenue for the whole district comes from when we look at different configurations. Another reason why, and Scott and D'Arcy will be talking about this later when we compared ourselves to other districts between 1000 and 2000, is the possibility of many different ways to configure and different ways that districts do it and whether or not that has an impact on educational outcomes. So, we're looking at it from solely a revenue side, but this is about active modeling at the moment.

Scott Benwell - I could just jump in, Jesse, to it. You know, we certainly had some feedback that we paid attention to that folks wanted to see some additional thinking around this. So I think you're right to point out that there is some more optimal and less optimal lenses on what we can do, but it's there to offer a perspective on the impacts of our funding and the way we choose to spend it.

[Slide 22]

So certainly, back to the concept of this as an objective presentation. This is not values-based or suggesting any one particular lens, but it gives us an opportunity just to see how dramatic things are as we move the various elements around. So just wanted to add that, (*sorry for interrupting Jesse*).

Jesse Guy - I always appreciate it, it gives me a chance to drink water. So, the next section is looking at these areas, we're going to look at the comparative of all the districts that I just brought. D'Arcy is going to jump in and give us, he has more experience in other districts than I do. As many of you know I'm new to the sector, not new to the district, but I'm new to the sector.

So, as we know, we're looking at our scenarios. We have agreed on \$1.1 million as a place, a range with which we could live in if costs to remove from the district to be it at a surplus or comfortably balance position, as funding protection removes itself from our district. So, we're working to find balance, and these are some other comparative districts with how they've configured and also their impact on graduation rates, which is where the education side also is important to come into this discussion. We know this is very finance heavy, but we were asked to model the impact for the district. Please take it away, D'Arcy.

[Slide 23]

D'Arcy Deacon - Thank you Jesse, and thank you Chair. As noted by both Jesse and Scott previously in this presentation, staff has looked both internally and externally at configuration options and local knowledge about our communities, and the geography of the Southern Gulf Islands is at the heart of our considerations and it is the backbone of what we're presenting today.

But with that said, it really is good practice to look around the Province and see how other districts of similar size and geography are configured. So, staff investigated six different districts. I think we see some familiarity to our previous graphs here, ranging in student population from approximately 1100 students up to 3900 students. All of these districts are geographically diverse. They serve multiple communities, and they face similar challenges to us in transportation, including in some instances water transport.

In reviewing these districts, despite the unique context of each, there are some common trends that emerge. Typically, what we find in these districts, is centralized communities with greater density tend to be configured in a K to 7 and 8 to 12 model. Remote or extremely rural community configurations vary from typically a combination of both elementary and secondary learners, to K to 9, K to 10 or even up to a K to 12 model. What we recognize that these schools tend to have higher grade levels. Additionally, what we typically find is that most similar sized districts have two regional secondary schools.

So, we can see, based on our configuration, that some of our similarities are that our smaller island schools are configured with both the elementary and secondary learners. The big departure that we have is that SD 64 is configured with our Middle school serving only one island and we are configured for one larger secondary school that serves all grade 9 to 12 students. A key area that we noted was worth looking into, and had some desire to do that, was looking at completion rates amongst the comparable districts, and as we look here we see a wide range of performance despite the differences and similarities in configurations. One of the most similar districts to us, Boundary, which also operates on a four-day week, notably has admirable completion rates and it is something that we're curious about and we want to continue to pursue.

Ultimately, what this data tells us, though, is that physical design of the organization does not determine our student's success. It's how you design and deliver the learning agenda that impacts

learners, attention to a high-quality instruction, knowing where kids are at and being responsive provides our pathway for student success. So regardless of what decisions are made, SD 64 places student success at the front of our work. Thanks everyone.

Scott Benwell - And thanks, D'Arcy. (*Jesse, I'll give you another opportunity to get a sip of water*). I want to make the point as well that when public education is at its optimal, and that's certainly where we wish to go, is that there is a stability and a consistency year in and year out with our finances and what we can count on.

We're better off when we have the resources available to equip our classrooms and equip our classroom teachers with items, and resources for them to be able to carry out their work as best they can. When we are very, very close to the line, those resources are not available. A public education system, at its optimal, is investing in professional growth, is investing in collaborative time for teachers and staff to work together to discuss where they're going. In an environment where we don't have those resources, those things are compromised and I think most public educators would comment about the value of having resources, having time to plan and to collaborate with colleagues. That has been a challenge in our district in years past as we've moved from one fiscal challenge to the other. There has been an absence of that stability and consistent investment in professional growth and resources for the classrooms. We would certainly like to see the conditions improve in that area so that we're able to collaborate with our staff and move forward. Thanks, Jesse.

Jesse Guy - Thank you Scott and now I would like to carry on with the point that I don't think I've brought in yet, and that is that I have touched on, it is that the earlier we bring our spending in line with the size of our student body, the more of the funding protection we have to utilize to make good choices around what we wish to use those resources for. Whether it's re-outfitting classes, changing schools as we configure to make new student arrangements, or to do professional development and growth, and have technological tools. So we have flexibility and a gift in that funding, and so the earlier we do make those changes to get to a stable place, it's best for education and I think it's best for the people in the district and the community. So, I'm an advocate for the process with which we're doing, even though I know it's hard. It does allow us some opportunities as well. And Rob, I believe you have a technical update.

Rob Pingle - and thank you. (*dog barks*) Yeah, my dog decided to join in the conversation as well. Behind the scenes we've been working to upgrade our account. (*dog barks*) My dog is very excited about it. Tell your friends, I'm not sure what our maximum number is, but if there is someone who wasn't in the Zoom, please join. Let them know that they can join now and thank you so far, as we proceed through the presentation. Please remove videos. Reps will be welcomed to ask questions of the presentation at the end of the presentation.

[Slide 24]

Jesse Guy – Thank you, Rob. So the next section we're going to look at, it starts to deep dive into modeling the five different scenarios. I've used this as a point up here so that people can see. The slide brings together a lot of information. It brings, in the middle, the funding impact. So the three scenarios we discussed that had changes and impact, or four scenarios had impact on our unique geographic. Those are here as well as an item which is not a cost item, but it is a funding impact. As many districts do many different things to decide what they will spend and what they won't spend money on, and one of the things that they also can do is raise funds around charging for transportation. It's not something that's tried in all districts, but I think it's important when we look at everything to put certain things on the table whether or not we see them as optimal or not optimal to choose, it allows people to see more flexibility in the pieces.

Most of the savings items on the left have to do with areas that are not under collective agreements. There's more discretion in the district to decide how they want to spend their funds around them. Things like transportation. It is deciding how many buildings and where we want to have our buildings. It is positions that unite, like StrongStart coordinators, that bring together the district in a wonderful way but aren't actually covered in collective language. Also, things at the district level with which we could, just discretionary items like whether travel within our district, whether it's reimbursing administrative level people \$250 a year, it's small items like retirement gifts from the Board to retirees. We've looked through and found small areas of items that we could put in a bucket that aren't covered under lenses.

So each of these categories has things that we have discretion around and we can put on the table for discussion. Some of them are more or less optimal, but I think in the same way we've looked at revenue, we need to look at what possible areas of savings there are.

The other item I'll bring your attention to is pre-existing admin. reductions. We talked a little bit about that, at how we've moved from kind of 1.6 to 1.1 [million] so there already has been areas this district has worked hard to reduce that surplus level to, and I think it's important to note those changes, whether it's from Windsor House to reduction in administration here and across the district, so to bring forward. I'm going to move back to Excel spreadsheets to bring these items on.

[Reference data booklet] These are, these are the slides behind the scenarios which we're going to present, but I just want to give you a little layout of how they're built.

Each scenario has a funding impact, if it's unique geographic. They may have an additional cost and in this case, scenario one, which is our current configuration, we know we have pressure on our water taxis. So every four years or so, we may have to run another boat like the Hawk, and I think it's the Hawk which carries 12 passengers. To allow for that overflow, we need to look at it. You know it's \$200,000 a year if we do it. I think it's important to cost it out per year so we know \$50,000 a year, so perhaps over four years, every four years we might have to run it. Then there's the category with expenses removed. These would be the items with which we choose to forgo in order to balance the deficit. And then the deficit comes in, and the total impact is remaining on this side of what might be a surplus over here. The items I've calculated out of the scenarios above, that we've chosen to keep or not to engage, like charging for buses and transportation. It's just how the scenarios are built, each one behind has items that are included or excluded depending on the scenario. I invite people to think about...are there things that would work for them or not work for them? I mean, this is solely based on trying to work and find a logical system, knowing that there's inputs, like revenue and outputs, like expenses, and how those work within a deficit we're trying to work on.

[Slide 25]

To go back and start going through the scenarios. So scenario one is our current configuration. And on the lower side of the balance beam, are the items with which would impact the deficit. So these are items we would forgo, or any additional expenses that we would have to accept, if we stay with this scenario. One would be that \$50,000 for the small water taxi every four years approximately, so I divided it by 4. Things we could forgo, and with these expenses, they are not objectively looked at. They are simply things that we have the possibility to change in our district and work around. So some of them may/ will impact different things like access and funding when we talk about what is equity, so it's important to think of this picture broadly and that we're going through five scenarios to see possibility of where we may or may not want to go as a district, and where the Board may choose to take us. So forgoing boarding for Pender, Mayne, Saturna,

Galiano students who wish to stay on Salt Spring while they attend the High School. School based would be just reducing timetabling, flex budgets at schools across the district, to try to find a pot of savings that would allow us to reduce our deficit down. The other would be the ones I talked about earlier, which is kind of district-wide smaller amounts that we've looked at and assessed. And then all bussing across the entire district so we would be foregoing transportation to allow this budget, this deficit, to be seen. This would leave us with a \$10,000 surplus. As we know this one doesn't have any revenue impact because it is the place at which we're measuring from.

[Slide 26]

Scenario two is K to 7 all neighborhood schools and GISS for 8 to 12 for all students of the entire School District 64. This is one of the most difficult ones for us to balance we would have to forgo, as a district, most of these items because we would be losing \$280,000 in unique geographic. Plus we would have to put on a full additional third boat. This could be balanced if we removed all buses from the district, we closed SIMS, all of our school-based Itinerant positions which are the positions within our district that support all the schools but aren't covered within collective language, the district components, and boarding for our outer island students. That would leave us still in a \$40,000 deficit position, but other funding could be found. So we could do this, but we would have to give up many expenses that we currently have across the whole district to make this one function.

[Slide 27]

Scenario 3 is K to 9 in all of our outer islands, K to 7 on Salt Spring, 8 to 12 for the high school for all students in SD 64. This one we lose \$100,000 in unique geographic. We've brought in student transportation fees for every student in the district who uses transportation bus or water taxi to help cover up that reduction in revenue we would receive. We, could close SIMS, school based district Itinerant and lose 1 bus on Salt Spring with the closure of SIMS as we think we could reconfigure our routes to allow for one less bus within the district. This would allow us to come to a place with a surplus. Once again, quite a bit has to be given up because we lose some revenue. On the other hand, we're not putting another water taxi on, so there's not that same offset, that same increase to the deficit before we even remove other expenses.

[Slide 28]

Scenario four is K to 7 in all elementary schools. There would be two high schools with a junior and a Secondary component in each high school. One school would be on Pender Island and all students from Pender, Mayne, Galiano and Saturna would attend for 8 and 9, with the option of either going to Salt Spring for 10, 11, 12 or Salt Spring could go to Pender for 10, 11, 12. So you have two junior and secondary high schools, one on Pender, one on GISS, allows students to go both directions at the graduate program level. Students remain within their neighborhood schools across the entire district until grade 7. This supports the small neighborhood schools staying robust. The only alteration to this would be Saturna continues to go to Pender for grades 6/7 as well.

This one has the increased revenue of \$230,000 and we don't have an additional water taxi expense. We would still want to do our school-based reductions. SIMS would probably be still a good choice to close, losing an additional cost from that one extra bus and some district-based expenses still being removed out. This does allow us to balance, and it opens a second high school, so there's some changes within the district and how people come together, but we still have options as well - at the graduation level of 10, 11, 12. there's still options across the district.

[Slide 29]

Scenario five would be the biggest change on Pender, Mayne, Saturna and Galiano, the least - no change - to Salt Spring. It is financially the most optimal, but it has the biggest change in impact. It allows us to see the breadth and depth of how you can reconfigure in a district and the impacts that have. This would result in an extra just over \$1,000,000 in unique geographic. There would not be require(ment) for water taxi anymore or boarding, and we would still end up, even with reducing the deficit, with over \$1,000,000 surplus. So that allows additional funding to be put across the district.

Those are the five scenarios that we have modeled. Of course, there's other things we could possibly look at, and the items of cost could be moved, but there is some logic to certain ones based on configuration and then there is other discretionary about which ones get moved in and out to balance the deficit. We have tried to give an objective picture of the possibilities of configuration, comparisons to other districts that also configure in different ways. The funding formula provides funding based on student and to some degree location. It doesn't fund transportation, but it does fund the district as a whole, and so we've worked to provide an objective look at how we could possibly, doing that, knowing that change is a good thing to have. But it is also a difficult place to have, so we've tried to give a broad objective path to that. I'll hand it back to Scott. Thank you.

Scott Benwell - Thanks so much Jesse, D'Arcy, Boe for the presentation this evening.

[Slide 30]

At this point I'm going to hand it back to our Chair who is prepared to talk about next steps and perhaps, and this is just a nudge, incorporate a comfort break into the proceedings this evening as we transition to the next phase of the meeting.

Rob Pingle - Thank you. Thank you staff for your wonderful presentation that helps back up the documents that are available on our website.

[Slide 31]

At this time we will open discussion with our partner groups as requested by Scott. Just giving staff a chance to turn off their monitors if they need to, or if they need to just step away. Trustees feel free to step away for a moment. For the general public talking about next steps is something I will do while they take their comfort break.

We have received this meeting and as stated, the transcript for this meeting will be provided online on our website within two weeks. We will do it as quickly as possible. It's something that we need to ensure we protect privacy and follow all of the legislative rules around sharing information like this. Our next meeting where we will be discussing this will be our regular Board meeting on October 14th at 1:00 PM, is when it is scheduled to begin. It will be addressing all the business of the Board but will also have an opportunity for question period from the public and further discussion regarding this process that we are in.

Then the next step is Committee Day on October 28, the Committee of the Whole will be reconvening to further discuss configuration. Committee of the Whole, as you see tonight, is comprised of Trustees, School District administration, our four partner groups – PVP'S(Principals and Vice Principals), GITA(Gulf Island Teachers Association), CUPE(Canadian Union of Public Employees)...I hope I got that acronym right and DPAC(The District Parent Advisory Council).

The timing of that meeting is still to be confirmed, but it will be on October 28 and it will allow for further discussion by the Trustees to advance, hopefully a final decision that will be moved at the

November Board meeting where we look to make a decision. The timing of this is to allow us to, if a school closure is made, a decision on a school closure is made, to go through the legislative requirements of school closure beginning in January. Then that allows us to staff the remaining, remaining open schools accordingly in March. It's an amazing process that our staff go through to ensure every September the schools start on time and at the most appropriate staffing levels for the students we are expecting and it truly begins in March of every year for September.

(Now, I am aware that we have Angela Thomas. I'm looking to invite our, I don't, I've lost Ian. I know we have Jonathan Lane from DPAC, and so I'm inviting you to turn on your videos. I'm also looking for Shelly our, ... Shelly your video looks like it's already on. I'm learning, thank you Shelly. And I've lost Ian, so our GITA Rep. is missing potentially and Marie Co Chair, Shelly and Marie have turned on their videos for the PVP. There we have Ian, so we're now in a full screen view. You can see our, I can't tell you what order you're seeing them in, but I can confirm that I see my school board staff and my trustees and the DPAC, well sorry, the partner group reps. We're happy to welcome any questions or further inquiries. As we are a small group, we're going to just attempt to see who wants to go first. If you use the raise hand feature or take yourself off mute, I'm sure will be OK with this small group. And if you're having trouble, yeah, Jonathan. Believe you are unmuted, thank you.)

Jonathon Lane – Perfect, thank you. We've got quite a few questions from parents so I just wanted to start by asking: you had indicated before this, I think it during our practical briefing that there would be an online feedback form made available or online question form. How questions can be submitted, how those questions can be seen by everybody and how those questions will be answered. Whether they are arising from tonight or from people reviewing the materials have been provided.

Rob Pingle – I greatly appreciate all questions being submitted through that forum, it allows us to have a record of those and then they can be published in then attached to our October Board meeting agenda for all to see. We, as a district, have grouped similar questions and answered them collectively in the past and I believe that that is the method that we will continue to use as we move forward. Next question or comment or inquiry.

(Trustees, if there's anything that you wanted to ask you, please feel free. We're here for you. Alright, you were kind and waited Jonathan and you get the floor again.)

Jonathon Lane - Yeah, I'll try and pause and let other people jump in because I don't want to be

Rob Pingle – Totally understand.

Jonathon Pingle - But I'll just start in on some of the questions that we've got, that have been submitted by parents. So, one of the first questions under calculations is when transportation costs are removed, some schools have deficits while others do not. Why is this? What programs are generating the overspending, and can any cost savings be considered within those schools?

Rob Pingle - Jesse.

Jesse Guy - So when we look at, when we remove transportation, which is a significant cost, we're actually no longer at a deficit position. We're actually ahead if we took out transportation, we're at about a \$500,000 surplus. So, the transportation, if you're looking at a chunk of

discretionary spending that we have, transportation does put us over the line into deficit. (Jonathan, if you repeat your last part of your question for me so I can answer it completely. Sorry.)

Rob Pingle – (Where'd you go Jonathan, you there?)

Jonathon Lane – (Sorry I can't unmute myself so I have to let Rob do that for me.) So, the last part of the question was what programs are generating overspending within those schools that are kind of in the red and can cost savings be considered within those schools?

Jesse Guy - So I, I think the district, that the reason schools are never looked at individually is because it, we are a district and so we would never penalize a school for being in a different position. We would look at equity to some degree, but we're not going to use this as a measure for taking away certain things. But we can look at our district to decide if there's areas with which we, overall, wish to reduce our spending. I think that's the best answer I can give, because we haven't looked at every school and said, you, you're having this much, taking this much away from you, because it's not. We're providing education to students in a district, we're not providing funding to a school. (Scott, is there anything you want to add to that having more experience in this area than I do.)

Scott Benwell - Yeah, I think that's an on point answer to that. We certainly want to look at schools across our district, this has been quite an artificial endeavour. Unpacking line by line, student by student. We did so because there were requests for us to articulate things that way to gain an understanding of where costs are in our district. It's not a typical process, so we would look, as Jesse articulates, across our district to ensure that we find balance and, we understand that some schools are going to have some additional district programs in there, some things that other kids benefit from. It's not an exact science around accounting for every single dollar in that particular way.

Rob Pingle – (Thank you, going around to the next round. So now I see a hand up and you are off mute.)

Janelle Lawson - Yeah, I'm just curious about that not doing that work for exact expenses on programs, since that was part of the feedback summary, from the feedback committee?

Jesse Guy - I think what we've looked at is the majority of programs as I think Scott said in the first one, we could mostly keep. It really depends on how the schools configure and if we look at certain programs and think, ok, there's a way to tighten this up. I don't think there's any program that's sinking the district. I think it's just looking at all the programs and saying, does whatever configuration is chosen, how would it fit into this new model? And whether there's ways to decide if the issue might be around that there's not enough students in a specific class - do we look at how we run the timetable, and perhaps put a 10, 11 together. So things like that we could do to work on each program. But I don't think a wholesale removal of programs from the district suits who we are or actually is spoken to in the funding. We did spend time with our coordinators to look at ways with which different programs may be able to be a bit more economical and those can be approached from an operational standpoint. (Scott)

Scott Benwell - I think it's important to add too, or you know, we're mindful of the dialogues that we had and reviewing the feedback. There are important identity based things going on in our district, and if we're able to maintain some of those that are held closely and held as important, those are the things that make schools and make districts and, to the extent possible, not needing to incorporate them into the to the picture is, was, important.

Rob Pingle – *(Thank you, just noting Kelly, I recognize that your hand is raised. You are not a member of the representative of one of our partner groups, and so with your question tomorrow, our online forum will be open for you to submit a question for review by staff and trustees and response in, at the October public meeting. Jonathan, I see your hand is up again. Happy to unmute you and acknowledge.)*

Jonathon Lane - Thanks yeah, there's just a bit of a follow-up on to some of the program costing that one of the parents had asked. It seemed like we did have some sort of numbers around how much French Immersion costs and that French Immersion, just I mean I've got a son in French Immersion, so don't think I'm picking on it everyone, but that French immersion does run at a deficit within our school district. There was a question about some of the other special programs like GISPA and what not and I believe that at an earlier meeting the, the district said that they would provide some numbers around the costs associated with those programs. Do you have any on that or?

Jesse Guy - So what I can say, and Scott can jump in here at any point is those are two very specific programs where we worked. We looked at the programs we looked at the coordinators and we looked at the timetabling and thought I think this we could retain these programs within the district and make them cost neutral, just simply by deciding how we would provide those programs. So that's where that bit of a difference comes from. But I think the costing of programs would be a bit later. This particular motion from the Board in June, I took it as looking at more of the feasibility of different configurations in the district, not just program review would perhaps come a little later in a longer-term process. *(but, Scott, please jump in.)*

Scott Benwell - I just want to make the point that we do have a responsibility as well as we talk with our coordinators and our staff and we have. That making some of that,..., there are privacy issues associated when you get down to one person, one program, and those need to remain private. And as Jesse said, there's a pathway to including those programs as part of the identity of our district. Certainly, most of the feedback was that there was a desire to retain them. And none of those program costs, thankfully, are moving us into a debilitating budgetary place.

Rob Pingle - I'd just like to follow up and ask for some further clarity from staff if possible. My understanding is that we have included in our savings estimates, through the costings that you'll see, school-based savings of \$250,000 and that those savings are including efficiencies around each school to bring them closer to a cost neutral place. They don't result in a wholesale removal of any specific program at any of our schools, that is correct, but it is that staff has taken the time to investigate where efficiencies can be made and has brought those to our attention. At, to a point, where a quarter of a million is not enough, and I believe that that's an indication that reaching that \$1,000,000 target would be very difficult through that level of approach. *(Scott)*

Scott Benwell - Thanks, that's absolutely, thank you.

Rob Pingle – *(Looking at my trustees, staff, partner groups, another question, I see Greg with a hand up in the forest. I'm trying to bring you off mute. There you go.)*

Greg Lucas - There we go. Thanks Rob. Wondering, Jesse, if you could speak to what current student numbers we're looking at for boarding?

Jesse Guy - So I can, you mean in this particular year, or, you were talking going forward in the future?

Greg Lucas - If you could do both, that would be fantastic.

Jesse Guy - This current year I have no idea yet, we do it based on budgeting from prior fiscal years. Last year of course was on target until we hit March and so I have budgeted \$75,000 for this year not knowing with Covid if that will be impacted. But I think because in prior years that has been how much it was, you know, in multiple years and that's how I budget based on, that's what I used for this number. I can't tell you what this year is going to be. I have no idea how many students are going to want to stay with families that they would normally stay with, or how many are not going to be engaging in extracurricular sports. So I can't use end of last year or this year for long-term forecasting. Though Covid may be with us for multiple years, it probably won't be our main focus for 25 years.

I have to make projections that far, you know, with the thinking of, for reconfiguring, we can't just think about how International is impacting this current year and so I pulled it out. We can't, and so same things with boarding, I'm going on average prior years, not this year.

Greg Lucas – *(Fair enough thanks Jesse.)*

Jesse Guy – *(Thank you)*

Rob Pingle - I just like to follow up on that. The policy of boarding when you hear the word boarding, I immediately go to private school where the student is no longer at their home, except maybe on a weekend. But as I understand it, in our district, terminology boarding is that there would be from time to time expense of a student that could be submitted to the district and would be refunded. *(Is that correct Jesse?)*

Jesse Guy – Close-ish, so students who wish to board with a family there is a set amount that's a maximum per month that is then provided. So it's not directly related to a cost. It's a subsidy, is probably the best way to do it, that can be applied for by parents.

Rob Pingle – *(Thank you for that clarity. Stefanie, I see you with a hand raised and I'm trying to bring you off mute. There you go.)*

Stefanie Denz - I'm just going to follow this even further, Jesse, so do you know what the average of boarders there were from the previous years before Covid?

Jesse Guy - You mean the average number of students?

Stephanie Denz – That would board on Salt Spring?

Jesse Guy – I'm not sure, I can look at the total amount because of course some students decide to board for part of a semester, they might be 3 nights a week, they might do a full week so I can look at the total amount. Being about \$75,000 is what we've boarded for divided by that, perhaps somewhere around 20 to 30. I could go back, and you know, count per year, how many approved forms there were. But they're going to be different amounts as people are going to do it for 10 months for the full amount and some people are going to do it for periods of time. So it's more looking at the cost, with which I'd say on average maybe impacts 20 to 30 students from Pender, Mayne, Saturna and Galiano. It's open to all of those students.

Stefanie Lenz – Great, thank you, that's very helpful.

Rob Pingle - Thank you. *(Looking around the screens at our partners, trustees, staff. There you are, Jonathan. It's your turn again. Stepping up to the mic, have a good...)*

Jonathon Lane - It's been a minute or so.

Rob Pingle – Yes

Jonathon Lane - This is more of a comment or suggestion that came in from one of the parents. So a transportation service for something to Gulf Islands is a strategic priority for the CRD and will be pursued through 2020. There are as yet untapped opportunities for partnership between SD 64 and both Salt Spring Transit and the CRD and in terms of water transportation between SD 64 and both BC Ferries and the CRD. These could not only address some of the needs of the district, but could also support improved transportation for all residents across the region. From a climate change impact perspective, it would be much better to address these problems in partnering with these other service providers than for each entity to be working independently. So I guess a bit of a question might be, have there been discussions with the CRD, with Salt Spring transit, with BC ferries about tweaking schedules to improve things?

Rob Pingle - Definitely there has been. I've attended meetings on Salt Spring Island. We have a representative on both the Salt Spring Ferries Advisory Council and the Southern Gulf Island Ferry Advisory. It might not be a counselor, it might be a commission and we are in active engagement with the CRD regarding their Southern Gulf Island Initiative for Transit Services. We need to be realistic about the possibility of that starting and ensure that we find a solution that's within our control at all times.

Ferry schedules can change from moment to moment in my time as 10 years as a trustee, we've seen ferry schedules be changed dramatically with little consultation and resulting upset and then, you know, advocacy from schools. Especially our high school which was impacted when a Crofton Ferry was changed, and we advocated and had that ferry reinstated. So, we continue to advocate to the best of our abilities, to see that our students receive the best services possible, and will continue to do so. But we have always felt that keeping things within our control is the best way to approach the decision-making in the district. *(Jesse, go ahead and add to that.)*

Jesse Guy - Thank you

Rob Pingle - and Scott if necessary.

Jesse Guy - I think from a financial perspective, of course we would be happy to partner or liaison with CRD or BC Ferries. But as Rob says, it's important that we keep our configuration questions within our district and if at some point we can work towards partnering, or be a part of these, we would still, that could be time farther away, and it's important that we make decisions for our own district, while knowing that we would happily, in the future, if something arose that would reduce our expense in that area. But we can't depend on that partnership at this point. If there was something that developed, we would be happy to join and support. I think as long as that's the way the Board felt was the optimal way to go. *(Scott, do you have anything to add to that?)*

Rob Pingle - You're, you're good? *(Jonathan, are you looking to follow up? I see Shelley also with a hand up. I'll bring you off mute and then and so you can actually speak, are you, is it a follow up question?)*

Jonathon Lane - It is, just yeah, it's a follow up to that. So the follow up question to that is, are we just sitting in on committees with those groups or we actually actively asking them for things? I guess Part 2 to that is, with speaking to kind of keeping things in our control, I mean the water taxi operator doesn't work for the school district, it's an outside contractor that contracts with the school district. So, or to some degree, I mean our transportation isn't within our control already. It seems like the benefits of speaking to other groups might outweigh the drawbacks to that? That's my brain turned off at around 6:00, so.

Rob Pingle - It's ok. That's a point well taken. We definitely are advocating and will continue to advocate to minimize our transportation costs. Part of the scope of opportunity that was released, it doesn't address our immediate concerns, but it is to reconsider how we contract out our water taxi services. When we do our next contracting, which is a way for us to minimize costs if possible, it is, once you're in a contract with someone you are in strong relationship for a number of years while the contract is in order. If we could reach a contract with the CRD or BC Ferries that would be great and we could look towards that. We are not aware of any district who has managed to do that when they are using BC ferries as a way to transport their students to their schools. But it's not that we won't do it, and we will do it. We just need to do this as well.

(Further questions or responses from staff? Alright, I saw Shelley and then I'm going to do Tisha. So Shelley you are off mute.)

Shelley Lawson – And, and Tisha, are we raising our hands for the same thing? So we are seeing, ok, thank you Jonathan. I'm very glad to have those questions being posed as I know this has been kind of my angle on this configuration conversation from the beginning. I had the pleasure of being on the previous Board who set this motion in motion if you like. It very much, was with the hope that we would be able to have these, those, kinds of conversations because they're huge, they are complex. We have all been impacted by ferry schedule changes at one time or another I'm sure. I am stumbling now because there's so much I would like to say, but I'll try to keep it brief for the sake of the evening.

I really do believe that this is the place where we can have the biggest impact. We have seen clearly in the data booklet and in all of the information that we've had for years that transportation and water taxi expenses are one of our biggest budgetary items. From my perspective, for those of you who don't know, I'm the trustee on Galiano Island, and from my perspective it is the place where we have the biggest barrier to accessible education. I really feel like that's the way we're going to solve some of those problems is by diversifying that portfolio a little bit.

I was very excited and pleased to see a review of the water taxi contract on the document that we got in June. I think that's an important first step and, and I think conversations with BC Ferries. I know we just as on maybe last year, Greg, did you get appointed to the southern Gulf Island Ferry Commission? So we're starting to make relationships with some of those partners. I've been very excited about this opportunity to work with the CRD, let's see if I get all the acronyms. This CRD SGI Transportation Commission that's been proposed and am excited. I think this is where Tisha was going, I think we can say this. We do have them on our Finance Audit and Facilities Committee meeting for October to meet with, I believe it's going to be the CRD Rep. and the Galiano Island Rep. to start to have some more of those conversations.

Of course, it's not optimal timing. We would like to have all of this ready to go by November, and I can't imagine any organization, whether it's a school district or a government body like the CRD, is going to be able to turn things around in a month. So I'm kind of keen to have conversations in the next 6 to 8 weeks about how we can address some of that alongside some of this reconfiguration

conversation, because I really do feel like that's the place where we can have/make the biggest impact.

So I'm grateful that that's come up tonight and I'm quite pleased that we're moving ahead with some of those conversations in October. I hope, we hope we can move along in tandem with them and really come to some, to take some of the things in some of these scenarios and then work with, you know, with our transportation with a broader scope on our transportation budget.

Rob Pringle - *(Scott's off mute. I'm going to let Scott comment and then we'll go to Tisha.)*

Scott Benwell - Thanks just quickly Chair. Recognize the work of Trustees, both from this Board and previous Boards and speaking to Ministers and on committees. We would certainly welcome some direction from our Board as to how you wished, or how to vision for how staff could contribute to that conversation and certainly identify the need to, as we move forward and make decisions, to identify pivot points if those become successful. To ensure that we are not locking into a particular direction that would endure beyond a partnership opportunity that might emerge between CRD and BC Ferries. Looking at their operations in service, not just to the school district, but to our Island communities. So I'm sure Chair, that will be coming up in a, in a meeting in the not too distant future about how you see staff fitting into that conversation. We would welcome that.

Rob Pingle - Thank you. *(Tisha, I'll take you off mute.)*

Tisha Boulter - Thanks Chair. I just wanted to add that I know Greg sits on the Southern Gulf Islands FAC, which is the Ferry Advisory Committee. I sit on the Salt Spring Island FAC and we've been very active online and through Zoom through Covid. But they have just decided, BC Ferries is just decided to postpone all FAC meetings due to Covid. So at this point, I think, I don't know. *(Greg, is that your understanding as well in your Southern Gulf Islands?)* Yeah, so I'm glad we're going to have the agenda item on October 28th at Finance Audit and Facilities Committee to bring Shelley's idea forward to meet with the CRD and Galiano CRD. I'm very curious to see where those conversations go and I'm very aware that those conversations are not going to answer our configuration questions right now. And that anything that does happen in the future is going to be exciting. I do think Covid right now is putting a bit of a wrench in that, in the BC Ferry option. Just, an update.

Rob Pingle - Very good. *(Greg, I took you off mute in case you wanted to add to that. But don't think you're obliged)*

Greg Lucas – Thanks Rob. Just wanted to dovetail that. Just to bring to attention that it really is about public presence, about public pressures so far as the student voice and that has been my observation all along. It is still a publicly funded operation. So Covid aside, it does require that pressure to see change.

Rob Pingle - Thank you Greg. *(Scanning our partners, trustees, staff for further input on the conversation. I see Ian with a hand up. I will take you off mute. Takes a moment. If I click too much, it becomes stressful. Now it's oh, there we go, we succeeded?)*

Ian Mitchell – *(Does that work? Can you hear me?)*

Rob Pingle – *(Yes Sir)*

Ian Mitchell – Oh my gosh, ok, well, great presentation by the way. I just, I'm going to keep it very brief. I just want to say that you know we're on a four day school week in order to protect our programs. Our culinary programs or dance programs, arts programs, GISPA, French. These are all very, very important to us, and so from a GITA perspective it's very important that I speak out for the teachers who are involved with those programs and that's part A. But part B is, just want to bring up this and because we floated this around in Staff rooms and private conversations and even when I met a few teachers after school today. With all the scenarios that we're looking at, nobody's really answered a question for me and that is what might happen to these unused buildings? Supposing the, for instance, the Middle School? Can we talk about that at all at this point?

Rob Pingle –I'll let Jesse respond. There's definitely a lot of people speaking about it. It's one of those difficult things of placing cart before the horse, but Jesse does have some insight to it.

Jesse Guy - That's exactly it, Rob. I mean in the same way French Immersion was on the, and all our programs were on the scope of opportunities. If we are reconfiguring our districts, we have to have practical things. If French Immersion is at SIMS, how do we reconfigure? Do we put it at SIMS, if the Board decided to close SIMS, do we put it at the SSE? Do we stop the program? Do we try to find something that provides some form of French broader across the district. So those questions have to come up?

The same thing you know, as we're proposing as one of the cost items to close SIMS, is that proposal comes on looking at our facility space across our district in the fact that we're not at capacity. Or we're spending money on buildings and things instead of on people, which is where we'd like to spend the funds. There are of course some practical thoughts. It is a public asset and I feel very strongly, and of course it's the Board's decision, that a public asset remain within the public asset. So whether that's a connection with somewhere like CRD or it's a connection with local arts groups. We've had both, we've had conversations with CRD on a preliminary level of has this ever been done in other places? Is there already places where CRD has paired with school districts to operate facilities and lease the buildings for them to make them still available to community? Our purpose is to educate children. It's not to be a renter or organizer of facilities, so if that was to happen, I would prefer it to be in other people's hands for that very organizational piece of it. But I also like the fact that, who knows if in 10 or 15 years if the school districts expands and we really need that capacity. So I wouldn't see it going in a place of selling the building. It's retaining the asset through the school district, but finding a community use for it so it still remains an available asset to the community. Once again that's a very cart before the horse decision, as it's just a one item out of many items in five scenarios. *(Does that help?)*

Ian Mitchell – *(That helps.)*

Jesse Guy – *(OK.)*

Rob Pingle - Thank you Ian. Just Jesse, just keep you as to clarify my assumptions. The asset of any building remaining within the school district rather than being sold to another entity allows the district to see revenue from rentals. Whereas if the asset was sold, the capital raising, the raising of that, those fees wouldn't actually remain in the district, even if it was a one time fee, it would go straight to the Province. Am I correct in that assumption or is that an old assumption from? From 10 or 15 years ago?

Jesse Guy - It depends entirely based on how the building, the land, was originally acquired. So each location, throughout the Province, if it was acquired through Provincial funds then those funds

return to the Province. If it was acquired with school district funds originally, then parts or all of it would remain with the school district. But I think the more important question, than specifically to that one facility we're discussing, is as I said, it's very important for a district to be able to expand and contract based on our what we're here for, which is students, and so retaining it as an asset that could be leased out through a leasing period. That is reasonable, that the community, that the student body of the district, could ebb and flow. So it still retains under our control.

Rob Pingle - I appreciate that perspective. It wasn't one that I put my head around, so I appreciate that. *(Scott did you want to add?)*

Scott Benwell – Yeah, briefly. I think we all sort of would be thankful that this is a highly regulated area - the stewardship of public assets. So it would be a partnership that would emerge or a conversation that would emerge between us and the Ministry of Education, other regulatory bodies to ensure that that anything to do with our buildings would be done ethically and in keeping with good practice.

Rob Pingle - Thank you, Scott. *(Jonathan, you have another question. Happy to have you continue to ask, it's a pleasure to work with you tonight.)*

Jonathon Lane - It's just a follow up to that discussion. So do we know if SIMS is owned by the Province? I guess the question is more, have we factored in any rental income from SIMS if that's going to come back to the district? We're deep into 'if' territory at this point, but....

Jesse Guy - You're absolutely right, Jonathan. It is one of the factors that allows me to feel more comfortable moving from 1.6 to 1.1. So it is more that I'm allowing, I am comfortable with having a less conservative number 2 or a slightly more optimistic number because of the possibilities going forward. But I'm not willing to put it into an any equation because it's an unknown, specially since we would be dealing with external bodies about how much we could get, and I wouldn't want to get ahead of a contract.

Rob Pingle - Thank you.

Scott Benwell - And Rob, just want to add that it is important for a School District with the benefit of a public asset to be very careful about the market in which it enters or becomes part of a rental environment. That needs to be navigated very, very, carefully and over time, and with the understanding of our community and businesspeople in our community. So I just say that to ensure that anyone on the call understands that we have that awareness and that it would be a cautious and methodical way that we would enter in to that environment if that's the direction that we go.

Rob Pingle – Thank you Scott. *(Happy to address any other comments or questions from partners, trustees, staff. Doug, I'm going to let you speak and then we'll go back to Jonathan. There you go.)*

Doug Livingston - Ok, there we go. I think the conversations that I've been listening to over the last hour, particularly just illustrate the complexity of this conversation. Whether it's about rental revenues, whether it's about ferry pieces, but I'd like to go back to that notion of program costs at the specific schools. With which I think, and Jesse pointed this out in the presentation, is particularly problematic because it's the snapshot in time.

Over the eight years that I've been in the district, I've seen school enrollments rise and fall again, and then rise again. And with configuration of classrooms - trying to find, trying to design good,

effective learning environments and so on are all challenges, particularly in smaller learning environments that we have to navigate. So it's difficult to ascribe, particularly to look at an average or try to identify some kind of an average cost that would be associated with a particular site overtime. So that's kind of an observation. My role, of course, has been over the last few years, Director of Instruction for Learning Services. That's been a pleasure to work in the district, and many of you will be aware that over the next few days, not weeks probably, but in fact days, I am after decades in education and teaching and learning, going to be retiring.

So my next kind of observation is a little bit of a look back, I suppose. I want to recognize the foresight of the previous Board and the senior management team and recognizing that this has been a pernicious and a kind of a long-term quest if you like. For stability, for some type of sustainability, and so I just wanted to kind of give credit to the last Board for the motion that they, they left, that the new Board inherited. Also to acknowledge the bold and judicious way that I think the new Board has approached these problems. With 8 or 10 or 12 days left or whatever it is, I don't have a particular vested interest and saying all of the nice things, so I'm really saying it as I see it. I have a great deal of confidence in the Board, that you're weighing, and I think this is for all of the other people who are on this particular broadcast. You're going to weigh. You're going to find a good balance that's going to offer the exciting opportunities for education for our students across the district in each of our communities. While at the same time, finding a path that's going to be sustainable and they're going to be able to provide that path forward that makes sense for us.

There's a reason that we don't do this every few years, that it's a 25 year kind of a window since we last said: What can we be doing to redesign how our district best operates? So just wanted to acknowledge that and I want to also commend my senior colleagues Scott and Jesse and D'Arcy and Boe for their work in identifying really quite an array of options in this, to meet these complex demands as we move forward. So thanks Rob for the opportunity to make those remarks.

Rob Pingle - Thank you Doug, just to comment because we are in a group. I greatly appreciate all the service you have provided to the district if this is the last time I see you on staff in a Zoom meeting. I need it to be acknowledged that the efforts you've put in were fabulous and appreciated from the first day of your arrival in the district to the last moment, which I'm fine if it takes a couple extra days, and I greatly appreciate your assistance in the transition.

Your work towards ensuring students were the center of our conversation is something that we, as a district, have always worked towards and the difficulty of this conversation is that finances are getting in the way of those discussions of improving student achievement. This presentation has shown us that configuration doesn't limit the ability to have the discussion about student achievement. It allows us to have the confidence that we have the financial security to ensure we are focused on student achievement every other moment. This district, as Ian mentioned, when we switched to a four day school week, it was to continue providing programming to keep money in schools and invested in people who would be interacting with our students.

I'm remiss that we haven't said enough about the students. These decisions are about students and their best outcomes and unfortunately, we must live within a fiscal reality that is similar but has different challenges across the province, across Canada, in their own unique ways. Once again bringing it back to you Doug, I'm grateful for your work with students and parents and staff in this district to improve outcomes and I look forward to working with everyone on those outcomes moving forward. So thank you Doug. *(Jonathan I'll bring you off mute again. I appreciate your patience and your continued inquiries.)*

Jonathon Lane – *(Miss me yet?)* Ok, so I mean, as DPAC, we've had over 50 questions submitted to us today from various parents. So at some point you're just going to cut me off Rob and I won't take offense to that. But we will need to get these questions answered at some point, in some format. So maybe I can work with you to do that, and with Jesse and Scott to get answers to these questions for the parents.

But moving on, we're not at that point yet. The next question I've got is sort of around program offerings and outcomes of students. So with potential closure of SIMS, how would you consider....How will French Immersion be continued to be offered? Particularly in scenario four and five of the modeling. Would there be a full French Immersion Program on Pender as well as Salt Spring? What would that look like and not just French Immersion? We're also talking about special needs students, all other kinds of specialized programs. Special needs isn't really a specialized program, it's sort of an essential, it is an essential program. Band, Robotics Club, I'll just name off all the things that my kids have been involved with over the years.

Rob Pingle - Thank you. *(I'll turn to Scott, well Scott's off mute, so I'll turn to Scott to address this)*

Scott Benwell - Well, I think Jonathan, as you're alluding to, some of these are best handled in a thoughtful way as we would respond to a list of questions or otherwise. You're doing so this evening runs the risk of leaving something out or providing an incomplete answer. Which I feel like certainly I have done already and it's uncomfortable to be providing complete answer. We want to be thoughtful about it.

So we are again into the what ifs and the possibilities. You listed a ton of programs there, I don't know if I can pick them off one by one. Certainly, there is an experience in this district with offering French Immersion at the Elementary School, so what's old is new again in some respects. If that were a possibility, and as Jesse and I contemplated in the slide, just to complete that thought. Yeah, well it would most likely be centralized on Salt Spring Island and most likely centralized on Salt Spring Island in Salt Spring Elementary School, which is its previous home before SIMS. So you know, it does speak to that slide about equity, choices, and what is equity through one person's lens. What is a want or a need through one lens can be seen and felt as a loss through another person's lens. There are many competing ideas and demands and expectations on the school district as ... **[Slide 11]** (Well, I thought I had dropped out and went ok. Thanks, Jesse.) There are a lot of competing demands, that the equity equation in French Immersion certainly bends away from universal access. It bends towards having a more central program because it would not be feasible to have French Immersion spread out amongst all of our islands. So then it becomes a question of how do we look at access and we can be informed by practices in other schools and I'll move into the hypothetical now because I don't wish to pre determine anything. This particular conversation has not been pursued.

The possibilities that are out there is that often a district will choose to provide opportunity to families that are francophone. There is some Federal funding associated with it and some expectations and entitlement, the recent Supreme Court case informing this particular area in a powerful way. Certainly, there's some mindfulness around siblings that have been through the program and what many districts do, and it's imperfect, it's just a way, it might not be the way. One option is to go to a lottery system for vacant seats spread out across the district. In a scenario like some of our configurations, there would be water taxi space so that you know our current policy of courtesy ridership could be flexed towards an entitlement for French Immersion students.

So again, in the hypothetical. But there are an array of options available and we are in communication and Ian, I'm mindful of your comment about, 'this is about our people'. It's always

hard to have conversations about our people and their jobs and their security and we are in touch with our coordinators in these areas, as I said previously, and there's a pathway forward. It might look differently, but I'm sure there's a middle ground on French Immersion. The rest of the list perhaps you can submit and will get back, sort of with a more fulsome answer on.

Rob Pingle - Thank you Scott. *(I think it be preferential if we don't screen share during this part, Jesse. Just makes it hard for me to see the Gallery and I see Shelley has a hand up. So I hope, that's the wrong person you're innocent. I meant who I was trying to unmute. You had a hand up all over your hand.)*

Shelley Lawson – *(Thought it came down already. I'm sorry.)*

Rob Pingle – *(Just let, let me.)*

Shelley Lawson – *(Let me take my..., unless the other Shelly would like an opportunity.)*

Rob Pingle – *(No, no it was definitely your hand and not, but I shall make sure it's lowered and put you back on mute and everyone rearranged from screen share to not screen share. I'm confused where you're all sitting now. It was like a, like a, I don't know.)*

Anyways we have reached 8:07, meeting started at 2:00 o'clock or at 6:00 PM. It's been a little over 2 hours. I do appreciate your comments, Jonathan, regarding this conversation to be continued. Direct discussion with our partner groups will happen at meetings that we hold with our partner groups. Beyond the meetings that I've suggested are open to the public, and so I believe there will be numerous opportunities before the Board makes a decision to continue the conversation with our partner groups and with the public. But if there is any other questions I would hate to shut down conversation if there is one or two more questions that could be raised at this time.

(So it's the looking and the searching, seeing who is feeling up for it. There it is, Jonathan's hand is up. Thank you so much. It's like a strange game show. I'm sorry that I feel like I'm Bob Barker or someone like that, but I don't mean it that way. I, it's just the format.)

Jonathon Lane - I've got a great source of materials to work from here. Oh, skipping around. Ok, let me think. So I know this came out during our technical briefing with DPAC, but could Jesse just give some examples of what the district itinerant and school-based cost saving opportunities are? You've got those in the slides, but they're not really fleshed out as to what those actually mean.

Jesse Guy - Sure, I can describe it to a general sense, I can't do it too individually, this is Jonathan, that's the purpose of a technical briefing. Is because a lot of that information gets too granular in such a small district as us, so it gets to individual people. That's why we have to keep it at a heigh level, if we were talking Surrey, we talked about one group of people it would be 100 employees, here we're specific. So it's talking about the positions that support all schools in the district and aren't required within Collective Agreements. We all benefit for them. I will put some examples forward like StrongStart, things like that so there is a reason why we do keep it. We have to, at this level, keep it a little higher and with our partner groups we did the technical briefings to have a bit of a better understanding of where those numbers came from.

Scott Benwell - Rob, just quickly. Yeah, I really appreciate that question because I think as Jesse answered, it illustrates how un-optimal, not optimal, that choice would ever be. Itinerant positions across our district or are in areas of student support, bring a community service to our school

district and it's why this has been such an incredibly painful process at times to quantify the effort of people. It just seems so unpalatable and not optimal to look first to those type of areas. So you'll see in the balancing that only in the most extreme cases where, you know, to address that \$1.1 million that we have there, would we ever contemplate that district itinerant type of area to balance anything. It's very much part of the fabric of what we do.

Rob Pingle - Thank you. So as stated we are over 2 hours in this meeting. The majority of the questions are coming from DPAC at this time of our partner groups, we will have other opportunities as we move forward through this process. I would like to reiterate that our, *(See Shelley with hand up. You're off mute Shelley.)*

Shelley Lawson – Thanks Rob. Just wondering if I could, if I can ask Jonathan a question and I'm curious. I know you have a long list there, is there, are there any questions around that are focused on something that we haven't touched on at all tonight? I'm just, I'm just curious if there's a range of things and maybe we're not hearing something really important that could be clarified tonight for most of the people on the call instead of waiting. Or if they're kind of, we've touched on the topics already? Thank you Chair.

Rob Pingle – *(Don't feel pressure, but of course.)*

Shelley Lawson – *(No pressure at all.)*

Jonathon Lane - I didn't think I could commit myself to answer right away, it's so hard to say because there's like, I'm, in some of the questions I've asked, I've tried to group some together by theme. I think one of the areas that we really haven't gotten into a lot of, that seems to be a very big concern amongst parents, is in terms of equity. In terms of, if some of these scenarios are implemented there's a big feeling that a lot of the programs on Salt Spring are great, but we won't see them in the Southern Gulf Islands. We won't see them on Mayne. We won't see them on Pender. We won't see them on Galiano. So to throw in a personal anecdote here, I've got two sons that are in high school. Now I've got a daughter who's at Mayne Island Elementary School. If we implement scenario four or five in my mind, I don't think my daughter is going to have the same opportunities that my son had. Just based on what's been presented here. I think that's a feeling of a lot of parents in the district.

Rob Pingle - I appreciate that emotion. It's not easy. The ideas, as Jesse and Scott represented, about equity. It's really tough and I believe, in my experience and work with this district, that our goal is to always increase programming and to ensure students are receiving as much diverse programming as possible.

I don't want to go into the area of assumptions at this time either. But in that general idea of the options that were raised, the option that gives us the largest surplus with the smallest impact on our students, allows us to invest that surplus back into our students through programming and so that is the work that this Board needs to do.

I remind everyone that these trustees sitting before you have all been parents in this school district. If they're not currently parents in the school district, they were. Elected or acclaimed through a process that asks them to represent the needs of their community for parents, seniors, just regular folk, and we have this burden of ensuring that we live within the balanced budget mandate that has been given to us by the province and, in tandem, increasing our graduation rates. I think those are the two things that we need to do along, you know, those are the two core pieces to a trustee's job in Education, if you have two very specific measurable. Can we increase graduation rate and can

we do it within a balanced budget? Then of course, we try to address all the other things within that and that were presented in this presentation. It's not easy and I'm grateful for you holding us to account to ensure that we don't forget that. I'm not trying to say that we already know it. I'm just trying to say that we live it and we appreciate being reminded of it and that, as we move forward, we will continue, hopefully, to be demonstrating that thoughtfulness. *(Jesse, I saw your hand go up.)*

Jesse Guy – I think Jonathon, that you speak to, and the slide Scott has spoken to, and I have spoken to, about equity of access and equity of funding and finding a middle place at which they meet well. The five different scenarios kind of span spectrums to different directions in that and looking for a place in the middle whereas much access to programming is possible for as many students. That's where Scott talks about if we reconfigured French Immersion to have it open to a lottery for a remaining level of students who weren't, say, a French Immersion family, or had a sibling in it, that could be available to the whole district. And if we're running water taxis to make certain things like that key positionings of access. So if you go to a scenario like two high schools, we're only talking about one more year of change staying within the Pender, Mayne, Saturna, Galiano region, I'm saying. And coming to Pender for two years before having the opportunity of the high school. So there is a bit of a change there, but there's also a whole new opportunity for programming, possibly at Pender, where you could have a different high school that is smaller and suits different students' needs. It also may have a focus on sciences, so when you get to a size of the high school that that's proposed, we're talking three or four or five teachers, depending on how many students attend. So there's new possibilities for access as well to different programming.

In all these scenarios, I think when trustees look at them, there is a trying to come together for that balance point of equity and funding equity. Equity of access, and equity of funding, so that when we do look at the one point in time analysis to seeing where the deficit lies, we're trying to shrink that deficit closer to the average for where it is. But on the other hand, still provide as much access for as many students and possibilities.

I don't know if Scott has anything he wants to add to that? It's a pretty nebulous thing to conceive of, but know that everybody is working to find, or at least I am from my perspective and I believe Scott would be too and most people trying to find a point with which is fair for access and funding.

Scott Benwell - I would just add Jesse, I think and is, that is going to be front and center. As I said previously, over the days, weeks and months to come, as we work together to try and find a solution, equity, access, funding is all going to interact in our thoughts and our emotions as we try and construct this, ... pardon me,... together. Thank you.

Rob Pingle - One of the ways I'm gauging the interest in this discussion is by our participants and although some have dropped off, there's still a lot of you participating by viewing this and so that is, heartening and I appreciate your viewing and deep thinking and look forward to hearing from you through our online portal, the website sd64.bc.ca. There will be opportunities for you to ask direct questions to us and have them answered by us at our next Board meeting on October 14th. *(I am reminding of those things as I look to our partner groups and trustees and staff to give them a moment to collect their thoughts and see if there is another question that they would like to ask before we wrap up this evening and move forward in the discussion. I see, Marie Mullen with the hand up. I, there you go, you're off mute, you.)*

Marie Mullen - Thank you. I just like to say thank you to the staff for putting together the different scenarios of the presentation. I know that many parents had questions that weren't answered or they felt weren't answered through the consultation. I think that this should help to answer some of

those questions and I'm pleased to see there's another opportunity for parents and partner groups to ask further questions through the online forum. So thank you for that. I know it's a lot of work. I've been in the district for a long time, so I've been through several situations where the Board of Trustees have had to make very difficult decisions due to financial restrictions. This will be another one of those situations I believe and, and we're all fighting for the same things. Trying to keep this district as great as it is now, and it has been in the past. So thank you, for all that work, and I look forward to continuing the process.

Rob Pingle - Thank you, Marie. (*Doug, ok, I believe you're off mute. Doug Livingston.*)

Doug Livingston - I have been a little bit persistent about this particular comment. I have a lot of empathy for what Jonathan has just described, the desire to have the highest quality learning environment for children. That's what we all, I think, are striving for. That's what we all want. I had the opportunity to work through a reconfiguration in White Horse, the city of Whitehorse, about 25 years ago and I just want to kind of share this because I want to encourage people to consider the impact of having two high schools rather than one in a district.

I think we have a great high school in our district, but there's a certain passion or lively interchange that occurs when we add a second kind of a site or second kind of a setting for learning within a district. I would encourage people not to underestimate the impact of that in terms of the professional work in our community and the potential impact on our learners. I think it could be a very positive piece that would develop over time. So I just wanted to offer that.

Rob Pingle - Thank you Doug. Alright. There we go. Jonathan, thank you. There you are.

Jonathon Lane - I just wanted to take a moment to say thanks on behalf of the parents. We didn't get to all the questions here but as a Parent Advisory Council we're committed to try and get answers to these questions for you. So we'll be working with the school district and with the trustees to get them answered and get those answers to you. I've got a couple ideas. I'll be emailing Scott and Jesse and Rob and Janelle and whoever else wants in on that about. We can maybe get these answered and hopefully we can do that in a timely manner. Also just want to thank all the staff, Scott and Jesse and everyone else for all the work they put into this. It's clear that there's been a lot of work that's been put in behind the scenes and a lot of effort already.

Rob Pingle - Thank you Jonathan. We appreciate that and you only have to email it to one of us and we will all receive it. It's something that we're all putting our minds to at this time, so don't, don't be concerned that any trustee, or don't be concerned that you would be left out of that discussion if Jonathan only sends it to one, as we are one. Oh no, that might be a quote that's from an organization that I don't want to get close to. So I'll watch my sayings. We operate together and as stated, we have many opportunities to continue this conversation. But decisions, there are timelines and decisions need to be made and so we will continue to strive to meet and make time to ensure we address the questions as best as possible.

With that Jonathan, I think you're giving us the opportunity to move towards the end of this meeting, and I appreciate it. I missed my dinner and of course that's a small sacrifice to make, but I am mindful of other peoples evening obligations. (*I see Shelley, with a hand up, so I'm taking you off mute and...Shelley*)

Shelley Lawson – Thank you. I just want to confirm, the process for questions. Is this the same email form that we that we always used, that we've used in the past where it will get compiled

every couple of days or however often is needed and then sent to everybody? Is that the plan that we're...?

Rob Pingle - When you speak of everybody, you're speaking of Trustees and you will be updated, Trustees, as the questions come in so that you can review them in a timely matter. They will all be compiled into one document that will be presented to the public at the October Board meeting. But we don't want our trustees to receive a however many page document within days of the meeting to contemplate it. We want them to have the time to sit with those questions, and so yes, the sd64.bc.ca website will be open. I strongly encouraged public as that is the best way to share your views and ensure they are seen by all trustees and all senior administrative staff and then they will be shared with the public and our partner groups at the meeting. Partner groups, of course you know we do hold specific meetings with you. We will continue to hold those meetings with you as we move forward to maximize our conversations and clarity. I've just been informed by my administrative staff that you won't see the question block right now - it will be there tomorrow. Just the Internet. Sometimes it's super fast and sometimes it takes a night to get things in order.

I'm very grateful to the work that staff have done, especially our admin. staff that were behind the scenes and when we were informed that we reached our maximum participation, they figured out a way to boost our participation. We may not be perfect, but we are consistently trying to meet your needs. And I hope that we can continue to do that as we work towards stability in this district and improving achievement in this district in a time when there's a lot happening.

But I'm proud of the work that I see. I'm proud of the classes that are happening right now across the Province. There is great celebration. It's hard to say great celebration, but it is heartening that we are able to get back to in class learning. Where we feel that is the most important thing we can be doing is working with our students in safe environments and will continue to do that and continue to provide that. And Thank you so much, as we get to 8:30. I will seek a motion to adjourn this Committee of the Whole from a trustee. *(Tisha Boulter raised her hand)*

Thank you, all those in favor. Opposed *(no one opposed)*, we are adjourned *(2:27:46)*. Thank you so much and we will meet again on October 14th at 1:00 PM to address the Board business including this configuration process. Goodnight.

Scott Benwell - Thank you Chair.