



BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

School District No. 43 (Coquitlam)
Education Learning Centre

April 22, 2025
6:30 p.m.

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TERRITORY

Carol Brodie

Today We acknowledge we are on the ancestral unceded territory of the kʷikʷəłəm (Kwkwetlem First Nation). We thank the kʷikʷəłəm who continue to live on these lands and care for them, along with the waters, and all that is above and below. We acknowledge, with gratitude, this beautiful place where we live, work, play, and learn. All My Relations

- A. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA**
- B. INTRODUCTIONS**
- C. OVERVIEW OF BUDGET PROCESS & REMARKS FROM BOARD CHAIR**
- D. REMARKS FROM SUPERINTENDENT**
- G. STAKEHOLDER BUDGET FEEDBACK QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS**
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- H. TRUSTEE BUDGET DISCUSSION**
- I. QUESTION PERIOD**
 - a) Trustees
 - b) Gallery
- J. ADJOURNMENT**

ANNOUNCEMENT

Next Public Board Meeting: April 29, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

Location: Education Learning Centre

Contacts regarding agenda items: Michael Thomas, Chair – 604-939-9201

Randy Manhas, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO – 604-939-9201

Nicole Schenato, Executive Assistant – 604-939-9201



BOARD OF EDUCATION

BUDGET STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

APRIL 22, 2025

PRESENTATION		PRESENTER(S)	Pages(s)
1	SD43 Employee	Jessica Bell, Teacher	3
2	Coquitlam Teachers' Association (CTA)	Ken Christensen, CTA President	4-5
3	CUPE 561	Mike Myers, CUPE 561 President	
4	SD43 Employee	Written Submission Only	6-7

From: Bell, Jessica

Sent: Wednesday, April 16, 2025 3:47 PM

To: Budget mailbox for Public feedback

Subject: Budget Feedback 2025-2026

I am writing with deep concern regarding the recent decision by our school district to eliminate one of the four Indigenous Resource Teacher positions from our department, citing budget constraints. This role has been vital in supporting staff, students, and schools in embedding Indigenous perspectives, building relationships with the local Nation, and advancing meaningful reconciliation in education.

At a time when school districts across the country are being called to uphold the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action—particularly those that speak directly to the role of education—how does the removal of this position align with that mandate? The work of reconciliation is not optional, and it certainly cannot be treated as expendable when finances get tight.

The elimination of this role sends a troubling message: that Indigenous education is still seen as peripheral, not central, to our shared responsibility in the education system. It disregards the relationships built, the cultural safety fostered, and the trust nurtured over years of dedicated work.

Reconciliation requires more than land acknowledgements and cultural days. It requires consistent, funded, and visible commitment to decolonizing education. Cutting Indigenous-specific roles undermines that work.

We must ask ourselves: are we truly committed to reconciliation, or only when it's convenient?

Jessica Bell

Indigenous Resource Teacher - Secondary Focus

C/O Millside Centre 1432 Brunette Ave, Coquitlam, BC V3K 6X5

604.945.7386

I am thankful to be working on the ancestral, unceded, and traditional territory of the kʷikʷəḷəm First Nation. I also respectfully acknowledge the ancestral, unceded, and traditional territories of the Tsleil-Waututh, Katzie, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, and Qayqayt First Nations of which I also have the honour to work and live. Musi Cho

60. Develop and teach curriculum on Aboriginal spirituality, history and culture.

62.i Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal Peoples historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory requirement for K-12 students.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.*
- Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.*
- Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.*
- Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.*

Presentation for the Board of Education regarding Budget 2025

Good evening Board, we are here to present our reactions to the presented Board budget for 2025-26, on behalf of the 2700 teachers of the Coquitlam Teachers' Association. We recognize the Board's necessity to produce a balanced budget and the high volume of unfunded cost pressures within it. We recognize the extraordinary effort to try to not impact staffing and maintain what we have.

We have spoken to you repeatedly on the necessity to avoid layoff, as it is critical to teacher morale and the competitiveness of the District in an environment of teacher shortage.

We have asked that the employer remove the requirement for EA scheduling from our membership, as we believe this quasi-managerial task has been putting our members into situations of conflict when it is the role of the Principal in site is to assign and direct work.

I would like to speak to you tonight on a particularly granular and specific decision in the budget and that is removing 1.0 from the Indigenous Education Dept. I have included in your package two of the relevant TRC calls to action that are impacted negatively by this decision.

I think this decision has an impact outsized from its intention. Yes, we understand there has been declining enrollment in IE but, simply looking at this as a ratio doesn't accurately assess the impact of this decision or reflect how this department works. I will explain.

You can't look at this department as a simple ratio of four teachers with a caseload of students, similar to a Learning support teacher. There are *many* undeclared students and staff with ancestry out there. There are strong cultural, historical and organizational reasons that many don't declare their ancestry to the School Board.

These teachers support families of schools. With this decision, you have increased the workload on the remaining teachers by 25%. They are already supporting 20 plus schools each as it sits.

And that is what they do. They don't just support Indigenous students in the school, they support whole schools in the efforts to make true reconciliation a reality. They work with teachers in their efforts to introduce Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning into classrooms, they work with administration and teachers to plan culturally relevant and sensitive school activities, they are a part of the collective culture at the schools they support. This means that the proposal impacts not just the individual teacher being redeployed, but all the schools being supported by them, and the schools being supported by the other teachers in the dept. who will now be stretched thinner.

I am asking, with the greatest respect and consideration, that this rebalance of staffing in the dept. be reversed. The impact of this change is too outsized and impacts the whole student and staff community of SD43. In doing this, we would be taking a step backward on our promised journey of truth and reconciliation.

Thank you for the consideration.

Ken Christensen

CTA President

To the Members of the Board of Education,

We would like to thank you for your ongoing leadership and acknowledge the difficult financial decisions you are navigating in this time of economic uncertainty. We also appreciate the inclusion of feedback regarding our recent request for a stipend recognizing the specialized role of School Psychologists in SD43. We respectfully ask you to reconsider this decision, based on several pressing concerns that directly impact student services, district initiatives, and staffing sustainability.

1. Critical to Student Success and Literacy Goals

School Psychologists are uniquely trained to support both mental health and academic achievement, including evidence-based literacy screening and intervention. As the district moves to implement new provincial literacy mandates, our role in assessment, consultation, and targeted intervention is essential. Continued under-staffing due to unfilled positions undermines our ability to meet these goals effectively.

2. SD43 Lags Behind Other Districts

Most Lower Mainland districts offer stipends—Burnaby (\$8,700), Richmond (\$11,000+), North Vancouver (\$7,500), among others. Coquitlam is now the only large district not offering similar recognition. This significantly impacts our recruitment and retention, particularly when neighboring districts offer more competitive compensation for the same qualifications and responsibilities.

3. Recruitment Challenges Are Worsening

Recent delays in registration processing for psychologists in B.C., combined with federal immigration changes, are further limiting the pool of available clinicians. Without incentives to attract candidates, SD43 will continue to experience staffing shortages, leaving student needs unmet.

4. Rising Student Complexity Despite Enrollment Decline

While overall enrollment is declining, the number of students with high and complex needs is increasing. Our work includes critical assessments for both high- and low-incidence designations, as well as support for neurodivergent learners. These services require time, expertise, and consistency—something we cannot provide at scale when staffing remains insufficient.

5. Community Referrals Are Not a Substitute

Private assessments have long waitlists (9–12+ months) and are not accessible for many families. In-district services provide continuity, collaboration, and equitable access. Without adequate staffing, we risk delaying interventions and falling short of the district's vision of early support for vulnerable learners.

Conclusion

We urge the Board to recognize that supporting School Psychologists is not only a matter of fair compensation—it is a necessary step in maintaining high-quality, equitable services across SD43. Without action to improve recruitment and retention, the district will face growing service delays, staff burnout, and difficulty meeting provincial mandates. We remain committed to working with the district to support sustainable solutions and thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

The School Psychologists of School District 43