

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY (PHASE 1 & 2)**  
*FOR THE 2026/27 PROPOSED PRELIMINARY BUDGET*

April 29, 2026

## 2026/27 PRELIMINARY BUDGET PROCESS TIMELINE

<b>PUBLIC BOARD MEETING</b> Wednesday, June 18, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation and approval of 5-year capital plan for major capital projects for 2026/27</li> </ul>
<b>PUBLIC BOARD MEETING</b> Wednesday, September 17, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation and approval of 5-year capital plan for minor capital projects for 2026/27</li> </ul>
<b>PUBLIC BOARD MEETING</b> Wednesday, December 3, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation and approval of the proposed budget process and consultation timeline for the 2026/27 preliminary budget</li> </ul>
<b>ONLINE PUBLIC BUDGET SURVEY PART 1</b> Thursday, January 29 to Wednesday, February 18, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with the public on budget priorities through an online budget survey</li> </ul>
<b>BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING WITH PARTNER GROUPS AND STUDENT VOICE</b> Wednesday, February 25, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the 2026/27 draft preliminary budget estimates</li> <li>• Consultation with partner groups on budget priorities</li> <li>• Consultation with students on budget priorities</li> </ul>
<b>PUBLIC BOARD MEETING</b> Wednesday, March 4, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation and approval of the 2025/26 amended annual budget</li> </ul>
<b>PUBLIC BOARD MEETING</b> Wednesday, March 4, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of 3-year projected enrolments for 2026/27</li> </ul>
<b>INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL (IEC) BUDGET CONSULTATION</b> Wednesday, March 11, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the 2026/27 draft preliminary budget estimates</li> <li>• Co-construction of spending plans for targeted Indigenous Education funds</li> <li>• Consultation on budget priorities for non-targeted funds</li> </ul>
<b>BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING WITH PARTNER GROUPS</b> Wednesday, April 1, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the updated 2026/27 draft preliminary budget estimates</li> <li>• Presentation of the budget survey part 1 results</li> </ul>
<b>PUBLIC BOARD MEETING</b> Wednesday, April 15, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the proposed 2026/27 preliminary budget (first reading), including public survey part 1 results</li> </ul>
<b>ONLINE BUDGET SURVEY PART 2</b> Thursday, April 16 to Wednesday, April 22, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public input on the proposed 2026/27 preliminary budget through online survey</li> </ul>
<b>INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL MEETING</b> Wednesday, April 22, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IEC approval of the proposed 2026/27 spending plans for targeted funds</li> <li>• IEC input on the proposed 2026/27 preliminary budget non-targeted funds</li> </ul>
<b>BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WITH PARTNER GROUPS</b> Wednesday, April 22, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner group input on the proposed 2026/27 preliminary budget</li> </ul>
<b>BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE</b> Wednesday, April 22, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public input on the proposed 2026/27 preliminary budget</li> </ul>
<b>PUBLIC BOARD MEETING</b> Wednesday, April 29, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receipt of IEC-approved 2026/27 spending plans for targeted Indigenous Education funds</li> <li>• Presentation of the public engagement summary</li> <li>• Adoption of the 2026/27 preliminary budget and annual budget bylaw</li> </ul>

## **PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT**

Each year, the Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows School District develops a budget to support student learning and well-being while meeting the legislative requirement to adopt a balanced budget. For the 2026/27 budget cycle, the school district is using a two-phase public engagement process to gather early input on budget priorities and later feedback on the proposed preliminary budget. Input received through this process was considered alongside the district's strategic and operational goals in the development of the proposed 2026/27 preliminary budget.

## **WHAT WE HEARD – PHASE 1 (EARLY INPUT)**

Phase 1 input was gathered between January 29 and March 11, 2026 through an online public survey, a meeting of the Indigenous Education Council, Finance Committee of the Whole board meetings with Student Voice and partner groups, and a district leadership team staff meeting.

### **Indigenous Education Council**

The Indigenous Education Council (IEC) provided input on budget priorities at the March 11, 2026, meeting.

The IEC emphasized the importance of strengthening Indigenous Education staffing through the addition of an Indigenous Education Child and Youth Care Worker for a full-year trial. Feedback highlighted strong support for programs that preserve and strengthen local Indigenous language and cultural knowledge, including the annual awards event and the Artist-in-Residence and Elder-in-Residence programs, which support intergenerational learning and cultural mentorship. The IEC also emphasized the importance of food sovereignty initiatives in schools, cultural gatherings that bring families together, continued support for summer learning programs hosted at Katzie First Nation, and ongoing training and capacity building for Indigenous Education staff.

### **Student Voice**

The board received input from Student Voice representatives through its Finance Committee of the Whole meeting on February 25, 2026. Students consistently identified mental health and well-being as foundational to learning success and emphasized the need for timely access to counselling and calm, supportive spaces in schools. Students also highlighted the importance of reliable learning technology, and equity, diversity and representation in learning. Extracurricular activities, clubs, and sports were identified as essential to student belonging and engagement. Students supported practical cost-saving measures, such as reducing paper use by increasing digital communication and sharing resources where feasible.

### **Partner Groups**

The board received input from the Maple Ridge Teachers' Association (MRTA), Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 703 (CUPE), Maple Ridge Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association (MRPVPA), and District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) through its Finance Committee of the Whole meeting on February 25, 2026.

Partner groups shared strong alignment in their feedback on prioritizing frontline, student-facing supports. Participants highlighted that student needs are increasing in complexity, intensity, and frequency, and that early, school-based supports are critical. Participants identified education assistants, counselling and Safe and Caring Schools supports, early literacy and numeracy intervention, Indigenous Education, clerical support, reliable technology, facilities and maintenance, and trades staffing as key priorities.

## District Leadership Team

The district leadership team provided input to senior staff on February 26, 2026, through breakout groups comprised of elementary and secondary principals and vice principals, district managers, and district principals and vice principals.

Feedback focused on protecting front-line, school-based staffing and services that directly impact students, including education assistants, learning services and mental health supports. They noted increasing pressures related to growing complexity of student needs, aging facilities, and technology demands, and supported efforts to improve efficiency through reduced paper use, streamlined processes, and more equitable approaches to resource allocation. Overall, input emphasized long-term stability, fairness, and student well-being.

## Online Budget Survey Part 1

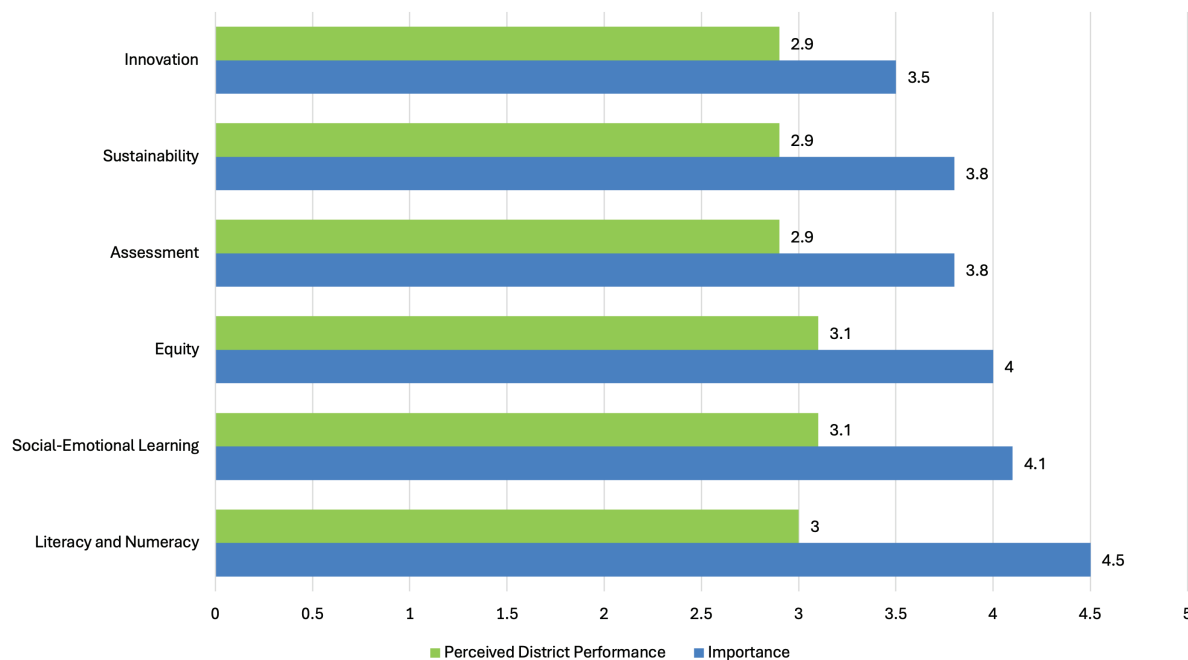
The district launched part 1 of the online public survey on January 29, 2026, to gather early input on budget priorities before proposed budget changes were developed. The survey was open for three weeks and received 840 responses from the community providing feedback on strategic priorities, one-time investment preferences, and advocacy priorities.

Survey results demonstrate strong alignment with the district's strategic plan. Literacy and numeracy, student well-being, and equity were identified as the highest priorities. While respondents generally rated current district performance as moderate across all areas of the strategic priorities, importance ratings exceeded perceived performance in all areas, indicating a desire for continued improvement. For one-time funding, respondents prioritized investments in curricular and learning resources and facility maintenance, and there was strong support for continued advocacy to ensure provincial funding reflects the true cost of operating schools.

Survey questions were evaluated by respondents on importance and/or performance on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high. Results presented in the graphs below represent weighted averages of all ratings.

### *Importance of Strategic Priorities - Perceived Importance and Performance*

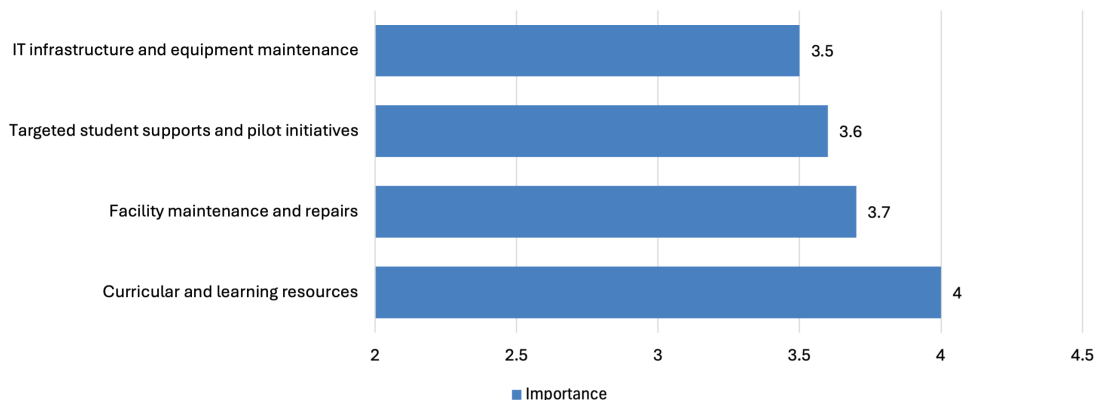
For each of the following district strategic priorities, please rate how important it is to you and how well the district is currently performing in that area.



Respondents rated all six strategic priorities as important, with the highest ratings assigned to core learning and student well-being. The highest rated priorities were literacy and numeracy, social-emotional learning, and equity. These results indicate broad support for maintaining focus on foundational learning outcomes and student well-being, consistent with the district's strategic plan.

## One-Time Investment Priorities

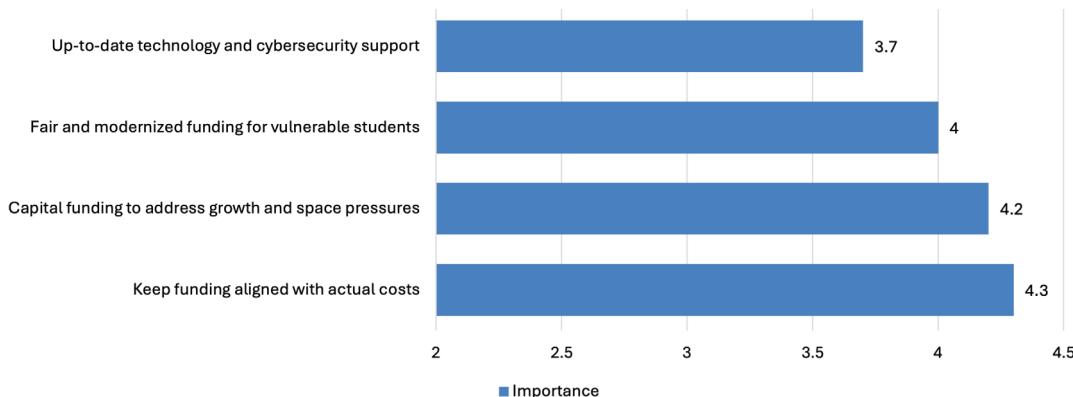
Please rate the importance of these one-time investment categories to help us understand community priorities for these restricted funds.



Respondents indicated if one-time funding is available, investments that support teaching and learning should be prioritized. Curricular and learning resources had the highest importance rating, followed by facility maintenance and repairs. Targeted student supports and pilot initiatives were rated as moderately important, while IT infrastructure and equipment received the lowest rating.

## Board Advocacy Priorities

Please rate how important it is for our Board of Education to prioritize the following advocacy themes when addressing unfunded inflationary and structural cost pressures with the Ministry of Education and Child Care and Ministry of Infrastructure.



Respondents indicated strong support for continued board advocacy to address inflationary and structural cost pressures. Highest advocacy priorities included keeping funding aligned with actual costs and securing capital funding to address growth and space pressures. Fair and modernized funding for vulnerable students was also rated as important, while technology and cybersecurity support received a comparatively lower rating.

## Additional Feedback on Advocacy Priorities

151 respondents provided feedback on other areas for board advocacy priorities. Common themes identified are as follows: advocacy for more education assistants (EAs); advocacy for additional supports for students with designations and diverse need; advocacy for funding support in the areas of mental health, counselling, and student well being; advocacy for the funding of music, art, and band programs; advocacy for additional funding to support facilities maintenance; advocacy for more staffing of various school-based roles, and advocacy for provincial funding of regular student transportation.

## NEXT STEP – PHASE 2 (FEEDBACK ON THE PROPOSED PRELIMINARY BUDGET)

Individuals wishing to share their views on the 2026/27 Proposed Preliminary Budget were invited to participate in phase 2 of the online survey, open from April 16 to noon, April 22, 2026.

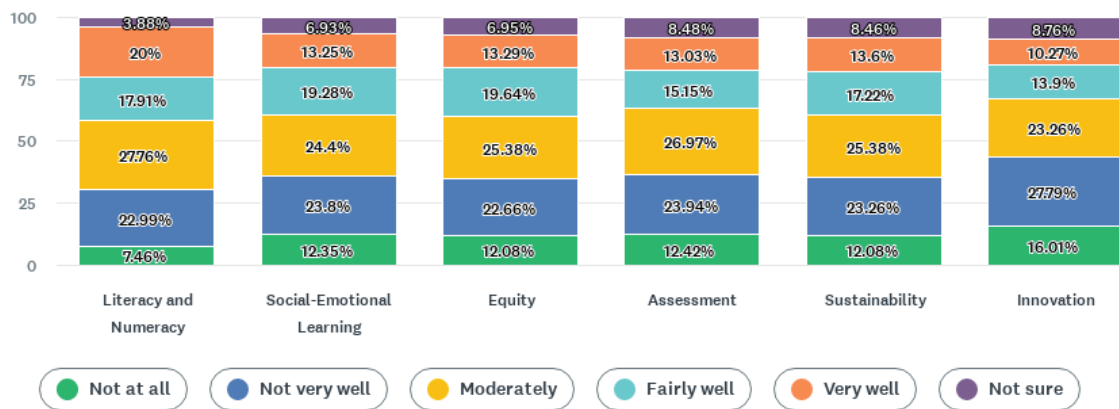
### Alignment with District Priorities

For each of the district's strategic priorities, please rate how well the proposed 2026/27 budget reflects that priority. (1 = Not at all, 5 = Very well)

337 individuals responded to this question. Across all six strategic priorities, respondents were most likely to rate the 2026/27 Proposed Preliminary Budget as reflecting those priorities as "Moderately" or better. When combining the top three ratings (Moderately, Fairly well, Very well), roughly 55-65% of respondents indicated the budget reflects each priority at least moderately well, while those selecting "Not at all" or "Not very well" ranged from about 30-44%.

Literacy and Numeracy received the most positive ratings overall, with about 69% rating it Moderately or better and only 7.46% selecting "Not at all" - the lowest dissatisfaction score across all priorities. Equity, Social-Emotional Learning, and Sustainability followed a similar pattern, with relatively strong "Fairly well" and "Very well" responses.

Innovation stands out as the area where the budget is perceived to reflect the priority least well. It has the highest "Not at all" rating (16.01%) and the highest "Not very well" rating (27.79%).

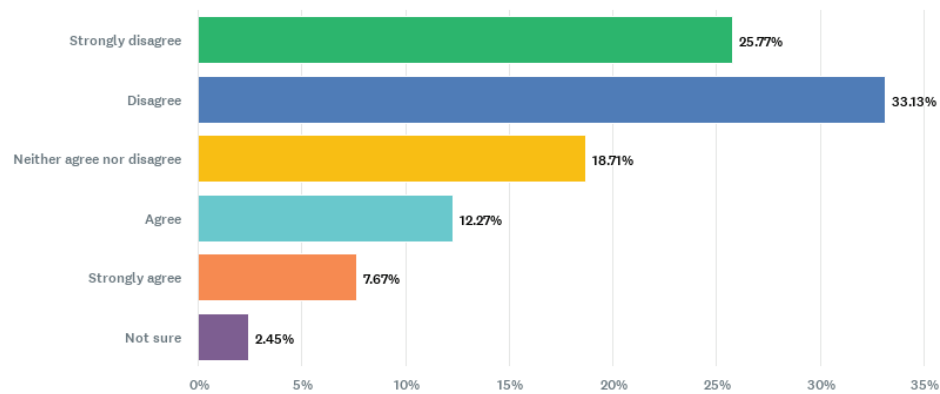


### Balancing Competing Needs

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: "The proposed 2026/27 preliminary budget balances competing needs across the district."

326 individuals responded to this question. A majority of respondents (58.9%) indicated they disagree or strongly disagree that the budget achieves this balance, while about 20% agreed or strongly agreed. Roughly 19% of respondents were neutral, selecting "neither agree nor disagree," and a small share indicated they were not sure. This result should be read alongside the priority ratings in the previous question. While respondents generally rated the budget as reflecting individual strategic priorities at least moderately well, they were less notably convinced that overall allocation across those priorities felt balanced. This gap likely reflects the specific concerns raised by respondents in the open-ended comments, which are documented under the *Alignment and Gaps* section of this summary document.

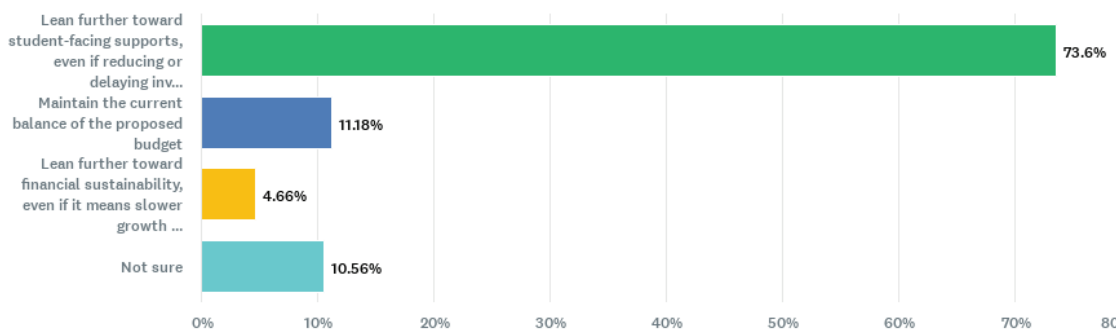
This context is important, as the responses to this question are a reflection of concerns about specific program/role reductions. The themes surfaced in the open-ended comments provide essential detail on where those concerns are concentrated.



### Prioritizing Overall Trade-Offs

If the board were to adjust the proposed budget, which overall trade-off would you prefer the board prioritize?

322 individuals responded to this question. Responses show a clear preference among respondents for prioritizing student-facing supports in any further budget adjustments. A strong majority (73.6%) indicated they would prefer the board lean further towards student-facing supports, even if doing so means reducing or delaying investments in other areas. By comparison, 11.18% preferred maintaining the current balance of the proposed preliminary budget, and only 4.66% indicated a preference for leaning further toward financial sustainability, even if it means slower growth in programs or services. About 10.56% of respondents were not sure. It is worth noting that "student-facing supports" is a broad category, and respondents may hold different views about which specific supports should be prioritized.



### Alignment and Gaps

Is there anything in the proposed budget that you feel is particularly well-aligned with community priorities, or anything you feel is missing?

197 responses were received to this question, providing important depth and specificity to the feedback received through the close-ended questions above. Respondents used this space to identify programs, positions, and services they viewed as adding value, as well as to raise concerns about specific proposed changes. The themes summarized below reflect the areas that received the most frequent and substantive commentary.

**One-to-One Inquiry / iPad Program:** Many respondents viewed the program as strongly aligned with equity, accessibility, digital literacy, and differentiated learning, particularly for students with diverse and accessibility needs. Concerns were raised that ending the program would create resource gaps, given the lack of physical textbooks and limited shared technology across schools. Some respondents, however, supported the conclusion of the program, citing screen time concerns and a desire for more hands-on learning, but also noted that alternatives must be clearly identified and resourced.

**Elementary Band Program:** Feedback framed elementary band as well-aligned with literacy, numeracy, social-emotional learning, equity, and belonging. Many respondents identified the discontinuation of the program in its current format as a gap in access, particularly for students who may not otherwise afford private music instruction. Concerns were also raised that eliminating the program in its current format would undermine long-term program sustainability, including impacts on secondary band participation.

**Helping teacher staffing:** Many respondents expressed concern about proposed changes to helping teacher staffing, viewing these roles collectively as integral to instructional quality, literacy and numeracy outcomes, and the district's capacity to support teachers in increasingly complex classroom environments. Across feedback, helping teachers were described as providing system-wide coordination, classroom-embedded instructional support, mentorship, and specialized expertise that supports both early-career and experienced educators. Respondents who raised concerns emphasized that reductions across multiple helping teacher roles were perceived as a shift away from supporting the adults who directly support students. Feedback reflected apprehension that streamlining these roles could reduce access to timely, responsive instructional support and undermine stated literacy, equity, and sustainability priorities, particularly during a period of heightened demand on classroom teachers.

**Indigenous Education funding:** While some respondents acknowledged changing enrolment patterns, many saw the reductions as misaligned with Truth and Reconciliation commitments. Respondents emphasized the importance of relationships and continuity, which are difficult to maintain with reduced staffing.

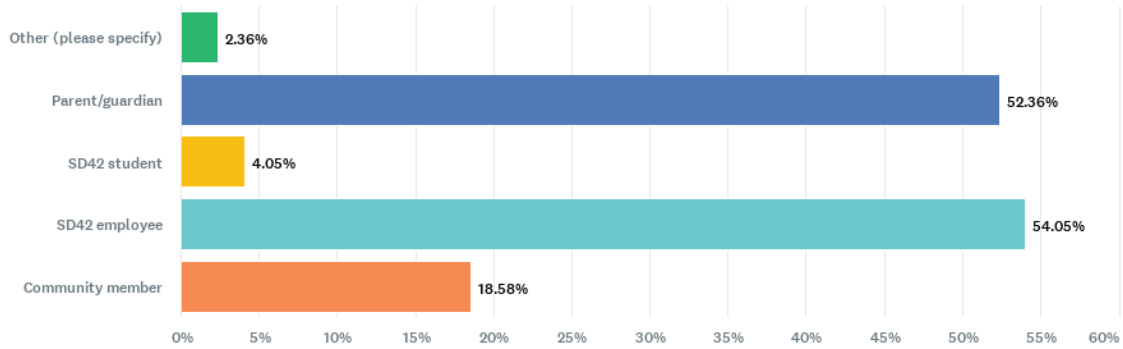
**Student Support Services and Specialized Staffing:** Feedback in this category supported investment in education assistants, child and youth care workers, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, English language learning teachers, school psychologists, and counsellors. Many respondents identified early intervention as a critical gap, particularly for undiagnosed or non-designated students. There was concern that needs are increasing faster than capacity, creating pressures on classrooms and staff.

**Other:** Overall, respondents emphasized the desire to see student-facing and classroom-level supports prioritized and protected. A few respondents referenced the importance of student transportation, some felt before and after school care should be prioritized, several would have wanted to see additional details outlined in the budget document, while a number suggested reductions in upper management roles and a reduction to upper management conference expenses. Finally, some respondents acknowledged the constraints of provincial funding and expressed support for the district's effort to balance priorities.

### **Demographic Information**

Please indicate the categories that best describe your involvement in Maple Ridge - Pitt Meadows School District No. 42. (Select all that apply.)

Of the 296 responses received to this question, respondents were able to select all categories that applied to their involvement with the school district, meaning many individuals were represented in more than one category. SD42 employees made up the largest group, with 160 selections (54.05%), followed closely by parents/guardians at 155 selections (52.36%). Community members accounted for 55 selections (18.58%), SD42 students for 12 selections (4.05%), and 7 respondents (2.36%) selected "Other" and provided their own description. Because respondents could identify with multiple categories, these figures reflect the range of connections respondents have to the district rather than a breakdown of district respondent groups.



### ***Response to Key Themes from Feedback***

The following clarifications respond to recurring themes in the feedback received. Matters that were operational in nature have been referred to staff for appropriate follow up with schools.

**One-to-One Inquiry/iPad Program:** Inquiry and challenge-based learning are embedded in BC’s redesigned curriculum and in the daily work of teachers, and they will continue. The devices currently assigned to the program will remain in schools for the 2026/27 school year, with individual schools determining how best to deploy them to support student learning. iPads and other assistive technologies provided to students with diverse learning needs are not affected by this proposal.

**Elementary band:** The elementary band program was proposed in April 2025 for discontinuation in 2025/26. In response to community advocacy, the board approved one-time funding for that year to allow the district to work with program teachers and the BC Music Educators’ Association to identify sustainable delivery options that support equity and remain cost-neutral to both families and the school district. Two models were identified for secondary schools to consider, along with a new Grade 6/7 Band offering within the district’s Summer Learning program. Models referenced in other districts are primarily user-pay and delivered outside of instructional time. The district welcomes the opportunity to support community groups interested in offering elementary band through this kind of model.

**Helping teacher staffing:** The district heard concerns about the reduction of certain helping teacher roles and the continuation of the supports these positions provide. The proposed changes reflect both the fiscal realities facing the district and considerations of alignment with current needs, overlap with school-based and administrative responsibilities, and opportunities to deliver similar support through different structures. The functions associated with the reduced and discontinued positions (including mentorship, innovation, and library support) will continue in reconfigured forms through school-based leadership, existing district roles, and other supports within the broader service model.

**Reductions to Indigenous education:** Targeted Indigenous education funding is allocated on a per-student basis and is projected to decrease in 2026/27, reflecting a decline in projected Indigenous education enrolment. In alignment with provincial Indigenous Education Council policy, which establishes the Council’s role in approving plans, spending, and reporting related to targeted Indigenous funding, the proposed budget reflects this collaboration. The Indigenous Education Council reviewed the proposed budget at its April 22 meeting and did not provide additional input for Board consideration.

**Call for reductions in upper management roles and conference expenses:** The senior leadership team has been reduced and restructured, resulting in approximately \$260K in annual ongoing savings reflected in the 2026/27 base operating budget. The 2026/27 Proposed Preliminary Budget also includes a proposed ongoing annual reduction from \$26K to \$5K for the exempt staff conference.