



BUDGET SURVEY 2025 SUMMARY



SURVEY DATE: FEBRUARY 7-26, 2025
DATE OF SUMMARY: MARCH 25, 2025

**TOTAL
RESPONSES:
368**

SURVEY

WHY DID LETHBRIDGE SCHOOL DIVISION CONDUCT THIS SURVEY?

Lethbridge School Division has begun preparations for the 2025/2026 Preliminary Budget, and with that in mind, the budget survey was developed.

Did you know, approximately 93% of the Division's total revenue comes from Alberta Education? Student enrolment is the most significant factor in determining the Division's funding and therefore drives many of the decisions made in allocating funds within the instruction budget.

Through the budget survey, the Division sought input into the development on the instruction area of the budget. In 2024/2025 the instruction budget was approximately 82% of the Division's total budget, which was approximately \$122 million.

Thank you to everyone who provided this valuable feedback.

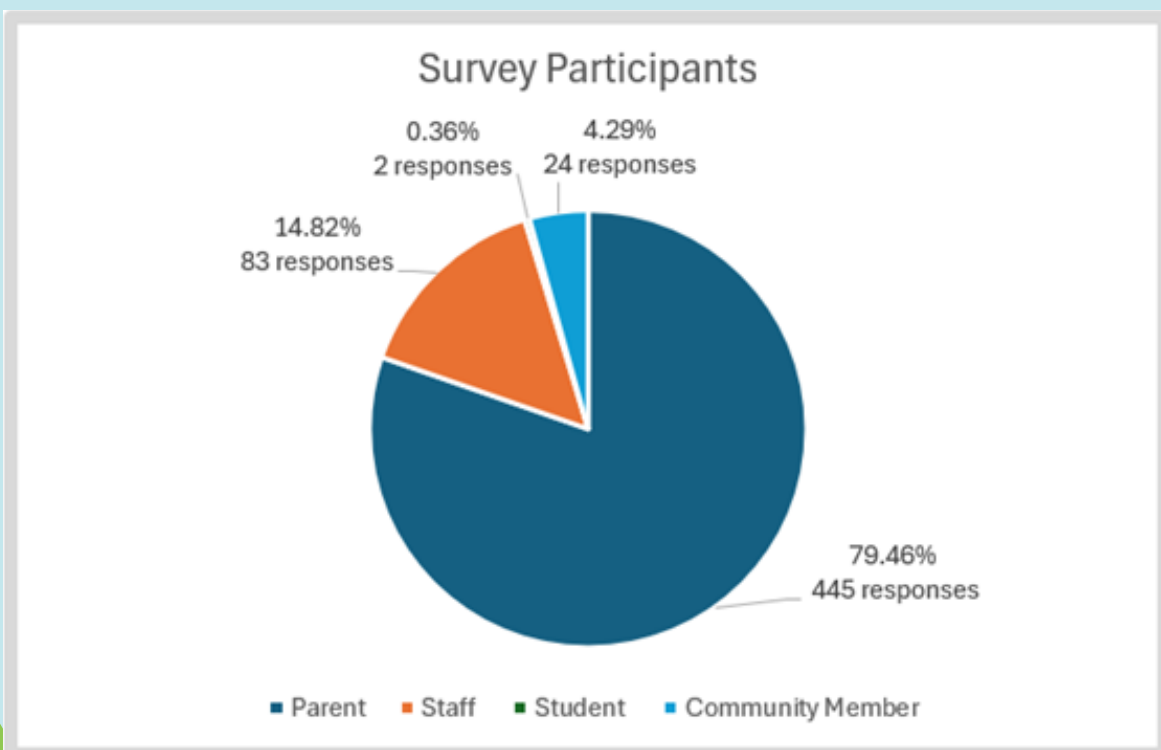
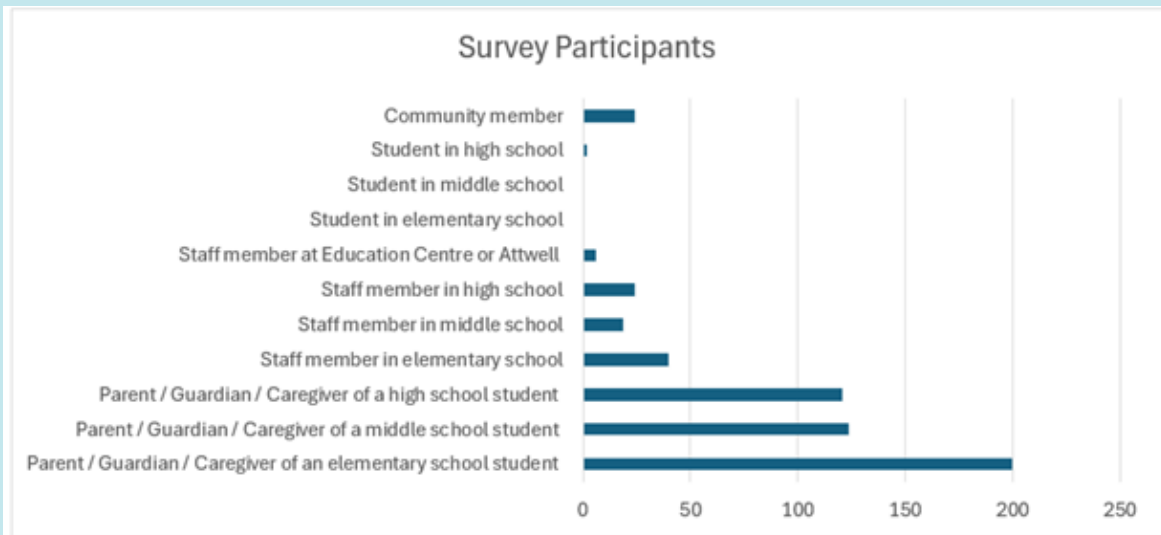
We appreciate you taking the time to share your unique perspective.

WE ASKED:

I am the following:

Please note, participants could answer more than one group if applicable. Example, some respondents answered parent of elementary, middle, high school and community member, therefore the participants number is more than the responses.

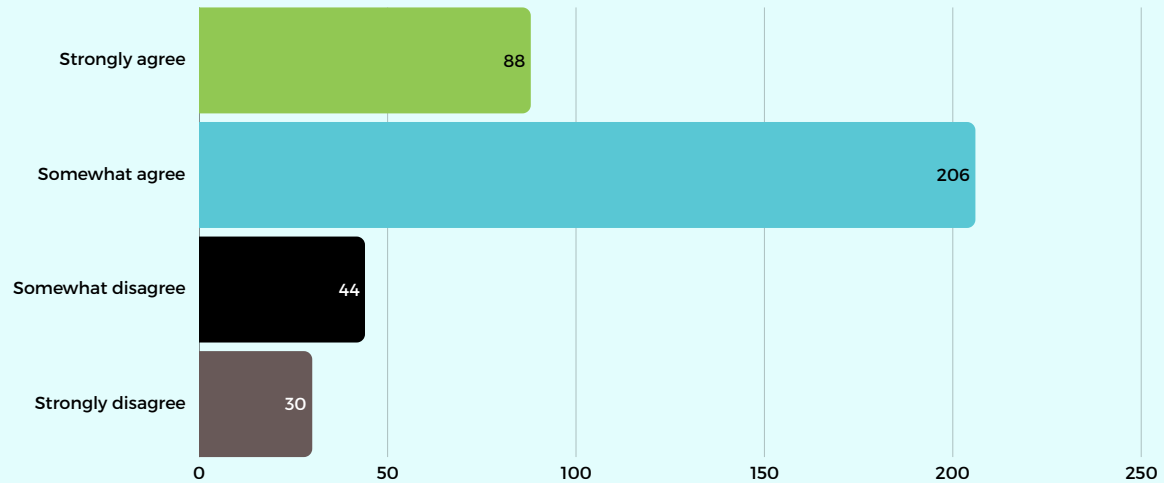
YOU SAID:



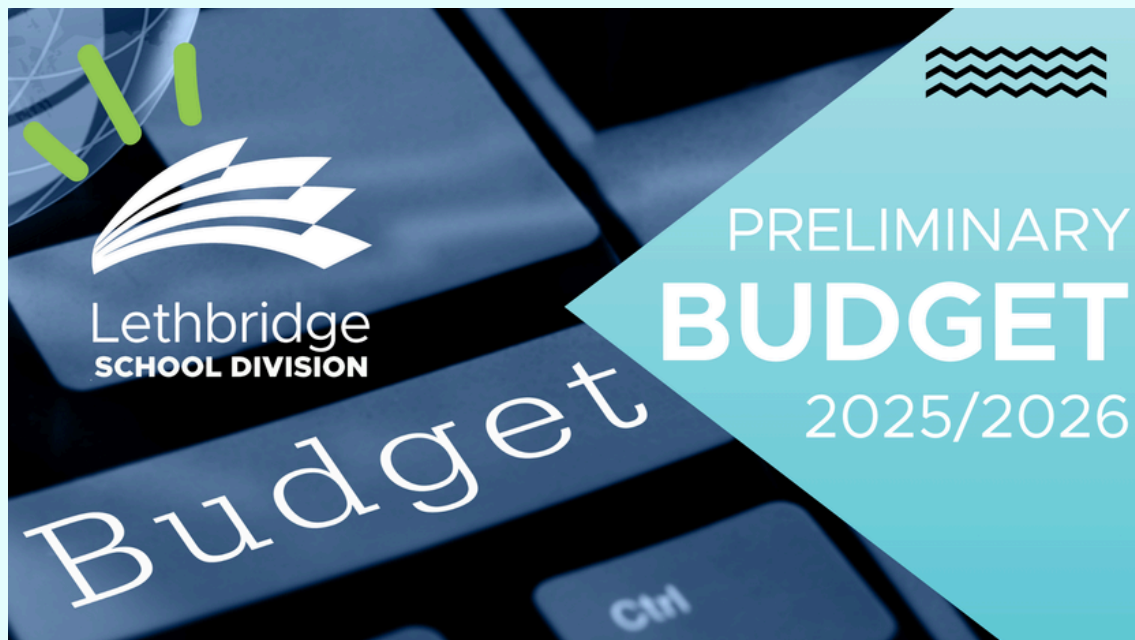
WE ASKED:

I am familiar with how Lethbridge School Division is funded.

YOU SAID:



In total, 80 per cent agreed they are familiar.



WE ASKED:

For the 2024/2025 school year, the Division's total operating budget is \$150.39 million.

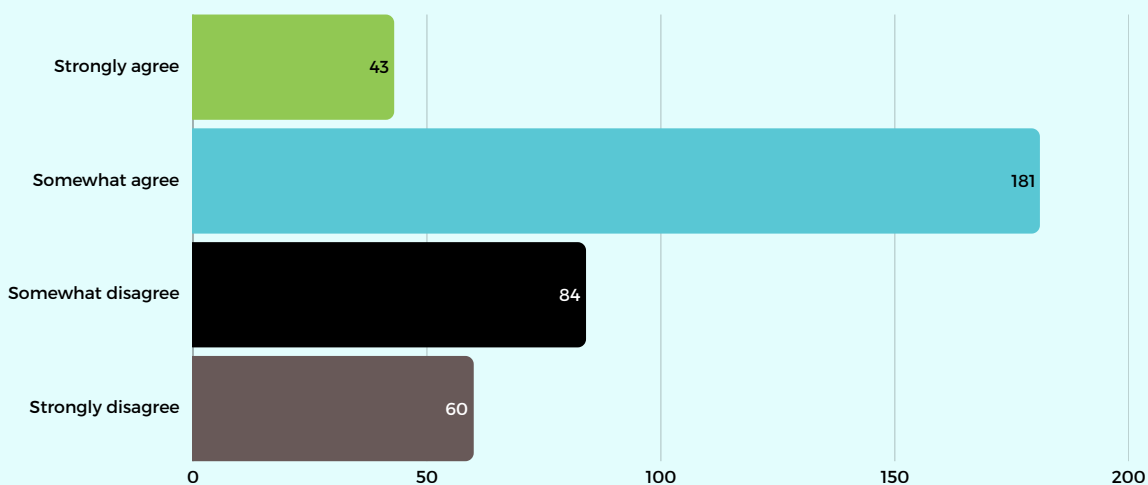
Allocation of funds: 82% of the Division's budget is dedicated to instructional services, where the remaining 18% are targeted non-instructional support services grants for facilities (12%), transportation (3%) and administration (3%). Of the total Division budget, 77% is allocated to staffing.

Budgetary Concerns

The Division is funded over 90% from Alberta Education on a three-year weighted moving average formula. This means that not every student the Division supports is funded fully. As well, inflationary pressures have increased costs in areas such as resources, employee health benefits, utilities, transportation and insurance.

Given the budgetary concerns discussed above, do you believe the Division is allocating instructional funds to best serve student needs?

YOU SAID:



In total, 61 per cent agreed.

WE ASKED:

Please explain the reason for your choice in Question 3.

YOU SAID:

Themes from those respondents who agreed:

1. Acknowledgment of Budget Constraints and Efforts:

- Many comments recognized the challenges posed by limited funding and appreciated the efforts made by the Division to allocate resources as effectively as possible. There was a general understanding the Division is doing its best within the constraints imposed by the current funding model.

2. Need for More Support Staff and Resources:

- Similar to the "Disagree" comments, there was a strong call for increased support staff, such as Educational Assistants (EAs), and more resources to address the diverse needs of students. Many comments highlighted the importance of having adequate support staff to ensure effective learning environments.

3. Desire for Improved Allocation Transparency and Efficiency:

- Several comments expressed a desire for more transparency in how funds are allocated and suggested there could be improvements in efficiency. There was a call for better communication and understanding of the budget allocation process to ensure resources are being used effectively.

WE ASKED:

Please explain the reason for your choice in Question 3.

YOU SAID:

Themes from those respondents who disagreed:

1. Need for Increased Support Staff and Smaller Class Sizes:

- Many comments highlighted the need for more Educational Assistants (EAs) and support staff to adequately meet student needs. There was a strong sentiment that current staffing levels are insufficient, leading to larger class sizes and inadequate support for students with special needs.

2. Concerns About Budget Allocation and Spending Priorities:

- Several comments expressed dissatisfaction with how funds are allocated. Stakeholders particularly criticized the amount spent on administrative positions and non-essential programs. There was a call for more transparency and better management of resources to ensure that funds directly benefit students and classroom needs.

3. Inadequate Funding for Essential Resources and Programs:

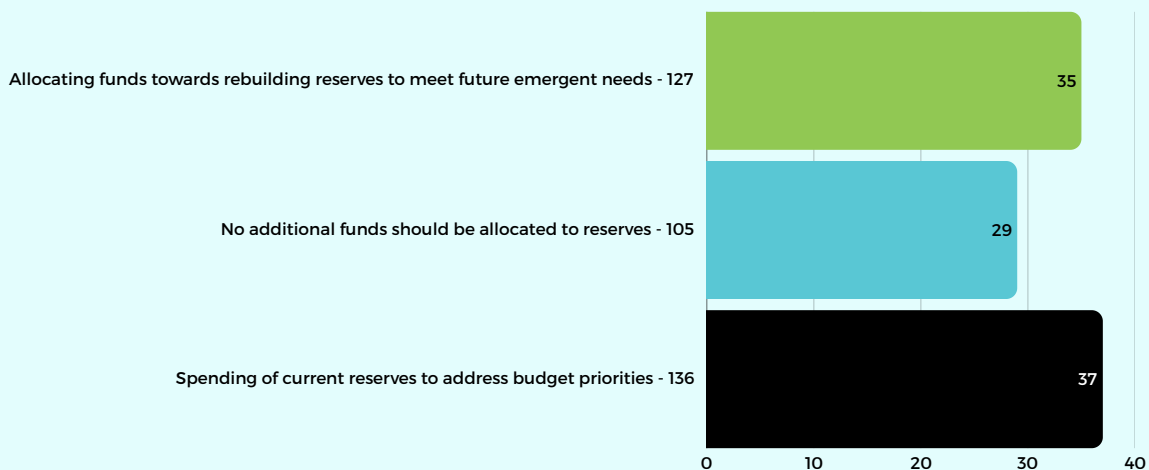
- Many respondents said essential resources and programs, such as technology, inclusive education and mental health support are underfunded. There was a concern without proper investment in these areas, the quality of education and student well-being will suffer.

WE ASKED:

The Division has spent a large portion of its reserve fund over the last three years to maintain instructional programming. Since the 2020/2021 school year through the 2023/2024 school year, the reserve balance (excluding school generated funds) of the Division has decreased from 7.07% to 2.45%. Budget calculations show the estimated reserve balance at August 31, 2025 to be 1.53% (excluding school generated funds).

Please select the approach the Division should be using for its reserves.

YOU SAID:



WE ASKED:

Alberta Education has assurance domains that help guide Lethbridge School Division. Three of these priorities are:

- Student Growth and Achievement
- Teaching and Leading
- Learning Supports

Please drag and reorder the following spending areas in order of importance (1 being high and 7 being low) that you believe should be prioritized in the 2025/2026 instructional budget to improve educational outcomes based on the priorities above.

The 7 choices were:

Class Size

Complex Classrooms

Student Wellness

Early Learning

Technology Supports

Setting Aside Funds for the Future

Other

YOU SAID:

Spending Area	% of Rank 1	% of Rank 2	% of Rank 3	% of Rank 4	% of Rank 5	% of Rank 6	% of Rank 7
Class Size	58%	26%	8%	4%	1%	2%	0%
Complex Classrooms	22%	31%	21%	13%	6%	6%	2%
Student Wellness	8%	18%	30%	27%	14%	3%	2%
Early Learning	4%	12%	21%	20%	23%	17%	3%
Technology Supports	4%	10%	13%	23%	32%	15%	3%
Setting Aside Funds	0%	1%	5%	10%	22%	50%	12%
Other	4%	2%	4%	3%	3%	6%	78%

WE ASKED:

Please add any additional comments you may have about the Division's budget.

YOU SAID:

5 Main Themes

1. Class sizes and complexity:

Many respondents highlighted the impact of large class sizes and complex classroom dynamics on student learning and wellness. More supports are needed for students with diverse needs to ensure a better learning environment. Respondents said that small class sizes allow for more individualized attention, better student-teacher interactions and improved learning outcomes.

2. Funding and Resource Allocation:

Concerns were raised about the allocation of funds, as some respondents said too much money is spent on non-essential projects and not enough on direct student support. There was a desire for more equitable distribution of resources, particularly in technology and support staff. Many respondents expressed frustration with the overall level of funding provided to the Division. They mentioned the current budget is inadequate to meet the needs of students and staff, leading to a strain on resources.

Resource Allocation

- **Technology and Infrastructure:** There were mixed opinions on spending for technology. While some respondents saw the need for updated technology to support learning, others felt too much money was spent on technology at the expense of other critical areas. Additionally, there were concerns about the physical condition of school buildings and the need for maintenance and upgrades.

YOU SAID:

5 Main Themes

3. Support for Teachers and Staff:

There were comments about the need for better pay and retention strategies for support staff. Comments were also made about teacher wellness, and their direct impact on student outcomes.

4. Government and Policy Criticism:

Several comments expressed dissatisfaction with government funding policies. There was a call for increased advocacy to secure better funding for public education and to address the perceived inequities in the current system.

5. Focus on Student Wellness and Learning:

Respondents stressed the importance of prioritizing student wellness and learning needs. This included addressing early learning, providing adequate support for complex students and ensuring all students have access to high quality education and resources.

**Thank you to all for taking
the time to have your voice
be heard. Please look
for additional 2025/2026
budget information concerning
the Division in May of 2025.**