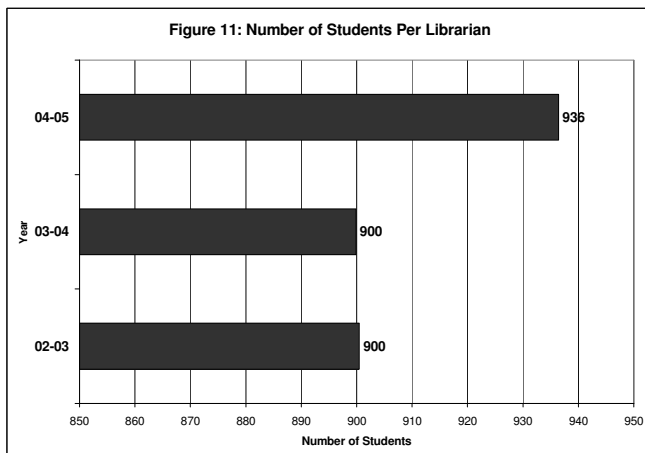


## First Tracking Survey of Vancouver Secondary Schools

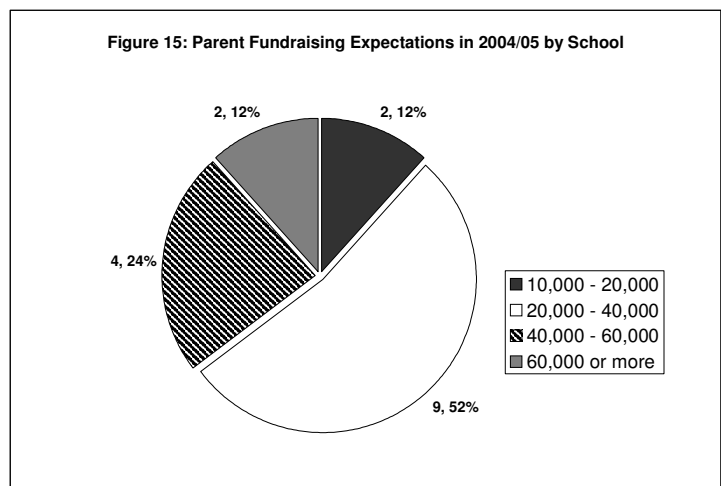
Last winter we started a project to survey Vancouver's secondary schools to find out how they were coping with budget cuts. With excellent cooperation from the Vancouver School Board, school administrators, and parents, BCSPE volunteers gathered information and put together a report released in mid-September. The report is available on-line and can be downloaded from [www.bcspe.ca](http://www.bcspe.ca).

The report provides relevant and factual information to help parents and others understand what is going on in schools across Vancouver. The survey asked questions about class size, course offerings, support services, staffing levels and fundraising activities over the past 1 to 3 years. Overall, we found that while efforts to protect the majority of students in the classroom are working, there are some worrisome changes in library resources and supports for students with special learning needs.



**Please sign on!** We invite you to visit our website [www.bcspe.ca](http://www.bcspe.ca) and sign on to our email list. Go to [bcspe.ca](http://bcspe.ca) and click on "Add me to the BCSPE mailing list." We will not share our list but will use it to keep you informed about public education issues.

Another area of note is the significant role that fundraising is playing in Vancouver's secondary schools — parents alone expected to raise in excess of \$680,000 in 2004/05, an amount equivalent to the money the government provides for educating 120 students. The trouble is that parent efforts and abilities to fundraise are very uneven with some schools raising significantly more than others. And not only PACs are fundraising, students, teachers and other parent groups are fundraising as well.



We plan to conduct the survey again during this school year. With no cuts to this year's school budgets and some additional program funds, we hope our report will, in future years, paint a happier picture of reinvestment in public schools. We believe that investing in public education is the smartest thing we can do for our collective future

**Election reminder:** School Board elections are scheduled for November 19. It's important to become informed on your candidates' positions on public education. The BCSPE urges all British Columbians to stay informed on the issues, ask the candidates about public education, and be sure to vote on election day. Remember: school trustees are elected to represent the public, including parents, and make decisions on their behalf. For some questions to ask your local candidates, visit the [bcspe.ca](http://bcspe.ca) website and click on School Board Elections – 2005.