

Ten per cent hike

School costs for 1980 top \$100 m

Herald Special
Haltom Board of Education finance committee estimates it will cost just over \$100 million to operate the school system this year.

Committee chairman Florence Meares said last week the \$101,748,314 total is an increase of 9.91 per cent over last year's \$93,425,882 budget.

Among the areas inflation has hit hardest during the past year are fuel prices which have jumped 27 per cent, hydro which rose 13 per cent, interest rates which rose 15 per cent, and tenders for supplies and services which so far have risen 7.5 to 14 per cent.

The sewer surcharge recently imposed by Halton region will add an additional \$120,000 to the budget, while maintenance costs are also climbing due to the aging area schools, she said.

Only 10 per cent of the schools are less than 10-years-old, while half of them are 10 to 20 years old and the remaining 40 per cent were built prior to 1960.

The opening of the new E.C. Drury high school in Milton also requires additional funds for supplies, textbooks and library books, she said.

The board has budgeted \$1,830.77 for each elementary student and \$2,571.16 for each secondary student in 1980, an increase of 11 per cent over last year's figures of \$1,649 for elementary and \$2,316 for high school students.

The fact that enrolments are dropping also makes per pupil costs rise, Miss Meares pointed out. Projected figures show 27,320 elementary students, 393 less than last year, and 20,120 in the secondary level for a drop of 487 students.

Salaries, wages and employees benefits account for the largest chunk of the board's budget, \$78,501,896 or 77.16 per cent.

Supplies and services have been allotted 13,307,235 or 13.07 per cent. Capital and debt charges are set at \$8,024,846 for 7.89 per cent and 1.88 per cent of the money goes into other things.

The 18 per cent exchange rate on funds debentured in the United States caused problems with last year's budget, Len Auger said. The board still has six U.S. debentures outstanding but three of them will be cleared this year. The other three end in 1985.

Funds were provided in the

budget to hire four new people in the psychological staff area. The board first approved the hiring of a psychologist, a social worker and two psycho-educators in 1976 but so far they have not been hired.

Mr. Lindley assured the board that while the money was included no action would be taken until such time as the matter had been reviewed and re-approved.

The board pays a total of \$319,014 in tuition fees to send students to other area schools. One elementary student attends classes in Wellington, four go to the Credit Valley Treatment Centre in Peel and five full time and one part time student go to Hamilton for special schooling for perpetual handicaps.

Tuition in Wellington costs \$8 per day, while in Peel it's \$32.06 and \$24.06 in Hamilton.

Secondary school students taking instructions in French cost the board \$15 per day in Hamilton and \$15.50 in North York. Tuition costs for English speaking students are \$14.50 per day while Hamilton charges \$15 for the same type of student.

The board will face an increase in transportation costs

because of the rise in gasoline prices, Miss Meares said. However, in September, the board will also be transporting blind students to and from

Branford each weekend as part of ministry policy for integrating boarding school students back into their home community where possible.

The board is expected to approve the budget at the next regular meeting March 13.

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Haltom region is proclaiming March 17 to March 21 as "Poison Prevention Week". Regional council approved the designation at last week's meeting.

Caledon bridge
Results of the Caledon Bridge Club on Feb. 27 were 1. Naureen and Des Devereaux, 2. Susan and Csaba Vargha, 3. Ken Pearce and Jack McFadden. Results of Feb. 28 were 1. Shirley and Bob Austin, 2. Naureen and Des Devereaux, 3. Ann and Rod Yeager.

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