

Halton District School Board approves budget for upcoming school year

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The Halton District School Board has approved its operating and capital budgets for the 2018-2019 school year.

The more than \$763 million operating budget will include items such as classroom instruction, school transportation and pupil accommodation.

The capital budget, which includes new schools, additions and improvements has been approved for \$88.7 million.

Highlights of the budget include a host of resource enhancements (including an expansion of the Students with Learning Disabilities Project), \$599 million for instruction costs, a total special education compliance revenue of nearly \$95.9 million (and \$20.8 million of expenditures in excess of revenue), \$17.2 million in transportation expenses, and a textbook and supplies total upwards of \$18.4 million.

While this is a balanced budget for the Halton District School Board, it is not without its areas of contention.

Earlier this month, the board announced it is currently the lowest funded English public school board in Ontario, with a per-pupil average more than \$1,300 lower than the provincial average (\$10,972 compared to \$12,299 provincially) - an aspect the Fair Funding Action Committee has been working raise awareness.

It was also announced at a June 20 trustee board meeting that the board's renewal of the Education Development Charges by-law has been blocked until the new provincial government can be sworn in.

The decision could potentially mean millions of dollars lost for HDSB.

However, superintendent Lucy Veerman assured the board that the news would not impede the budget from passing.



Graham Paine/METROLAND

Halton District School Board's J.W. Singleton Education Centre

"Any land that was purchased prior to the EDC bylaw expiry is a valid purchase and can be funded through the EDC. Prior to any subsequent purchase of land, a motion comes forward to the board of trustees, so, if and when we are in that position, we would bring the information forward," Veerman said. "At this point I believe we still need to go as planned."

The new budget allots \$3.7 million in EDC funding to new land.

In conjunction with the passing of the budget, the board of trustees has also passed its Long-Term Accommodation Plan, Operational Plan and Special Education Plan for the upcoming school year.



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