

Halton Catholic School Board approves budget

At its June 19, 2007 Regular Board Meeting, the Halton Catholic District School Board approved budget estimates for 2007-

2008 of \$235.5 million for submission to the Ministry of Education, in accordance with Ministry requirements. The operating expendi-

ture estimates of \$217.4 million and capital expenditures of \$18.1 million have been matched with revenue projections to produce a balanced budget for the 2007-2008 academic year. This represents a 6.1% increase over the 2006-2007 revised estimates.

"In order to achieve a balanced 2007-2008 budget it was necessary to use \$2.3 million of the Classroom Reserve Funds," explains Director of Education, Lou Piovesan. "However, despite the ongoing budget challenges, we were able to achieve a balanced budget without cuts in any of the Board's operational areas. This 'status quo, compliance' budget reflects modest staff increases due to enrolment and the opening in September, 2007 of our two new Catholic elementary schools – St. Christopher in Burlington and St. Anthony of Padua in Milton – and fl at-lines

non-salary and non-benefit expenditures at 2006-2007 levels except for known non-discretionary items such as utilities."

The overall increase in enrolment projected by the Board for the 2007-2008 school year and the staffing requirements are reflected in the budget, which provides for an increase in classroom spending of approximately 6.5%.

As a result of reallocations within the budget combined with other Provincial Grants and Other Revenues, the following initiatives will be implemented in the 2007-2008 school year: additional primary teachers to comply with the Ministry's "Primary Class Size Reduction" requirement to reduce the average class size for the primary grades (Junior Kindergarten-Grade 3) down to 20:1 for the 2007-2008 school year; additional Itinerant Literacy and Numeracy

teachers; the continued expansion of the instrumental music program at three additional elementary schools; the introduction of three new secondary programs – Arts & Culture, Primary Industries/Landscaping and a Health Care Assistant program; the expansion of the elementary robotics program; acquisition of new revised resources for the Family Life program (Grades 2 and 3); additional Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) to address the new elementary schools and the expanded identified populations across the system at both the elementary and secondary level; additional itinerant part-time staff to support the Daily Physical Activity program; Summer Writing Teams (science and curriculum maps); an increase in part-time staffing in Printing Services and an increase in funding of the Board's Technology Plan (i.e. acquisition of computers for the classroom).

Although education fund-

ing recognizes that school boards need flexibility to decide how best to allocate resources within the budget that is set by the board, there are restrictions set by the Ministry on how school boards may use certain components of their allocation. School boards will continue to report, as in past years, how all the funding is used and the extent to which this funding has been used for special education, classroom expenditures, new pupil places and school renewal, administration and governance and distant schools.

It is expected that there will be ongoing budget challenges in the 2008-2009 fiscal year as the current four-year teacher salary framework expires on August 31, 2008. As a result, the Board will continue to monitor expenditures closely and undertake a review of expenditures in light of available funding allocations to address the projected 2008-2009 financial challenges.

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