

No reduction in educational assistants: superintendent

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 equivalent education assistants (EA) for special education that are itemized in the 2008-09 budget means that there will be no reduction in the number of EAs for the fall. The superintendent simply stated, "Absolutely."

The president of the EAs and the board superintendent who's responsible for special education have been at loggerheads as of late with the former fearing the complement of EAs will be radically reduced by the start of

the next school year but the latter maintaining no changes are expected.

As is the case with other school boards around Ontario, salaries and benefits for teachers and other school personnel comprise the bulk of the Halton public board's expenditures with 58 per cent (\$250.5 million) allotted for nearly 3,100 FTE teachers, the same cost percentage as the previous school year. Teacher costs also include all salaries and benefits for long- and short-term

supply teachers.

The second largest budget expenditure for the board is 18 per cent for other school staff, which covers salaries and benefits for principals, vice-principals, EAs, professional support staff, school office, caretaking and cleaning staff, and program leaders and consultants.

The other 24 per cent of budget expenses for 2008-09 includes capital costs for school renovations and debt servicing (six per

cent), facilities maintenance, supplies, services, cleaning contracts and utilities (five per cent), school discretionary budgets and school-based programs (five per cent), salaries and benefits for central administrators plus supplies, furniture and equipment for central administration (four per cent), home-to-school and school-to-school transportation (three per cent) and professional development support for school-based staff (one per cent).

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