

JUNE 5, 2024
SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a **Special Budget Meeting** this evening at 7:00 p.m. in the Education Centre Boardroom, with the following members in attendance: J. Weston (Chairperson), B. Cody, C. Johnson, J. Meissner, S. Piatkowski*, M. Radlein, M. Ramsay, M. Waseem*, C. Watson and K. Woodcock.

*Virtual Attendance

Trustee S. Estoesta was unable to attend.

Student Trustees A. Awan and C. Dong were not in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: j. chanicka (Director of Education and Secretary), M. Armellini, E. Dougan-McKenzie, N. Landry, B. Lemon, S. Miller, M. Newlands and C. Sagar.

Other staff in attendance: R. Dallan, C. Gingrich Regehr, L. Lima, M. Mayer and S. Reidel.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson J. Weston called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by M. Radlein:

That the agenda of the June 5, 2024, Special Budget Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

Chairperson J. Weston shared regrets from Trustee S. Estoesta.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

REPORTS

CORE EDUCATION FUNDING (CEF) OVERVIEW

This report was provided for information.

Superintendent N. Landry began the presentation with a review of the budget process including the relationship to the Strategic Plan, in-year deficit management, budget compliance and the System Fiscal Review Committee. He reviewed a list of the related Ministry of Education (Ministry) communications regarding budget and the restructuring to the funding model. He presented the Ministry's key focus areas for the 2024-25 school year:

- Achievement of learning outcomes in core academic skills

- Preparation of students for future success
- Student engagement and well-being

Superintendent N. Landry shared that Core Education Funding (CEF) continues to be driven by a number of inputs, however, the primary driver of funding continues to be average daily enrolment. He also reviewed the related enrolment projections.

Controller M. Armellini provided details on the six components that make up the Core Education Funding:

- Classroom Staffing Fund (CSF)
- Learning Resources Fund (LRF)
- Special Education Fund (SEF)
- School Facilities Fund (SFF)
- Student Transportation Fund (STF)
- School Board Administration Fund (SBAF)

Controller M. Armellini shared a chart showing that 81% of the total projected revenues are for classroom staffing, learning resources and special education. She provided an overview of the variety of grants to support the ongoing need to revitalize and renew aged building components. She advised that the Ministry has eliminated the Safe and Clean Schools Supplement funding in 2024-25 as “normal operations in school boards have resumed.” She reviewed the Responsive Education Programs previously named Priorities and Partnership Funding (or PPFs), which support identified government priorities such as Math and Early Reading Interventions and is supplemental to the Core Education Funding, can change on a year-to-year basis and is never guaranteed the following year. She shared that the most significant change to Responsive Education Programs is the elimination of the Staffing Support for De-Streaming and Transition to High School, which was about \$3.2M and supported 27.34 FTE in 2023-24. She concluded CEF Overview with a summary of key changes for 2024-25.

Questions related to the CEF Overview were asked after the Preliminary Highlights from the 2024-2025 Budget.

PRELIMINARY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024-25 BUDGET

This report was provided for information.

Superintendent N. Landry shared the Core Education Funding (CEF) allocations for the 2024-2025 school year noting that outside of the increase to the transportation fund, the increases in the other areas of the CEF are attributable to enrolment and changes to other input data (census, demographic data) and staffing benchmarks however, these increases do not represent any significant increase in operating funding. He also reviewed the other revenues and noted revenue risks such as enrolment volatility and investment income. He shared an overview of the budget amounts for the year and the key expenditure risks including supply costs, temporary accommodations, inflationary pressures on supplies and services and utilities. He concluded the presentation with a review of next steps and a summary of the operational challenges and risks associated with the 2024-2025 budget:

- Enrolment volatility
- Supply Costs
- Facility operations and maintenance (energy, supplies and services)
- Contractual increases that exceed benchmark funding updates

Trustees asked questions regarding enrolment projections, the transportation funding model, special education funding, revenue and expenditure pressures, reduction areas and staff who personally spend money for their classrooms.

ENERGY AND GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS UPDATE

This report was provided for information.

Supervisor of Energy Conservation C. Gingrich Regehr presented the Energy Use Intensity, 2008 to Fiscal Year 2022/23 sharing conservation measures including HVAC equipment upgrades, roof and window upgrades, LED lighting upgrades, energy audits and monitoring monthly energy bills. There has been a 16% reduction in energy use intensity since 2008. He also presented the GHG Emission Intensity, 2008 to Fiscal Year 2022/23 sharing 2022/23 reduction measures such as heat pump space heating, heat pump water heating, roof and window upgrades, energy audits and monitoring monthly energy bills. There has been a 33% reduction in GHG intensity since 2008. He reviewed the past energy budgets and expenditures and highlights from the 5-year Energy Conservation Plan. Supervisor C. Gingrich Regehr also shared how real-time energy monitoring increases custodian, teaching staff and student engagement.

Trustees asked questions regarding the strategies for energy consumption reductions, the real-time monitoring software, energy consumption during the pandemic and federal energy conservation programs.

2024-2025 SCHOOL CONDITION IMPROVEMENT GRANT

This report was provided for information.

Several projects for major maintenance are prioritized and funded from the annual Pupil Accommodation Grant – School Renewal, however, not all prioritized projects can be completed due to the limited amount of funding available. The additional School Condition Improvement (SCI) Grant will allow for the completion of backlogged prioritized projects in the 2024-2025 school year. The intent of these prioritized projects is to bring older schools up to current standards. As per Ministry of Education Memorandum 2024:B08, dated April 26, 2024, the Ministry's allocation to the WRDSB through the SCI Grant for 2024–2025 is projected to be \$32,999,009.

Trustees asked questions regarding accessibility, fire protection upgrades and asbestos removal.

2024-2025 PUPIL ACCOMMODATION GRANT – SCHOOL RENEWAL ALLOCATION

Business Services establishes the spending priorities for major maintenance programs through condition assessments performed by Facility Services staff and/or outside consultants. These items are placed in the long-range capital forecast and are scheduled as funding permits. Renovations for program purposes that have been requested by schools are prioritized through consultation with the Elementary Accommodation Committee (EAC) and the Secondary Accommodation Committee (SAC). Major maintenance and program improvements proposed in this budget have been prioritized with the intent to bring older schools up to current standards (e.g., accessibility, HVAC). As per Ministry of Education Memorandum 2024:B08, dated April 26, 2024, the Ministry’s 2024-2025 School Renewal Grant allocation to the Waterloo Region District School Board is projected to be \$10,424,599.

Trustees ask questions regarding what renewal costs include and the practices related to approving this report.

2. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by M. Radlein:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the 2024-2025 School Renewal expenditures for the year September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025, not to exceed the level of grant received from the Ministry of Education for the 2024-25 school year.

-Carried-

MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS QUARTERLY

This report was provided for information.

Current capital priority projects with budgets greater than \$2.5M were presented indicating the project status relative to the schedule, budget and scope. Significant milestones, along with basic project statistics, were also presented.

When asked, Manager R. Dallan shared that the targeted opening date for the new Southwest Kitchener elementary school is September 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

3. Moved by C. Johnson, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Special Budget Meeting of June 5, 2024, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.