



Waterloo Region District School Board

51 Ardelet Avenue
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wrdsb.ca

June 21, 2024

The Honourable Todd Smith, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON, M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Smith,

At its meeting on June 12, 2024, the Board of Trustees for the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), approved our 2024-2025 school year budget. At the same meeting, the Board of Trustees agreed to write a letter requesting your consideration in a number of funding shortfalls affecting the WRDSB and other public school boards in Ontario.

Minister Smith, we are advocating for you to address the funding gaps below so we can continue fully supporting the students we serve.

A number of our concerns are also reflected in the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) [Statement](#) on the Funding Gap in the 2024-25 Core Education Funding from May 2024. Specific funding concerns for the Waterloo Region District School reflected in CODE's statement include:

- Short-term supply costs for teacher absences are costing boards almost 2.5 times the amount of funding provided by the province. In 2024-25, it is estimated that WRDSB will receive approximately \$11.18M in funding to cover short-term supply staff expenses (Teachers and DECEs) and projects to spend \$26.07M, resulting in a significant shortfall.
- Statutory benefits such as Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Employment Insurance (EI), mandated by the federal government have escalated without corresponding increases by provincial government grants to school boards. This gap for WRDSB is more than \$1.26M.
- Inflationary costs over a range of budget lines have not kept pace with per pupil funding grants, with an estimated gap of \$776 per student provincially.

In addition to the funding gaps mentioned above from CODE's statement there are a number of other funding gaps impacting the WRDSB:

- The elimination of funding to Support De-Streaming and Transition to High School has resulted in the elimination of almost 28 positions from our classrooms; these positions included Math/Literacy intervention teachers, de-streaming itinerant teachers and Math/Literacy consultants.
- The cost in staff time involved in implementing the province's Bill 124 remedy is significant, requiring staff to complete this work within the appropriate time frame while continuing to complete their already full workload.
- In 2023-2024, the Ministry provided the WRDSB with \$447,770 for Safe and Clean Schools Supplement; this funding was utilized to cover existing staff and supplies. In 2024-25, this funding was eliminated as "normal operations in school boards have resumed."



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The WRDSB has been actively deliberating about the choices to mitigate the implications of budget cuts to classrooms. Without addressing the sizable gaps in funding that currently exist, the impact on students will be significant and far reaching. The WRDSB would like to continue to engage in discussions with the Ministry of Education in hopes of addressing these significant funding issues in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanne Weston".

Joanne Weston
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board

cc: WRDSB Trustees and Student Trustees
Ontario Public School Boards' Association Member Board Chairs
Local Members of Provincial Parliament