

JUNE 11, 2025
SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING

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

Student Trustees D. Lakhanpal and F. Luo were not in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: S. Miller (Director of Education and Secretary), M. Armellini, N. Landry, and B. Lemon.

Other staff in attendance: R. Connolly, H. Han, M. Mayer, S. Reidel and N. Sarwar.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair M. Radlein called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by J. Meissner, seconded by M. Waseem:

That the agenda of the June 11, 2025, Special Budget Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

BUDGET DELEGATIONS

The following delegation spoke at the meeting:

- Cristina Fernandes

Trustees asked questions of clarification. A Point of Order was called by Trustee C. Watson when Trustee S. Piatkowski asked what the objection was to a speaker mentioned by the delegation. Trustee C. Watson indicated that the question of clarification should not ask for the delegate's opinion. Trustee S. Piatkowski was provided an opportunity to clarify his question. Questions of clarification continued. When asked, staff clarified the role of the Audit Committee.

2. Moved by M. Ramsay, seconded by C. Watson:

That the delegation be referred to staff for a response.

-Carried-

Opposed:
C. Johnson
S. Piatkowski
M. Radlein
J. Weston

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

REPORTS

CORE EDUCATION FUNDING & BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS AND THE 2025-2026 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

The WRDSB is financially positioned to address short-term fiscal challenges while maintaining our focus on fiscal sustainability and ensuring our resources are aligned with the priorities set out in the strategic plan and the Board Improvement and Equity Plan. The 2025-26 budget complies with provincial legislation and illustrates our commitment to math, literacy, student well-being and classroom safety. In the absence of any unforeseen changes to our fiscal position during the remainder of the 2024-25 school year, the WRDSB will be able to access a portion of its reserves in 2025-26 and 2026-27 to address strategic priorities. Ontario Regulation 280/19 permits school boards to incur an in-year deficit (funded through reserves) equal to one per cent of the school board's operating revenues when other criteria outlined in the regulation are met. For the 2025-26 school year, this amounts to approximately \$8.5M. The strategic spending being recommended by Leadership Council equals approximately \$6,428,400. This represents about 75% of the \$8.5M the WRDSB could access from reserves in 2025-26 and provides sufficient flexibility should the WRDSB's underlying fiscal situation change during the 2025-26 school year. These costs are not reflected in the 2025-26 budget, but would be added in-year once the 2024-25 year-end financial position has been confirmed, showing the WRDSB finished the year in a balanced position.

After a presentation on key budget risks, trustees asked questions regarding international students, the timelines for the funding announcement, projected enrolment and what trustees can do to encourage enrolment in WRDSB schools.

After a presentation on changes to the Core Education Funding, trustees asked questions regarding transit funding for magnet programs and special education expenses compared to the provided funding.

After a presentation on targeted Ministry investments provided through Responsive Education Programs, trustees asked questions regarding allocations, what is included in literacy funding and digital math tool funding.

After a presentation on revenues for 2025-2026, trustees asked questions regarding temporary accommodation funding, school renewal, CPP expenses and feedback gathered on the budget through the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

After a presentation on expenses for 2025-2026, trustees asked questions regarding extending the life of playgrounds and key changes shared for the budget.

After a presentation on budget pressures and Strategic Spending Plans, trustees asked questions regarding legal fee pressures, revised estimates to include the Strategic Spending Plans, cost of changing a school name, current reserves and the staffing model.

3. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by S. Piatkowski:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board (Board) approve the budget as presented in this report—with revenues of \$966,250,766 and expenses of \$958,624,737 with the difference of \$7,626,029 attributed as follows:

Excess of Revenues over Expenditures	\$7,626,029
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LESS:

As required by Ministry of Education (Ministry) budget compliance regulations, this budget includes the following appropriations from accumulated surplus:

Increase/ (Decrease) in Unavailable for Compliance - Accumulated Surplus

PSAB Adjustment for Interest Accrual	\$95,039
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Sinking Fund Interest Earned	(\$24,045)
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Unsupported Capital Projects Adjustment	(\$535,896)
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Revenues Recognized for Land	\$14,783,459
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Asset Retirement Obligation (ARO)	(\$6,739,774)
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In-Year Adjustment to Revenues	<u>\$7,578,783</u>
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TOTAL – Surplus/(Deficit) for Compliance	\$47,246
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-Carried-

Trustees discussed a motion to write a letter to the Minister of Education. Some areas of structure pressure include supply costs, CPP and inflation costs. There was a friendly amendment to include the Commodities and Services Inflation. Trustees discussed whether it was the best time to write the letter as new legislation has recently been introduced.

4. Moved by M. Waseem, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the question be called.

-Carried-

5. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board write a letter to the Minister of Education informing them of the approved balanced budget and share concerns regarding the structural budget pressures; and

That the letter includes the slide from the presentation showing the Commodities and Services Inflation; and

That copies of the letter be sent to the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, public school boards in Ontario, local Members of Provincial Parliament, labour partners and WRDSB statutory committees.

-Carried-

Opposed: B. Cody
Abstained: M. Ramsay

ADJOURNMENT

6. Moved by M. Waseem, seconded by S. Estoesta:

That the Special Budget Meeting of June 11, 2025, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.