

NEWS RELEASE

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Subject: CDSBEO Approves Budget

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CATHOLIC DISTRICT
SCHOOL BOARD OF
EASTERN ONTARIO



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CDSBEO Working to Minimize 2005-2006 Budget Deficit

Kemptville - The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO) has approved a budget of \$127.2 million for 2005 - 2006 – an amount that includes a deficit of \$1,345,000 or approximately 1.12% of the year's total operating budget. While the Board's revenues have increased by 6% over last year, expenditures for this year are estimated to reach 6.2%.

CDSBEO Manager of Finance *Bonnie Norton* says the Board is working to minimize the size of the projected deficit for the coming year. Mrs. Norton says final figures for the 2004-2005 school year include an estimated deficit of \$2.2 million. However, the Board has decided to deplete its working reserve fund of \$1.2 million and use those funds to minimize the total deficit going forward. By using the reserve fund, last year's estimated deficit falls to \$1 million. By carefully monitoring cost increases and holding operating expenses at last year's levels, the Board hopes it can limit this year's deficit increase to \$345,000.

2005-2006 Grant Highlights

As part of the new budget, the Board has received increased grant funding in a number of areas:

Salary & Non-Salary Benchmarks

The Ministry of Education has increased salary benchmarks by 2% for 2005-2006. However significant funding gaps still exist in this area, making it difficult for the Board to cover employee salaries. Non-salary benchmarks have also increased by 2% to cover increases in textbooks, classroom supplies, school operations and administration costs.

Elementary Preparation Time

The Ministry is gradually increasing the number of minutes of preparation time allocated to elementary teachers to 200 minutes per week. But while the Board currently provides 160 minutes of preparation time for elementary teachers, the Ministry funds only 146 minutes per elementary teacher this year, leaving a funding gap of \$375,000 between extra preparation time costs and salary benchmarks included in the funding model.

Secondary Student Success Teachers

Additional funding is being provided for secondary Student Success teachers, however the Board will adopt a multi-year phase-in approach by adding teachers as revenue becomes available.

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Reducing Primary Class Sizes

The Ministry has introduced Phase 2 of its initiative to cap the size of Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3 classes at 20 students per classroom by 2007-2008. Under the plan, the Board's allocation for this year is \$1.3 million, with funding to be used to hire additional teachers. The Board's projected 2005-2006 aggregate class size for Junior and Senior Kindergarten stands at 20.9 students, while Grade 1 to 3 class sizes are estimated at 21.37 students per class.

Special Education Funding

CDSBEO has identified new Special Education students who could collectively qualify for \$1.07 million in Special Education funding this year. However, the Ministry has capped this 'Net New Needs' funding at \$40 million provincially, meaning the Board may not receive its full funding under the plan. The province is aware that fundamental reform of the Special Education Grant is required and that there is an urgent need to develop a more effective and efficient approach to funding Special Education.

Pupil Accommodation Increases

School Operation grants will be increased by 2% for 2005-2006 with funds to provide additional classroom space under the government's plan to cap primary class sizes. The province's 'Good Places To Learn' initiative continues with \$6.1 million approved for urgent and high priority school renewal needs throughout the Board. Approximately \$3 million in projects have been carried out over the summer of 2005, with the balance of \$3.1 million in projects slated for 2005-2006. Changes in funding calculations for new school construction under the New Pupil Places grants may also affect the Board in the coming year.

Transportation

The base funding for transportation costs has risen by 2%, and there is an additional 3.56% increase to that base to recognize higher fuel costs faced by school boards. CDSBEO will also receive \$79,200 for safety training programs.

Province to Consider Changes to Other Grant Programs

The Ministry of Education has identified a number of other grant programs for fundamental reform, besides Special Education. These include the English as a Second Language component of the Language Grant; the Geographic Circumstances Grant; the Learning Opportunities Grant; the Transportation Grant; and the Declining Enrolment Grant.

In an on-going effort to balance the current budget, the Board will continue to review expenses for 2005-2006 from now until December 15, 2005, when it submits its revised budget.

*(For more information, contact Gordon Greffe, Superintendent of Business,
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