



Interim Financial Reporting: September 1 to December 31, 2020

Manager of Finance, Ashley Hutchinson, presented the interim financial reporting data to the Board of Trustees. The interim report summarizes revenue and expenses during September-December, compared to the same period last year.

Total projected revenue for the 2020-2021 school year is \$202.3M. This projection reflects the Revised Financial Estimates that were presented to the board in December.

Expenditures to the end of December 2020 overall are estimated to be below budget, suggesting some possible savings.

“Our total expenditures are tracking approximately 4.4 per cent less than what was spent this time last year due to several factors including a reduction in supply coverage costs, decreased travel and lower professional development costs, as well snow removal costs are currently tracking under budget.”

“Since our last reporting of the revised financials to the Board in December, the Board has received additional COVID-19 funding. To date, the CDSBEO has received more than \$9M in COVID related funding and we expect to spend approximately \$9.6M.”

Approximately 40 FTE staff have been added through COVID-19 funding, including staff for the addition of the Virtual Learning Elementary School, mental health supports and custodial staff.

Additional COVID-19 expenditures include enhanced cleaning of school transportation vehicles, early dismissal costs for grades 7 to 12, improved air quality and ventilation systems upgrades, personal protective equipment and a significant investment in technology including laptops, iPads and MIFI devices.

“Many thanks to you and the Finance Department for providing us with this update,” concluded Chair Lalonde. “We certainly appreciate all of the work that goes into preparing this information.”

Building One Reading Brain at a Time: The Journey to Aligning Classroom Practices to the Science of Reading

Speech-Language Pathologists in the CDSBEO Department of Special Education shared their system-wide work on how they are revolutionizing the way CDSBEO educators teach reading. Professional development has been delivered board-wide to train teachers about the science of reading and how the brain learns to read.



Currently, the Ontario Human Rights Commission is investigating reading instruction and intervention throughout the province through the Right to Read public inquiry. In Canada, Australia, Britain, and the USA, there is a push to align teaching practices with scientific research. Given that oral language is the foundation to reading, Speech-Language Pathologists are uniquely qualified to lead the way in implementing exceptional teaching methods.

Speech-Language Pathologists Julie McDermid, April Hackett-Helmkay and Tiffany Kalsi presented information to the Board of Trustees on this initiative, including teaching teachers how the human brain learns to read and providing them with tools to align their practices with this science.

"Over the last year, our team has embarked on a journey in supporting the educators within the CDSBEO in aligning their classroom practices with the one way that the brain learns to read," began McDermid.

"Teachers leave teacher's college not knowing how to teach kids to read, and all of the research on the science of reading and how to teach reading has been buried deep in academic journals. Our mission is to share this information with all educators in our board. Because as the Right to Read project says, every teacher deserves to know the science of reading, and every child deserves a teacher who knows it."

McDermid noted that the reason is because there are a lot of myths about how children learn to read, however children need purposeful and planned instruction to learn how to read.

"Reading is not natural. It is a human made alphabetic system and we must create the areas of the brain needed to read. This is done through connecting sounds to letters, and letters to sounds."

The team began by making changes to the assessment protocol so that it aligned with the way students learn to read. Assessment is still done with oral language; however, a more in-depth literacy portion was added which allowed them to see who is most at-risk for reading difficulties.

"This allowed us to identify who would need a little support, and who would need a lot of support to develop their reading brain," explained McDermid.

The assessment provides the information that parents, and educators need to guide instruction and intervention. Teachers can immediately put the recommendations into practice and see measurable growth in their students reading.

"The response has been overwhelming, as suddenly our most vulnerable students are starting to read. Many students were struggling to read, and word level reading was not being taught explicitly in our classrooms, and so began our journey of changing how word level reading is taught across our classrooms."



April Hackett-Helmkay noted that 40 percent of students would benefit from a structured approach to literacy in order to learn to read, while the other 60 percent require it as an essential component.

"It is essential to have structured literacy, and therefore teachers need to implement a structured approach. Our goal was to empower teachers to think critically about their teaching practices in order to align them with the one way that the brain learns to read."

Teachers received training through a board-wide webinar series in the spring. The first session focused on the science of reading, teaching educators how the brain learns to read to guide instruction. This was followed up with webinars on thinking in sounds, which helped teachers to shift their focus from letters to sounds. Teachers then learned about high-frequency words, phonemic awareness, and the development of sound walls.

Once training was complete, the team moved forward with providing educators with the materials required to teach word level reading effectively.

"We decided to create materials that teachers could use immediately," noted Kalsi.

These resources included a phonemic awareness binder, as well as embedded pneumonics and an interactive sound wall tool for posting within classrooms. The team has also setup a Teams site which includes webinars, training videos, and additional resources for teachers.

"Thank you for a great presentation, it has obviously made an impact on our Board of Trustees to learn about your innovation. Whenever we see a child learning to read, that is a complement to the educational leaders in our system, and to your team. Thank you very much," concluded Chair Lalonde.