

2005/06 Preliminary Budget – Summary
April 26, 2005

The process of developing a budget consists of an ongoing review of programs and priorities as they relate to the School District Strategic Plan and the Board's directives. There is regular dialogue on the effectiveness of existing programs and new initiatives generated by staff or other agencies and school districts. Input is obtained from a variety of sources throughout the year, from formal and informal discussion with administrators, school planning councils, parent advisory committees, superintendent's council, union and management representatives, staff, students, trustees and the public. These discussions help to inform the budget development process.

The Finance and Facilities Committee includes representatives of the various partners including teachers, administrators, parents, students and support staff. This standing committee meets monthly and reviews the expenditures and adjustments to the budget throughout the year. The committee also reviews the Five Year Capital Plan and other facilities activities.

The Board is required to submit the preliminary budget to the Ministry by June of each year. The estimated operating grant for the school district is announced by the Ministry, in mid-March. The grant is based on a per pupil rate and the estimated enrolment for the following September. We are estimating an enrolment of 12,146 which is 50 students less than the current year.

The operating grant recently announced by the Ministry for 2005/06 has increased by about 3% over this year. This increase was very welcome news because approximately 2% of our 2004/05 budget included one-time revenue which is not available for 2005/06. The actual additional 1% in revenue has allowed the Board to maintain support service levels and to enhance educational programs.

The 2005-2006 budget will allow us to enhance the work that is being accomplished by educators involved in promoting student achievement in the areas of Literacy, Numeracy,

and Social Responsibility. We will be able to further help our teachers and administrators develop their professional learning.

This means that there will be more learning opportunities for teachers and administrators involved in student literacy throughout the school district, not only for educators involved in the Literacy Project at middle school but also at the secondary school level.

The budget will also provide more support for Year Two of the implementation of the new Math program by adding instructional support in the classroom as well as learning opportunities for teachers and administrators.

Social Responsibility is an area that will also receive additional funding this year. For 2005-2006 we have initiatives planned for Effective Behaviour Support, the Safe Schools Student Forum and student assessment.

The implementation of strategies for Chronically Low-Achieving Students (CLAS), our struggling learners, will also be enhanced through support for initiatives in the areas of identification of students, student transitions, assessment, reporting student progress, instruction and programs.

This budget will also allow us to improve our information technology system for our school district. We are preparing for the new province-wide electronic student information system (BCeSIS) and a communication system that will enhance e-mail communication, simplify website development, facilitate internal and external staff collaboration and provide improved services for students and parents.

The specific staff enhancements include:

- additional elementary teachers to reduce intermediate class size,
- additional school-based special education teacher time at elementary,
- additional literacy helping teacher time to assist at both elementary and secondary,
- additional helping teacher time for numeracy, assessment and training,

- additional school psychologist time for assessment and support in schools,
- retention of teaching assistants, clerical and custodial positions previously funded from one-time funding and
- additional training opportunities for teachers in instruction, assessment and transition for chronically low-achieving students.

The impacts of the budget are as follows:

- there will be **No** staff reductions due to funding shortages;
- there will be increased support to literacy, numeracy and social responsibility;
- there will be additional resources in schools to support CLAS initiatives related to assessment and intervention;
- there will be increased support for students with special needs in elementary schools;
- there will be a modest reduction of the class size at the intermediate level, and
- there will be increase in the staffing ratio at secondary from 20.5 to 21.0 students per teacher. Following an external audit of our class sizes it was noted that our secondary staffing was very rich.

The total budget is \$84.6 million. 83.5% of the budget goes toward the provision of instruction to our students. The remaining 16.5% is split between District Administration, Operations and Maintenance and Transportation.

The preliminary budget for 2005/06 school year is based on the estimate of the number of students for September 2005. Once the actual enrolment for September 30th is confirmed, the Ministry will announce the final operating grant. In the fall, the Board will review the final operating grant and make adjustments to the budget for approval of the final budget in January. Sources of new funds and reassignment of existing funds will be considered to satisfy outstanding priorities at that time.