



For immediate release

Media Release

Student Achievement and Community Engagement Focus of Board Budget - Spending aligns with HWDSB key priorities -

Hamilton, ON – June 7, 2011: Student achievement, engagement and equity are the foundation of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's (HWDSB) 2011-2012 budget. The budget was brought before trustees at its Committee of the Whole meeting on June 6, 2011, and is aligned with the Board's Annual Operating Plan, which guides and focuses school and system action. The budget still requires approval at the full Board meeting on June 13, 2011.

The release of the budget comes after a five-month development process that involved extensive consultation with the Finance Advisory Sub-Committee, Special Education Advisory Committee and Executive Council. The 2011-2012 combined annual operating and capital budget is \$566.1 million, \$504.2 million of which is the operating budget. The 2011-2012 operating budget marks a 3.6 per cent increase over last year's operating budget.

"We are committed to providing our students with a relevant, responsive education so that they become lifelong learners and contributing citizens in a diverse world," said Chair Judith Bishop. "This budget sets us in this direction by ensuring student achievement improves and we have parents and communities who are engaged in our schools."

Although declining enrolment continues to be a challenge for boards across the province, HWDSB is committed to maximizing its resources by investing in areas that align with its Strategic Directions.

Highlights of next year's budget include:

- Expanding full day learning opportunities for four and five year olds by increasing the number of schools offering full day kindergarten from 11 to 16. This will also increase the number of teachers and Early Childhood Educators providing programming to students.
- Supporting the continuation of the kindergarten to Grade 2 oral language and early reading strategy through the addition of 24 teachers and increased resources.
- Purchasing a new student information system that will allow the Board to meet the enrolment reporting requirements of the Ministry plus enhance the data mobilization needs of schools.

- Designing a Professional Learning Plan to create a culture of collective efficacy, trust and high expectations through networking and job-embedded learning.
- Upgrading all school network infrastructures in order to support our 21st Century Fluencies development.

“This budget closely aligns with our Annual Operating Plan to fulfill our Strategic Directions,” said Director of Education John Malloy. “We want each student reading, achieving, engaging and graduating in a 21st century learning environment. We can achieve this because we know our students, we know our staff, we know our parents and communities, and we act on what we learn.”

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board has a vision in which all students achieve their full potential. Embracing student achievement, engagement and equity, the Board's 5,121 staff strive to provide relevant, responsive education so that each of our 48,000 students become life-long learners and contributing citizens in a diverse world.

With an operating budget of \$504.3 million, HWDSB is proud of the 113 schools that serve the communities that make up the amalgamated City of Hamilton, including Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Glanbrook and Stoney Creek. For more information visit hwdsb.on.ca or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/hwdsb.

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Backgrounder

Budget 2011-2012 Highlights

The 2011-2012 budget was developed after extensive consultation with the Finance Advisory Sub-Committee, Special Education Advisory Committee and Executive Council over a five month period. The budget is aligned with the 2011-2012 Annual Operating Plan, which guides and focuses school and system action.

Set within the HWDSB Strategic Directions, the core elements of Achievement Matters, Engagement Matters, and Equity Matters have become the cornerstone of the Board's direction. Based on this cornerstone, HWDSB plans to reach the goal of having each student reading, achieving, engaging and graduating in a 21st century learning environment. We plan to achieve this by knowing our students, staff, parents and communities, so we can continue to show and explain how our work must integrate achievement, engagement and equity across our HWDSB community.

Achievement Matters • Engagement Matters • Equity Matters

Knowing our Students

A critical piece to our students' success is the meaningful use of data and evidence. In 2011-2012, HWDSB's Data Mobilization Strategy will focus on creating opportunities for student success.

Highlights include:

- Using learning within classrooms, as a foundational piece to knowing students and responding appropriately to their needs
- Continuing the kindergarten to Grade 2 reading strategy (with the exploration of a similar strategy to reach effective instruction for all students, some students and a few students in appropriate settings).
- Engaging students through opportunities for student voice, student leadership, program pathways, advancement of 21st-century fluencies, the arts, and support for student mental health and well-being.
- Implementing a new student information system that will allow the Board to meet the enrolment reporting requirements of the Ministry, while enhancing the data mobilization needs of schools.
- Implementing a three year project to upgrade all school network infrastructures in order to support our 21st Century Fluencies development initiative.
- Expanding full day learning opportunities for four and five year olds, through 13 classrooms at five new sites.

Knowing our Staff

The Professional Learning Plan for 2011-2012 highlights the importance of supporting schools and departments through building confidence in staff abilities, a high level of trust between staff and parents, and high the expectations within HWDSB.

Highlights include:

- Professional learning for schools and departments within a responsive system
- Leadership development

- Engaging staff through opportunities for staff voice, effective employee relations processes, coaching and support, understanding and support for unique and responsive service delivery models promoting service excellence

Knowing our Parents / Community

HWDSB places a high value on deeply knowing our students, staff, parents/guardians and community. This commitment is centred on meaningful engagement and equity. We will work with our parents/guardians and community to support them in meeting the needs of their child.

Highlights include:

- Providing support for all parents, some parents and a few parents appropriate to their child's circumstance.
- Continuing to develop the Community Engagement Plan.