

<b>Administration and Finance Committee Meeting</b>
<b>March 1, 2022</b>
<b>2022-2023 BUDGET UPDATE</b>
<b>Multi Year Strategic Plan Values: Believe, Excel, Respect, Thrive and Trust</b>

*"He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord."*  
(Psalm 112:7)

## **BACKGROUND**

On February 17, 2022, the Ministry of Education released memorandum 2022:B03 - *2022-2023 Grants for Student Needs (GSN)*. Having the GSN information this early in the budget development process has never happened, however it is beneficial for planning and consultations.

This report provides a preliminary analysis of the GSN information and potential impact to Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB). The Technical Paper and Education Financial Information System (EFIS), not yet released, are required to know the full extent of the GSN impact.

## **DISCUSSION**

The release of the GSN is a significant part of the budget development process. GSN funding is projected to increase by 2.7 percent provincially, accounting for salary compensation increases and targeted investments in student learning needs and enhanced supports for mental health and special education.

The potential impact or presence of COVID-19 and restrictions in the 2022-2023 year is unknown which can make it difficult to plan for the year ahead. To address the needs that may exist, the Ministry has provided funding that reflects some of the COVID-19 investments from the prior year, including additional staffing reports.

### **Student Learning Needs**

Over \$651 million, provincially, was announced to support student learning needs, however the majority of that funding existed as limited or one-time only in 2021-2022. The major investments are detailed below.

#### ***Supports for Students Funding***

The Investment in Supports for Students Fund (ISSF) was negotiated during the last round of central bargaining and replaced Local Priorities Funding (LPF) at the time. This funding supports just over 100 FTE positions at DPCDSB in several different employee groups. This funding source is time limited: future years is subject to the upcoming round of central bargaining for agreements that expire on August 31, 2022.

#### ***Learning Recovery Funds***

This investment allows school boards to keep the COVID-19 funding that was provided to support additional staffing during the 2021-2022 year. Changes can be made to the way funding was utilized, to help address learning recovery, the implementation of the first year of de-streamed math, supports for special education and maintaining enhanced cleaning standards. School boards are also required to utilize the funds to provide an option for remote learning based on local demand.

It is important to note that funding methodologies for remote learning and the e-learning requirements are different. Remote learning options are funded at regular class size requirements similar to in-person learning, whereas e-learning classes are funded at an average class size of 30:1. E-learning classes reference the graduation requirement of two online courses for the grade 9 cohort of students that started September 2020.

The funds can also be used to support staff previously funded under the Education Worker Protection Fund (EWPF) provided to the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) in the last central collective agreement that expires on August 31, 2022.

The Ministry continues to fund the Recent Immigration Component of the English as a Second Language/English Literacy Development (ESL/ELD) allocation. This time-limited funding was introduced in 2021-2022 to address the decline in immigration enrolment due to COVID-19 and restrictions.

It is important to note that this funding is expected to be one-time only and expire at the end of August 2023.

### **Priority Investments**

Over \$103 million, provincially, was announced to support priority investments in student mental health, special education and network connectivity.

#### ***Student Mental Health***

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all students. To address ongoing needs, the Ministry has transferred the funding provided by Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) that supports student mental health into the GSN. The mental health and well-being grant will be enveloped to ensure the funds are utilized for school or school board based mental health staffing, programs and initiatives.

Additional funding for mental health and well-being will require 50% to be used for evidence-based mental health programs and resources to support student resilience and mental well-being.

#### ***Special Education***

The Ministry has created a new Local Special Education Priorities amount within the Special Education grant by transferring funds previously provided through PPF. School boards may use the funding to address local priorities, such as evidence-based programs and interventions and/or transition supports.

The Special Equipment Amount (SEA) will be increased slightly to support more assistive technology for students with special education needs.

#### ***Broadband Network Operations***

The Ministry is providing a new Broadband Network Operations per pupil amount to support increasing network capacity to support digital learning and access to quality online learning opportunities for all students. This supplemental funding supports the costs associated with network connectivity, network infrastructure, network security and related network operations. School boards will be expected to

maintain specific performance metrics associated with this funding.

### **Labour Related Provisions**

The GSN for the 2022-2023 year includes the funding for the negotiated salary and benefit increase for principals and vice-principals. A provision, yet to be announced, will also be included for upcoming labour negotiations for other agreements that expire on August 31, 2022.

The salary benchmark funding for principals and vice-principals will be unified for elementary and secondary panels, rather than having different benchmarks. The Ministry will also unify the elementary and secondary school office support staff salary benchmarks.

### **Priorities and Partnerships Funds (PPF) Transfer to GSN**

PPF funding transferred into the GSN provides sustainability and allows school boards to fully support and plan for specific programs for students. Note that this is not new funding to school boards, but the transfer into GSN does provide stability going forward. PPF allocations that will transfer into the GSN for 2022-2023 include Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants, Canada-Ontario Agreement for French as a Second Language (FSL), Well-Being and Mental Health Bundle and the Learning and Innovation Fund for Teachers (LIFT).

- The PRO grants will become a new component of the Parent Engagement Allocation within the GSN. There is no change to the intended use of PRO grants.
- The Canada-Ontario Agreement for FSL will be enveloped as a new Area of Intervention component of the FSL allocation within the GSN Language Grant. This funding is intended for school boards to enrich the FSL learning environments and opportunities available to all students.
- As mentioned earlier in this report, the funding from the Well-Being and Mental Health Bundle is moving to GSN to support school boards in meeting local needs and priorities that promote and support well-being and inclusive education, including strengthening positive school climates.
- Funding from LIFT will move into a new Teacher Learning and Innovation Allocation within the GSN Cost Adjustment and Teacher Qualifications and Experience Grant. This funding includes a base amount per school board and additional amounts based on average daily enrolment.

### **PPF Announcements**

PPFs are supplemental to the GSN and are considered to be temporary for the year in which they are provided. The announcement included the following allocations for DPCDSB:

De-streaming Implementation Supports	\$ 0.08 M
Early intervention in Math for Students with Special Education Needs	\$ 0.12 M
Entrepreneurship Education Pilot Projects	\$ 0.04 M
Health Resources, Training and Supports	\$ 0.04 M
Math Strategy	\$ 0.78 M
Skilled Trades Bursary Program	\$ 0.02 M
Special Education Additional Qualifications (AQ) Subsidy for Educators	\$ 0.03 M
Summer Learning Special Education Supports	\$ 0.24 M
Tutoring Supports	\$ 6.60 M
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 7.95 M</b>

The Tutoring Supports PPF will span two fiscal years, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. 50% of the allocation is to be spent by August 31, 2022 and the remaining 50% during the next year. The tutoring program is expected to begin no later than the first week of April 2022. The program will prioritize math and literacy and other foundational learning skills and be offered during a variety of time slots to meet student need, such as before and after school, during the school day, weekends and during the summer.

### **Ongoing Items**

2022-2023 represents the eleventh year of the 12-year phase out of the retirement gratuities and the reduction of the benefit benchmark by 0.167% each year. For DPCDSB, this continues to exacerbate the issue related to carrying the full cost of the Long-Term Disability (LTD) benefit plan and the increasing costs of this program.

The Ministry will provide a 5.45% cost benchmark update to the non-staff portion of the School Operations Allocation to assist with increases in commodity prices (i.e. electricity, natural gas, insurance) and to support the increased costs related to the need to run ventilation systems longer and replace filters more frequently. In prior years, this benchmark funding increase was 2%.

The Ministry will provide a 2.3% cost benchmark update for all other components of non-staff funding throughout the GSN.

A review of the Student Transportation Grant is ongoing. Updates to this funding will be provided at a later time.

The School Renewal and School Condition Improvement funding will be similar to prior years. For DPCDSB, this equates to approximately \$28 million annually.

### **CONCLUSION**

This budget update report summarizes the major elements of the 2022-2023 GSN release and the areas that require attention in developing the 2022-2023 budget. Additional detail from the Technical Paper will be required before the overall impact of the GSN can be analyzed.

Throughout the budget development process, staff are committed to keeping the Board of Trustees updated with regard to information released from the Ministry, financial analysis information and all public consultation input to the budget process.

### **THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATION IS PROVIDED FOR CONSIDERATION:**

- 1. THAT THE REPORT TO THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE, 2022-2023 BUDGET UPDATE, BE RECEIVED.**

Prepared by: Brian Hester, Superintendent, Financial Services  
Julie Cherepacha, Executive Superintendent, Finance, CFO and Treasurer

Submitted by: Marianne Mazzorato, Ed.D., Director of Education