

# Halton District School Board

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**Report Number:** 20039  
**Date:** April 7, 2020

**FOR INFORMATION**

**TO:** Members of the Halton District School Board  
**FROM:** R. Negoi, Superintendent of Business  
S. Miller, Director of Education  
**RE:** **2020-2021 Budget Survey Stakeholder Input Results**

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## **Background:**

The Province of Ontario, while delaying the release of the 2020-2021 budget, has released the Economic Outlook for next year, identifying an increase of \$0.5 billion for the education sector, to account for student growth, 1% compensation increases, new investments in mental health and resources provided under the support for students funds negotiated in various labour agreements. This summary of information indicates many of the funding areas will remain status quo; however it is not clear whether there may be some reductions identified in some areas. It is expected that the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) will be released at the end of April, providing more details to school boards.

In preparation for the 2020-2021 Budget, the Halton District School Board (HDSB) invited parent(s)/guardian(s), students, staff and community members to provide input into the budget development process.

An online survey, accessible using a computer, tablet or mobile device, was made available to the public from February 10 to March 1, 2020. The survey was promoted via the HDSB website, Facebook, Twitter and through a media release. An email was also sent to all HDSB parents/guardians and staff to notify them of the opportunity to provide feedback. Student Trustees shared the survey invitation with the Student Senate, who communicated it to their peers.

The consultation garnered a total of 1490 responses from the following groups:

<b>Respondent Group</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Parent/Guardian	1217	82
Student	113	8
Staff	119	8
Community Member	18	1
Community Agency/Partner	1	<1
Other		<1
No Group Indicated		1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1490</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents were asked to comment on priority areas of further financial investment and suggest areas of budgetary savings. From the 1490 surveys received a total of 2353 comments were identified as relating directly to the budget consultation process. These comments were analyzed and grouped within areas of similarities and differences.

## **Discussion:**

A summary of the survey findings is presented herein, while Appendix A provides a more detailed review of the respondents' feedback. The findings are not listed in any particular priority order, except for being grouped by area.

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Key themes identified regarding areas for priorities and investments included:

- Maintenance of buildings, including common areas and outdoor spaces
- Construction of additional learning spaces (new schools/additions) to address overpopulation of schools in certain areas
- Support for additional positions within Special Education, guidance, library, English as a second language
- Focus on professional development, instructional strategies and instructional tools and technology
- Increased awareness of equity and inclusion, mental health and well-being
- Focus on courses that build life skills, elective courses, Indigenous education, literacy, math, STEM, Arts and extra-curricular clubs and athletics
- Focus on e-Learning, English as Second Language (ESL), French Immersion, Full Day Kindergarten, International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP) and Outdoor Education
- Investment in classroom supplies, instructional resources, equipment for physical education and library materials
- Resources to support student and staff mental health and well-being
- Student and educators' access to general technology, modernized tools and wi-fi upgrades

Respondents also identified several areas of budgetary saving:

- Compensation savings
- Eliminating redundancy in processes by streamlining business flows and automation
- Reducing transportation costs
- Using maintenance as a strategy to achieve future savings
- Outsourcing to obtain competitive rates

## **Conclusion:**

The detailed stakeholder input is carefully reviewed by staff in the context of the education funding available and focus areas identified in the 2020-2024 Multi-Year Plan currently under development. Topics identified within the budget survey will inform the budget process for 2020-2021. Trustees will be kept informed of any new developments that become available.

Budget presentations are scheduled for the Committee of the Whole meeting of April 22 and the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of May 5th, 2020. A draft budget will be presented at the Committee of the Whole on May 27, 2020, with a budget report provided at the June 3rd, 2020 Board meeting for information and at the June 17, 2020 Board meeting for Trustee approval.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*R. Negoj,  
Superintendent of Business Services*

*Stuart Miller,  
Director of Education*



# Appendix A

## 2020-2021 Budget Consultation

### *Summary of Survey Findings*

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## Background

In preparation for the 2020-2021 Budget, the Halton District School Board (HDSB) invited parent(s)/guardian(s), students, staff and community members to provide input into the budget development process. An online survey, accessible using a computer, tablet or mobile device, was made available to the public from February 10 to March 1, 2020. The survey was promoted via the HDSB website, Facebook, Twitter and through a media release. An email was also sent to all HDSB parents/guardians and staff to notify them of the opportunity to provide feedback. Student Trustees shared the survey invitation with the Student Senate, who communicated it to their peers.

Participants were advised to review the Board's current Multi-Year Plan (2016-2020), Special Education Plan, Operational Plan and current year Operating and Capital Budget before completing the survey.

Although the survey was anonymous, participants were asked to identify the group in which they identified as (i.e., student, staff, parents/guardians, community member, community partner/agency, other). Additionally, respondents were asked to identify the areas the board might prioritize through budgetary investment (invest) or create budgetary efficiencies (savings), and to provide an explanation for their feedback.

As displayed in Table 1, the survey gathered a total of 1490 responses; 1217 (82%) from parents/guardians, 113 (8%) from students, 119 (8%) from Staffs, 18 (1%) from community members, 1 (<1%) from community agencies/partners and 5 (<1%) from stakeholders who described themselves as grandparent(s), previous student(s), neighbour(s) and Trustees. 17 (1%) respondents did not indicate which group they belonged to. Due to rounding, the values presented may not add up to 100%.

Table 1. Number of surveys received by respondent group.

<b>Respondent Group</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Parent/Guardian	1217	82
Student	113	8
Staff	119	8
Community Member	18	1
Community Agency/Partner	1	<1
Other		<1
No Group Indicated		1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1490</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents' feedback was analyzed for areas of similarities and discrepancies. The information was then organized within smaller and larger themes or categories. A total of 2353 comments were identified as relating directly to the budget consultation process. These comments were grouped according to similarities and differences within six broad themes.

## Summary of Findings

The following provides a summary of respondents' feedback. As respondents were asked to comment on priority areas of further financial investment and suggest areas of budgetary savings, the feedback is organized as 'Save' or 'Invest' for each specific priority area.

### INVEST

#### Administration: Building & Facilities

- Respondents identified a large number of areas requiring additional investment, including:
  - repair and maintenance of Board facilities, with particular attention to schools
  - common areas and structures within schools (e.g., cafeterias, washrooms, floors, ceilings, labs, etc.)
  - Kindergarten and playground areas, updated furniture and overall school aesthetics
  - update facilities to support safe and comfortable learning environments (e.g., heating and cooling systems, safe drinking water, safe and healthy learning environments, etc.)
  - new schools/additions to support overpopulated schools (e.g., replace portables with additional schools and/or classrooms)
  - adopt practices to reduce environmental impact

#### Administration: Professional Development

- Staff Professional Development was identified, primarily by parent(s)/guardian(s) as an area needing further financial investment. Respondents identified a wide-range of topics, but shared a similar expectation that investing in educators' knowledge and skill-sets will improve their children's education experience and achievement. Areas of training included:
  - instruction and Learning Environment
  - Special Education
  - Mental Health
  - Software and Technology
  - strategies to identify and eliminate the inequities and racism
  - strategies to create inclusive and equity-oriented environments

#### Administration: Staffing

- Respondents indicated the need to hire additional personnel including:
  - Educational/Teaching Assistants
  - English as Second Language teachers
  - Applied Behavioural Analysis facilitators
  - Early Childhood Educators
  - Child and Youth Counsellors
  - Guidance Counsellors
  - Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs)
  - Speech and Language Pathologists
  - Occupational Therapists (OTs)

#### Programs: Special Education

- Special Education received a significant amount of comments as its own category. Respondents shared the desire to see increased allocation of funds by ways of hiring additional classrooms and specialized supports to ensure their children's needs are met as best as possible.

#### Programs: Priority Programs

- Additional priority programs for stakeholders include:
  - Full Day Kindergarten
  - e-Learning
  - International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP)
  - French Immersion
  - English as Second Language (ESL)
  - Outdoor Education

#### Programs: Curricular/Extra Curricular

- Respondents suggest investing in the following curricular and extra curricular areas for students' future success:
  - STEM/STE(A)M [Science, Technology, Engineering, (Arts), Math]
  - Math
  - Literacy
  - the Arts
  - elective courses
  - courses that build life skills
  - Indigenous Education
  - extra curriculars (clubs, sports, etc.)

#### Resources: General Resources

- Additional areas of investment included general resources, specifically:
  - Classroom materials/supplies
  - Instructional materials including curricular resources and materials that support differentiated and individualized learning
  - Print text books and resource materials to compliment digital resources
  - Equipment for physical education
  - Investing in library services, materials and full-time librarian positions

## Resources: Technology

- With regard to technology, areas of investment include:
  - general technology tools such as computers, laptops, tablets
  - modernized and updated tools
  - wi-fi upgrades

## Resources: Mental Health & Well-Being

- Respondents expressed wanting to have increased:
  - access to professionals with expertise in providing mental health supports, including social workers, psychologists and therapists across all sites
  - resource materials
  - learning materials and professional learning to increase the safety and inclusivity of all HDSB's buildings, for all stakeholders.

## **SAVE**

### Administration: Operations

- From an operational perspective, respondents highlighted several areas of possible budgetary savings, including:
  - streamline and automate processes
  - adopt practices to reduce the environmental impact
  - reduce transportation costs (e.g., school boundaries, increases to walking distances)
  - reduce salary, hourly wages (where applicable), benefits for board-level staff and redirect funds to programs and/or to hire more educators
  - reduce system-level staff
  - outsource maintenance work to obtain competitive rate.