



May 31, 2024

A message from the Trustees of the Halton District School Board

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As Trustees of the Halton District School Board (HDSB) we would like to share our concerns about how the Ontario Ministry of Education funds public education, and ask for your support in advocating for fair and equitable funding.

Education funding has been an issue for a number of years, with the HDSB ranking among the three lowest-funded school boards in Ontario for more than a decade. Across the province, funding has not kept up with the cost of providing education, with funding per student [falling by \\$1,500](#) in inflation-adjusted terms since 2018. The main areas of education funding that are causing pressures include underfunded supply staffing costs, unfunded enhanced statutory benefits (for CPP/EI), as well as the funding allocations outside of compensation that are not keeping up with inflation and market pressures.

Because of these funding pressures, the HDSB is projected to be in a deficit position of almost \$8 million this year and is required by regulation to eliminate that deficit in the next school year. Without sufficient increases to education funding, we will have to reduce our supports for students this fall.

A reduction of this scale will involve cuts across the entire system. The draft budget that staff have presented to Trustees involves increased class sizes for special education and kindergarten, reduced supports for literacy, fewer classes in secondary schools, reductions in facilities maintenance and other areas, including supports for mental health and well-being, which will adversely affect students. Funding for transportation has not kept up with costs and Trustees are concerned this could lead to some programs becoming unsustainable and result in

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inequitable access to programs throughout the region.

Furthermore, funding for staff, which is provided by the province, has not been adjusted to cover the extra \$6 million in costs associated with the enhancements to CPP and EI. The funding provided for supply teachers is \$10 million less than actual costs. If the province covered these two items, our school board could be making investments instead of making cuts.

Trustees are deeply concerned with their ability to approve a balanced budget given the current education funding limitations and that the budget will not adequately support programs and services to serve the diverse needs of our students and school communities. Many students fell behind during the COVID-19 pandemic and now is the time to help them catch up by making investments in classrooms, targeted supports and mental health and well-being. This is not the time to be taking resources away from students.

To advocate for Fair Funding, Trustees have been raising concerns about education funding with the Government of Ontario and local Members of Provincial Parliament.

We hope that you, as a key partner in public education, will join the HDSB Trustees in advocating for an improved funding formula.

To learn more, visit the HDSB Trustees' [Fair Funding webpage](#) and tune into the [June 5 Board meeting](#) where the draft budget will be discussed. The Fair Funding webpage contains information about how the HDSB is funded, an infographic which highlights budget concerns, proposed budget changes for the upcoming school year and suggestions for how to advocate about your concerns with education funding in Halton.

We welcome and appreciate your help and support as we advocate for the best possible education for all students. Please reach out if you have any questions or recommendations.

Sincerely,

Amy Collard, Chair of the Halton District School Board

On behalf of the Fair Funding committee:

Kelly Amos, Trustee Oakville Wards 5 & 7

Robbie Brydon, Trustee Burlington Wards 1 & 2

Joanna Oliver, Vice-Chair, Trustee Oakville Ward 4