

Halton District School Board

Report Number: 21053

Date: March 30, 2021

FOR INFORMATION

TO: The Chair and Members of the Halton District School Board

FROM: R. Negoi, Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer
S. Miller, Director of Education

RE: **2021-2022 Budget Survey Stakeholder Input Results**

Background:

The Ministry has indicated that the funding for next year is expected to remain status quo within the Grants for Student Needs (GSN). Additional funding provided in 2020/2021 as one time grants to support schools during the COVID pandemic should not be expected to continue. The Ministry will provide updates as to whether there will be additional support once more information is available from public health. It is expected that the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) will be released by mid April, providing more details to school boards.

In preparation for the 2021/2022 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 12 to March 5, 2021. The survey was promoted via the HDSB website, Facebook, Instagram, 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 budget survey link was also shared with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) members.

The consultation garnered a total of **1791** responses from the following groups:

Respondent Group	Count	Percentage
Parent/Guardian	1365	69
Student	336	17
Staff	154	8
Community Member	103	5
Community Agency/Partner	11	<1
Other	7	<1
Total	1976*	100

*The total number of respondents exceeds the total number of responses as individuals could be part of multiple groups (e.g., parent/guardian and staff).

Respondents were asked to comment on the investments the board should make pertaining to the strategic priorities identified in the 2020-2024 Multi-Year Plan, and to identify additional priority areas.

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Executive Summary

An executive summary of the survey findings is presented herein. Respondents' comments were thematically analysed for similarities and differences. Four themes emerged consistently across the five Strategic Priority Areas. These themes are:

1. Curriculum & Instruction,
2. Practices & Processes,
3. Resource Allocation and
4. Initiatives.

The findings are listed below, grouped by theme. For a detailed summary of respondents' feedback, by Strategic Priority Area, please refer to [Appendix A](#).

Theme 1: Curriculum & Instruction

Respondents indicated the following areas of investment with regard to Curriculum & Instruction:

- Build a diverse collection of resources including those by Indigenous authors, female authors, resources in various languages and topics that support Equity and Inclusion
- Provide courses that enhance students' essential life skills (e.g., emotional resilience, financial and digital literacy, etc.)
- Prioritize math and literacy to improve overall scores
- Invest in the arts (e.g., music, visual arts and theatre)
- Enhance the focus on academic achievement in secondary schools to prepare students for the larger circle of competition in post-secondary education

Theme 2: Practices & Processes

Respondents indicated the need for new and/or changes to existing practices and processes. These included, implementing/revising processes to:

- Diversify school staff in order to increase cultural and racial representation within the system, to best support students of various identities
- Enhance protocols to ensure all schools provide:
 - Stricter punishment for racist comments (e.g., suspension)
 - Anti-bullying initiatives and support for those who are bullied
 - Food programs (e.g., breakfast club, school lunches)
 - Safe space for students to discuss their concerns and offer anonymous incident reporting and support (e.g., virtual counselling)
 - Accessible buildings (e.g., ramps, working automatic doors)
- Enhance processes to ensure board-wide provision of equal opportunities, equal access to resources and fair treatment of all students from all learning types and identities
- Provide support to students for the transition to in-person learning (post COVID) and to recognize learning gaps and support those who fell behind
- Create more programs including volunteer and co-op opportunities, after school programs and STEM programs

Theme 3: Resources

Respondents shared the following recommendations on specific resource allocation for the various priority areas:

- Invest in support staff (e.g., SERTs, EAs, Tutors), mental health professionals (e.g., psychologists, counsellors, social workers) and overall support for students' learning and emotional needs
- Offer Professional Development courses and programs for educators and students about diversity, anti-racisms and creating a sense of community
- Provide technical course to increase educator digital capacity
- Increase 'specialty' spaces within schools (e.g., calm rooms, prayer rooms) and increase green spaces (e.g., local/community gardens, green space, sitting rocks, tree planting)

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- Invest in physical resources (e.g., textbooks, science equipment, books, agendas) as opposed to digital copies, and provide more bike racks and garbage bins outside
- Provide additional educational resources that support online learning

Theme 4: Initiatives

Respondents indicated several initiatives that the board could invest in to support the implementation of the strategic priority areas. These included:

- Investing in events that encourage feelings of acceptance and inclusion among all students (e.g., multicultural events, field trips to places of worship)
- Invest in speakers:
 - from Indigenous communities to share their personal stories and perspectives on current and historical events that are beyond textbook knowledge
 - and diverse communities (i.e. women in trades, LGBTQ2S+, racialized communities, etc.)
- Establish student-led initiatives that affirm and celebrate various cultures and religions
- Invest in programs, speakers, and tools that highlight mental health and well-being
- Provide broad hands on experiences outside the classroom through field trips to museums, science centres etc.
- Introduce students to various careers through speakers of different professional backgrounds (e.g., scientists, movie makers, sales, etc.)
- Increase initiatives to build family-school relationships.

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. Topics identified within the budget survey will inform the budget process for 2021/2022. 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 27 and the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of June 1st, 2021. A draft budget will be presented at the May Committee of the Whole meeting (times are tentatively scheduled for May 12 or May 26, depending on the release of the GSN), with a budget report provided at the June 2nd, 2021 Board meeting for information and at the June 16, 2021 Board meeting for Trustee approval.

Respectfully submitted,

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*S. Miller,
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