

Budget Planning - March 20 Committee of the Whole

2024-2025 Proposed Savings and Efficiencies - Additional Information

The HDSB has budgeted for a \$7.7M deficit in the current year and is required by regulation to eliminate this deficit next school year (2024-2025). Staff have prepared a draft proposal of savings and efficiencies for the 2024-2025 school year. This was presented at the March 20, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting to the Board of Trustees. **This list is an initial draft and will evolve as new information becomes available and as feedback from key parties is reviewed and considered.**

The proposed savings and efficiencies identified so far focus on minimizing the impact to student learning and well-being, while achieving the HDSB’s financial goals. This list ensures compliance with Ministry regulations and helps the HDSB prepare for a sustainable future.

Based on information currently available, the HDSB has identified net budget reductions totalling approximately \$10.3M, to address the following:

- Regulatory requirement to eliminate the current year structural deficit of \$7.7M
- Expected revenue loss of \$1.8M due to a forecasted decline in student enrolment across the region and interest rate reduction
- Annual year-end savings which have been on average \$2M
- Proposed budget additions of \$2.8M (include items on slide 11 and the proposed retention of 24 educational assistants for which funding continuation is not confirmed)

The initial draft of proposed savings and efficiencies include:

#	Budget Area	Proposed Savings and Efficiencies	Staffing FTE	Savings Amount
1	Central/Program	Central teaching supports, e-learning and SHIFT coaches	19.00	\$ 2,090,000
2	Elementary	FDK Staffing re-sizing (Elementary teachers and Early Childhood Educators (ECE))	16.00	\$ 1,155,000
3	Secondary	Secondary class re-sizing	8.00	\$ 880,000
		LEAP Program closure	2.50	\$ 275,000
4	Special Education	Self-contained class demand, viability and re-sizing	27.33	\$ 3,008,000
		Structured Reading Instructional Resource Teachers	8.00	\$ 880,000
		Behaviour Resource Class Closures	3.00	\$ 330,000
5	Student Mental Health &	Child Youth Counsellors	2.00	\$ 170,000
		Mental Health Strategy (funded by reserves in 2023/24)		\$ 75,000

	Well-Being			
6	Other Areas	School admin support	8.00	\$ 480,000
		Right To Read resources (one-time addition in 2023-2024)		\$ 397,000
		Other one-time budgets or roll-forwards		\$ 347,000
		Facilities Savings		\$ 105,000
		Welcome Centre - 0.5 assessor for newcomer students and contractual services	0.50	\$ 80,000
		TOTAL REDUCTIONS	94.33	\$10,272,000
		<i>Staff reductions are expected to be achieved through attrition.</i>		

Budget Area #1: Central Teaching Supports

The HDSB currently employs 109 central teaching staff across School Programs, Special Education, Student Mental Health and Well-Being, Safe Schools, Equity and Inclusion and Indigenous Education departments. Over the past couple of years, additional funding has been provided to complement these resources through Priorities and Partnership Funds (PPFs) and Support for Students Funds (SSFs). For the current year these include 19 Instructional Resource Teachers focused on literacy and early reading for the elementary panel. An additional 36 positions for the both elementary and secondary panels, focused on math, literacy, destreaming and transitions are still to be confirmed.

Proposed reductions for this group include 15 Learning Resource Teachers (elementary), two e-learning positions (secondary) and two SHIFT coaches (Kindergarten - Grade 12). The reduction of Learning Resource Teachers will be addressed by the continuation of PPF funding for 18 Instructional Resource Teachers who will continue to work with elementary students. This funding has been confirmed for two more years until 2026.

The reduction to e-learning positions is addressed by the addition of an Instructional Program Lead to oversee and support all schools offering e-learning.

SHIFT coaches have worked with elementary and secondary schools, building capacity around innovation, creativity and continued improvement to learning delivery. Using their training, classroom staff will continue this work at the school level, while Instructional Program Leads within School Programs will continue to support innovation across all subject disciplines.

Budget Area #2: Elementary Program

The HDSB has experienced steady growth over the past 15 years. Since the onset of the pandemic, enrolment has stabilized and began to decline as immigration was limited, development has been delayed and many families with school-aged children have been moving outside of urban areas. During a period of continuous growth, HDSB had the resources and flexibility to offer lower class sizes than provincially mandated (and funded), in particular in the Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) program. Lower class sizes made sense during a period of steady growth, as additional students would enter our system and be placed within existing classes, minimizing disruption to the school class structure. We have now seen a decline in elementary students, in particular in the entry grades, and expect

this to continue into next year. As a result, the HDSB will staff its FDK program more efficiently, building classes to an average of approximately 26, as provincially funded, instead of the current average of 23 to 24 students.

Budget Area #3: Secondary program

The HDSB will achieve efficiencies in staffing its secondary program by reducing the allocated number of sections. The review of the secondary staffing process has resulted in the identification of some duplication of resources. The reduction of eight staff results in an overall reduction of 48 sections (classes) across all secondary schools. Students will continue to be offered the same courses and programs, however a more efficient planning process will be required and some sections may only be offered one semester as opposed to both.

LEAP Program

The LEAP Program has been available to select Grade 8 students for many years. The program aims to ease the transition to secondary school, improve confidence, build literacy and numeracy skills and develop academic and social skills through project-based learning. Under the LEAP program, staff identified students going into Grade 8, who were likely to go into locally developed streams. In alignment with the expectation that all students enter destreaming in Grade 9, students will continue to be served by the staff at their elementary school with whom they have existing relationships.

Budget Area #4: Special Education program

The HDSB recognizes the importance of supporting students with special education needs in regular and self-contained classrooms. A comprehensive review of special education programs is ongoing, looking at program viability, class size, demand and locations. The focus remains on maintaining and/or improving our service model for students while finding efficiencies/savings within our model.

- Community Pathway Program (CPP): The class size ratio has been adjusted to 1:12 (Ministry cap is 1:16); it was previously staffed at 1:10 for some classes and 1:12 for others. By staffing all classes at 1:12, administrators can build some classes smaller and others larger based on the profiles of the students and the level of support staff assigned to the program. This is a reduction of eight full-time equivalent (FTE) across seven sites.
- Learning Disability: The class size has been adjusted to 1:10 (Ministry cap is 1:16); it was previously staffed at 1:8. There is a decrease in students seeking a self-contained placement which is believed to be related to the rollout of Wilson resources for Reading Intervention programs and the Multi-Tiers System of Support in every school. The change in class size, coupled with fewer students seeking placement, has resulted in the closing 12 classes. This is a reduction of 12 FTEs plus planning time.

- Behaviour Resource Class (BRC): The HDSB is closing three classes and moving to in-school support/coaching for schools. This is a reduction of three FTEs plus planning time. The addition of a Specialized Behaviour Support Worker to the team (currently have eight) will support the in-school work.
- Gifted: The HDSB is closing two Junior - Intermediate classes in Halton Hills. These have been decreasing in enrollment over the years (currently with seven students in one class and eight in the other - the Ministry cap is 25). With only a potential of three students in Halton Hills meeting the criteria this year, it really spoke to this program no longer being viable. Students have been offered a spot in the self-contained Milton program or to remain at their current school and be clustered together in the regular class. This results in a reduction of two FTEs plus planning time.
- Structured Reading Instructional Resource Teachers (IRTs): The HDSB is closing this team and shifting our approach. Rather than providing direct services to students, we have provided training and resources to schools so Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) have the ability to support their own students. This is a reduction of eight FTEs and the addition of one Instructional Program Lead and three coaches to continue to support the learning, build fidelity and deepen implementation in all schools, resulting in a reduction of four FTEs.
- The HDSB is maintaining the number of Educational Assistants and Student Supervisors (lunchtime supervisors for students with special education needs), as feedback from administrators confirms this role is a key resource and should be prioritized when considering reductions. As a result, and without confirmation that funding will continue for 24 Educational Assistant positions through the Supports for Students Funds, there have been savings identified to allow for these positions to continue.

Budget Area #5: Student Mental Health and Well-Being

Student mental health and well-being counselling is supported by social workers at both elementary and secondary schools. Child and youth counselors provide psychoeducational support for students in elementary schools. There has been an increasing need for more social worker support at elementary schools. To keep up with this demand for social worker support, the HDSB is proposing to reduce two child and youth counsellor positions and add one social worker.

Budget Area #6: Other

A proposed reduction of school administrative and clerical positions has been identified. School allocations are currently being finalized to confirm what positions these will be, and additional information will be provided once this is complete. The Supports for Student Funds funding, which has typically supported this employee group, is no longer continuing. Other areas identified for efficiencies include budget areas that were one time in nature, or areas where resources could be reallocated.