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CHAIRPERSON: Barbara Holland  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: Paul A. Picard

**Meeting Date:**  
January 28, 2014

## BOARD REPORT

**Public**  **In-Camera**

**PRESENTED FOR:** Information  Approval

**PRESENTED BY:** Senior Administration

**SUBMITTED BY:** Paul A. Picard, Director of Education  
Mario Iatonna, Executive Superintendent of Corporate Services

**SUBJECT:** **2014-15 BUDGET SCHEDULE**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the report on the 2014-15 Budget Schedule be received as information.**

### SYNOPSIS:

This report has been prepared to provide information on the proposed 2014-15 budget development process.

### BACKGROUND COMMENTS:

The fiscal year for all school boards in Ontario is in alignment with the school year and runs from September 1 to August 31. The Ministry of Education requires school boards to approve a balanced budget for the upcoming fiscal year before the end of June of the current year.

In order to meet this timeline and to provide an orderly process for the preparation of the 2014-15 Budget, a proposed schedule has been developed that provides opportunity to communicate budget information to the community and solicit input from all stakeholders.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Not applicable.

### TIMELINES:

The budget development process begins early in January and it is expected the final 2014-15 Draft Budget will be considered for approval at the June 23, 2014 Public Board meeting.

Key budget development activities and timelines are noted in the attached Appendix A.

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix A: WECDSB 2014-15 Budget Process

**REPORT REVIEWED BY:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:	Review Date:	January 14, 2014
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EXECUTIVE SUPERINTENDENT:	Approval Date:	January 14, 2014
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION:	Approval Date:	January 14, 2014

**APPENDIX A****WECDSD 2014-15 Budget Process**

This document is meant to outline the annual budget process, along with general timelines for development of the operating and capital budgets.

**Summary: Key Budget Stages and Activities**

<b>Step</b>	<b>Key Budget Stage</b>	<b>Key Budget Activity</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Responsible for Completion</b>	<b>Approximate Date</b>
1	Plan	Proposed budget timelines developed by Finance and communicated to all departments.	(1) Budget Timeline (2) Presentation at a Public Board Meeting	Finance	(1) Jan 6 - 10 (2) Jan 28
2	Forecast	Enrolment forecast prepared by Human Resources and signed off by Executive Council. Forecast of staffing begins.	(1) Enrolment Forecast (2) Enrolment Sign-Off	(1) Human Resources (2) Executive Council	(1) Jan 13 – Feb 14 (5 weeks) (2) Feb 18
3	Forecast	Preliminary funding forecast prepared by Finance. Communication of anticipated budget challenges based on forecast.	(1) Preliminary Funding Forecast (2) Presentation at a Public Board Meeting	Finance	(1) Feb 17 – Feb 27 (8 days) (2) Mar 25
4	Budget	Allocation of budget envelopes (salaries/benefits, departments, schools) prepared by Finance.	Preliminary Funding Forecast broken out by envelope with explanations	Finance	Feb 28
5	Budget	Preparation of departmental budgets, central school budget allocations and salary and benefits budget development.	(1) Departmental & School Budgets (2) Preliminary Staff Allocation Forecast (3) Salary & Benefits Budget	(1) All Operating Departments (2) Human Resources (3) Finance	(1) Mar 3 – 14 (2 weeks) (2) Mar 14 (3) Mar 17 – 21 (1 week)
6	Budget	Budget consolidation prepared by Finance.	Consolidated Draft Budget	Finance	Mar 24 – Mar 28



Step	Key Budget Stage	Key Budget Activity	Deliverable(s)	Responsible for Completion	Approximate Date
7	Revise	Update report and draft budget tabled with Trustees, including potential alternative program delivery options and/or program reductions. EFIS <sup>1</sup> is populated and updated to reflect GSN <sup>2</sup> announcements.	(1) Draft Budget with pressures and reduction options (2) Presentation at a Public Board Meeting	Finance	(1) Mar 31 – Apr 17 (2) Apr 22
8	Revise	Trustees review phase including preparation of a short-list of budget prioritization alternatives for community input.	Short-list of budget prioritization alternatives to community	Trustees	Apr 22 – May 2 (2 weeks)
9	Revise	Community consultation period.	Feedback	Community and Finance	May 5 – 16 (2 weeks)
10	Revise	Final draft budget documents revised and tabled. EFIS is updated and refined.	(1) Updated budget documents (2) Draft Final Budget tabled with Trustees (3) Report & Presentation at a Public Board Meeting	Finance	(1) May 20 – 26 (1 week) (2) May 27 (3) May 27
11	Approve	Final Board deliberations and public consultation.	(1) Budget deliberations & public consultation (2) Approved Budget	(1) Trustees and Community (2) Trustees	(1) May 27 – Jun 23 (4 weeks) (2) Jun 23
12	Approve	Final Board approved budget submitted to Ministry of Education through EFIS.	Submitted Budget	Finance	June 27

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup>EFIS = Education Finance Information System<sup>2</sup>GSN = Grants for Student Needs



## **Operating Budget Process**

### **Step 1: Proposed budget timelines developed by Finance and communicated to all departments.**

This report is meant to outline the proposed annual budget process for Trustees and all Board budget owners, along with timelines for development of the Operating and Capital Budgets.

Given the Board's budget pressures and declining enrolment, identification of discretionary spending areas is critical to avoid future budget deficits. During the 2012-13 budget development process, Administration categorized budget items on a line-by-line basis as either Discretionary, Discretionary-Traditional, Non-Discretionary and Revenue Neutral. This was done to inform Trustees in their decision making and improve efficiency in the budget development process. Following the classification of budget items, the budget owners then prioritized accounts as a starting point for future budget discussion. This classification and prioritization of accounts conducted in 2012-13 will continue to be relied upon during the 2014-15 budget development process.

### **Step 2: Enrolment forecast prepared by Human Resources and signed off by Executive Council. Forecast of staffing begins.**

Projected enrolment for the following year is a critical point in the budget process. The Human Resources Department is responsible for establishing the following year's enrolment projections based on historical data, updated for current developments. Student Achievement K-12 will be consulted on enrolment projections and will support Human Resources by providing input on elementary school enrolment figures. These projections are conservative and will be reviewed with and approved by Executive Council before departmental funding allocation and staff forecasts can be prepared. Once approved by Executive Council, the enrolment forecast will be provided to Finance and Human Resources will begin development of the staffing forecast.

### **Step 3: Preliminary funding forecast prepared by Finance and communication of anticipated budget challenges.**

Finance will prepare a Preliminary Funding Forecast based on guidance from Ministry B Memos and the Enrolment Forecast. A comparison of the Funding Forecast to the prior year's budget will inform the anticipated Budget challenges for the Board during the coming academic year. When the final Grants for Student Needs (GSN) announcement is made in late March (during Step 5), Finance will revise the funding forecast and budget allocations and communicate any changes to impacted departments.

The report prepared at this stage will outline high level budget pressures and challenges that are expected in the upcoming fiscal year.

### **Step 4: Allocation of budget envelopes (salaries/benefits, departments, schools) prepared by Finance.**

Finance will allocate Budget envelopes for salaries/benefits, departments and schools based on the Preliminary Funding Forecast. Included in this allocation will be a breakdown of how allocation amounts were determined.



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**Step 5: Preparation of departmental budgets, central school budget allocations and salary and benefits budget development.**

Once allocations have been communicated by Finance in early March, staff begins to prepare departmental budgets and central school budget allocations.

During this phase a preliminary staffing plan for all categories of employees is prepared. The Business Department is responsible for creating the salaries and benefits budgets while Human Resources is responsible for the staff allocation plan. When the staff allocation plan is complete, Finance will then consult with Human Resources to prepare the associated salary budget. Upon substantial completion of the staffing complement and salaries budget, Business (Payroll Division) will prepare the benefits budget.

Throughout the Budget Development process, Executive Council will be consulted to provide input into the individual budgets.

It is proposed annually that Administration will deliver a balanced budget in compliance with the Education Act, developed based on the following principles:

1. Budget Increase Categories
  - A. Trustee Approved Annualizations
  - B. Provincially Negotiated Salary & Wage Increases
  - C. Contractual Obligations
  - D. Legislated Obligations
  - E. Significant Inflationary Pressures
  - F. 0.5% Contingency Reserve

The school board is facing fiscal pressures due to declining enrolment and a corresponding reduced grant revenue. Additionally, many departments have legislative or other restrictions that inhibit achievement of a balanced budget with the same level of program delivery and staffing levels as experienced previously. As a result, Administration will develop potential options for Trustee consideration should certain recommendations not be acceptable. The reduction options prepared will exceed the amount required to balance the budget in order to allow some level of flexibility. Budget reduction options will be developed as follows:

2. Budget Reduction Categories
  - G. Line-by-Line Reductions
  - H. Program/Service Level Reductions (Minimal Impact)
  - I. Program/Service Level Reductions (Major Impact)
  - J. Program/Service Level Reductions (Complete Elimination)

The goal is to provide Trustees with the flexibility to achieve a balanced budget in compliance with the Education Act, while maintaining the system priorities of Student Achievement and Faith Development.



**Step 6: Budget consolidation and listing of prioritization alternatives prepared by Finance.**

After receiving individual departmental Budgets and completing the salary and benefits budget, Finance will consolidate all Budgets and prepare the Draft Budget.

**Step 7: Update report and draft budget tabled with Trustees, including potential alternative program delivery options and/or program reductions. EFIS is populated and updated to reflect the GSN announcements.**

The draft budget and accompanying report prepared at this stage will outline and quantify any additional budget issues identified for the upcoming fiscal year. Any budget issues identified during the Administrative budget development phase will also be presented.

Trustees will receive potential budget options to consider should certain recommendations not be acceptable. These options will allow Trustees flexibility in achieving a final budget which is consistent with the Board's strategic priorities.

**Step 8: Trustee review phase including preparation of a short-list of budget prioritization alternatives for community input.**

During an approximate two week period, Trustees will review the budget issues and prioritization alternatives. They will be asked to indicate which issues they are prepared to recommend, which will then be tabled with the public as a short-list of alternatives. Trustee direction as to services to cut to achieve a balanced budget (if applicable) is sought at this time, based on the variety of reduction options identified.

**Step 9: Community consultation period.**

Trustees will provide the public with the short-list of prioritization alternatives developed in Step 8 for public consultation. Delegates will be able to attend Public Board Meetings to provide input to Trustees and Administration (other than for appropriate in-camera matters).

**Step 10: Final draft budget documents revised and tabled. EFIS is updated and refined.**

Once the Trustees and the public have reviewed the issues and made their recommendations, Finance will update the budget documents to include the recommendation for the tabling of the budget. The final draft budget will be tabled for four weeks for the general public, various stakeholders and the Board of Trustees.

**Step 11: Final Board deliberations and public consultation.**

The proposed timelines allow for Trustee budget deliberations and public consultation to occur at the end of May, allowing time for any subsequent revisions required based on discussions. Final budget deliberations will include early public input so that Trustees may make timely decisions regarding final budget revisions and approval.

**Step 12: Final Board Approved Budget submitted to Ministry of Education through EFIS.**

EFIS will be finalized and submitted to the Ministry of Education by the anticipated deadline of June 27, 2014.



### **Capital Budget Process**

The Capital Budget will be prepared by Finance through consultation with Facilities and Information Technology (I.T.). Facilities and I.T. will determine the Board's future capital needs. These will inform the Capital Budget Development for the coming school year.

It is important to note that there is typically very little additional funding available for the annual capital budgets and that the projects in the Capital Plan must remain in balance to the projected funding.

Requested projects from departments and schools will need to be prioritized along with a detailed project description with the requested budget. Administration will review the requests and recommendations will be put forward to balance the projects to available funding. The recommendations will be based on departmental priorities taking into account asset management principles, previous funding allocations, and Board priorities.

There will be a portion of the funding for each year of the capital budget that is left unallocated to allow for some level of flexibility in future years to address changing priorities, unanticipated projects and/or changes to currently approved capital projects.

### **Unsupported Debt Reduction**

The Debt Reduction Plan will be updated and included in the annual budget documents. The revised plan will outline the projected debt over the next 5 years, along with how the debt payments will be funded.

### **Staff Budget Workgroup**

To better facilitate the Budget process and improve communication between departments, Administration has established a Staff Budget Workgroup comprised of Management representatives from each department. The Staff Budget Workgroup will meet weekly throughout the development cycle to discuss progress for each department and address any issues on a timely basis. This multidisciplinary team will allow the Board to take a holistic view to budget development and consider the unique needs and competencies of each department.

### **Competing Priorities**

The budget schedule as identified above is aggressive. It is important to note that in each year, there are other significant initiatives currently underway at the Board that may impact the timelines. *The budget timelines are very tight and any changes or delays that impact the critical path of the process will result in the final budget date being postponed (resulting in significant financial penalties imposed by the Ministry of Education), or will significantly compromise the integrity of the steps inherent in the process.*





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## Budget Issues Categories & Definitions

### Increase Categories

**A. Annualizations (of previous Trustee Decision)**

Increases to the operating budget resulting from service level changes that have been quantified and approved by Trustees outside of the normal annual budget process which have an impact on future year's operating budgets and are supported by a Board Resolution.

**B. Provincially Negotiated Salary & Wage Increases**

Increases to the operating budget associated with salaries and wages stipulated within collective agreements.

**C. Contractual Obligations**

Increases to the operating budget that have been quantified and approved within a written contract / agreement, and include escalation clauses requiring additional funding. Copies of contract / agreement required.

**D. Legislated Obligations**

Increases to the operating budget in which there is no discretion as the Board is obligated through Federal / Provincial legislation to provide the service/program at a prescribed level as set out in the legislation.

**E. Significant Inflationary Pressures**

Increases to the operating budget resulting from corporately established levels and rates of inflation on specified expenditure line items. Typical items in this category include Insurance, Fuel and Utilities.

### Reduction Categories

**F. Line-By-Line Reductions**

Reductions to the operating budget resulting from a line-by-line review of all departmental accounts in an effort to identify internal savings and efficiencies.

**G. Service Level Reductions (Minimal Impact)**

Reductions to the operating budget resulting in little or no impact on the department's existing level of program/service delivery as approved by Trustees.

**H. Service Level Reductions (Major Impact)**

Reductions to the operating budget resulting in significant changes to the department's existing level of program/service delivery as approved by Trustees.

**I. Service Level Reductions (Complete Elimination)**

Reductions to the operating budget resulting in a complete elimination of an existing program/service provided by the department as approved by Trustees.