

## **School District 68 News Release – March 30, 2005**

Wednesday night, School District 68 senior managers presented a 2005-06 draft budget to the Business Committee that focuses on several key strategies designed to support the district's goal to improve student achievement and to provide safe and caring learning environments for students.

District managers designed the draft budget after consultations with representatives of parents, teachers, support staff and principals. The draft will be discussed by the Business Committee, which includes stakeholder representatives, before being finalized by the Board of Trustees in mid-April.

Superintendent Rick Borelli said that the budget is good news for the school district, after a number of years of cutbacks. "Next year, the Board will be able to provide increased support in priority areas," he said. "In designing the draft budget, the goal of senior managers was to focus on the areas that are the most critical to improving student achievement, while providing necessary leadership and infrastructure."

Key strategies in the budget are:

- A commitment to the district's performance plan
- Decreasing class size in grades 4-12 and addressing class composition issues
- An increase in school clerical time
- A commitment to expanding the district's funding base
- Increasing the level of maintenance of facilities
- The maintenance of existing funding for vulnerable students

Secretary-Treasurer David Green said that management consulted with all educational partners and listened to their concerns. "As a result, we believe the proposed budget for 2005-06 expresses the collective view of the education community and contains the necessary short-term and long-term strategies to support the district's overall goal of improving student learning."

Mr. Green said that the draft budget for the next school year totals \$110.9 million, compared to \$109.3 million in this year's budget. The district expects to have 14,985 FTE (funded) students next year, compared to 15,201 this year.

The draft budget was developed using a "status quo" budget as a base. The status quo budget outlines what it would cost to operate the district in 2005-06 at the same service levels as in 2004-05, with adjustments for declining enrolment. The status quo budget for 2005-06 totals \$107 million.

Increased funding from the provincial government, however, means that the district can spend \$4.6 million more than the status quo.

Mr. Green said that the increased funding has allowed district managers to propose a budget that contains 54 more positions than are contained in the status quo budget. There are 34 full-time equivalent (FTE) more teaching positions and 20 FTE more support staff positions.

"It is significant that for the first time in a number of years the total number of positions in the district will exceed 1,400 FTE even though our enrolment has declined," Mr. Green said.

Some of the major additions in the draft budget for 2005-06:

- A commitment to the district's performance plan by providing

- an increased number of literacy lead teachers in elementary schools, from 15 to 22 positions of 0.2 FTE each - 1.4 additional teaching FTE
  - an increase in elementary teacher-librarian time to the levels of pre-2001-02, to support schools' literacy programs - an increase of 1.82 FTE
  - inservice related to district and school goals, for teachers and School Planning Councils
- Addressing class size and class composition by:
  - reducing the number of secondary school classes which have more than 32 students with the addition of 15 FTE teaching positions
  - addressing issues of class composition at elementary schools through the increase in learning assistance and elementary counsellor services and the creation of a student assessment and intervention centre, as well as the addition of teaching positions – 15 FTE teaching and support positions
- Programs for students with special needs
  - Continuation of the position of district vice-principal of Student Support Services to lead implementation of the Student Support Services review recommendations
  - Safe Schools Coordinator 0.7 FTE position
  - Additional 0.5 speech pathologist
- Support for school secretaries:
  - An increase in school secretarial time by 3 FTE
  - Release time for secretaries for inservice for the new student information system
  - A district position to support school secretaries dealing with school accounting procedures
- Increasing the district's funding base by providing new types of educational services:
  - Additions to Outreach Program staffing – 3.45 teaching and support FTE
  - District Principal position, along with 1 FTE clerical support
  - Addition of staff in the Brannen Lake Program – 1.4 teaching and support FTE
  - Addition of 0.2 FTE teaching staff in the Learn@Home program
- Increasing the level of maintenance and custodial services for schools:
  - Reduction in the custodian area coverage with the addition of 2 FTE
  - Increase of 1 FTE painting staff
  - Inventory control staffing of 0.7 FTE
  - Increase of 0.5 FTE in maintenance staffing
- Support for technology:
  - replacement of a number of school computer labs
  - a study of the educational effectiveness of elementary computer labs
  - support for the implementation of a new student information system
- Providing educational leadership with the creation of six new elementary vice-principal positions. These positions will help the district provide continuity in educational leadership in the years ahead when a significant number of elementary principals are expected to retire.