



OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Pre-Budget Consultation

Ministry of Finance
Government of Ontario

Third, we need better ways to fund the physical infrastructure of schools. To do this, we believe that it is imperative that the Province “**Redesign Education Development Charge (EDCs)**” to expand the allowable uses of Education Development Charges to include the cost of buildings as they relate to new pupil places. This is a change that could actually help offset the provincial budget in the longer term and would help ensure that school boards are provided with capital funding in a more timely fashion.

We also require “**Improved Capital Planning Processes and Funding**”. At the OCDSB, our Board and staff have undertaken considerable work in the development of a new capital planning process which uses a criteria-based decision making model. However, that process is hampered by the opaque, unpredictable and seemingly ad hoc nature of the provincial capital planning process. The methods used for such planning and prioritization processes are not at all clear to either us or the public. As a result, school boards cannot conduct effective long-term capital planning. Without some indication of funding timing, our communities remain uncertain of when they will see a new school or renovation. We ask that the Ministry introduce an equitable and transparent multi-year capital planning framework which would allow for the prioritization and spending of provincial tax dollars and ensure a fair process that stands up to public scrutiny.

Finally, ask that you to “**Protect Our Capital Investments with Proper Facility Maintenance**”. The Province must allocate sufficient funds to protect its investment in school infrastructure. Schools are complex buildings which include many specialized learning spaces and these must be maintained. A school is an investment in a community and can serve many generations. However, without sufficient funding for facility maintenance, a school can quickly fall into disrepair which adversely affects student learning and student well-being, and it also adversely impacts the community around the school. Across Ontario, our infrastructure is aging and there is a lack of sufficient annual renewal funding to meet the current needs. This is not good long-term investing.

We understand the budgetary pressures you face and the emphasis on deficit reduction. We also understand the importance of making strategic investments in the economic future of Ontario. We note that many of the proposals in this submission come at a zero cost to the Province or are an investment in future savings.

Education is the key to the future success of this Province – please invest wisely.

Jennifer McKenzie
Chair, Board of Trustees

and

Shirley Seward
Vice Chair, Board of Trustees

Increase Childcare Subsidies

For the past four years, the Province has invested heavily in early learning through the Full-Day Kindergarten and Extended Day Programs. This is another area where the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has taken a lead role in the Province. We believe strongly that equitable access to early learning opportunities is critical to the elimination of student achievement gaps, increased employment, reduced poverty and the betterment of society.

The OCDSB has become a leader in the delivery of the Extended Day Program in Ontario. Currently, our district offers Extended Day Programs in 77 sites. As we rolled out Extended Day, we noticed a disturbing trend that the uptake in schools in low socioeconomic areas was much lower than in higher income areas of the city.

We have worked hard to ensure the program is available and either directly offered by the District or in partnership with a third party provider. However, we remain concerned that the current structure of the program is not accessible for families with demonstrated financial need. We are not able to offer unused spaces to families at a reduced cost and the municipal childcare subsidy system does not adequately meet the needs of our communities.

There are opportunities to address the equity gap at zero cost to either the school board or the province that are currently legislatively prohibited from being used.

Furthermore, we believe that the shortage of childcare subsidies in Ontario undermines the commitment of the Extended Day program. Providing Extended Day care in schools largely to those who can afford it serves only to widen the economic gap between rich and poor by giving significant educational and lthe DTdress the v(caldcTdress th0.002t a reduc0.0002

Redesign Education Development Charge (EDCs)

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has a diverse geographic jurisdiction which results in a variety of capital needs in order to serve its students into the future. Parts of our District are experiencing intensive new residential growth which creates the need for the timely provision of new schools and/or permanent additions in order to provide students with basic accommodation within their local communities. There are also a number of mature areas within our District which are currently experiencing a revival in primary-age enrolment due to neighborhood turnover and the impact of local development intensification policies.

Currently, education development charges (EDCs) fund only those costs associated with the acquisition and preparation of land needed for the accommodation of growth-related students. Prior to 1998 and the adoption of Bill 160, the collection of EDCs also funded a portion of capital needs for new schools and additional space for new pupil places.

We reiterate our request that the Province undertake a review of the capital funding formula including an examination of this part of the legislation and consideration of the expansion of the use of EDCs to include the cost of buildings. This is a change that could actually help to offset the provincial budget in the longer term and would help ensure that school boards are provided with capital funding in a timely fashion.

Improved Capital Planning Processes and Funding

Over the past year at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, the Board of Trustees and senior staff have invested many hours in the development of a capital planning

Protect Our Capital Investment with Proper Facility Maintenance

It is equally important that the Province allocate sufficient funds to protect its investment in school infrastructure. The current backlog of renewal projects in our school district is in excess of \$426 million for our permanent learning facilities which does not include administrative and depot sites. Accessibility and program backlog is currently estimated at an additional \$91 million. By 2015 the combined backlog is projected to grow to a total of \$616 million. This rapid rise is due to our aging infrastructure and lack of sufficient annual renewal funding to meet the current needs.

During the Ministry's Good Places to Learn initiative, which ended several years ago, the District was averaging \$35 million a year in renewal projects. Our annual FRP grant

In Summary

We recognize that the provincial government has a multitude of competing needs and reduced revenue. There are many demands on provincial finances. We remind you of the ongoing identification of education as key for a successful economy and a priority for this government.

We agree with the government that public education must continue to be a priority and we would like to see that priority represented in the provincial budget. We remind you that many of the proposals in this submission come at zero cost to the Province or are good investments that save money over the long-term.

Thank you for your time and attention.