

August 23, 2006

## **Each student in Peel 'shortchanged' \$800, says Peel board chair**

*Peel board approves balanced budget, despite \$9.5 million gap in funds for busing*

Trustees of the Peel District School Board approved a budget of \$1.14 billion for the 2006-07 school year. This balanced budget is a 7.7 per cent increase in Ministry of Education funding from last year. However, the board expects that the actual costs of busing students will exceed the grants by \$9.5 million in the coming year.

In addition to the budget risk in transportation and a salary gap of \$10 million, board chair Janet McDougald also highlighted the funding disparity for Peel board students. "Peel—the second largest board in the province, the fastest growing and arguably the most diverse—is now funded at \$7,591 per student," McDougald observed. "Why is that number important? Because other boards in the province are funded at an average of \$8,380—and in terms of per pupil funding, we're very near the bottom of the pack. If you do the math, that's \$789 x 145,000 students—approximately \$114.5 million. A significant amount of money!

"This is simply unfair to the children we serve and the taxpayers of Peel. There's not one logical reason why we're not funded at least at the provincial average. Why aren't we? Well that's a question I urge each of the trustees around this table, and each parent and taxpayer in Peel to ask our MPPs. It is a simple question—is there a reason Peel students receive a below-average level of funding?"

The increase in the board's budget is due mainly to enrolment growth of about three per cent or about 5,000 students. Other new initiatives include the following:

- the opening of four new elementary schools and one new secondary school, along with nine major additions
- expansion of alternative programs to provide a wider range of learning program options
- introduction of literacy coaches
- implementation of the energy management program and the Good Places to Learn renewal initiative
- new budget provision for lunchroom supervisors

For a copy of the Peel board budget, go to [www.peelschools.org](http://www.peelschools.org) or call 905-890-1010 (or 1-800-668-1146) ext. 2012.

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**Note to media:** For the text of Janet McDougald's budget remarks, go to [www.peelschools.org](http://www.peelschools.org) or call 905-890-1010 (or 1-800-668-1146) ext. 2809.