

PDSB sets \$1.979 billion budget for 2021-2022 school year

By Rob Paul

The Peel District School Board (PDSB) approved its 2021-2022 budget at the June 29, Special Meeting of the Board.

The budget for the school year will be \$1.979 billion?the estimated revenue for the PDSB in 2021-2022 is \$1.984 billion

This school year budget is unique in that it's both feeling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic while in the context of assuming things return to some facet of normal by the fall as Ontario's vaccination coverage continues to increase.

The budget also prioritizes inclusion and commitment to all students given recent events across North America.

?This budget supports?and centres?student learning and well-being in the next phases of the pandemic recovery, it continues the ongoing implementation of the Ministerial Directives, it continues the modernization of operations, and?it reflects the Peel District School Board's commitment to student achievement, anti-Black-, African- and Afro-Caribbean-racism, anti-Islamophobia, anti-oppression, equity, and well-being initiatives for staff, students, families and community,? said Supervisor Bruce Rodrigues.

To help with achieving COVID recovery and inclusion goals: PDSB will be adding 26 inclusion coaches; 26 child and youth workers; 75 long-term teaching assistants to support students with special needs; adding resource teachers to assist First Nations, Metis and Inuit students; funding to support Black Student Success Strategy professional learning.

There will be \$4,856,895 going towards indigenous education, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and community partnership support services (a \$1,330,400 increase from the 20-21 budget). This will support the PDSB goal of achieving better inclusivity.

Due to the pandemic, the PDSB has experienced enrolment decreases which has resulted in funding impacts that will be mitigated through temporary grants provided by the Ministry of Education.

?This year,?the Peel District School Board?prioritized the maintenance of services delivered by our frontline staff and supporting our most underserved students in order to maximize the impact of these funds despite budgetary constraints,? said Director of Education Colleen Russell-Rawlins.

To deal with some of the fallout from the pandemic and the potential increased enrolment as the area grows, \$1,500,206 will be put towards planning and accommodation support services. This will be invested in enrolment projections, capacity and space calculations, new school and addition designs, major renovations, and childcare spaces.

The pandemic put the need for increased support services into perspective with the pivot to remote learning and, as a result, the PDSB budget will see an over \$3 million increase in student learning support services in the new budget?\$39,909,850 will go towards this. This investment will support everything from in-classroom learning to extra-curricular activities to athletics to technology.

More than anything, the pandemic put a spotlight on the need for psychological support both in and out of the classroom and that's why the PDSB has \$6,909,529 going towards social and emotional learning and well-being ? nearly \$2 million more than last year.

This will allow for more psychological services, social work services, mental health support, and other services.

A major chunk of the budget will be going towards facilities and environmental support services. The \$146,627,373 invested there will help towards achieving green energy initiatives, renewable energy initiatives, energy efficiency and conservation programs, and environmental compliance and eco schools.

The budget in its entirety can be found at
[peelschools.org/about/reports-plans/budget-financial-statements/Documents/Budget%20Book%202021-22%20Estimates%20FINA
L.pdf](https://peelschools.org/about/reports-plans/budget-financial-statements/Documents/Budget%20Book%202021-22%20Estimates%20FINAL.pdf).