



Media Release

For Immediate Release
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Grand Erie Trustees Approve 2019-20 Budget; Board on Track to Successfully Complete Multi-Year Financial Recovery Plan

Brantford Ont. – Grand Erie District School Board Trustees approved the operating and capital budgets for the 2019-20 school year at tonight’s Regular Board Meeting.

“Every day, in every decision we make, our main focus is our students,” said Board Chair Greg Anderson. “At a challenging and difficult time for all school boards in Ontario, we achieved a balanced budget without having to draw on reserves, we successfully delivered on our promise to complete the financial recovery plan on time, and we kept the indicators of our Multi-Year Plan, *Success for Every Student*, at the forefront of our decision-making process.”

Grand Erie was able to balance its 2019-20 budget despite an overall reduction in funding. The Board is also on track to complete its Ministry-imposed Multi-Year Financial Recovery Plan in August 2019. In achieving both goals, the Board never lost sight of its number one priority: students.

Grand Erie’s total operating budget for 2019-20 is \$321,672,098. This is a decrease of 1.54 per cent or \$5,037,381 from 2018-19. Impacts on Grand Erie’s 2019-20 budget include: The Ministry of Education’s *New Vision for Education*, which features changes to both elementary and secondary class-size averages as well as delays in the announcement of funding initiatives known as the Priorities and Partnerships Fund. Grand Erie is further impacted by declining enrolment and the end of Local Priority Funding, which expires August 31, 2019.

“We’re very proud of the work we’ve done on this budget,” said Anderson. “We’ve all worked together to exercise caution and find solutions. With every difficult decision, we’ve tried to insulate our students from the impacts. We’ve also protected funding and invested in programs and initiatives that directly support our students including those focused on equity and inclusion, well-being, technology, achievement, community and environment.”

Grand Erie’s 2019-20 budget features a significant investment in Special Education, with expenditures that far exceed the revenues the Board receives through funding. The additional \$1.1 million invested by the Board will support the achievement and well-being of Grand Erie students in Special Education.

“As we’ve navigated this year’s budget process, we’ve tried to be as open as we can about our 2019-20 staffing,” said Anderson. “This is a time for transparency. Our students, our staff, and our community expect the facts; and, they understand the realities we’re facing.”

Changes to elementary and secondary class sizes lead to reduced funding. The bigger the board, the larger the impact. These changes, combined with a reduction in other grants, declining enrolment and the end of Local Priority Funding has resulted in some teaching staff reductions at our board.”

In April 2019, Grand Erie announced 84 secondary and 21 elementary teachers were declared redundant, meaning they don’t have a job with the board in the fall. Those numbers have since been reduced to 55 secondary and 16 elementary teachers.

“No one wants to see any Grand Erie employee lose their job,” said Anderson. “But, this is a challenging time for education. As elected officials, we have an obligation to make the most efficient use of public money, while also advocating for every resource we can for students in our communities. We firmly believe we’ve accomplished that with this budget. We’re also confident Grand Erie continues to deliver the best possible education experience for students because of the wide range of opportunities we can provide through 58 elementary and 14 secondary schools as well as our leadership when it comes to equity and inclusion.”

The total capital budget for Grand Erie in 2019-20 is \$30,851,250. This includes funds allocated from the School Condition Improvement Grant, the School Renewal Allocation, Capital Priorities funding and Child and Family Program Capital.

Total projected Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) for Grand Erie in 2019-20 is expected to be 25,832, a decrease of 291 students from actual 2018-19 enrolment (26,123). Elementary ADE is estimated to be 17,995, while secondary ADE is projected to be 7,837.

For more information on Grand Erie’s 2019-20 Budget, see the Budget Approval Report (pages 34-39) here: <https://bit.ly/2N0jSVx>.

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