

Impact of the 2006/07 Budget on students, staff and parents

Instructional

1. Special Needs - Severe Needs Funding Shortfall \$250,000

- In 2005/06, the district was funded for 872.5 severe needs students but serves in excess of 960 severe needs students resulting in a funding shortfall of approximately \$1,500,000. Funding is taken from regular students – accordingly schools will receive about \$47 less for each student in Kindergarten to Grade 12, to make up this shortfall.
- In order to meet our “balanced budget”, the Special needs equitability fund was reduced by \$250,000 – funding used to provide additional supports to students with very special needs.
- Funding in this area has increased by only 2%. With more students being served, allocations to schools remain at the same levels as in 2005/06. With salaries for special needs teacher assistants (SNTA) increasing by 6.86% for 2006/07, we anticipate that there will be approximately 40 fewer SNTA's in schools in 2006/07.

2. Full Day Kindergarten (Extended Experiences) \$723,520

- Full day kindergarten (Extended Experiences) is offered at 17 schools, serving approximately 300 students considered ‘at-risk’ for failure because of socio economic status, language and social/emotional factors.
- The program was previously funded through the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS), however as the second cycle of AIS projects concludes at the end of the 2005/06 school year, the District is required to fund this much needed program through other sources.
- As a result, in order to continue support for these ‘at-risk’ students, the District will fund these programs from funding normally used for Kindergarten through Grade 12 students. Accordingly, schools will receive about \$23 less per student for each student in Kindergarten to Grade 12.

3. High School Funding \$500,000

- Edmonton Catholic high schools are facing funding pressures as a result of implications of the implementation of the Alberta's Commission on Learning (ACOL) – Class Size Initiative.
- Regular high schools need to have an average of 29 students to meet the ACOL guideline of 27 students in each class. (District special education classes traditionally have fewer than 17 students in each class and these classes are considered in the calculation of the ACOL class size average.)
- Many of the “option courses” offered in high schools, courses such as welding and food studies need to limit class sizes to less than 17 students due to safety concerns, or to the physical set up of the classrooms.
- Some option classes have limited enrolments; however schools still offer these programs to meet the specific needs of students.
- As a result, high schools have been left with no alternative but to offer less option classes.
- The result for high schools is this – to meet the average of 29 students in each class, core subject classes are often higher than 29 students in order to meet the ACOL guidelines. This continues to cause increased funding pressures on all high schools.

Transportation

1. Transportation Fees \$800,000

- Costs for providing student transportation continues to rise due to the high cost of fuel and rising operator costs (maintenance and drivers' wages).
- Transportation grants have increased only by 2%.
- As a result, parents are required to pick up the additional costs of providing transportation for their children. In 2005/06, parents contributed approximately \$2.4 million towards getting their children to school.
- In 2006/07, this will rise to approximately \$3.2 million dollars, an increase of school bus passes of 33%. In September of 2006, bus passes for Elementary, Junior High and High School students will increase by \$5.00 per month.
- While bus passes remain affordable, the increase in cost will have an affect on families using these services.

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