

## News Release

April 5, 2006

For Immediate Release

### Investigator's report acknowledges underfunding in Dufferin-Peel *Chair says Dufferin-Peel deficit not isolated – many boards are facing similar pressures*

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board chair Peter Ferreira reacted to the public release of the investigator's report through the media and Ministry website yesterday. "The Ministry has once again disrespected the parents of our community by releasing his report without the courtesy of providing us with a copy beforehand."

Said Ferreira, "We are, however, pleased to finally see some acknowledgement of underfunding in salaries, transportation and special education. These are the three areas that Dufferin-Peel has repeatedly identified as being chronically underfunded. We were also pleased to see an acknowledgement that Dufferin-Peel *is providing an excellent level of service to its community and doing many great things for its students*. It is our commitment, and the expectation of Dufferin-Peel parents, that we continue to provide this level of service to our community."

Referring to the investigation process, Ferreira said, "This was a ministry investigation set up to align with the Ministry's position. The allegations related to the practices of the board and its staff, as outlined in the report, are unfounded and are a smokescreen for the larger issue of chronic underfunding. As boards use up the last of their reserve funds to balance their budgets, as Dufferin-Peel did last year, more will be in the position in which Dufferin-Peel finds itself. If the Ministry believes otherwise, they have their heads in the sand."

The government has a real problem looming with province-wide underfunding of education. The sand in the hourglass is draining quickly as more and more school boards use the last of their reserve funds to balance their budgets. Despite the fact that this is the second report the Minister of Education has received that speaks to underfunding in the benchmarks in special education, transportation and salaries, the Ministry continues to dodge for the most part, the real issue of chronic underfunding.

"We are concerned about recommended cuts that clearly target specific areas of our community, including transportation to Holy Name of Mary Secondary School and St. Sofia School, lunch hour busing for children attending kindergarten and various staff areas, including special education, vice principals and school secretaries. These are all areas that will have a negative impact on children and, in some cases, will have a direct impact on our ability to provide safe schools," added Ferreira.

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