

News Release

October 3, 2006

For Immediate Release

Trustees maintain stance; refuse to endorse Ministerial directive

Standing on the strength of their year-long stance and overwhelming support from the community, trustees directed staff to not comply with an order from Minister of Education, Kathleen Wynne to implement a Deficit Management Plan created by staff and Ministry Advisor Peter Lauwers; a plan the trustees had already rejected on September 14 and refused to reconsider on September 26. Trustees' actions last night set the stage for a possible takeover of the board by a supervisor, a move that Minister Wynne vehemently opposed as a trustee with the Toronto District School Board in 2003.

At a special board meeting on September 14, trustees had rejected a deficit reduction plan that would have produced a balanced budget in two years. While rejecting the plan, trustees did approve approximately \$10 million in economies. This is in addition to economies of approximately \$13 million achieved from December 2005 to August 2006. The economies approved on September 14 reduced the board's projected 2006-07 operating deficit to approximately \$7.5 million.

"We have done our part and taken a tremendous chunk out of the system already," said Chair Peter Ferreira. "Without an increase in benchmark funding to address the chronically deficient funding formula, we will be right back in a deep hole again next year. Our community has said enough is enough and we have heard them. We won't do it. We won't swing the Ministry's axe to fix a problem they promised to fix when they were elected."

"We don't want a supervisor, just as Minister Wynne didn't want one when she was in our position," added Ferreira. "We would like to work with this government but we can't do all the heavy lifting. The government must do its part and make the funding formula reflect the reality of operating a large urban school board."

The Minister of Education is now in a position to seek approval from Cabinet to appoint a supervisor to take over control of the board, one of the largest in Ontario with approximately 89,000 students in 142 schools in Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon and Orangeville.

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