

Bargaining Bulletin

March 29 • Issue 6

Dear members

The Ministry of Education released the Grants for Student Needs (GSNs) 2012-2013 this morning, which outlines the financial information school boards need to build their budgets. Below, are some components of the GSNs from the government's document that may be of interest to the majority of OSSTF/FEESO members. We are preparing a more thorough review as more detailed documents are received.

GRANTS FOR STUDENT NEEDS

In 2012-13, total projected education funding through the GSN will be held stable at almost \$21B. When funding of \$374 million for the Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program(FDK) which is outside the GSN, is taken into account, funding to school boards will increase by approximately 1.5 percent.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The government is committed to meeting its existing PDT commitments on an ongoing basis. While the 2011-12 school year is the final year of the current four-year PDT agreements, some measures under these agreements are to take effect in 2012-13. The government is committed to fully funding these supports for student achievement.

2012 PROVINCIAL DISCUSSION TABLE

The government is currently facilitating a Provincial Discussion Table (PDT) process with the goal of establishing a framework for negotiating local collective agreements in the education sector. As the basis for this process, on February 22, 2012, the government tabled parameters for PDT agreements. These parameters have been incorporated into the 2012-13 GSN. The measures described below could be changed or modified based on the PDT discussions. When PDT agreements are reached that are acceptable to the government and stakeholders and within the funding constraints in the Budget, the Ministry will, if necessary, seek the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council for further amendments to the GSN regulations.

ENHANCEMENTS TO KEEP UP WITH COSTS

OMERS Contributions

In July 2010, OMERS, which is the pension plan for most non-teaching staff, announced that contribution rates would be going up by 2.9 percent over three calendar years, beginning in 2011. To address this cost pressure, \$21M in new GSN funding was allocated retroactively for 2010-11, with a further \$50M allocated for 2011-12. To further assist school boards with the increased costs of the employers' share of contributions in 2012-13, the Ministry will allocate an additional \$29M in funding through enhancements to both the Foundation Grants and Special Purpose Grants.

REFORMS and REFINEMENTS TO THE GSN

Special Education Grant

Despite the fiscal constraints the government will be providing stability in special education funding for 2012-13, as funding through the Special Education Grant (SEG) is projected to remain at approximately \$2.52B. During the 2012-13 school year, the Ministry will continue to gradually review and refine the components of the SEG, and to consult with stakeholders to ensure that the evolution of the funding approach supports students with special education needs and supports improvements in student outcomes

EFFICIENCY and SAVINGS MEASURES

Savings measures introduced for 2012-13

Curriculum and Teaching Specialists

Funding for Curriculum and Teaching Specialists will be reduced by approximately 15 percent in 2012-13. Curriculum and Teaching Specialists are teacher consultants and co-ordinators, such as reading specialists and program specialists. This will mean approximately 300 fewer funded FTE positions for non-classroom teachers

Savings measures to be implemented in 2013-14

The government has identified three savings measures that are to be implemented in 2013-14:

Under-utilized School Strategy

The Ministry will examine the incentives built into the GSN that encourage school boards to establish and maintain small and/or under-utilized schools, particularly in urban areas, with the goal of implementing changes in the 2013-14 school year.

A Four-Year High School Program

Starting in 2013-14, when students exceed a limit of 34 successfully earned secondary school credits, those additional credits will no longer be funded at the Day School rate, but at a lower rate.

School board amalgamations

The Ministry will consult with education stakeholders to develop proposals for school board amalgamations in the 2013-14 school year. These proposals will respect the constitutional rights of Catholics and French-language rights holders as regards education.



Kenneth Coran, President