



DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

NOTICE OF MEETING

EDUCATION FINANCE COMMITTEE PUBLIC SESSION

Tuesday, May 12, 2026

Chair: Carolyn Morton

Vice-Chair: Donna Edwards

Recording Secretary: Kristin Talbot

DATE: Tuesday, May 12, 2026

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Board Room with Virtual/Hybrid Option

ATTACHMENTS: Agenda

Copies to:

All Trustees

Director of Education

All Superintendents



Durham District School Board
Education Finance Committee Meeting
PUBLIC AGENDA
Tuesday, May 12, 2026
6:30 p.m.

	<u>Presented By</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Call to Order	Chair Morton	Verbal
2. Land Acknowledgment	Chair Morton	Verbal
3. Declarations of Interest	Chair Morton	Verbal
4. Motion to Approve Agenda	Chair Morton	Verbal
5. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes a) June 17, 2025 Education Finance Committee	Chair Morton	1 - 2
6. Welcome	Director Williams-Taylor	Verbal
7. Written Submission Deputation a) Julia McCrea Representing Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, D-13	Chair Morton	3 - 7
8. Presentation a) Considerations for the Development of the 2026-2027 Budget	Associate Director Bianca	Verbal
9. Other Business	Chair Morton	Verbal
10. Next Public Meeting – June 2, 2026	Chair Morton	Verbal
11. Adjournment	Chair Morton	Verbal



Durham District School Board
Education Finance Committee Meeting
DRAFT MINUTES

A public meeting of the Education Finance Committee was held on Tuesday, June 17, 2025.

1. Call to Order

Chair Morton called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Committee Members Present:	Trustees - Michelle Arseneault (virtual), Tracy Brown, Emma Cunningham, Donna Edwards, Kelly Miller, Carolyn Morton, Christine Thatcher (virtual)
Non-Committee Members Present:	Trustee Stephen Linton (virtual)
Officials Present:	Director of Education Camille Williams-Taylor; Associate Director Jim Markovski, Associate Director David Wright; Superintendents Lauren Bliss, Michael Bowman, Mohamed Hamid, Andrea McAuley, Heather Mundy, Martine Robinson, Jacqueline Williams-Leacock, Human Rights and Equity Advisor Devika Mathur, Head of Facilities Services Lisa Bianca, Senior Manager Melissa Durward, Senior Manager Dervla Kelly, Senior Manager Jennifer Machin
Recording Secretary:	Kristin Talbot

2. Land Acknowledgement

Chair Morton gave the Land Acknowledgement: the Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with the territories upon which our school board and schools are located. Today, this area is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island (North America). We acknowledge that the Durham Region forms a part of the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, the Mississauga Peoples and the treaty territory of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. It is on these ancestral and treaty lands that we teach, learn and live.

3. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

4. Motion to Approve the Agenda

MOVED by Tracy Brown

That the agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED

5. Motion to Approve the June 10, 2025 Education Finance Committee PUBLIC Meeting Minutes

MOVED by Kelly Miller

That the minutes be approved as presented.

CARRIED

6. Questions and Answers on the 2025-2026 Draft Budget

Chair Morton thanked staff for emailing a summary of the questions asked and answers provided at the June 3 and June 10 Education Finance Committee meetings.

Associate Director Wright opened the floor to any questions on the 2025-2026 draft budget.

A discussion ensued and questions were responded to.

7. Consideration of the 2025-2026 Draft Budget

Associate Director Wright presented the recommendation report with the 2025-2026 draft budget.

A discussion ensued and questions were responded to.

MOVED by Emma Cunningham

SECONDED by Tracy Brown

It is recommended that the Education Finance Committee recommend to the Board of Trustees that the 2025-2026 draft budget containing total revenues of \$1,308,989,261 and total expenses of \$1,308,989,261 be approved as presented.

CARRIED

Chair Morton expressed her appreciation to staff for their contributions in drafting the 2025-2026 budget.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Next Public Meeting Date

The June 23, 2025 Education Finance Committee meeting is no longer required and will be cancelled. A Special Board meeting will take place on June 23 to seek approval from the Board of Trustees on the 2025-2026 draft budget.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:41 p.m.

Carolyn Morton
Chair of the Committee



OSSTF/FEESO District 13

438 Rossmount Avenue, Oshawa, ON, L1J 3K6

Occasional Teachers' Bargaining Unit

289-356-6979

Certified Teaching Professionals

April 7, 2026

Dear Chair, Trustees and Members of the Education Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Durham District School Board's budget consultation process and for the work you are doing under extremely difficult financial conditions. I want to acknowledge up front that the challenges facing DDSB budgets are largely driven by the constraints of ongoing provincial underfunding that has not kept pace with inflation or student needs. This context places significant pressure on local decision-making and increases the importance of equity-driven priorities. Local budget decisions still matter deeply because they directly affect students and the school communities you serve.

D13 OSSTF OTBU Submission to the DDSB Education Finance Committee, 2026-2027 Budget Consultations: Necessary Investments in a Safe and Skilled Workplace

The OSSTF/FEESO District 13 Durham Occasional Teachers Bargaining Unit (OTBU) represents over 1000 qualified teachers working in the secondary schools and workplaces of the Durham District School Board. The secondary occasional teachers roster of teachers fluctuates with significant turnover annually but with hiring remains at about 1000 members. Occasional staff are a permanent system requirement of DDSB, and appropriate recognition of this fact requires appropriate investment by both the provincial government and DDSB.

Priorities for Equity, Staffing, and Student Well-Being with Recommendations from OSSTF/FEESO

First, budget decisions must centre equity and student supports. Increasing classroom complexity requires targeted investments in schools with higher socio-economic need, greater special education demands, and limited access to external supports. Reductions in these areas disproportionately impact the most vulnerable students.

Recommendation: If resources are limited, the priorities should be equity, staffing, and safety. Decisions should protect classroom staffing, education worker supports, and mental health services—particularly in high-needs schools—because cuts in these areas have the greatest impact on learning conditions and student outcomes.

Second, staffing levels directly affect student success, safety, and well-being. Maintaining appropriate class sizes, education worker staffing, and access to specialists is essential. Staffing reductions lead to increased workload, decreased support, and unsafe learning conditions.

Comment: The problem with staffing reductions are they increase class sizes, workload, and safety risks while reducing individual student support. This disproportionately affects students with special education and mental health needs and contributes to staff burnout and retention challenges.

Third, mental health and well-being supports must be permanent and predictable. Schools are increasingly the first point of access for student mental health support, and short-term funding solutions are insufficient to meet ongoing needs.

Recommendation: While new funding is essential, the Board can prioritize making existing mental health supports more stable and school-based rather than relying on short-term or external solutions. However, without predictable funding, schools are forced to react to crises instead of preventing them.

Finally, safe, and healthy learning and working environments must remain a priority. Deferred maintenance, aging facilities, and rising incidents of violence place students and staff at risk. Investments in infrastructure, caretaking, and health and safety measures are critical.

While DDSB faces real fiscal constraints, the choices made in this budget will signal the Board's commitment to equity, student well-being, and safe schools. We urge trustees to prioritize these areas and continue advocating to the province for the funding students deserve.

Recommendation: DDSB should clearly communicate to the Ontario provincial government that current funding levels are insufficient to meet student needs safely and equitably. Budget pressures should not be normalized; they should be used to strengthen advocacy for sustainable, inflation-adjusted education funding.

SPECIFIC PRIORITIES: REALITIES OF PRECARIOUS OCCASIONAL WORK in a TIME of INCREASING PERMANENT STAFF LEAVES, ABSENCES DUE TO ILLNESS and INJURIES

As a large body of DDSB employees, the OTBU includes new teachers, career occasional teachers and retired teachers, all of whom are certified by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) having completed relevant university degrees in education along with subject or skilled trade specific training, are qualified in a diverse range of subjects and who take on primarily daily assignments that are inherently challenging and risky on behalf of injured, ill, and absent permanent teachers. Occasional teachers (OTs) and other occasional staff including occasional elementary teachers (ETFO DOTL), occasional professional support staff (OSSTF-PSSP) and occasional educational assistants, office staff and custodians (CUPE 218) are all precariously employed.

Precarious employment and working conditions are the realities of OTs and can be described as follows. Daily occasional teachers (OTs) are paid significantly less than their qualifications and experience warrant in comparison to similarly and qualified and experienced permanent teachers. Occasional teachers (OTs) have high costs to undertake this work. OTs must pay for their own vehicles to get to various locations with ever increasing gas rates, must own cell phones and pay for their cellular plans to receive job call outs and provide their own computer for daily work as there is no guarantee of additional digital technology availability at the each DDSB secondary worksite. Occasional teachers have no paid sick leave and nil or limited health care benefits. If an OT was able to obtain 90 days of work in the prior school year and these benefits are only partially paid by the board leaving the staff member to cover the remainder. Access to paid professional development is limited to one half (0.5) day per year. If an OT is injured on the job, there is likely to be no or limited income and may mean they can no longer work. Many DDSB occasional staff seek to become DDSB permanent staff, yet this outcome is not a reality for most. The qualified occasional staff deserve greater respect, fairness and investment considering the reality of the costs in educational finance of the ongoing permanent structural need of the DDSB for the service of occasional teachers and educational workers. They have

the same human needs as all DDSB staff in times of rising costs for all and specific additional costs as indicated.

Occasional teachers are hard working DDSB staff. 80% or more of OTs work on a daily supply basis. As there is no guarantee of regular or permanent employment, most occasional teachers are forced to obtain work with other often numerous employers such as surrounding school boards (Toronto, Peel, York, Kawartha) and co-terminus school boards (DCDSB) or to work at several part-time jobs to try to secure enough income to sustain themselves, their families, and dependents. Working multiple boards is necessary to increase opportunities for long term or permanent work. Records show that 400 – 500 OTs work each month. At the same time this indicates 500 to 600, OTs hired with expectations to work for the DDSB do not get work each month. This is extremely stressful for OTs as there is continuity of employment especially for those who have seniority served as OTs for several years. Preferential hiring when DDSB is hiring permanent staff would demonstrate greater respect for the commitment of current DDSB OTs.

PRIORITY ON HEALTH AND SAFETY WITH SPECIFIC SKILL TRAINING/PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

DDSB is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all employees. While there can be no guarantee of safe and respectful working conditions, it must be recognized that in addition to being precarious employment, OT work is increasingly hazardous due to underfunding of both special education/inclusive student services and limited investment in health and safety of OT through training and professional learning opportunities. One key example is behaviour management training (BMS) which is prevention oriented behaviour management training to handle escalating students and emergency situations and to successfully manage students who present a high risk of staff injury in complex classroom situations with multiple special needs, with or without experienced support staff. This training needs to be more accessible to occasional staff as it is critical to the success of all staff. Currently this are few and limited opportunities to take this what should be mandatory training as one begins work and renewed each school year.

INVESTMENT in health and safety training for occasional teachers is critical to ensure a quality experience for students, teachers, and support staff. It is required by the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development occupational health and safety act and is the employer responsibility assisted by worker advisors such as the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Training. Occasional teachers face the same risks of injury as permanent staff but without the information, DDSB training and guarantee of sick leave, disability pay or workers' compensation if they are injured. They have no access to regular information, regular updates on board policy, procedures and practice that occur in staff meetings and as daily replacements may not have access to the information about classroom and school working conditions and recent changes to best inform their work. These matters are raised regularly with senior staff and managers of the DDSB, yet little has been done.

The DDSB costs of accidents, injuries, Workers Compensation insurance claims are rising along with the need for replacement staff due to the lack of investment in health and safety training. The OTBU's recent submission to the Ad Hoc Trustee Committee on Violence reflects on this with recommendations. Health and safety is critical to the well-being of all and is a critical responsibility to fund.

Political Context

The investment being asked for in the upcoming DDSB budget will require considerable DDSB trustee and staff advocacy as the current political context is not favourable.

1. The proposed Ontario provincial government budget does not appear to support the much needed investment of funds to meet students needs. It an austere budget that continues a pattern of slowly starving the education system.
2. The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) reports that this proposed provincial budget fails to deliver the investments workers and communities need, at a time when affordability pressures are rising and job security is increasingly uncertain. School boards are now receiving \$260 less per student than they did in 2018-19 after inflation and enrolment growth. For the 2025-26 school year alone, that represents a \$561.7 million funding gap, and over the past seven years, Ontario's schools have lost \$6.35 billion in real funding since 2018. (OFL March 26, 2026)
3. Further cuts to education despite billions in past underspending is reinforcing a pattern of avoiding structural investments needed to rebuild public systems.(OFL) This contributes to the current chaos of underfunding, significant stress on staff and students to cope resulting in increased use of sick leave and reported violence in schools.
4. Ontario is a wealthy province, and students and families deserve a well funded education system that ensures all students needs are met which will require the necessary the staffing by schools boards to meet these needs. This is a necessary investment to meet the social and economic needs and human rights now and for future.
5. The OFL In their pre-budget consultation to the Ontario Government asked for the following in addition to addressing the funding gaps itemized above:
 - Permanent education funding tied to inflation and enrolment growth
 - Smaller class sizes across Ontario, especially in high-needs and rapidly growing communities
 - Thousands more education workers to support student learning, safety, and well-being
 - Fully funded mental health and special education services in every school
 - The repeal of Bill 33 and the protection of locally elected school boards
 - An end to government takeovers of democratically elected boards
 - A public education system built on investment, not control (OFL Pre-budget Submission, January 2026)

Summary of Recommended Priorities from OSSTF/FEESO for Equity, Staffing, and Student Well-Being

Priority 1: Equity-centred budget decisions

Durham classrooms are increasingly complex. Students have diverse academic, mental health, behavioural, and social needs, often compounded by poverty, housing insecurity, disability, race, or language barriers. Equity means directing resources where needs are greatest—not spreading scarcity evenly. Budget decisions should protect programs and staffing that support the most vulnerable students, particularly in schools facing higher needs.

Priority 2: Staffing and class size

Staffing levels are one of the most important factors in student success and school safety. Reduced staffing or growing class sizes increase workload, stress, and risk—while decreasing supports for students. Any reductions to education worker staffing, specialist supports, or classroom staffing have a direct, negative impact on learning conditions. Budgets should prioritize maintaining and improving staff-to-student ratios wherever possible.

Priority 3: Mental health and well-being supports

Demand for mental health support in schools continues to rise. Temporary or one-time funding is not adequate. Students and staff need permanent, predictable, school-based mental health supports. Stable funding allows schools to respond proactively rather than crisis-to-crisis, improving attendance, learning, and overall well-being.

Priority 4: Safe and healthy schools

Safe learning and working environments are non-negotiable. Rising incidents of violence, aging infrastructure, and insufficient caretaking and safety supports are affecting both students and workers. Budget decisions should prioritize building maintenance, health and safety staffing, and proactive violence prevention measures.

Finally, DDSB is being asked to do more with less, but budgets reflect values. I urge the Board to prioritize equity, staffing, mental health supports, and safe schools as you finalize this budget. Investing in public education is an investment in Durham's future.

Thank you for the opportunity to address educational finances for the upcoming school and fiscal year. The OTBU representing secondary occasional teachers welcomes opportunities to engage with trustees and DDSB staff to contribute to ensuring educational funding addresses the needs of all - students, staff, family, and community. We hope the global and specific priorities will be addressed in the process and outcome of the budget development.

Sincerely,

Julia McCrea

President,

OSSTF/FEESO District 13 Durham

Occasional Teachers' Bargaining Unit

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