



## **2004-05 Provincial Education Budget Impact**

(June 2, 2004) – The provincial government released 70% of the education budget on May 25, 2004. The remaining 30% will be focused funding in areas such as the amortization fund, technology, Special Education, literacy leaders in schools and At Risk Students Projects. The Ministry will consult with District School Boards to determine the distribution of these funds. The Rainy River District School Board will pursue these grants in order to meet the unique needs of our District. The Northwestern Region of the province must continue to have input into policies and guidelines in order for our students to receive the same opportunities as students in Southern Ontario.

A positive step in this budget is the release of a long-awaited transportation formula. This will be phased in and increases the Rainy River District School Board budget by \$205,000 for 2004-05. The formula indicates the Rainy River District School Board should receive \$850,000 more, if and when it is fully implemented. The phase-in process is especially disappointing since the increase will not cover the total costs of transportation in the Rainy River District School Board for 2004-05.

To address the issue of class size in the Primary division, the Rainy River District School Board will receive approximately \$96,000 of additional funding. This funding will be used to hire additional staff in order to reduce class size from JK to Grade Three. Currently in the Rainy River District School Board, the majority of our primary classes meet the desired class size of twenty.

There is great concern that Cycle 5 Intensive Support Amounts to support special needs students have not been released to school boards for 2003-04 or 2004-05. The Cycle 5 claims which have been validated in the Rainy River District School Board would generate over \$900,000/year of additional funding which would be used to provide supports for special needs students.

School Renewal funding has been increased to reflect the Energy Retrofit Initiative. The Board will receive an additional \$100,000. These funds will assist in energy retrofits needed in Rainy River High School, Robert Moore School and Huffman School.

A \$200 million amortization fund will be established provincially to assist with the significant facility renewal needs. Allocations to Boards have not yet been released. The Board will actively pursue these funds to assist with the new J.W. Walker School.

*“There are positive aspects to this budget. The challenge will be staffing schools for September without all the information regarding our budget. Adjustments may have to be made during the summer months”* commented Director of Education, Warren Hoshizaki.