

**2016: B18**

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Directors of Education  
Senior Business Officials

**FROM:** Gabriel F. Sékaly  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Financial Policy & Business Division

**DATE:** **October 14, 2016**

**SUBJECT:** **Community Hubs Capital Funding: Minor Retrofits and Accessibility**

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Earlier this year the Ministry announced four separate capital funding initiatives to support community hubs in schools (see Memorandum **2016:B9**, *Ministry of Education Initiatives to Support Community Hubs in Schools*, dated May 6, 2016). Today, we are providing details on the \$50 million capital funding initiative to support the expansion of community hub use in schools that will benefit both students and the local community. This funding is to be used to retrofit available space in schools into community hub space and to improve the accessibility of schools to allow greater opportunities for use by the community (see Appendix A for specific board allocations).

School boards are encouraged to work with their community partners to explore mutually advantageous opportunities to share space in schools that would benefit both the board and the broader community as explained in the *Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline*. The Ministry recognizes that in many cases, when a community partner is prepared to occupy available school space in an operating school, some minor retrofits may be required to allow the partner to operate most effectively in the space.

School boards' approved community planning and partnership policies continue to govern the criteria and principles that school boards will use to determine partner eligibility, partner prioritization, school eligibility, student safety and all other items pertaining to school operations.

School boards are reminded that community partners are still expected to fully cover the operating and administrative costs to the board of the space occupied by the partner.

Included in this memorandum is information on:

- a) Eligible capital projects
- b) Allocation methodology
- c) Capital and financial reporting requirements
- d) Communication protocols

## **A. Eligible Capital Projects**

Minor Retrofits and Accessibility funding can be used to:

- Retrofit available school space into space for use by a new community partner(s) or to expand existing community hubs spaces in schools, or
- Improve the accessibility of a school to enable use by a broader range of community partners.

The objectives of this funding are to remove capital cost barriers to community use of available school space and to create or improve space for community partners that provide services or supports that satisfy the requirements of section 234 of the *Education Act*. Those requirements can generally be described as promoting the care and/or development of children (emotional, social or physical) or promoting student success.

Examples of how this funding could be used include renovating two available classrooms into a redesigned space for use by a community partner, adding security doors or addressing accessibility barriers through the installation of ramps or automatic doors. Eligible renovations can contribute to expanded public use by a new or existing community hub.

School boards will decide what available spaces and schools provide the best opportunities to meet the needs of the board, the school and a community hub partner. Capital expenses must be depreciable and qualify for amortization.

This funding is NOT to be used:

- To expand the existing building footprint or gross floor area;
- In a school that is scheduled to close within the next five years;
- To undertake capital work to accommodate a child care or child and family support program operator as Child Care Retrofit and Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit funding exists for this type of work; or
- To make space available exclusively for use after regular school day hours as Community Use of Schools funding exists for this purpose.

## **B. Allocation Methodology**

School board allocations were determined using two types of data – facility utilization and a combination of socio-economic variables. Since the Minor Retrofits and Accessibility funding is intended to be used in viable schools with excess space available for community partners, only those schools with available space generated funding.

Allocations were also determined using various social indicators, all of which are currently used by the Ministry of Education to provide program funding to school boards, as proxy measures of community socio-economic status. For example, the Demographic Allocation, one of the components comprising the Learning Opportunities Grant, utilizes social indicators data to calculate board funding.

### Utilization

Board utilization data was based on information in the School Facilities Inventory System (SFIS) and included all schools that met the following criteria:

- Open since 2011 or earlier;
- Owned by the school board;
- Between 60 to 90 percent utilized OR is eligible for Enhanced Top-Up funding (e.g. isolated schools).

The intent behind this approach was to focus on schools that have available space and are less likely to close. As such these schools are better suited to support community partners. This approach also ensures that isolated schools are not disadvantaged due to low school enrolment. Any school built and opened in 2012 or later was removed from the list of schools used to calculate allocations because enrolment at newer schools tends to take a few years to stabilize and in the medium term there should be little or no excess space available in the school.

### Socio-Economic Variables

At this time, the government does not have a standard measure in place to determine anticipated need for community space. Therefore, the Ministry incorporated various socio-economic statistics into its allocation model as proxies. The variables used were lone parent family, parental education, family income, income source, immigration and senior kindergarten Early Development Instrument (EDI) scores. EDI measures readiness of students to transition to Grade 1 based on various areas of child development (e.g. physical health to language and cognitive development).

In recognition that these social indicators are only proxies for community need, utilization was given twice the weighting (2:1 ratio) as the socio-economic variables. Using all the above data, allocations were generated at a school-level and subsequently rolled-up into an overall allocation amount. No school board received an allocation less than \$100,000.

## **C. Capital and Financial Reporting Requirements**

The Ministry intends to introduce streamlined reporting requirements for boards for Minor Retrofits and Accessibility funding. All Minor Retrofits and Accessibility expenditures made by boards must be reported in VFA.facility and will then be uploaded by the Ministry directly into EFIS, similar to the manner in which School Condition Improvement (SCI) expenditures are treated.

Similar to SCI funding, cash payments to boards will be made twice a year based on reported expenditures; specifically:

- Expenditures from September 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017 (and reported by April 2017) will be paid in June 2017; and,
- Expenditures from April 1, 2017 to August 31, 2017 (and reported by October 31, 2017) will be paid in February 2018.

The Ministry will also fund short-term interest related to these expenditures on a semi-annual basis, which is consistent with other capital programs. Any unspent funds by the end of the 2016-17 school year can be carried-over for one additional year, however, any 2016-17 amounts unspent by the end of the 2017-18 school year will be recovered.

The Ministry intends to collect information from boards on the projects they are planning to undertake using their Minor Retrofits and Accessibility funding. The Ministry will provide more details through a separate communication on the specific types of information that will be required, however, it is anticipated that school boards will be required to report by February 28, 2017 on such things as:

- The projects the board plans to undertake using their Minor Retrofits and Accessibility funding;
- What type of community space was created or improved or what is the nature of the capital work (e.g. installation of walls/firewalls, accessible ramp to parking lot);
- The name and/or type of community partner(s) to occupy the renovated space; and/or
- The additional community use, and positive outcomes for the school and potentially the broader community that will be realized due to the capital investment.

Please note Minor Retrofits and Accessibility allocations will be included in an amended 2016-17 Grants for Student Needs funding regulation this fall, subject to approval by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

#### **D. Communication Protocols**

School boards should not issue a news release or any other media-focused public communication regarding projects undertaken with this funding without publicly recognizing the Ministry of Education's role in funding the project. In addition, school boards can contact the Ministry of Education to receive additional content for the media-focused public communications, such as quotes from the Minister.

The intent is to secure as much coverage for these events as possible, and in doing so, help promote the role of both the Ministry of Education and the school board in bringing exciting new capital projects to local communities.

Important: For all openings of new or expanded community partnerships in schools funded through this initiative, the Minister of Education must be invited as early as possible to the event. Invitations can be sent to [Minister.EDU@ontario.ca](mailto:Minister.EDU@ontario.ca), with a copy sent to the ministry's Regional Manager, Field Services Branch, in your area. School boards are not to proceed with their public event until they have received a response

from the Minister's Office regarding the Minister's attendance. School boards will be notified at least four to six weeks in advance of their opening event as to the Minister's attendance. Please note that if the date of your event changes at any time after the Minister has received the invitation, please confirm the change at the email address above.

If the Minister of Education is unavailable, the invitation may be shared with a government representative who will contact your school board to coordinate the details (e.g., a joint announcement). School boards are not expected to delay their announcements to accommodate the Minister or a Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP); the primary goal is to make sure that the Minister is aware of the announcement opportunity.

This communications protocol does not replace school boards' existing partnership with the Ministry of Education's regional offices. Regional offices should still be regarded as school boards' primary point of contact for events and should be given updates in accordance to existing processes.

You must acknowledge the support of the Government of Ontario in media-focused communications of any kind, written or oral, relating to the agreement or the project. This could include but is not limited to, any report, announcement, speech, advertisement, publicity, promotional material, brochure, audio-visual material, web communications or any other public communications. For minor interactions on social media, or within social media such as Twitter, Vine, etc. where there is a tight restriction on content, school boards are not required to include government acknowledgement. In addition, when engaged in reactive communications (e.g., media calls) the school board does not have to acknowledge government funding; however, if possible, such an acknowledgement is appreciated.

## **Ministry Contacts**

For any communications-related questions, please contact Ryan Rigby at (416) 325-2540 or via email at [Ryan.Rigby@ontario.ca](mailto:Ryan.Rigby@ontario.ca). For all other questions or requests for additional information, please contact Cettina Cuffaro, Senior Policy Specialist, Capital Policy and Programs Branch, at 416-325-2034 or [cettina.cuffaro@ontario.ca](mailto:cettina.cuffaro@ontario.ca).

*Original signed by:*

Gabriel F. Sékaly  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Financial Policy and Business Division

cc: Superintendents of Facilities  
Managers of Plant

Appendix A: List of board-by-board allocations

## Appendix A: Allocations

### Community Hubs Education Capital - Minor Retrofits and Accessibility

District School Board Name	Board by Board Funding Total
Algoma District School Board	\$713,876
Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board	\$228,440
Avon Maitland District School Board	\$571,101
Bluewater District School Board	\$799,541
Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board	\$342,661
Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board	\$114,220
Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario	\$599,656
Conseil scolaire catholique Providence	\$513,991
Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Grandes Rivières	\$571,101
Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud	\$599,656
Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'est Ontarien	\$428,326
Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales	\$256,995
Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Centre-Est de l'Ontario	\$628,211
Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Nouvel-Ontario	\$628,211
Conseil scolaire de district catholique Franco-Nord	\$314,106
Conseil scolaire de district du Grand Nord de l'Ontario	\$399,771
Conseil scolaire de district du Nord-Est de l'Ontario	\$114,220
Conseil scolaire Viamonde	\$713,876
District School Board of Niagara	\$913,761
District School Board Ontario North East	\$485,436
Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board	\$1,085,092
Durham Catholic District School Board	\$371,216
Durham District School Board	\$856,651
Eastern Ontario Catholic District School Board	\$428,326
Grand Erie District School Board	\$942,317
Greater Essex County District School Board	\$856,651
Halton Catholic District School Board	\$256,995
Halton District School Board	\$542,546
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board	\$456,881
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board	\$1,113,647
Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board	\$770,986
Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board	\$228,440
Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board	\$314,106
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board	\$942,317
Keewatin-Patricia District School Board	\$485,436
Kenora Catholic District School Board	\$100,000
Lakehead District School Board	\$599,656
Lambton Kent District School Board	\$1,027,982

<b>District School Board Name</b>	<b>Board by Board Funding Total</b>
Limestone District School Board	\$742,431
London District Catholic School Board	\$656,766
Near North District School Board	\$542,546
Niagara Catholic District School Board	\$656,766
Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board	\$142,775
Northeastern Catholic District School Board	\$256,995
Northwest Catholic District School Board	\$100,000
Ottawa Catholic School Board	\$828,096
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board	\$742,431
Peel District School Board	\$2,255,849
Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic DSB	\$256,995
Rainbow District School Board	\$799,541
Rainy River District School Board	\$285,550
Renfrew County Catholic District School Board	\$199,885
Renfrew County District School Board	\$542,546
Simcoe County District School Board	\$599,656
Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board	\$542,546
St. Clair Catholic District School Board	\$399,771
Sudbury Catholic District School Board	\$285,550
Superior North Catholic District School Board	\$256,995
Superior-Greenstone District School Board	\$342,661
Thames Valley District School Board	\$1,741,858
Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board	\$314,106
Toronto Catholic District School Board	\$1,684,748
Toronto District School Board	\$6,710,436
Trillium Lakelands District School Board	\$656,766
Upper Canada District School Board	\$1,142,202
Upper Grand District School Board	\$656,766
Waterloo Catholic District School Board	\$485,436
Waterloo Region District School Board	\$885,206
Wellington Catholic District School Board	\$256,995
Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board	\$599,656
York Catholic District School Board	\$656,766
York Region District School Board	\$1,456,307
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,000,000</b>