

# 2023-24 Education Funding Consultation Guide

## **INTRODUCTION**

After two years of pandemic disruptions, the government is looking ahead and remains focused on ensuring students receive the best stable learning experience possible. Ontario has launched its [Plan to Catch Up](#), focused on getting students back on track and strengthening the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow. For the 2022-23 school year, the province will continue to support the learning recovery journey of all students, including those disproportionately affected by learning disruptions.

Ontario is also investing record funding for the 2022-23 school year of over \$26.6 billion – the highest investment in public education in Ontario’s history. This includes a \$683.9 million increase in Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding, with projected total funding of \$26.1 billion. In addition, over \$500 million is being provided in Priorities and Partnership Funding (PPF).

Finally, as you are aware, the ministry is currently engaging with its education labour partners in the bargaining process for new collective agreements with teachers and education workers in Ontario’s publicly funded education system. The government is committed to a fair and fiscally responsible approach for new collective agreements, while ensuring stability for students and families. Once new collective agreements have been reached and ratified, the GSN will be updated accordingly.

For more information about the current education funding model, please see [Education funding, 2022-23](#) on the Ministry of Education’s website.

## **ABOUT THIS CONSULTATION**

As in previous years, the government remains committed to discussing education funding reform in Ontario with education stakeholders through a consultation process that allows stakeholders to provide the benefit of their expertise, experience, and ideas. This year’s guide focuses on three key priorities:

- Efficiencies and reducing administrative burden
- Capital: Reducing time to completion for capital projects
- Capital: Joint use of schools

You may also submit feedback on education funding topics not outlined in this guide.

To ensure your feedback is considered, please forward your electronic submission by **November 15, 2022** to: [EDULABFINANCE@ontario.ca](mailto:EDULABFINANCE@ontario.ca). If your organization would benefit from a virtual meeting to provide feedback on this year’s consultation, please submit a request to the ministry at this same email address, and the ministry would be pleased to

arrange one. If you have questions about this consultation, please send them to the email address noted above.

## **EFFICIENCIES AND REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN**

The ministry continues to look for ways of reducing administrative burden and aligning program implementation with ministry priorities, while ensuring strong accountability and value for money.

To further support the ministry's efforts to streamline reporting while also reducing administrative burden for transfer payment recipients, for 2022-23 the ministry has transferred five Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) and Other Languages in Education (OLE) allocations into the GSN.

For the upcoming school year, the ministry will continue to provide school boards with Integrated (multi-project) Transfer Payment Agreements (TPAs) through Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON), the centralized digital system for government transfer payments.

The ministry is continuing to implement a phased approach in the adoption of TPON, to enable further efficiencies in the administration and management of TPAs. Reporting will be the next phase added to TPON focusing on the reduction and/or streamlining of reporting requirements. School boards will be able to access, complete, and submit PPF reporting requirements through TPON, with further details to be provided in the Fall.

### **Considerations:**

- 1. What other initiatives could support the reduction of administrative burden or further streamline reporting for the education sector?**
- 2. What are the areas where there is potential or opportunities to find new efficiencies?**

## **CAPITAL: REDUCING TIME TO COMPLETION FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS**

Schools and child care centers are crucial in supporting the well-being and positive development of students and children. The Ontario government's education infrastructure plan includes providing \$14 billion over 10 years to support school construction, repair, and renewal. There are over 400 major capital projects at various stages of development worth \$4B.

The time to completion for capital projects, from original funding approval by the Ministry to completion of the project/opening of a school/child care, varies considerably across the province. Some school boards have completed their major capital construction projects in as little as two years while other school boards have taken more than ten years to complete projects.

To ensure needs of communities are met in a timely manner and to deliver good value for Ontario taxpayers, the ministry will be working with school boards to reduce the time to completion for approved projects.

### **Considerations:**

- 1. What are the relevant considerations and opportunities to shorten each phase of planning and construction (planning, design, municipal approvals, approval to proceed (Ministry Approval), procurement, construction, opening)?**

## **CAPITAL: JOINT USE OF SCHOOLS**

The ministry continues to look for ways of optimizing the use of existing educational infrastructure. Overall, school utilization across Ontario is about 90%. On the whole, there is significant surplus school capacity throughout the province.

With student migration and changing demographics, it is an ongoing exercise to try to ensure that school capacity meets the needs of all four school systems at a local level. Where a school board may experience an enrolment decline, there may be a coterminous school board experiencing growth. While new developments often require the construction of new local schools by multiple school boards, there are also areas, both rural and urban areas, with declining enrolments and increasing surplus school capacity. In both circumstances, joint use schools may provide increased program opportunities for students and capital and operating efficiencies through better utilization of school facilities, as currently demonstrated on various arrangements throughout the province. In developing accommodation plans, school boards are encouraged to consider collaborative capital project arrangements between school boards to maximize the opportunities for co-

location. This may include two or more school boards working together to improve the utilization of existing school facilities and reduce surplus space by co-locating into an existing facility, or by exchanging schools to better utilize existing capacity.

**Considerations:**

- 1. What impediments do school boards face when considering opportunities for Joint-Use schools with their co-terminus school boards?**
- 2. There are a number of successful joint-use arrangements in place. What are the elements of success (governance, administrative practices, conflict resolution, etc.) that be replicated and scaled up across current and potential joint use arrangements?**

**CONCLUSION**

Each year, the ministry holds discussions with education partners, outside of the annual funding engagements, to discuss both policy and funding mechanisms. As student mental health and well-being will continue to play a critical role in students catching-up, beginning this Fall, the government looks forward to hearing from consultations with parents, students, and experts like children’s hospitals, on how to best strengthen learning to support student mental health and well-being.

As always, we thank you for your continued collaboration and partnership to support Ontario students. We remain committed to working closely with you to facilitate the next school year, with the best interest of Ontario’s students in mind.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide, and we look forward to receiving your submission.