

Ministry of Education**Ministère de l'Éducation**

Capital and Business Support
Division

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et aux affaires

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2021: B05

Date: March 24, 2021

Memorandum to: Directors of Education
Children's Service Leads, Consolidated Municipal Service
Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration
Boards (DSSABs)
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

From: Didem Proulx
Assistant Deputy Minister
Capital and Business Support Division

Subject: **Launch of 2021-22 Capital Priorities Program including Child
Care Capital Funding**

Schools and child care centres are integral institutions in their respective communities. The Ministry of Education is committed to working closely with school boards to ensure infrastructure investments meet the needs of the community and deliver good value for the Ontario taxpayers.

2021-22 Capital Priorities Program

We are pleased to announce the launch of the 2021-22 Capital Priorities Program, providing school boards with an opportunity to identify and address their most urgent pupil accommodation needs, including:

- accommodation pressures;
- replacing schools in poor condition;
- supporting past consolidation decisions;
- providing facilities for French-language rights holders in under-served areas; and
- creating new licensed child care spaces in schools.

Summary of the 2021-22 Capital Priorities Program

- The submission deadline for all capital funding requests is **May 21, 2021**.
- School boards will have the opportunity to submit up to 10 of their most high and urgent Capital Priorities for ministry funding consideration.
- The 2021-22 Capital Priorities projects are expected to be completed and open no later than the 2024-25 school year.
- School boards have an opportunity to request child care capital funding for Capital Priorities projects, if the local CMSM or DSSAB support the need and confirm the proposed new space will not result in an operating pressure for the CMSM or DSSAB.
- **NEW:** Based on recommendations from the LEAN Review of the Capital Approval Process to enhance efficiencies, school boards will have the option to submit a facility space template for ministry approval as part of the funding request; however, it will only be eligible for new school build projects.
- School boards are encouraged to standardize the design of new school construction. The ministry will be exploring ways to leverage this opportunity going forward.
- School boards are encouraged to identify opportunities to use modular construction methods for any one of their project submissions. The ministry will work with those boards to further develop those opportunities, as appropriate.
- School boards are encouraged to identify opportunities to work together on joint-use school project submissions.
- All public announcements regarding capital investments in the publicly funded education system, including those previously funded, are joint communications opportunities for the provincial government, the school board, the CMSM or DSSAB, and/or community partners.
- Information sessions will be offered to school board staff to provide support on the completion of business cases. Further information will be sent to school boards in the coming weeks.

Project Submissions

As with previous rounds of the Capital Priorities Program, funding for Capital Priorities projects will be allocated on a business case basis for new schools, retrofits, and additions that need to be completed by the 2024-25 school year. School boards are invited to identify up to their ten most urgent Capital Priorities projects and submit the associated business cases through the School Facilities Inventory System (SFIS) in order to be considered for funding approval. School boards will be able to access Capital Priorities submission templates through SFIS beginning on March 24, 2021.

There are **two template reports** that are required to be submitted per submission:

1) Business Case - Part A (Written Report)

School boards are required to provide a written description of the project, including detailed information on the rationale, proposed scope of work and demonstrate why alternate options are not feasible.

2) Business Case - Part B (Excel Template)

- **Enrolment and School Capacity Data Form (Required For All Submissions)**

School boards are required to provide an overview of current and projected accommodation needs for the proposed capital project, including schools within the local proximity of the selected project site.

- **Space Template Form for New School Build Projects Including Child Care Centres (Optional)**

School boards have the option to submit a facility space template for requests associated with new school builds (including child care). The template will be reviewed in conjunction with all other materials submitted with the request. If the project is approved by the ministry, the school board may also receive approval for its space template, allowing the school board to immediately attain the services of an architect for this project. The Space Template has been modified to collect room details for any Child Care Centre spaces.

- **Joint Submission - Capital Funding for Child Care Form (If Applicable)**

With support from their local CMSM or DSSAB, school boards have an opportunity to request capital funding for the creation of new child care space as part of their Capital Priorities submission.

For all child care project requests submitted through Capital Priorities, school boards and CMSMs or DSSABs are required to complete a Joint Submission - Capital Funding for Child Care template to request Early Years Capital Program (EYCP) funding. Requests for capital funding must be signed by both the school board and the CMSM or DSSAB.

For information regarding the child care project submissions, please see Appendix B.

Other Considerations for Project Submissions

School Board Considerations

In addition to project specific assessments as detailed in Appendix A, the following school board performance measures will also be considered for all Capital Priorities project categories:

- School board's demonstrated willingness to participate with co-terminus school boards in joint-use school opportunities;
- School board's ability to build to ministry benchmark costs as evidenced by past projects;
- School board's ability to deliver projects within target timeframes as evidenced by past projects;
- School board's history of meeting the ministry's capital accountability measures;
- Accuracy of enrolment projections for previously approved projects; and
- Number of projects the school board currently has underway.

Joint-Use Capital Projects

The ministry encourages all school boards to consider collaborative capital project arrangements between school boards. This includes maximizing the opportunities of co-location, particularly in rural, northern or smaller communities.

The ministry will be reviewing all capital proposals submitted by boards for ministry funding to ensure joint-use opportunities between school boards have been explored before funding is granted.

School boards seeking Capital Priorities funding approval must:

- Document efforts made to explore joint-use opportunities for each capital project funding request as part of the business case submissions; and
- Demonstrate a willingness to participate with co-terminus school boards in joint-use school opportunities.

For joint-use school proposals, all participating boards must:

- Include the project as part of their Capital Priorities submission; and
- Explain the role of the joint-use nature of the project on expected improvements to student programming and operational efficiency.

Pilot of Modular Construction Projects

As part of their written submission, school boards are asked to identify whether they are interested having a project participate in the pilot program. Proposals should illustrate the benefits of the using modular construction over traditional construction to address their pupil accommodation needs.

Communications Protocol

School boards are reminded to follow the ministry's communications protocol requirements for all ministry funded major capital construction projects as outlined in Appendix D. This includes the placement of Ontario Builds signage of project sites within 60 days of receiving funding approval notification.

Should you have any questions related to the communication requirements, please contact MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca.

Ministry Contact

Capital Priorities Program

If you have any Capital Priorities Program questions, or require additional information, please contact the Capital Analyst assigned to your school board or:

- Patrizia Del Riccio, Manager, Capital Program Branch at 416-885-2950 or Patrizia.DelRiccio@ontario.ca or
- Sophie Liu, Manager, Capital Program Branch at 647-402-9597 or Sophie.Liu@ontario.ca or
- Paul Bloye, Director, Capital Program Branch at 416-325-8589 or at Paul.Bloye@ontario.ca.

Child Care Program

If you have any child care program questions, or require additional information, please contact Jeff O'Grady, Manager, Capital Policy Branch at 416-918-1879 or at Jeff.OGrady@ontario.ca.

We look forward to working with you to identify and develop your capital projects.

Other Capital Initiatives:

The 2021-22 Capital Priorities Program is one of the key initiatives under a broader, more ambitious agenda on capital, intended to better support infrastructure investments in the education sector including the following:

Lean Review of Capital Approval Process

The ministry has undertaken a review of its Capital Accountability Process with the intent to identify opportunities to help expedite responses to school boards. Thank you to all of the school boards that participated in the review and provided feedback and suggestions.

The ministry is streamlining and improving the capital approvals process to reduce response timelines. The ministry has already implemented a number of internal changes to its process with a number of more visible changes planned, including:

- the creation of different streams for different types of approvals with service delivery standards for each stream;
- establishing clear expectations for project submissions with templates, guidelines and process maps; and
- increasing transparency and accountability through a request tracking tool available to school boards.

The ministry is taking an agile approach to implementing the various elements of the new process, with a view to test, learn and adapt the processes to improve outcomes.

Update of Modular Construction Pilot

As part of the 2019-20 Capital Priorities program, the ministry announced a Modular Construction

Pilot as a means to better understand innovative opportunities to deliver projects in a more cost effective, expeditious manner. The ministry engaged Infrastructure Ontario to assess potential design and delivery efficiencies in the education sector with a focus on modular construction designs and practices.

Some key findings to successful implementation of modular construction included having design certainty with minimal changes, establishing a pipeline of projects for volume and, to some degree, utilizing a centralized approach for procurement and delivery.

With these learnings, the ministry continues to be interested in potential projects for a Modular Construction Pilot. School boards are requested to indicate whether they are interested having a project participate in the pilot program, to build schools using state of the art modular build technology to reduce time to completion.

Design Standards

The ministry is exploring the potential of design standards and as a means to making school construction more efficient. By using design standards that are tailored to schools, the ministry can achieve key design principles that will lay the groundwork for successful design, including:

- Cost-effective design that supports ministry guidelines, standards, and programs;
- Sustainable design that ensures effective and efficient service delivery;
- Adaptable and flexible design that responds to changing service needs;
- Safe, accessible and inclusive design; and
- Increased opportunities for modular construction, which will help shorten project delivery timelines to ensure schools can be built, and needs can be met, faster.

Urban Development

The ministry recognizes that intensification in high density urban areas poses unique challenges. Finding suitable land for the construction of a school is challenging and expensive. The ministry encourages school boards to pursue opportunities to explore new, innovative ways of thinking about school construction – such as “vertical schools”. The ministry asks that schools boards facing these concerns contact the ministry to discuss further.

We look forward to working with you on advancing these and numerous other initiatives that are part of the ministry’s ambitious capital agenda to ensure funding, programs and supports continue to meet the needs of students and school boards across the province.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

Didem Proulx
Assistant Deputy Minister
Capital and Business Support Division

Appendices:

Appendix A: Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria

Appendix B: Child Care Capital Project Submission Requirements

Appendix C: Communications Protocol Requirements

- c. Senior Business Officials
 - Superintendents and Managers of Facilities Managers of Planning
 - Early Years Leads
 - CAOs of Consolidated Municipal Service Managers CAOs of District Social Services
 - Administration Boards
 - Parm Bhatthal, Director, Field Services Branch, Ministry of Education

Appendix A: Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria

Eligible Project Categories

Projects eligible for funding consideration for this round of the Capital Priorities Program must meet one or more of the following category descriptions:

1) Accommodation Pressure:

Projects will accommodate pupils where enrolment presently is or is projected to persistently exceed capacity at a school or within a group of schools, and students are currently housed in non-permanent space (e.g., portables).

Assessment of projects will include reviewing school-level capacity of impacted schools, including those in close proximity, historical enrolment trends, enrolment forecasts, and geographic distribution of students.

- Priority consideration for funding purposes will be given to projects with a utilization equal to or greater than 100% (including area schools) in the 5th year after the proposed school opening date as per the business case template.

2) School Consolidation and Facility Condition:

Projects that support the reduction of excess capacity in order to decrease operating and renewal costs, and/or address renewal need backlogs. These projects may also provide other benefits such as improved program offerings, accessibility or energy efficiency.

Projects associated with consolidations and/or closures that require a Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) that has yet to be completed will not be eligible for funding purposes.

Note: School boards will be asked to confirm that schools identified to be closed as part of the proposed solution will be closed and removed from the school board's assets within two years of completion of the approved project.

Assessments will be based on the projected operating and renewal savings and the removal of renewal backlog needs relative to the project cost.

- Priority will be given to projects with an expected Internal Rate of Return equal to or greater than 2.5%. This will be calculated using the expected cost of the project compared to the expected savings resulting from proposed solution as per the business case template.

3) French-language Accommodation:

Projects will provide access to French-language facilities where demographics warrant. Such projects will only be considered for funding if the school board can demonstrate that a French-language population is not being served by existing French-language school facilities.

Note: Project requests associated with French-language facilities in existing geographic areas experiencing accommodation pressures will be reviewed for funding consideration based on

the Accommodation Pressure criteria identified above.

Assessment of projects will include enrolment forecasts, geographic distribution of students, reviewing school-level capacity of impacted schools, including those in close proximity and potential alternative solutions.

Ineligible Projects

Projects matching the following descriptions will not be considered for Capital Priorities funding purposes:

- Projects addressing an accommodation pressure as a result of a specialized or alternative program such as French Immersion;
- Projects for additional child care space that is not associated with a capital priorities school project (i.e., child care only project requests);
- Projects associated with consolidations and/or closures where a Pupil Accommodation Review has not been completed;
- Requests for Land Priorities funding for site acquisitions;
- Projects addressing the renewal needs of a facility; and
- Projects addressing school board administrative space.

The ministry will expect that school boards will explore various options before submitting their business cases for a specific option. School boards must be able to identify the cost differentiation and considerations of various options within its submitted business case.

Previously Approved Capital Priorities Projects and Scope Change Requests

If school boards are considering a scope change for a previously approved capital priorities project, they may be required to resubmit the project through the Capital Priorities Program. Please contact your Capital Analyst for further clarification.

Appendix B: Child Care Capital Project Submission Requirements

Child Care Eligibility

The ministry will consider funding child care centre capital projects in schools where there is a need for new child care construction and/or renovations to existing child care spaces for children 0 to 3.8 years of age. School boards will need to have the support of the corresponding Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) or District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) regarding the eligibility and viability requirements to build or renovate child care rooms in the identified school.

When selecting a school for child care centre capital, school boards and CMSMs and DSSABs should consider available operating funding, cost effectiveness of the capital project, school capacity, location, long-term viability, age groups, accommodation pressures/service gaps, demand, local child care plan, etc. prior to signing the Early Years Joint Submission.

When considering long-term school viability, school board planners and CMSMs and DSSABs must consider at least the next five years and use population projections as well as other local data to inform submission decisions including an assessment of:

- Cost effectiveness of the project, including anticipated additional site, construction, labour/material or municipal costs associated with the project.
- Whether the school has existing child care centre space.
- The average daily enrollment and the on-the-ground capacity of the school.
- Current utilization rates, and historical/forward trend analysis.
- School board capacity to support cost overages and implementation.

Child Care Operational and Accountability Requirements

Approved new construction of child care rooms must meet the following operational and accountability requirements:

- The child care centre rooms are viable within existing CMSM or DSSAB operating funding.
- The physical space will be owned by the school board and leased to the child care operator or CMSM or DSSAB. School boards are not to charge operators beyond a cost-recovery level.
- School boards should operate on a cost-recovery basis and recover their accommodation costs (e.g., rent, heating, lighting, cleaning, maintenance, and repair costs) directly from child care operators and/or CMSMs and DSSABs as per the school board's usual leasing process. School boards should not absorb additional school board facility costs (e.g., custodial, heat, and lighting) and renewal costs (e.g., windows) through ministry funding, such as the School Facility Operations or Renewal Grant. School boards are not expected to take on additional costs to support facility partnerships, although school boards will continue to use their discretion in supporting partnerships based on their student achievement strategy.
- School boards are required to follow the capital construction approval process for the new construction and/or renovations of child care centre rooms as per the ministry's Capital Accountability Requirements.
- School boards will require an Approval to Proceed (ATP) before the child care capital

project can be tendered.

- School boards, CMSMs and DSSABs and/or child care operators should contact their child care licensing representative as soon as possible as all child care centre capital projects require a floor plan approval letter issued by the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch prior to receiving an ATP or starting construction. In order to streamline the floor plan approval process, school boards, CMSMs and DSSABs and/or child care operators should note to their child care licensing representative if the child care floor plan has been used in the past (i.e., a repeat child care floor plan design) or if the child care floor plan will be used for multiple child care sites in the near future.
- Child care centre space will not count as loaded space.
- School boards will be held accountable for implementing appropriate measures to ensure that the cost and scope of approved child care centre capital projects are within the approved project funding.
- Rooms must be built in accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA).
- It is expected that all new child care centre rooms funded under this policy will be built to accommodate a maximum group size (at 2.8m² per child, as per the CCEYA) for each age grouping for children 0 to 3.8 years (e.g., 10 infant spaces, 15 toddler spaces, 24 preschool spaces, and 15 family age grouping spaces), and that child care centre rooms will be for exclusive use during the core school day. Although unobstructed space requirements are per child, infant, toddler and family age group sizes require additional space for separate sleep areas, change area, etc. these should be considered when developing child care floor plans. Consideration should also include the long-term use of the room, including the ability to convert to serve other child care age groups in future.
- It is important that school boards and CMSMs and DSSABs are taking into consideration licensed child care operator viability, and flexibility where appropriate, when determining appropriate mix of age groupings. Programs created will support continuity of services for children and families in order to accommodate children as they age out of programs. For example, if a toddler room is included in the child care capital project proposal a preschool room should also be available, unless a family age grouping room is in place.
- For the purpose of this policy, an eligible child care operator:
 - has a purchase of service agreement with the CMSM or DSSAB; or
 - is a licensed child care centre that is eligible to receive fee subsidy payments from the CMSM or DSSAB.
- Capital funding for a child care centre cannot be used to address other school board capital needs. Funding will not be provided for school-age child care spaces (except spaces within a family age grouping room) as the ministry will not fund exclusive space for before and after school child care programs.

Appendix C: Communications Protocol - Public Communications, Events and Signage

Acknowledgement of Support

School boards are required to acknowledge the support of the Government of Ontario in proactive media-focused communications of any kind, written or oral, relating to the agreement or the project. This could include but is not limited to:

- Reports
- Announcements
- Speeches
- Advertisements, publicity
- Promotional materials including, brochures, audio-visual materials, web communications or any other public communications.

This is not required for:

- Minor interactions on social media, including social media such as Twitter
- Reactive communications, such as media calls.

All public events and announcements regarding capital investments in the publicly funded education system are considered joint communications opportunities for the provincial government, the school board, as well as Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Service Administration Boards (CMSMs and DSSABs); and/or community partners.

Issuing a Media Release

When issuing a media release or other media-focused communication, school boards, CMSMs/DSSABs, and or community partners must:

- Recognize the Ministry of Education's role in funding the project
- Contact the ministry to receive additional content for public communications, such as a quote from the minister.

You can send your draft public communications to MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca to obtain a quote or other information for your public product.

Note: The ministry may also choose to issue its own news release about various project milestones. If the ministry chooses to do so, school boards, CMSMs/DSSABs, and/or community partners will be notified.

Invitations to the Minister of Education

Openings

School boards are to invite the Minister of Education to all openings of:

- New schools
- Additions that include new child care spaces, EarlyON Child and Family centres, or community hubs.

To invite the minister to your event:

- Send an email invitation as soon as possible to MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca

- Where appropriate please copy the ministry's regional manager in the Field Services Branch for your area
- Please do not move forward with your event until you have received a response from the ministry (you will be notified within 15 business days of the event as to the minister's attendance)
- Inform the ministry via the email address above if the date of your event changes.

Note: If the minister is unable to attend, your invitation may be shared with another government representative. Their office will contact you directly to coordinate details. Announcements do not need to be delayed to accommodate the minister. The goal is to make sure that the ministry is aware of the opportunity.

All Other Events

For all other media-focused public events, (e.g. sod turnings):

- Send an invitation to the minister at MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca with at least three weeks' notice
- Copy the ministry's regional manager in the Field Services Branch, in your area, where appropriate.

Note: These "other" events should not be delayed to accommodate the minister. Only an invitation needs to be sent; a response is not mandatory to proceed.

Ontario Builds Signage

NEW – The Government of Ontario is introducing Ontario Builds signage.

For approved Capital Priorities, Early Years Capital and Child Care Capital projects, school boards will be required to display Ontario Builds signage at the site of construction that identifies the financial support of the Government of Ontario.

School boards are responsible for the following:

- Producing and paying for Ontario Builds signage. For the Ontario Builds artwork and the visual identity guide, please access www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-builds-templates for templates to create the signage.
 - These are examples of project descriptions that could be used on the school board sign: "New school and child care centre," "New school," or "New school addition."
 - Francophone communities, consider producing both English and French signage.
- Providing the ministry with a digital proof of the sign which to be sent via email to MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca. Ministry approval of the digital proof must be received before finalizing and physically producing Ontario Builds signage.
- Posting signs in a timely manner. Please ensure a sign is present at the construction site at all stages – before construction work starts and throughout construction.
- Displaying permanent sign(s) for major school and /or early years and child care projects identified by the ministry in a prominent location that does not obstruct traffic or cause safety concerns, particularly if the sign is located near roads. To avoid potential safety

issues, school boards should ensure the appropriate provincial and municipal authorities are consulted on Ontario Builds signage.

- Removing the signage within six months of the completion of the project.
- Providing the ministry with a photograph after the sign has been installed; please send to MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca.
- Maintaining the signage to be in a good state of repair for the duration of the project.

Note: For projects that are co-funded, such as by a municipality or the federal government, use the Ontario Builds visual identity guide for partnership signage. Also, please facilitate signage approval from the partners.

Contact

Should you have any questions related to this communications protocol or Ontario Build signage, please send your questions via email to MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca.

Note: 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.