

**Ministry of Education**

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**2019: B17**

**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:** Joshua Paul  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Capital and Business Support Division

**DATE:** **July 22, 2019**

**SUBJECT:** **Announcement of launch of 2019-20 Capital Priorities  
Program, including Child Care Capital Funding and  
review of School Construction Standards**

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This memorandum provides details of the launch of the 2019-20 Capital Priorities Program, including requests for child care capital. Additionally, the ministry will initiate a review of its School Construction Standards.

The Capital Priorities Program (CPP) provides 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 child care spaces in schools.

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## Summary of the 2019-20 Capital Priorities Program

- The submission deadline for all capital funding requests is **September 30, 2019**.
- The 2019-20 Capital Priorities projects are expected to be completed and open no later than the 2023-24 school year.
- School boards have an opportunity to request child care capital funding for Capital Priorities projects, if the local Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) or District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) support the need and confirm the proposed new space will not result in an operating pressure for the CMSM or DSSAB.
- 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.
- School boards are required to seek ministry approval during key project milestones. The ministry is developing options to increase school board compliance to the existing capital approval process.
- 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.

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## Design Standardization and Benchmark Review

School boards are encouraged to standardize and repeat the design of new school construction. Going forward, the ministry will explore opportunities to drive efficiencies in the design and procurement of new school construction.

This work will recognize the need to review the existing cost and space benchmarks, building on the work first developed by the Expert Panel on Capital Standards in 2009-10.

School boards are encouraged to look at creative and lower-cost solutions (e.g., locating a school within a podium instead of purchasing acres of land) when developing business cases for consideration that also address accessibility in the design and meet requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA).

## 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 2023-24 school year. School boards are invited to identify up to their 10 most urgent Capital Priorities and submit the associated business cases through the School Facilities Inventory System (SFIS) in order to be considered for funding approval.

New for the 2019-20 Capital Priorities Program, there are **two template reports** that are required to be submitted per submission:

### 1) Business Case - Part A (Enrolment and School Capacity Data)

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.

### 2) Business Case - Part B (Written Report)

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 have not been pursued.

For information regarding the eligibility and evaluation criteria for project submissions, please see Appendix A.

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## **Child Care Space in Schools**

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 through Capital Priorities, school boards and their local CMSM or DSSAB partner must complete and submit a *Joint Submission - Capital Funding for Child Care* form with their Capital Priorities business case.

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

## **Other Considerations for Project Submissions**

### **Pilot of Modular Construction Methods**

The ministry continues to seek opportunities to identify efficiencies related to the provision of pupil accommodation. For this round of the Capital Priorities Program, the ministry will run a pilot program to assess the merits of modular construction. As such, the ministry will be considering for selection projects to be constructed using modular methods.

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.

### **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 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.

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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.

## **Submission Requirements Summary**

The 2019-20 Capital Priorities submission requirements include the following documents:

- 1) Business Case - Part A (Enrolment and School Capacity Data)**
- 2) Business Case - Part B (Written Report)**
- 3) Joint Submission - Capital Funding for Child Care Form (If Applicable)**

School boards will be able to access Capital Priorities submission templates and *Joint Submission - Capital Funding for Child Care* form through SFIS.

School boards are required to submit their completed submissions through SFIS no later than September 30, 2019. The ministry will not accept submissions after this date.

## **Capital Priorities Program – Project Accountability Framework**

The ministry has established a series of measures and guidelines regarding the development and construction of major capital projects. As part of the ministry's capital approval process, boards are required to seek ministry approval during key project milestones. Please see Appendix C: Capital Approval Process Chart for further details.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the frequency of projects proceeding without following the Project Accountability Framework. As a result, ministry staff are developing options to increase school board compliance to the existing capital approval process.

## **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.

Should you have any questions related to the communication requirements, please contact Dylan Franks, Senior Information Officer, Communications Branch at 437-225-7712 or [Dylan.Franks@ontario.ca](mailto:Dylan.Franks@ontario.ca).

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## 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](mailto:Patrizia.DelRiccio@ontario.ca) or

Paul Bloye, Director, Capital Program Branch at 416-325-8589 or at [Paul.Bloye@ontario.ca](mailto: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](mailto:Jeff.OGrady@ontario.ca).

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

*Original signed by:*

Joshua Paul  
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: Capital Approval Process Chart  
Appendix D: 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  
Debra Cormier, Director, Field Services Branch, Ministry of Education

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## 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).
- 2) School Consolidations: Projects that support the reduction of excess capacity in order to decrease operating and renewal costs and 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 will not be eligible for funding purposes.
- 3) Facility Condition: Projects will replace schools that have higher renewal needs than the cost of constructing a new facility of approximately the same size.
- 4) French-language Accommodation: Projects will provide access to French-language facilities where demographics warrant. Such projects will only be considered eligible if the school board can demonstrate that there is enough French-language population not being served by an existing French-language school facility.

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 priority school project (i.e., stand-alone child care project);
- Projects associated with consolidations and/or closures where a Pupil Accommodation Review has not been completed;
- Requests for Land Priorities funding;
- Projects that have been previously funded by either the ministry or the school board;
- Projects that should be funded through renewal funding; and
- Projects addressing school board administrative space.

If school boards are considering resubmitting previously submitted projects that did not receive Capital Priorities funding approval, they are encouraged to review ministry

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comments in funding decision letters. Please contact your Capital Analyst for further clarification.

## **Project Evaluation**

The ministry will assess all proposed projects using project-specific quantitative and qualitative measures depending upon the category of the project.

For Accommodation Pressures and French-Language Accommodation projects:

- Assessments will be based on school-level capacity of impacted schools, including those in close proximity, historical enrolment trends, enrolment forecasts, and geographic distribution of students; and
- Priority consideration will be given to projects that are addressing accommodation pressures with a utilization greater than 100%, including consideration of available capacity in nearby schools, within the next five to nine years.

For Facility Condition and past School Consolidation projects:

- Assessments will be based on the projected operating and renewal savings and the removal of renewal backlog needs relative to the project cost; and
- Priority will be given to projects with the highest expected Internal Rate of Return. This will be calculated using the expected cost of the project compared to the expected savings resulting from the project.

For child care projects:

- Assessments will also be based on an evaluation of the project's cost-effectiveness, including any anticipated site costs or costs related to the displacement of school space, and how the project addresses community needs and service gaps; and
- Priority will be given to projects in new schools.

In addition to project specific assessments, 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;
- Enrolment and utilization trends for projects of the school board which have previously been funded; and
- Number of projects the school board currently has underway and the status of these projects in relation to approved funding and opening dates.

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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.

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## **Appendix B: Child Care Capital Project Submission Requirements**

### **Child Care Eligibility**

The ministry will consider funding child care capital projects as part of new school and larger school construction projects under Capital Priorities, 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, school boards, CMSMs and DSSABs should consider available operating funding, school capacity, location, long-term viability, cost effectiveness, age groups, accommodation pressures/service gaps, demand, local child care plan, etc. prior to signing the child care joint submission. When considering long-term school viability, school board planners, 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:

- Existing empty space within the school.
- Whether or not the school is in an accommodation review, and could potentially close, consolidate or remain open.
- Whether or not the child care could potentially be part of a joint use capital project, especially in rural, northern, and small communities.
- Whether the school has existing child care space.
- The average daily enrollment and the on-the-ground capacity of the school.
- Current utilization rates, and historical/forward trend analysis.
- Number of existing empty classrooms.

### **Ministry Prioritization of Eligible Child Care Capital Projects**

The ministry will use the following factors to prioritize child care capital projects under this policy should the number of eligible submissions surpass available funding:

- whether the child care space is part of a new school (projects in new school are a priority);
- cost effectiveness of project;
- community need/service gaps;
- child care replacement due to school closure/accommodation review; and
- equitable geographic disbursement of new child care spaces.

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## Child Care Operational and Accountability Requirements

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

- The child care rooms will not result in an operating pressure for the CMSM or DSSAB.
- The physical space will be owned by the school board and leased to the child care operator, CMSM or DSSAB. School boards are not to charge operators beyond a cost-recovery level.
- School boards will 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/or DSSABs as per the school board's usual leasing process. 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 rooms. As per the ministry's Capital Accountability Requirements, school boards will be required to submit a space template before designing the project, where applicable. School boards will require an approval to proceed (ATP) before the project can be tendered.
- School boards, CMSMs and DSSABs should contact their child care licensing representative as soon as possible as all child care 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 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 space will not count as loaded space for the purposes of the facility space template. The facility space template should provide details of the child care space under the section "Community Use Rooms."
- School boards will be held accountable for implementing appropriate measures to ensure that the cost and scope of approved child care capital projects are within the approved project funding and do not exceed the ministry's benchmarks.
- Rooms must be built in accordance with the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA).

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- It is expected that all new child care rooms funded under this policy will be built to accommodate a maximum group size 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 rooms will be for exclusive use during the core school day. Although unobstructed space requirements are per child, infant and toddler group sizes require additional space for separate sleep areas, change area, etc. These should be considered when developing child care floor plans. Considerations should also include the long-term use of the room, including the ability to convert to other child care age groups or for classroom use.
- It is important that school boards, 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:
  - is a third-party operator or municipal operator; and
  - is expected to continue operating in the location for at least five years; and
  - 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 child care cannot be used to address other school board capital needs. Funding will not be provided for school-age child care spaces as the ministry will not fund exclusive space for before and after school child care programs.

## **Child Care Capital Funding Calculation and Eligible Expenses**

The construction of child care rooms will be funded using the current elementary school construction benchmarks (for both elementary and secondary schools under this policy), including the site-specific geographic adjustment factor (GAF). For this policy, the loading factor used to calculate the capital funding will be 26 pupil places per room regardless of age groupings (e.g., infant, toddler, preschool, and family age grouping rooms will all be funded based on 26 pupil places per room). This approach allows school boards to build child care rooms at maximum group size and allow flexibility to address potential changes under the CCEYA. This funding formula will apply to all new construction of child care, including the replacement of existing child care due to school closure or accommodation review.

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$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Capital Funding for} \\ \text{New Construction of} \\ \text{Child Care Rooms} \end{array} = \begin{array}{r} 26 \\ \text{Pupil} \\ \text{Places} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{r} \text{Elementary} \\ \text{Construction} \\ \text{Cost} \\ \text{Benchmark} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{r} \text{Elementary} \\ \text{Area} \\ \text{Benchmark} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{r} \text{Site} \\ \text{Specific} \\ \text{GAF} \end{array}$$

**Note: The capital funding for renovation projects for child care will be a maximum of 50 per cent of the capital funding for new construction projects.**

Eligible expenses include:

- first-time equipping; and
- expenses incurred to meet CCEYA and Building Code standards, which qualify under the Tangible Capital Assets Guideline (TCA), revised April 2015.

## **Application Process – Child Care Joint Submission**

The Child Care Joint Submission includes project details and confirms that the child care program meets all eligibility and viability requirements.

In order to be considered for funding for the construction of new child care rooms, school boards must work with their CMSM or DSSAB to submit a jointly signed Child Care Joint Submission. School boards must submit a Child Care Joint Submission signed by both the CMSM or DSSAB Manager of Child Care and Early Years System, the school board Early Years Lead, Capital Lead, and Director of Education.

The Child Care Joint Submission is to be downloaded, completed, and uploaded into the School Facility Information System (SFIS) as well as submitted to school board's Ministry Early Years Regional Staff and Capital Analyst.

Early Years Joint Submissions must be received by the ministry by **September 30, 2019**.

The ministry may request supporting documentation following a review of the Child Care Joint Submission.

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## Appendix C: Capital Approval Process Chart

Capital Construction Approval Process Updated Spring 2019		New Schools*		All Additions* (incl. Early Years)		All Major Retrofits* (incl. Early Years)		Small Early Years* (Child Care, Child & Family)
		Repeat Design	New Design	>50% or >\$3.0M	<50% and <\$3.0M	>50% or >\$3.0M	<50% and <\$3.0M	Individual Projects <\$250K
Pre-Design	Facility Space Template	Complete template with most recent adaptation (<5 years)	Board to submit template before hiring architect	Board to submit template before hiring architect	Not Required	Board to submit template before hiring architect	Not Required	Not Required
	Project Manager	Board to appoint a Project Manager (either internal staff or external resource). Board to notify Ministry of name and contact info.						
	Ministry Approval	Ministry must approve scope of project based upon submitted Space Template	Ministry must approve scope of project based upon submitted Space Template	Ministry must approve scope of project based upon submitted Space Template	Not Required	Ministry must approve scope of project based upon submitted Space Template	Not Required	Not Required
	GOAL	Board to retain an architect.						
Pre-Tender	Independent Cost Consultant Report	Board to submit final cost of recent adaptation (<5 years)	Board to submit an Independent Cost Consultant Report before issuing tender	Board to submit an Independent Cost Consultant Report before issuing tender	Not Required	Board to submit an Independent Cost Consultant Report before issuing tender	Not Required	Not Required
	Approval to Proceed (ATP) Request	Board's senior business official to submit the ATP Request Form confirming total estimated project costs does not exceed board's identified funding, including a floor plan approval letter for the child care component.						Not Required
	Capital Analysis & Planning Tool (CAPT)	Board to confirm that data entered in the CAPT for the requested project is in line with the data provided through the ATP Request Form.						Not Required
	Ministry Approval	Ministry's approval required before proceeding to tender. Approval based on identification of sufficient funding.						Not Required
GOAL	Board to proceed to tender.							
Post-Tender	Tender exceeds approved funding	Board to either identify additional funding available or make design changes to reduce the project cost. In either case, the board must demonstrate to the Ministry that sufficient funding is available to complete the project.						
	Tender meets approved funding	Board to accept tender bid. Important to ensure all project costs are identified and considered.						
Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry approvals are not required for retrofits that are 100% funded through School Condition Improvement and Early Years Funding less than \$250K.</li> <li>Consultant to review the design, provide costing analysis and advice, and report on options to ensure cost containment. To be based on drawings that are at least 80% complete.</li> <li>50% determined by the following: (Estimated project cost / Latest construction benchmark value of the existing OTG (pre-construction) of the facility).</li> </ul> <p>* If a child care component is included as part of the project, a floor plan approval letter issued by the Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch of the Ministry of Education must be submitted as part of the ATP request.</p>							
Definitions:	<p><b>Addition:</b> Expansion of the gross floor area of a facility, including child care and child and family program rooms.</p> <p><b>Major Retrofit:</b> Major structural renovation or reconstruction of the existing building envelop, including child care and child and family program rooms. It does not include expansion of the existing gross floor area. Any project that does expand the gross floor area, but is funded with Ministry funds or &gt;\$1M in Accumulated Surplus is treated as a Major Retrofit.</p>							

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## Appendix D: Communications Protocol Public Communications, Events and Signage

All public announcements regarding capital investments in the publicly funded education system are **joint** communications opportunities for the provincial government, the school board, the CMSM/DSSAB, and/or community partners.

### Acknowledgement of Support

Acknowledge the support of the Government of Ontario in your 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 where content is restricted
- Reactive communications, such as media calls.

### 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 of Education to receive additional content for public communications, such as a quote from the minister.

You can **send your public communications to [Dylan.Franks@ontario.ca](mailto:Dylan.Franks@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 contacted in advance.

### Invitations to the Minister of Education

The Minister of Education must be invited to all public events relating to ministry-funded capital projects. This includes:

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- Openings of new schools
- Openings of additions and major renovations including those with new child care spaces, child and family programs, or community hubs.
- Sod turnings and ground breakings
- Ribbon cuttings
- Official blessings

To invite the minister to your event:

- Send an email invitation **at least six weeks in advance of your event** to [minister.edu@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.edu@ontario.ca)
- Where appropriate please copy the ministry's regional manager in the Field Services Branch, for your area
- 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 minister is aware of the opportunity.

## Signage

The government is currently reviewing its approach to signage on capital projects, you will be notified of changes, if appropriate.

## Contact

Should you have any questions related to this communications protocol, please contact Dylan Franks at 437-225-7712 or via email at [dylan.franks@ontario.ca](mailto:dylan.franks@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.