

**SEAC Questions – Toronto Catholic District School Board
SEAC Meeting – Wednesday, March 8, 2023**

1. Tutoring - What are the new tutoring supports?

- The Plan to Catch Up announced on July 25, 2022 builds on the ministry’s Learning Recovery Action Plan released in February 2022 – a five-point plan to strengthen learning recovery. As part of this plan, \$175 million in funding is being invested to expand access to tutoring in small groups after school, during school, on weekends, and over the summer. This province-wide program began in April 2022 and will run until March 2023. Each school board oversees the design and implementation of the tutoring supports program to meet the diverse needs of their students.

There has also been an expansion of online tutoring through Mathify and Eurêka, with an additional \$1.4 million being invested annually to provide year-round online tutoring supports in math and reading. This includes scaling up Mathify online 1:1 tutoring services to include additional grades (previously Grades 6-10, now 4-12) and expanded weekend hours. Investments have also expanded Eurêka! online tutoring services to reach more students in French for Grades 1 and 2 and Math for Grades 7-9 and 11-12.

Mathify is now available to English-language students in Grades 4-12 weekdays from 9 am – 9 pm and weekends from 3 pm – 9 pm. French-language students in Grades 1-12 can access Monday to Thursday, 4 pm – 9 pm, and Sunday from 5 pm to 9 pm.

In addition, in October 2022, the government launched Catch Up Payments, offering parents \$200 or \$250 per child to help offset costs as they support their children to catch up on their learning. This new initiative commits a total of \$365 million in direct financial relief for parents. Parents can use their direct payments for additional tutoring supports, from the provider of their choice, or for supplies and equipment that support learning.

In 2022-23, school boards also have access to \$8.4M in funding for tutoring supports through the Tutoring Allocation with the Targeted Student Supports Envelope in the Learning Opportunities Grant of the Grants for Student Needs (GSN).

2. Tutoring and Devices - What is the Ontario government doing to support children who don't have electronic devices to get help with tutorial supports and schoolwork?

- As outlined in the 2022-23 Education Funding Technical Paper, the Pupil Foundation Grant covers items such as classroom computers and student technological devices. In addition, the Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Allocation within the Special Education Grant of the GSN, can be used for items such as computers, software, robotics, computing-related devices, and other required supporting equipment as identified for use by students with special education needs.

Parents can get financial support to help with the costs of their child's tutoring, supplies or equipment during the 2022–23 school year. Eligible applicants will receive a one-time payment of:

- \$200 for each student between kindergarten and Grade 12, up to age 18
- \$250 for each student with special education needs between kindergarten and Grade 12, up to age 21

The deadline to apply is March 31, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. EST. Please see the website for more information: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/catch-up-payments>.

3. Right to Read - What are the evidence-based screening tools that will be used for screening reading twice a year?

- The Ministry of Education continues to work with education partners on recommended screening tools and associated supports for use in the 2023-24 school year. More information will be shared when it becomes available

4. How is the government supporting school boards with special education programming for students in French Immersion programs?

- French as a Second Language programs are for all students. Ministry guidance on "Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs, A Guide for Ontario Schools" was published in 2015. Since then, there has been a steady increase in students with special education needs enrolled in French Immersion. The ministry has provided funding for multiple organizations to develop targeted resources and learning opportunities for teachers. Resources and webinars can be found on the websites of Transforming FSL (e.g. 2022 Virtual Learning Series "Special Education Needs") and the Ontario Modern Languages Teachers Association (e.g. 2020 Modules: "Positive Classroom Environment" "Engaging the Learner" and "Assessment and Evaluation").

5. Ministry Terms - What is the definition and purpose of each of the following?

- **Technical Paper** - details the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding formulas that are used to calculate school boards' funding allocations for budgeting and financial reporting purposes.
- **The Uniform Code of Accounts (COA)** - outlines the Ministry of Education's detailed financial data requirements for Ontario school boards. The document is structured such that account segments are grouped together to form unique account codes. The groupings of accounts, as set forth in the COA, reflect the level of detail that the Ministry of Education requires from school boards.
- **EFIS** - The Education Finance Information System, or EFIS, is a web-based reporting system for district school boards and child care recipients to report financial data to the ministry. EFIS has the following purposes for school boards:
 - Grant calculation: EFIS implements each year's GSN funding formula, by using enrolment and other input data to calculate funding allocations based on the benchmarks, table amounts, and descriptions from the regulation.
 - Financial reporting: School boards report detailed financial information in EFIS so that their data can be consolidated into the Public Accounts of the province. Capital expenditure details are also reported, for capital transfer payment purposes.
 - Compliance with enveloping provisions (restrictions on how funding is spent), balanced budget requirements: School boards report spending details of allocations that are restricted for specific purposes through legislation (Regulation 193/10 Restricted Purpose Revenues), so that EFIS can calculate the allowable amount of revenue available for specific expenditures. EFIS also calculates compliance with balanced budget provisions (Education Act section 231(1), Regulation 488/10 Determination of Boards' Surpluses and Deficits, Regulation 280/19 Calculation of Maximum In-Year Deficit).
 - Fees calculation: EFIS calculates the fees to be charged to Indigenous pupils and the minimum fees to be charged to international students each year, based on direction in the Technical Paper. These calculated values are then loaded to a table in each year's fees regulation.
 - Other data collection: EFIS collects other data from school boards needed for specific purposes, such as staffing full-time equivalency (FTE) values by union group (used for payments to provincial benefits trusts).
- **Regulations on Restricted purpose revenues** - indicate how certain funding provided can be spent. For instance, a board shall use the amount determined for school condition improvement (part of the board's pupil accommodation allocation) under the legislative grant regulations only for the purpose of school condition improvement expenditures as defined in the regulation.
- **GSN legislative grants** – a regulation made under the Education Act before the start of each school year that sets out how to calculate annual funding amounts for school boards in Ontario and authorizes the ministry to flow funding to the

boards. The regulation may be amended during the year to reflect new policies or additional information from boards.

6. Mental Health - What is the process by which the government consults with parents about building a good mental health foundation for all students?

- As part of their 3-year strategy, School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON), the ministry's implementation partner for student mental health, focuses on explicit and intentional Parent, Caregiver, and Community Connections and Support. The goal is to strengthen relationships, build mental health literacy, codevelop collaborative mental health promotion initiatives, and reinforce common understandings and messaging for young people.

7. Mental Health - What has been the result of the cross-sector consultation regarding Mental Health?

- The Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Ministry of Health- conducted a cross-sector consultation on student mental health with over 100 organizations from the child and youth mental health and education sectors, including student and parent groups. The purpose of the consultation was to gather knowledge about what is happening in schools and community child and youth agencies related to mental health, and to improve coordination of mental health resources and services in schools and communities. Information from the consultation will inform next steps.

8. Mental Health - How are School Mental Health Ontario and the Ministry of Education working together to support mentally healthy elementary and secondary classrooms in Ontario?

- The Ministry of Education works with School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON) and district school boards to equip educators with the tools and knowledge they need to identify potential child and youth mental health and addictions issues.
- SMH-ON is the ministry's implementation partner for student mental health. SMH-ON was established in 2011 and provides implementation support to all 72 publicly funded school boards to promote consistent, evidence-based, made in Ontario programs, resources, and tools to standardize school based mental health across the province.
- SMH-ON has expertise in the area of student mental health and implementation science. It takes a collaborative approach to working closely with Mental Health Leadership teams in all school boards by providing regular, ongoing coaching and support for the implementation of school board mental health strategies and action plans.

- SMH-ON is providing educators, system leaders and mental health professionals in Ontario's publicly funded school boards with additional culturally responsive resources, tools and coaching to support the mental health and well-being of all students.

9. Grant to Parents - \$200 was provided to parents to help their child catch up with school through learning supports.

- **If the parent has a receipt of more than \$200 in extra learning supports can the parent apply for more than the \$200?**

Catch Up Payments provide eligible parents/guardians with one-time support of either:

- \$200 for each eligible student between kindergarten and Grade 12, up to age 18; **OR**
 - \$250 for each eligible student with special education needs between kindergarten and Grade 12, up to age 21
- **Eligible parents/guardians may only apply to receive one payment for each eligible student. How did the government come up with \$200 as enough to cover learning supports such as tutoring services?**

Parents have the flexibility to choose from a range of the learning supports such as tutoring services (e.g., private providers such as retired teachers/university students, incorporated businesses, or non-profit organizations) and all supplies and equipment that support student learning.

The funding amount is comparable to support provided to families through similar programs.

- **If there were 2 years of disruptions, why is the deadline not extended to 2 years instead of March 2023?**

Applications for Catch Up Payments will be accepted from October 20, 2022 to March 31, 2023. This gives parents/guardians just over five months to determine if they are eligible and wish to apply for this funding.