

Ontario Launching Pilot Program to Support Students with Autism in Schools

Program Aims to Improve Learning Experience of Students with Autism

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Ontario is improving school-based supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by launching a new pilot project for the 2017-18 school year.

The pilot program will:

- Provide dedicated spaces for external practitioners of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) to deliver on-site autism services.
- Provide education assistants with access to voluntary 40-hour online targeted training and professional learning sessions.
- Provide funding to hire an ABA expertise professional with Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) certification/qualification or equivalent qualification.

The pilot is available in 18 school boards and aims to improve the experience of students with ASD by reducing the number of transitions for students during the school day between home, school and community-based supports and services. Through training and professional expertise, the pilot will also work to improve the capacity of school teams to provide skilled support to students with ASD.

The pilots will be reviewed by an external researcher to monitor and evaluate the success of the project, including the evaluation of the inclusive practices developed by the participating schools. The researcher's findings, along with recommendations from a Provincial Advisory Team, will inform the future direction of in school supports for students with ASD.

Enabling more students to achieve success in school and beyond is part of our plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives.

QUOTES

" Ontario is taking action to ensure that all students have access to the supports they need to succeed in school, and in their lives. This pilot project is a critical first step toward greater integration of ASD supports across the province."

- Mitzie Hunter

Minister of Education

" We have heard from families that services for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) must be consistent from home, to school to the community. We are committed to moving ahead with regulation of ABA providers, and to working closely with our partners across government to deliver better quality, more integrated services for young people with ASD and their families."

- Michael Coteau

Minister of Children and Youth Services

" The OAC has been advocating since 2005 for the rights of students to access meaningful ABA in the classroom to help them learn. While this announcement is a long-awaited first step, it is a step in the right direction. The OAC looks forward to seeing a continued commitment by the Ministry of Education to ensure that all students with ASD have access to appropriate ABA services and ABA trained staff at school, to give students with autism the support and education they are entitled to."

- Bruce McIntosh

Ontario Autism Coalition

QUICK FACTS

- Ontario is committing approximately \$5 million to the one-year pilot project.
- Schools from English and French public and English and French Catholic schools systems are represented in the pilot and are located across the province.
- More than 20,000 students identified with ASD are currently being supported in Ontario's publicly funded school system.
- Ontario is making an unprecedented investment to create new services and supports across Ontario for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. This includes the creation of the new Ontario Autism Program, which is providing an expanded and more individualized program of supports for children, youth and their families.

LEARN MORE

- [Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Schools – about the pilot program](#)
- [Special Education – information for parents](#)
- [Ontario Transforming Autism Services for Children and Their Families](#)
- [Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario](#)
- [2017-18 Grants for Student Needs](#)

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Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Schools

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services are partnering on a one-year Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The pilot will take place during the 2017-18 school year and has two approaches:

- **Targeted Education Assistant (EA) Training**
 - This approach will explore a targeted 40-hour online training module for EAs designed by Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBA) and based on the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board (BACB) Registered Behaviour Technician (RBT) task list.
- **Dedicated Space for Autism Services**
 - This approach will explore the provision of dedicated space on school site in a select number of schools for external ABA practitioners to provide direct service to students with ASD.
 - Students with ASD enrolled in a pilot school who are receiving ABA services from an external ABA practitioner are eligible to receive services in the dedicated space.

A total of eighteen boards will be participating in the pilot. Eleven pilot boards will be participating in both approaches while the remaining seven will participate in the Targeted EA Training approach only (see list below).

Participating boards have also been provided with funding to hire an additional BCBA to support teachers and EAs to improve supports for students with ASD.

This pilot is a measured approach as a first step towards greater integration of autism supports in schools. Piloting in 18 school boards across the province will allow us to closely monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the pilot approaches over the 2017-18 school year and will inform future direction.

Families with a child enrolled in a pilot school board requesting additional information should contact the school board directly for more information (see contact information below).

Questions regarding other school boards can be directed to the Ministry of Education at: information.met@ontario.ca

District School Boards (DSB)	Pilot Approaches	Public Contact Information	School Site for Dedicated Space*
CS de district catholique de l'Est ontarien	Dedicated space & EA training	pierre.a.morin@csdceo.org	For more details please contact the school board Ecole élémentaire publique Marie-Curie 837 Quinlan Rd, Ottawa, ON
CS des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario	Dedicated space & EA training	carole.marcoux@cepeo.on.ca	
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB	Dedicated space & EA training	asdpiot@hwcdsb.ca	For more details please contact the school board
Hamilton-Wentworth DSB	Dedicated Space & EA training	ASDPilot@hwdsb.on.ca	For more details please contact the school board
Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	Dedicated space & EA training	lloyd_schoenmaker@kprdsb.ca	Newcastle Public School Newcastle, ON
Ottawa-Carleton DSB	Dedicated space & EA training	ASDpiot@ocdsb.ca	First Avenue Public School Ottawa, ON
St. Clair Catholic DSB	Dedicated space & EA training	cathy.calvert@st-clair.net	St. Matthew Catholic School Sarnia, ON
Thunder Bay Catholic DSB	Dedicated space & EA training	asargent@tbcschools.ca	For more details please contact the school board
Toronto Catholic DSB	Dedicated Space & EA training	emmy.szekeresmilne@tcdsb.org	For more details please contact the school board
Toronto DSB	Dedicated space & EA training	Lydia.Tisma@tdsb.on.ca	West Glen Junior School Etobicoke, ON
Algoma DSB	Dedicated space & EA training	phillic@adsb.on.ca	Parkland Public School Sault Ste. Marie, ON
Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic DSB	EA training	info@alcdsb.on.ca	EA training only

CS catholique de district des Grandes Rivières	EA training	richard.loiselle@cscdgr.education	EA training only
Durham Catholic DSB	EA training	AutismPilot@dcdsb.ca	EA training only
Northeastern Catholic DSB	EA training	amarks@ncdsb.on.ca	EA training only
Rainy River DSB	EA training	charlayne.bliss@mail.rrdsb.com	EA training only
Thames Valley DSB	EA training	(519) 452-2000	EA training only
Wellington-Catholic DSB	EA training	eileen.clinton@wellingtoncdsb.ca brian.capovilla@wellingtoncdsb.ca	EA training only

*School sites subject to change at the discretion of the school board

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How were pilot schools chosen?

A. Pilot boards represent the province in terms of rural/urban, French/English, Catholic/public and large/small.

Each of the 11 pilot boards implementing dedicated space selected one site for the dedicated space pilot based on local context/need.

There is no dedicated space at the other 7 boards.

Q. Which students are eligible for the pilot?

A. Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) enrolled in a pilot school who are receiving applied behavioural analysis (ABA) services from an external ABA practitioner are eligible to access the dedicated space. All students with ASD in pilot boards will benefit from the increased expertise as a result of the targeted EA training and additional ABA Expertise Professional with Board Certified Behaviour Analyst certification.

Q. Who will be able to access the dedicated space to deliver ABA services?

A. Subject to school board policies, external ABA practitioners will be able to access the dedicated space in pilot schools to deliver ABA services.

This includes MCYS-funded ABA practitioners (Direct Funding Option (DFO) and Direct Service Option (DSO) and privately purchased ABA practitioners.

Q. What supports and services are available for students with autism spectrum disorder who are not taking part in the pilots?

A. Our government is committed to ensuring that every student has access to the supports they need to succeed in school, including students with ASD. We are making changes to be more responsive to the needs of all students and to increase our focus on supporting their achievement and well-being.

The Special Education Grant is projected to increase to approximately \$2.856 billion in 2017-18. This represents an increase of approximately \$69.2 million or 2.5 percent over 2016-17; and \$359.6 million or 14.4 percent since 2012-13. SEG funding is enveloped for special education programs, services and equipment. Any unspent special education funding must be treated as deferred revenue for special education.

In addition, as a result of the education sector labour negotiations and discussions, the ministry has agreed to establish a Local Priorities Fund (LPF) of \$223.2 million province-wide in 2017-18. The LPF will allow boards to address a range of local priorities and needs. This may include more special education staffing to support children in need, "at -risk" students and adult education.

We are supporting the transition to the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) which is the MCYS plan to transform children's autism services and to work across government to improve supports for Ontarians with autism throughout their lives. The OAP will provide families with more flexible and individualized services at varying levels of intensity based on their children's specific needs. In June 2016, we announced \$39 million in one-time funding to support school boards as the province transitions to the OAP.

Q. What happens after the pilot ends? Will the Ministry consider further expansion?

A. The one year pilot will take place during the 2017-18 school year. We have secured an external researcher to monitor and evaluate the pilot.

The researcher's findings, along with recommendations from the Provincial Advisory Team (PAT), will inform future direction.

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