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2026:B03

Date: November 13, 2026

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

From: Paul Cleaver
Assistant Deputy Minister (A)
Capital and Business Support Division

Subject: Launch of 2026-27 Capital Priorities Program and Upcoming Changes for the 2027-28 Capital Priorities Program

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The Ministry of Education is pleased to invite school boards to submit proposals for funding consideration through the 2026-27 Capital Priorities Program. The program supports Ontario's commitment to building, expanding, consolidating and renewing education infrastructure so students can access high-quality learning environments close to home.

2026-27 Capital Priorities Program

As part of the Ministry's ongoing efforts to improve transparency, consistency, and project readiness, the Capital Priorities Program remains a streamlined, one-window intake process that consolidates capital funding requests into a single, coordinated submission. Specifically, school boards are asked to submit their highest-priority capital accommodation needs that address accommodation pressures, facility condition, school consolidations, and access to French-language schools. School boards may also request capital funding for licensed child care spaces with any associated school project.

French language school boards may also submit projects for funding consideration that are funded through the federally funded infrastructure program, the Canada-Ontario

Agreement on Minority-Language Education and Second Official-Language (CAN-ON) program. These proposals are to support community-based spaces within schools including child care centres.

Submissions will be assessed using a standardized provincial framework that considers demonstrated accommodation need, project readiness, including site status, design standardization and other program-specific requirements. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate the strongest need and readiness to proceed.

New for 2026-27, submissions will be limited to a maximum of five (5) projects (excluding CAN-ON submissions). However, to better support school board accommodation needs through a more structured and frequent intake and approval process, the ministry will be introducing changes starting with the 2027-28 Capital Priorities Program. There will be two intakes with the first one beginning in January 2027, allowing school boards to submit additional projects.

2026-27 Capital Priorities Program Submissions – Summary

- The deadline for all capital funding submissions is **January 5, 2027**. No submissions will be accepted after this date.
- NEW** School Boards will be permitted to submit up to **five (5) Capital Priorities projects.** (Standalone CAN-ON project submissions are excluded from this count)
- Business Case Templates, Program Guidelines, Design Catalogue and other supporting material are available for download from the Capital and Business Support Division SharePoint site. This site will also be used for submitting proposals.
- School Boards are asked to:
    - Submit detailed project proposals to address current accommodation needs related to:
        - Accommodation Pressures;
        - School Consolidation;
        - Facility Condition, with health and safety considerations; and
        - Access to French-language schools.
        - Child Care Capital Needs Associated with A School Project
    - Provide high-level summary information on long-term enrolment projections linked to municipal growth plans.
    - Provide a priority ranking for the proposals. (Maximum #5)
- School Boards submitting a repeat submission from 2024-25 or 2025-26 may use the streamlined (short form) resubmission template.
- These templates are also required to be completed by French Language school boards that are submitting CAN-ON submissions related to childcare and community spaces.
- Please refer to the Program Guidelines document on the SharePoint site for additional information, including detailed instructions.

Submission Process Changes:

- **Capital Priorities 2026–27 Pre-Submission Validation:** To support the quality and completeness of submissions, school boards are being asked to **complete a pre-submission validation check-in** with their ministry's capital analyst prior to the submission deadline.
- This pre-validation process does not constitute an assessment, evaluation, or analysis of the merits of a project, nor does it provide any indication of funding eligibility or approval.
- **Facility Condition Project Submissions:** Facility Condition and/ Health and Safety requests must be supported by a **third-party assessment report** to support the rationale for the urgency of a project. Evaluation criteria will place greater emphasis on projects addressing significant structural, facility condition, and health and safety risks.

Reminders:

- Detailed project submissions must include completed business cases (written and Excel) demonstrating accommodation need, a proposed solution including a new school, school addition or retrofit and rationale. **Incomplete submissions may be considered ineligible for funding consideration.**
- School Boards are encouraged to explore all possible capital solutions including additions at existing school sites prior to considering a new school build, and opportunities for joint-use project submissions, where appropriate.
- Detailed project schedule including key milestone dates is required.
- It is recommended that projects include a Class D cost estimate. Cost escalation cannot be included in project estimates.

PROJECT READINESS ASSESSMENT

Project readiness will be assessed based on the information and supporting documentation provided through the submission process, including evidence that the project can proceed within proposed timelines and achieve timely delivery. Submissions will require information on status of project site, design plans with cost estimates, and a clear schedule based on the milestone dates. If a site is to be acquired, the timelines for acquisition are taken into consideration. Projects may be funded where a school site is not owned but the school board has demonstrated that it may be acquired in a reasonable timeline.

DESIGN STANDARDIZATION

The use of standardized designs can support project readiness by accelerating design, approvals and procurement activities, reducing overall project timelines and costs. To support these objectives, it is expected that new elementary school builds are to leverage repeat designs from the EDU Design Catalogue or alternative school board

design that meet specified criteria. Where possible, school boards should also assess opportunities to leverage repeat designs for new secondary school build submissions.

URBAN AND INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS

The ministry recognizes that intensification in high-density urban areas may require new and different approaches. Where finding suitable land for the construction of a school may be challenging, the ministry encourages school boards to pursue opportunities to explore new, innovative ways to build schools, such as vertical schools and podium schools.

PROJECT COMMITMENTS

Approved projects will continue to be subject to the ministry's Enhanced Capital Accountability Framework. School Boards will be required to meet applicable reporting, monitoring, and oversight requirements and demonstrate adherence to the approved Project Commitment, including project scope, schedule, and budget. For additional information, please refer to the Education Capital Policies and Programs Manual.

INFORMATION SESSIONS

The ministry will host information sessions for the Capital Priorities Program on the following dates:

- English session: Date: November 30, 2026
- French session: Date: December 2, 2026

These sessions will provide school board staff with support regarding the completion of Capital Priorities business cases.

Looking Ahead: 2027–28 Capital Priorities Program - Dual Intake Model

Beginning in 2027-28, the Capital Priorities Program will transition from a single annual intake to two submission cycles each year, providing boards with more frequent opportunities to submit capital projects for funding consideration.

- Cycle 1: Submission window will be open between January and March, with expected announcements starting as early as June 2027.
- Cycle 2: Submission window will be open between June and September, with expected announcements starting as early as December 2027.

School Boards will be permitted to submit up to five (5) new Capital Priorities projects per intake. Also, projects that were not approved in the latest intake will be considered for funding without the requirement to submit an updated proposal.

Further details will be communicated to school boards in January 2027, including the opening of the Cycle 1 submission intake window.

MINISTRY CONTACT

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

- Patrizia Del Riccio, Director, Capital Program Branch Patrizia.Delriccio@ontario.ca.
- Tatiana Goulart, Manager Unit A, Capital Program Branch Tatiana.Goulart@ontario.ca.
- Gianoula Korinis, Manager Unit B, Capital Program Branch Gianoula.Korinis@ontario.ca.

The ministry looks forward to reviewing submissions that address student accommodation needs in communities across the province and demonstrate strong alignment with Capital Priorities Program objectives.

Sincerely,

Paul Cleaver
Assistant Deputy Minister (A)
Capital and Business Support Division

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
Holly Moran, Assistant Deputy Minister, Early Years and Child Care Division, Ministry of Education
Didier Pomerleau, Assistant Deputy Minister, French-Language Education Division, Ministry of Education
Andrew Locker (A), Director, Field Services Branch, Ministry of Education
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Executive Director, Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association (OCSTA)
President, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
Executive Director, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)
Executive Director, Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO)
Executive Director, Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO)
Executive Director, Ontario Principals' Council (OPC)