

Additional Funds Enhance Ontario's Robust Back-to-School Plan

Funding will be used to complement provincial health and safety measures already in place

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[Education](#)

TORONTO — The Ontario government's back-to-school plan, developed in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and public health officials, is being further enhanced by additional federal investments and resources to support the return to class in the fall. Today's federal announcement provides \$381 million to Ontario, on top of the nearly \$900 million provided by the province to support provincial back-to-school plans.

"Ontario's investments lead the nation in supporting priorities like more cleaning, physical distancing, testing, and hiring of staff to ensure a safe reopening of our schools this September," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. "Today's investment by the Federal government complements the already landmark investments made by our government in support of safe and healthy schools in Ontario."

The federal funding will support several priority provincial initiatives:

Reopening Plan Implementation - \$200 million

- \$100 million to complement the health and safety components of school reopening plans, in consultation with local public health units, including the hiring of custodians, HVAC, improvements, internet connectivity for students and other local needs.
- \$30 million to support additional PPE for schools.
- \$70 million for the temporary hiring of educators as required.

Student Transportation - \$70 million

- \$44.5 million in support of the Driver Retention Program (DRP).
- \$25.5 million for route protection and to help reduce the number of students on buses.

Special Education and Mental Health Supports Enhancement - \$12.5 million

- Will allow boards to hire and train additional staff and provide more mental health supports for students.

Additional Public Health Nurses - \$12.5 million

- Supports up to 125 additional nursing positions in public health units across the province to help schools manage potential COVID-19 cases.

Remote Learning - \$36 million

- Ensures that every school board offering virtual learning has a dedicated principal and administrative support for both its secondary and elementary virtual schools.

The province is also setting aside \$50 million for any future pandemic learning needs, to ensure that Ontario is prepared for every scenario this Fall.

Pending federal approvals in December, the Ministry of Education will announce the second half of the payment later this year for the remainder of the school year.

Quick Facts

- Ontario's [COVID-19 website](#) includes resources to help stop the spread, sector specific resources, including helpful posters, mental health resources, and other information.
- On July 30, 2020 the government released the [Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools](#), which was developed in consultation with leading medical experts and approved by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. This plan committed over \$300 million in funding to support the safe reopening of Ontario's schools, which is part of the evolving layers of protection the government is providing to students, parents, staff, and the communities they live and work in.

- The provincial guidelines provide a baseline and school boards are encouraged to adapt them to meet local needs and support students and families. They include:
 - In-person classes for elementary school students five days per week for the 2020-2021 school year.
 - Masking for students in Grades 4-12.
 - Focus on cohorting and limiting student contacts.
 - Adapted secondary school delivery for designated boards.
 - On August 13, the government [announced](#) more than half a billion dollars in supports to school boards to ensure schools across the province will reopen safely in September and to protect students and staff.
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