

Ontario Releases \$35 Million to Hire More Staff, Improve Remote Learning in Targeted Communities

Investments Build on Province's Robust \$1.3 Billion Back-to-School Plan

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[Office of the Premier](#)

TORONTO — Today, the Ontario government is announcing the allocation of \$35 million to provide additional immediate school board supports in the communities of Peel, Ottawa, Toronto and York Region to enhance public health measures and protection strategies as they confront higher rates of transmission in their communities.

This funding is part of the government's robust and comprehensive [\\$1.3 billion plan to safely reopen classrooms](#) across the province, including additional resources to help school boards hire more staff, keep class sizes low, and enhance cleaning in schools.

"As we find ourselves at the beginning of a second wave of COVID-19, we know there are schools in hotspot areas that need extra supports to keep students and staff safe," said Premier Doug Ford. "That's why we're immediately authorizing the release of this funding to reinforce existing investments to improve physical distancing and remote learning and hire more staff, so our kids and teachers stay safe and healthy."

To further enhance the safety of students and staff, this funding will be used for:

- Providing increased distancing between students through the hiring of additional teachers, early childhood educators, and educational assistants; and
- Providing increased remote learning supports, including the hiring of additional teachers, early childhood educators and educational assistants, as well as devices for students who have chosen to learn remotely.

"Our priority as we enter the flu season is to ensure our schools take every preventative measure possible to ensure students and staff remain safe," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. "We are delivering this additional funding — targeting those communities with higher rates of transmission — to ensure we prevent the spread and maximize the safety of Ontario families."

Earlier this summer, Ontario unveiled one of the nation's most [comprehensive plans for the safe reopening of schools in September](#). The plan is supported by \$1.3 billion in resources to hire more teachers and increase physical distancing, support procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE), enhanced cleaning of schools and buses, improving ventilation, hiring of more custodians, and adding school leadership positions and administrative support for virtual schools. The province is also providing funding to public health units to support the hiring of 625 school-focused nurses, while establishing a mandatory masking policy for grades 4-12, and a surveillance strategy to monitor the virus and detect cases and outbreaks quickly in schools.

The government launched a [new voluntary interactive screening tool](#) for students, staff, and visitors to advise individuals on whether they should attend school or child care. The tool is continually updated to reflect current public health advice.

The government also released the [Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools](#) document. This guide was developed in consultation with public health experts, including Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, and aims to help schools identify and isolate COVID-19 cases, reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and prevent and minimize outbreaks.

Quick Facts

- As part of its plan to reopen schools safely, Ontario has committed to making [\\$1.3 billion in COVID-19 resources](#) available to school boards in support of the COVID-19 outbreak.
 - This \$35 million investment is part of the \$50 million set aside to respond to emerging challenges during the return to school.
 - Ontario recently launched a [webpage to report COVID-19 cases in schools and child care centres](#). This page will be updated every weekday with the most up-to-date information available, including a summary of COVID-19 cases in schools and licensed child care centres and home care agencies.
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Additional Resources

- [Ontario Releases \\$35 Million for Schools in Priority Communities](#)

- Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.
 - Students, parents and staff can visit Ontario's [new voluntary interactive screening tool](#) to assist with the daily assessment of COVID-19 symptoms and risk factors that is required before attending school.
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