

## NEWS RELEASE

# Ontario Further Improving School Ventilation

New funding builds on previous investments to keep schools as safe as possible

August 04, 2021

[Education](#)

---

THORNHILL — The Ontario government announced additional funding of \$25 million to further improve ventilation in schools as students return for in-person learning this fall. This additional funding, which brings the net new investments in school ventilation to \$600 million, will ensure that all occupied classrooms, gyms, libraries and other instructional spaces without mechanical ventilation have standalone high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter units in place when students are back in class, including Junior and Senior Kindergarten classrooms in mechanically ventilated schools to recognize that the youngest learners will not be wearing masks in the classroom.

“With yesterday’s release of health and safety measures for schools, students have a safe path to return to a more normal, in-person, full-time learning environment, which is critical to their mental and physical health,” said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. “We are following the best expert advice by ensuring all schools have improved air ventilation, including deploying an additional 20,000 HEPA units, in total over 70,000 ventilation devices, to help ensure schools remain as safe as possible. With the work we have done, I am confident we will keep students and staff safe in our schools as we reopen for the 2021-22 school year.”

Ontario’s Science Advisory Table, as part of its science brief on school-based measures, identified the use of standalone HEPA filter units as a strategy for classrooms and spaces with challenges in achieving adequate ventilation. Approximately 20,000 standalone HEPA filter units have been procured through the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services and will be deployed to school boards where needed. Remaining funding will be allocated to school boards to procure additional standalone HEPA filter units.

To support students, parents and staff in access to information on school ventilation in their communities, Ontario will also provide school boards with a standardized reporting tool on ventilation improvements. This tool will communicate school-level ventilation measures online to ensure that information is publicly available across the province, including inspection, use of standalone HEPA filter units, use of higher grade filters and more frequent filter changes.

“We appreciate the Ontario government’s evidence-based investment in ventilation and air filtration to help reduce COVID-19 transmission in schools. I have always maintained reopening schools is the utmost priority to support children’s learning development and mental health,” said Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region’s Medical Officer of Health. “There is benefit to improving ventilation in indoor settings to enhance both overall indoor air quality and COVID-19 risk reduction in schools. We must also continue to follow all other public health measures and I encourage everyone eligible to receive their vaccines to help avoid a resurgence of cases.”

Today’s investment builds on significant action the government has taken over the past year to support immediate ventilation and filtration improvements in schools, while also upgrading school ventilation infrastructure where needed. Every year, Ontario also invests \$1.4 billion to maintain and renew school facilities, including HVAC systems and windows.

Ventilation enhancements are one part of Ontario’s plan to advance and protect public education for the 2021-22 school year. Ontario’s safer return to school is supported by significant investments, including \$1.6 billion in targeted COVID-19 supports and \$80 million in funding for mental health supports.

---

## Quick Facts

- In the 2020-21 school year, over 50,000 air ventilation devices were purchased to keep Ontario classrooms safe.
- The COVID-19 Resilience Funding stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program is supporting 2,052 projects in over 1,670 schools and co-located childcare facilities across 70 school boards throughout Ontario.

- In response to the pandemic, the government made over \$1.6 billion in temporary resources available for the 2020-21 school year to support the safe reopening and operation of schools.
- 

## Additional Resources

[COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for Schools \(2021-22\)](#)

[Ontario Unveils \\$2 Billion Plan to Keep Schools Safe and Support Learning Recovery and Renewal](#)

[Canada and Ontario Invest in School Infrastructure to Respond to the Impacts of COVID-19](#)

---

## Related Topics

### Education and Training

Learn about Ontario's early years, education and training systems. Includes information on child care, elementary schools, secondary schools, colleges, universities, skills training and financial aid. [Learn more](#)

---

## Media Contacts

**Caitlin Clark**

Minister's Office

[caitlin.clark@ontario.ca](mailto:caitlin.clark@ontario.ca)

**Ingrid Anderson**

Communications Branch

[ingrid.e.anderson@ontario.ca](mailto:ingrid.e.anderson@ontario.ca)

[437-225-0321](tel:437-225-0321)

---

[Accessibility](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Contact us](#)

 [Subscribe to news feed](#)

© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2012-2021

---