

BACKGROUNDER

Ontario's Improvements to School Ventilation Systems

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[Education](#)

The Ontario government took significant action to support ventilation and filtration improvements in schools for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, while also investing in upgrading school ventilation infrastructure where needed. The investments are an important way that Ontario is acting to support the safety of schools with the return of in-person learning.

In the 2020-21 school year, school boards were provided over \$550 million to support improvements in ventilation and air quality:

- The province announced \$100 million in funding for immediate measures to optimize and improve ventilation in the 2020-21 school year. This funding has supported immediate improvements in all publicly funded schools.
- As a result, in schools with mechanical ventilation:
 - 99% of the systems have been assessed and/or recommissioned to optimize air flow
 - 92% of the filters are being changed more frequently and/or using higher grade air filters, including MERV-13 rated air filters
 - 91% are running systems longer
 - 87% have increased fresh air intake
 - Over 50,000 standalone HEPA filter units and other ventilation devices purchased
- Canada and Ontario announced \$450 million in funding specifically for HVAC and window projects through the COVID-19 Resilience Funding stream of the *Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program*. This funding is supporting 2,052 ventilation improvement projects in over 1,670 schools and co-located childcare facilities across 70 school boards. Most of these projects are underway in preparation for the 2021-22 school year.

In addition, for the 2021-22 school year, the province is providing:

- \$29.4 million to operate ventilation systems longer and replace filters more frequently
- \$25 million to ensure that all occupied instructional spaces without mechanical ventilation, as well as JK-SK classrooms in mechanically ventilated schools, have standalone high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter units.

With today's announcement, the government has announced more than \$600 million in incremental new funding to optimize air quality in schools across Ontario.

These investments are in addition to the \$1.4 billion annual school renewal allocation provided to school boards which can be used for a range of projects including renewing and upgrading ventilation systems.

They are being made on the best available advice of public health experts, including Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, as part of a plan to get kids back to school safely.

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