

Ministry of Education
Office of the ADM
Business & Finance Division
900 Bay Street
20th Floor, Mowat Block
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation
Bureau du sous-ministre adjoint
Division des opérations et des finances
900, rue Bay
20^e étage, Édifice Mowat
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



2013: B18

MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
School Business Officials

FROM: Gabriel F. Sekaly
Assistant Deputy Minister
Elementary/Secondary Business and Finance Division

DATE: **July 31, 2013**

SUBJECT: **Initiative to Encourage Joint Use / Collaboration
between School Boards on Capital Projects**

I am writing today to announce a new initiative to support joint use projects and encourage greater collaboration between school boards in meeting their accommodation and capital needs. This initiative is comprised of the following two components:

1. Proposals submitted for joint use capital projects and other collaborative capital solutions between school boards will be given first consideration for funding approvals under the Capital Priorities Funding Program.
2. A consultation strategy to be launched this fall to identify and share opportunities, challenges and best practices associated with joint use schools and other collaborative capital project arrangements.

This initiative anticipates work on the government's broader School Board Efficiencies and Modernization strategy which, as announced in the 2013 Ontario Budget, aims to achieve long-term sustainability in school board funding. While the Ministry is aware that a variety of joint use arrangements currently exist in the province between school boards and other parties, the Ministry believes that greater collaboration between boards in addressing their facility needs will provide opportunities for capital and operating efficiencies.

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Initiative to Encourage Joint Use / Collaboration between School Boards on Capital Projects

To encourage a greater number of new and innovative collaborative capital project arrangements between school boards the Ministry will review all joint use projects for funding consideration before evaluating any other Capital Priorities submissions. Joint use projects are more likely to receive capital funding and also have the opportunity to generate an increased amount of capital funding than stand-alone projects.

We realize that joint use capital projects may require additional time for school boards to plan, develop and consult with their communities and that this may pose a challenge given the 2013-14 Capital Priorities submission timelines as outlined in **Capital Priorities Memorandum 2013: 813**. However, we expect that the efficient utilization of school facilities between boards will remain a focus of the Ministry's annual Capital Priorities review process and as such, boards should seek joint-use opportunities between school boards for future Capital Priorities submissions.

Types of Eligible Joint Use Capital Projects

To receive first consideration for funding under the Capital Priorities program, an eligible joint use capital proposal must meet at least one of the following conditions:

1. The shared use of a single facility by two or more school boards (either involving the construction of new permanent space or the utilization of existing space)
2. The increased utilization of existing capacity through the 'swapping' of school facilities between school boards

Joint use capital proposals also must meet the capital and accommodation needs of the boards involved in the solution. Please refer to Appendix A for a list of examples of potential joint use capital projects between school boards.

Submission Process for Joint Use Capital Projects

School boards are requested to submit proposed joint use capital projects through the Capital Priorities Template in the School Facilities Inventory System (SFIS) as specified in **Capital Priorities Memorandum 2013: 813**.

Each school board involved in the proposed joint use capital project must submit a completed business case and identify the project as one of its top eight Capital Priorities projects to receive priority funding consideration. The business cases for these projects should still provide the projected enrolment and capital needs of individual school boards. Boards are required to identify these projects as joint use in the comments section of the business case and are to contact their capital analyst with specific details on the joint use solution (e.g. what type of arrangement will exist between the boards, what spaces will be shared, what efficiencies / program opportunities will be gained from this joint use solution).

Consultation Strategy

The Ministry will provide more details on a consultation strategy to encourage joint use / collaborative solutions between school boards later this fall.

If you have questions about joint use capital projects, please contact your board's capital analyst.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Gabriel F. Sekaly
Assistant Deputy Minister
Elementary/Secondary Business and Finance Division

Appendix A - Examples of Joint Use Projects between School Boards

Example 1

School Board A operates a facility in good condition with a low enrolment and excess space. School Board B operates a facility in *very poor* condition and has a *very low* enrolment.

- Joint use solution - School Board B's students *move* into School Board A's building to essentially have two schools under one roof.

Example 2

School Board A and School Board B each operate separate facilities with approximately 200 students in a small, rural community. Each facility has high renewal needs with enrolment projected to remain steady.

- Joint use solution - a new jointly owned facility should be constructed for both boards. The preferred model would be to have two schools under one roof (ie. Each board would have separate office spaces / classrooms but would share certain common areas such as libraries or gymnasias).

Example 3

School Board A operates a facility with a capacity of 400 and enrolment of 150. School Board B operates a facility with a capacity of 200 and enrolment of 350.

- Joint use solution - School Board A and B swap school buildings to achieve efficiencies through increased facility utilization.