

Ministry of Education
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2015: B16

MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs)
District School Services Administration Boards (DSSABs)

FROM: Gabriel F. Sékaly
Assistant Deputy Minister
Financial Policy and Business Division

Nancy Matthews
Assistant Deputy Minister
Early Years Division

DATE: December 16, 2015

SUBJECT: Request for School Consolidation Capital Projects and New
Construction of Child Care

We are writing to announce details of the 2016 School Consolidation Capital (SCC) program which is supported through the \$750 million in funding that was announced in the 2014-15 GSN release as part of the School Board Efficiencies and Modernization (SBEM) initiative.

As was first communicated in [2015:B11 Memorandum: Capital Funding for New Construction of Child Care](#), child care project submissions are included as part of the SCC program. The memo included the details of a new investment of \$120 million over three years to support the construction of new child care spaces for children 0 to 3.8 years of age in new and expanded schools. As communicated in the memo, future opportunities to apply for major capital funding to support new construction of child care would continue as part of the Capital Priorities and SCC programs.

The SCC investments are intended to help school boards adjust their cost structure in response to reductions in Ministry funding that currently supports underutilized space and where needed, replace child care spaces that would be lost due to a school closure or address demand in a new school being built as part of a school consolidation project.

The Ministry recognizes that for school boards to effectively and efficiently manage their excess capacity, they will need to, in some cases, adjust their capital footprint. Through the SCC program, capital funding will be available to school boards to support projects that address a board's excess capacity. This funding will be allocated on a business case basis for new schools, retrofits and additions that support consolidations.

School boards are requested to provide the Ministry with their consolidation projects that need to be completed at the latest by the 2019-20 school year. The Ministry will be reviewing the SCC submissions for funding consideration, as well as to understand the need for ongoing capital investments in the education sector.

Business Case Considerations

The Ministry will consider funding business cases under the SCC program that allow a board to reduce their excess capacity. Only projects that are identified as consolidating excess space will be eligible for funding. Eligible projects for funding consideration include the following:

- Consolidating two (or more) schools into one new facility.
- Building an addition and/or undertaking a major renovation to an existing school to accommodate enrolment from other schools that a board has made a decision to close.
- Right-sizing existing schools by renovating existing excess space for other uses including Community Hubs.

The SCC business cases will be reviewed by the Ministry with the focus being on the cost effectiveness of the proposed solutions. The business cases should address the following:

- Improvement of facility utilization through the reduction of unused space.
- Impact on reducing a school board's operating and renewal costs.
- Enrolment projections for schools in the area of the project.
- Existing renewal needs of schools that are part of the business case.
- Other benefits, such as improved programming, accessibility and/or energy efficiency.
- Results of the accommodation review process (where applicable).

We expect that school boards will be submitting projects for SCC funding that are linked to accommodation reviews decisions. Please note, projects related to accommodation reviews must have a final trustee decision by March 28, 2016 to be considered for SCC funding approval.

Submission of School Consolidation Capital Projects

Beginning January 15, 2016, school boards will be able to submit their requests for SCC funding through the School Facilities Inventory System (SFIS). Only a school board's eight highest priority projects expected to open no later than 2019-20 will be considered for SCC funding and will need to be supported with a completed business case. School boards are required to submit their SCC business cases by February 29, 2016. The Ministry will not accept business cases after this date.

School boards can save their work in progress within the SFIS Capital Priorities module, however, once school boards submit their business cases, their submissions will be locked from further editing. School boards will only be able to modify their business cases by requesting that their Capital Analyst unlock the submission.

The Ministry is aiming to make announcements regarding their SCC funding decisions in early Spring 2016 with an announcement of the next round of Capital Priorities to follow shortly thereafter.

Submission of Child Care Projects

As with the previous round of child care project submissions through the Capital Priorities program, school boards and CMSMs/DSSABs have an opportunity to submit child care projects through the SCC program. To date, 49 projects have been approved totaling \$80.1 million to support the new construction of 164 new child care rooms and 2,901 new child care spaces.

As part of the SCC program, school boards can submit a request for the inclusion of new child care construction. Note that stand-alone child care capital projects are not eligible as part of the SCC program.

Eligibility

The Ministry will consider funding the new construction of child care in schools, under the following conditions:

- 1) The target school is any of the following:
 - a) an existing school that will be accommodating students from a closing school that currently contains child care spaces,
 - b) a new school that is to be constructed and receives Ministry funding approval,
 - c) an existing school that is to undergo a major addition/renovation that receives Ministry funding approval, or
 - d) an existing building that has been purchased for the purposes of student accommodation and receives Ministry funding approval.

- 2) The school board has the support of the corresponding CMSM/DSSAB regarding the eligibility and viability requirements to build child care rooms and create spaces for ages 0 to 3.8 years in the identified school.
- 3) The child care spaces will not result in a child care operating pressure for the CMSM/DSSAB.

When considering long-term viability, CMSMs/DSSABs and school board planners must consider at least the next five years and use population projections as well as other local data to inform submission decisions.

Affirmation Letter

As part of your SCC submission, the Ministry will require an affirmation letter (see Appendix A for the template) signed by both the CMSM/DSSAB Manager of Children's Services and the school board Director of Education. The affirmation letter includes project details and confirms that the child care program meets all eligibility and viability requirements.

To be considered for funding, the affirmation letter must be submitted as part of the school board's SCC business case. A copy must also be provided to your school board's Ministry Early Years Regional Staff (Education Officer and Child Care Advisor) (see Appendix B) and Capital Analyst (see Appendix C). The Ministry may request supporting documentation following a review of the affirmation letter.

Prioritization of Eligible Child Care Capital Projects

As communicated in 2015:B11 Memoranda, the Ministry of Education will use the following factors to prioritize projects under this policy should the number of eligible submissions surpass available funding:

- child care replacement due to school closure/accommodation review;
- age groupings (infant rooms are a priority);
- accommodation pressures/service gaps; and
- cost effectiveness and viability.

Joint Use Capital Projects

As with previous Capital Priorities Grant programs, the Ministry encourages school boards to consider collaborative capital project arrangements between school boards. The Ministry will review all joint use projects for funding consideration before evaluating any other SCC 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 individual projects. Please see Memorandum B2013:18, Initiative to Encourage Joint Use/Collaboration between School Boards on Capital Projects, for further details.

Community Hubs

As you are likely aware, in August 2015, the Premier's Community Hubs Framework Advisory Group released a report titled [Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan](#). This action plan brought renewed focus to the discussion of strategies to support the formation of community hubs across the province. The ministry recognizes the value of joint community based planning across local agencies. To that end, the Ministry encourages school boards to seek out community organizations for possible partnership opportunities in their SCC submissions.

Proceeds of Disposition

School boards will not be required to allocate their Proceeds of Disposition (POD) towards new SCC projects. School boards are reminded, however, that projects that they wish to undertake on their own using POD will first need to be submitted to the Ministry through the Capital Priorities or SCC programs. Additionally, school boards have the option to identify POD as a funding source for a SCC project that addresses outstanding renewal needs. Please see Memorandum B2015:13, Proceeds of Disposition Policy, for further details.

Capital Analysis and Planning Template

The Capital Analysis and Planning Template (CAPT) is an essential tool for understanding school boards' capital financial position. An approved CAPT is necessary before the Ministry is able to sufficiently assess the existing capital activity of a school board. As a result, school boards will not be considered for SCC funding approval if the Ministry does not have an approved CAPT consistent with the board's 2014-15 Financial Statement.

Highlights/Summary Points

- School boards to submit School Consolidation Capital projects expected to open no later than the 2019-20 school year.
- School boards will be able to submit their business cases through SFIS beginning on January 15, 2016.
- The deadline for School Consolidation Capital submission is February 29, 2016.
- Business cases will be required only for a board's top 8 School Consolidation Capital projects.
- School boards may also request funding for the construction of new child care spaces as part of a board's School Consolidation Capital submission.

Ministry Contact

If you have any SCC program questions, or require additional information, please contact the Capital Analyst assigned to your school board or:

Paul Bloye, Manager, Capital Policy and Programs Branch at 416-325-8589 or at Paul.Bloye@ontario.ca, or

Mathew Thomas, Manager, Capital Policy and Programs Branch at 416-326-9920 or at Mathew.P.Thomas@ontario.ca.

If you have any child care program questions, or require additional information, please contact the local Early Years Regional Staff assigned to your school board or:

Laura Sparling, Manager, Full Day Kindergarten at 416-212-4004 or at Laura.Sparling@ontario.ca.

We look forward to working with you to identify your future Capital Priorities Consolidation projects.

Original signed by

Gabriel F. Sékaly Assistant Deputy Minister Financial Policy and Business Division

Nancy Matthews Assistant Deputy Minister Early Years Division

Appendices:

Appendix A: Template – Affirmation Letter: Capital Funding for New Construction of Child Care – School Consolidation Capital

Appendix B: List of Ministry Early Years Regional Staff

Appendix C: List of Ministry Capital Analysts

cc: Superintendents of Business and Finance