

**Ministry of Education**

**Ministère de l'Éducation**



Capital and Business Support  
Division

Division du soutien aux immobilisations  
et aux affaires

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**2024: B11**

**Date:** July 8, 2024

**Memorandum to:** Directors of Education  
Children's Service Leads, Consolidated Municipal Service  
Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration  
Boards (DSSABs)  
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

**From:** Didem Proulx  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Capital and Business Support Division

**Subject:** **Launch of 2024-25 Capital Priorities Program**

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The Ministry of Education is pleased to invite school boards to submit proposals for consideration through the 2024-25 Capital Priorities Program. As you know, the Capital Priorities Program provides funding to address boards' highest priority capital needs. With Ontario's population increasing steadily, the government plans to build on the momentum of its \$1.3 billion investment in Capital Priorities in 2023-24 to focus on shovel-ready projects that will continue to help meet the needs of growing communities.

The ministry has been working closely with school boards, municipalities and other key partners to transform the education capital system to build modern schools faster, better utilize school capacity and enhance accountability and transparency.

Projects selected for Capital Priorities funding in 2024-25 will reflect these priorities by having a

demonstrated need, either to meet an accommodation pressure, improve the condition of a school, provide access to French-language rights holders or create new licensed child care spaces. Further, proposals will also be assessed in part based on their readiness and use of standardized design.

### **2024-25 Capital Priorities Program Submissions – At a Glance**

- The deadline for all capital funding submissions is **September 16, 2024**. No submission will be accepted after this date. Funding announcements will be made in Spring 2025.
- Business Case templates, Program Guidelines, Design Catalogue and other supporting material are available for download from the SharePoint site shared in the email to the school board.
- School boards will submit proposals through the Capital and Business Support Division SharePoint site.
- For the 2024-25 Capital Priorities program, school boards are asked to:
  - Submit detailed project proposals to address **current** accommodation needs related to:
    - Accommodation Pressures
    - School Consolidation
    - Facility Condition, and
    - Access to French Language schools.
  - Provide high level summary information on future, long term projections. The information should be linked to municipal growth plans.
  - Provide a priority ranking for the proposals.
- School boards have an opportunity to request Child Care Capital funding for child care projects associated with a larger Capital Priorities project.
- Detailed project submissions to address accommodation needs must include fully completed business cases that identify a utilization equal to or greater than 100% (including area schools) in the fifth year after the proposed school opening date, provide a positive investment return (Net Present Value greater than \$0), or identify students who do not have access to a French Language school. Projects are also expected to include a completion date with a clear, detailed schedule for milestones and deliverables. At minimum, projects should include at minimum Class D cost estimates and schematic designs. Boards are restricted from including any cost escalation in their estimations.
- School boards are encouraged to identify opportunities to work together on joint-use project submissions.

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

As with previous years, project submissions must demonstrate a critical and urgent pupil accommodation need in order to be considered for funding approval. These pupil accommodation needs may include accommodation pressures, replacement schools and French language access. In addition to addressing pupil accommodation needs, projects may also include the creation of new licensed child care spaces.

## **URBAN AND INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS**

The ministry recognizes that intensification in high density urban areas poses unique challenges. Finding suitable land for the construction of a school is challenging and expensive. As residential development is expected to continue to be high in urban areas, school boards may not be able to construct schools according to the traditional model. The ministry encourages school boards to pursue opportunities to explore new, innovative ways to build schools – such as vertical schools and podium schools. The ministry looks forward to working with you on advancing these and numerous other initiatives that are part of the ministry’s ambitious capital agenda to ensure funding, programs and supports continue to meet the needs of students and school boards across the province.

## **PROJECT READINESS ASSESSMENT**

School boards are asked provide evidence of project readiness. Priority will be given to projects that are best positioned to be completed in a timely manner. Submissions will require details regarding sites planned or acquired, design plans with cost estimates, and a clear schedule with project milestones indicating a path to project completion.

## **DESIGN STANDARDIZATION**

The ministry recognizes the importance of ensuring that school board capital assets are used effectively and efficiently to support the needs of growing communities.

Design standardization presents opportunities to help save time and money by accelerating the design and approvals processes.

Consistent with the last round of Capital Priorities, school boards must submit a design either from the EDU Design Catalogue or another repeat design. Where a standardized design is not possible, the school board may be permitted to submit a new design. For further details on design submissions and applicable criteria, please refer to the “Project Submissions” section below.

## **BOARD PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

As part of the Capital Priorities evaluation process, school boards will be assessed on their past performance in delivering capital projects, including the following:

- Adherence to project timelines
- Time to completion
- Cost overages
- Existing inventory of active projects
- Adherence to space benchmarks
- Capital Accountability Framework compliance

## **PROJECT COMMITMENTS**

Successful projects will result in a Project Commitment that will include a clear schedule, budget and scope of the project as submitted by the school board and agreed upon by the ministry. The Project Commitment will establish ministry expectations for successful project delivery.

School boards will be responsible and accountable for implementing appropriate measures to ensure that projects are completed within the schedule, budget and scope established in the Project Commitment.

The ministry will meet with school boards to review project progress reports on a regularly scheduled basis to monitor the progress of approved projects.

## **PROJECT SUBMISSIONS**

Submission templates, guidelines and design catalogue can be downloaded from the Capital and Business Support Division SharePoint site.

School boards will submit proposals through the SharePoint site to be considered for funding approval. A complete submission will include the following:

- 1) Business Case - Part A (Excel Template) will include:
  - a. Project Information
  - b. Closest Facilities
  - c. Space Template
  - d. Enrolment Projections
  - e. Child Care Joint Submission (If Applicable)
  - f. Child Care Space Template (If Applicable)
  - g. Cost Estimates
    - Boards are restricted from including cost escalation in their calculations.
    - At minimum, projects should include at minimum Class D cost estimates.
    - Cost estimation documentation must be submitted with the proposal.
  - h. Design Info
  - i. Submission Check
  
- 2) Business Case - Part B (Written Report) will include:
  - a. A written description of the project, including detailed information on the rationale,

proposed scope of work and demonstration of why alternative options are not feasible.

- b. Evidence and details on how site identification and design plans and cost estimates were derived. Identify the Land Priorities funding needed. This does not mean Land Priorities funding will be provided automatically. Requests for Land Priorities funding will be assessed against current inventory of surplus property.
  - c. Detailed information on costing estimates and assumptions made.
  - d. Detailed project plan that includes timelines for key project milestones.
  - e. Details on the submitted design including when the design was last used, associated costs and supporting documentation.
- Design
    - a. School boards should submit, at minimum, schematic designs based on either:
      - EDU Design Catalogue; or
      - Another repeat design that, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:
        - Tendered since 2021
        - Board must provide documentation on project cost for the repeat build that includes prior cost and updated cost estimate for the future build. This includes construction costs and soft costs like permit fees and furniture and fixtures. However, the cost estimate excludes unique site costs/demolition and site preparation costs.
        - Design space has to align with ministry space benchmark requirements for the specific pupil places being requested, including complying with 90% of the total space benchmark.
        - The ministry will only consider minor modifications to a repeat design, including instances where design changes need to be made to accommodate the site or the design is scaled up or down to include or remove additional classroom spaces and required washrooms. Other modifications to a repeat design would be considered a new design.
        - Submission of schematic design for original repeat and proposed design for new project.
    - b. New elementary school projects should proceed under one of the two options above. For other projects where a repeat design may not be feasible, school boards may be provided an exception and submit a new design. These projects include:
      - additions/ renovations,
      - projects with unique site constraints,
      - podium or vertical schools,
      - secondary schools, and
      - schools in joint-use facilities.

School boards **must submit schematic designs, at a minimum, for their submissions**, whether a repeat design is selected from the catalogue, another repeat design or new design. **NOTE:** Projects submitted without a design **may be ineligible** for funding.

#### 4) Long Term Projections

- a. Boards are asked to provide details of their longer-term growth needs for addressing current and projected pupil accommodation needs and should be related to municipal growth plans.
  - Boards covering the Urban Growth Centres identified in *A Place to Grow* **are required** to submit long term projections for those centres with their 2024-25 submission. A list of areas can be found in Appendix D of the Capital Priorities Guidelines document.
- b. Please see program guidelines for further information.

Please refer to the **Checklist** to ensure your board has included all required documentation.

#### INFORMATION SESSIONS

The ministry will host information sessions for the Capital Priorities Program on the following dates:

- Tuesday July 23, 2024 10:00am to 12:00pm
- Wednesday July 24, 2024 1:00pm to 3:00pm
- Thursday July 25 (French) 10:00am to 12:00pm

These sessions will provide school board staff with support regarding the completion of Capital Priorities business cases.

#### MINISTRY CONTACT

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

- Lesley Cunningham, Manager, Capital Program Branch at 647-404-1133 or [Lesley.Cunningham@ontario.ca](mailto:Lesley.Cunningham@ontario.ca)
- Sophie Liu, Manager, Capital Program Branch at 647-402-9597 or [Sophie.Liu@ontario.ca](mailto:Sophie.Liu@ontario.ca), or
- Paul Bloye, Director, Capital Program Branch at 416-325-8589 or at [Paul.Bloye@ontario.ca](mailto:Paul.Bloye@ontario.ca).

We look forward to working with you on advancing these projects and other initiatives as part of the Ontario government's commitment to meeting the needs of students and school boards across the province.

Sincerely,

Didem Proulx  
Assistant Deputy Minister

## Capital and Business Support Division

- c. Senior Business Officials
  - Superintendents and Managers of Facilities Managers of Planning
  - Early Years Leads
  - CAOs of Consolidated Municipal Service Managers CAOs of District Social Services Administration Boards
  - Holly Moran, Assistant Deputy Minister, Early Years and Child Care Division, Ministry of Education
  - Didier Pomerleau, Assistant Deputy Minister, French-Language Education Division, Ministry of Education
  - Andrew Locker (A), Director, Field Services Branch, Ministry of Education
  - President, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO)
  - Executive Director, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO)
  - President, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)
  - Executive Director, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)
  - President, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)
  - Executive Director, Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association (OCSTA)
  - President, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
  - Executive Director, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
  - Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)
  - Executive Director, Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO)
  - Executive Director, Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO)
  - Executive Director, Ontario Principals' Council (OPC)