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Capital Policy and Programs
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2016: SB33

MEMORANDUM TO: Senior Business Officials
Managers of Planning

FROM: Grant Osborn
Director
Capital Policy and Programs Branch

DATE: October 17, 2016

SUBJECT: OASBO Best Practice Guide & Toolkit - Facilitation
Skills to Encourage Community Involvement

I am pleased to support the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) in distributing its new "*Best Practice Guide & Toolkit – Facilitation Skills to Encourage Community Involvement*" (the "Toolkit") to all school boards. This Toolkit is an effective planning and reference tool that can be used by all school board staff who may be involved in the development and delivery of pupil accommodation reviews and community consultations in general.

As part of the School Board Efficiencies and Modernization initiative, the Ministry of Education committed to providing a range of supports to school boards that were preparing to right-size their schools. Through the Capital Planning Capacity program, the ministry allocated funds directly to school boards to support a range of capacity building initiatives, as well as providing funds to OASBO to develop facilitation workshops and a toolkit. The ministry recognizes that pupil accommodation reviews can be some of the most challenging processes that school boards have to undertake. The facilitation workshops and toolkit were commissioned specifically to speak to those needs and challenges.

The Toolkit was informed by the six facilitation skills workshop sessions organized by OASBO between January and April 2016. This Toolkit can be used by school board staff to prepare any number of community consultations, such as pupil accommodation reviews, boundary changes, program reviews, community use of schools consultations, etc. The Toolkit is available on the [OASBO website](#) and is attached to this memo for reference (Attachment A).

Further Workshops

Over 150 school board staff from across the province participated in the two-day facilitation skills workshop sessions. The principles of community engagement and techniques for facilitating community meetings were presented and practiced during the sessions. The significant experience and insight of consultants who were selected to develop and deliver the sessions (Mussio La Grassa Elliot Krogh Inc.) ensured that the workshops were highly informative.

As result of positive response to the 2015-16 workshops, OASBO will coordinate additional sessions for the 2016-17 school year. Notices and registration will be coordinated through the OASBO website, and details and scheduling will be released at a later date, also through OASBO. The ministry encourages school board staff to register for the program, particularly if they are embarking upon new accommodation reviews, and have not yet taken this very informative workshop.

We would like to thank Jennifer Passy of Upper Grand DSB, who over the last year was the OASBO lead in the development of these products. We would also like to thank Ellen Waring of Hamilton Wentworth DSB, Daniel Stojc of Conseil scolaire Viamonde and Tom Pechkovsky of York Catholic DSB, who formed the committee that supported Jennifer and the ministry in the procurement process, development of the workshops and review of the draft Toolkit. Finally, we wish to thank Shesh Maharaj of Waterloo Catholic DSB and his staff, who provided key procurement and contract management support throughout this project. The time, insight and attention of these OASBO members has ensured that these products will effectively serve the needs of their colleagues throughout the school board sector.

If board staff have comments or questions about the Toolkit or the upcoming facilitation workshops, please contact Ljiljana Allgeier, OASBO office, at e-mail: ljiljana@oasbo.org or telephone: 905-209-9704.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

Grant Osborn
Director
Capital Policy and Programs Branch

cc: Senior Plant Officials

Attachment A: "Best Practice Guide & Toolkit – Facilitation Skills to Encourage Community Involvement"