

Communications Protocol: Public Communications, Events and Signage

Acknowledgement of Support

School boards are required to acknowledge the support of the Government of Ontario in proactive media-focused communications of any kind, written or oral, relating to the agreement or the project. This could include but is not limited to:

- Reports
- Announcements
- Speeches
- Advertisements, publicity
- Promotional materials including, brochures, audio-visual materials, web communications or any other public communications.

This is not required for:

- Minor interactions on social media, including social media such as Twitter
- Reactive communications, such as media calls.

All public events and announcements regarding capital investments in the publicly funded education system are considered **joint** communications opportunities for the provincial government, the school board, as well as Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Service Administration Boards (CMSMs and DSSABs); and/or community partners.

NEW: Events and Announcements

Event Invitations

School boards are required to provide an opportunity for the Minister of Education or their representative to participate in public communications related to:

- New schools
- Additions or retrofits that include new student spaces, child care spaces, EarlyON Child and Family centres, or community hubs.

This media embargo requirement applies to media releases and media/public events for these milestones:

- ministry capital project approvals
- site acquisition related to the capital project
- awarded construction contracts
- significant project scope changes (such as additional funding or capacity)
- groundbreakings
- opening ceremonies.

School board meeting discussions, web postings, minor social media interactions, operational/internal communications or reactive responses to media calls related to these milestones are not included in this media embargo.

To clarify, the issuance of tender documents or provision of a targeted notification to the sector of the availability of tender documents is a permitted activity during the embargo period.

To invite the minister to be quoted in your media release and/or participate in your event:

- Send a request at least 30 days in advance of the proposed communication or event to minister.edu@ontario.ca
- Copy the ministry’s regional manager in the Field Services Branch for your area.
- Inform the ministry via the email address above if the proposed date changes.

Note: The ministry will respond if the Minister or another government representative will be attending the event and/or providing a quote for media materials. Please do not move forward with your communication or event until you have received a response from the ministry.

The ministry may also choose to issue its own news release about various project milestones. If the ministry chooses to do so, school boards, CMSMs/DSSABs, and/or community partners will be notified.

Ontario Builds Signage

Ontario Builds signs are required for all capital projects, including Capital Priorities (CP) and school based child care capital projects.

For Capital Priorities, and school based Child Care Capital projects announced in 2019-20 or after, school boards are required to produce and display Ontario Builds signage at the site of construction.

Timelines for Signage Placement:

To ensure timely placement of signage school boards are to adhere to the following timelines for placement of signage:

- Child Care Capital or CP Projects with Acquired Sites – Signage is required to be installed **within 60 days** of receiving ministry project approval notification and release of any communication embargo.
- Child Care Capital or CP Projects where sites are not currently owned by school boards : Signage is required to be installed **within 60 days** from the date of site acquisition.

Signage Process to Follow:

<p>Signage Instructions</p>	<p>To create a sign, boards can access the Ontario Builds templates, artwork and visual identity guide at www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-builds-templates.</p> <p>Here are some examples of project descriptions, school boards might use on their signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New School: “New Elementary School”; “New Secondary School” • New School with Child Care: “New Elementary School with Child Care Centre” • School Addition: “New School Addition” • School Addition with Child Care: “New School Addition with Child Care Centre” • Only Child Care Addition: “New Child Care Centre” <p>For Francophone communities, please use the Ontario Builds visual identity</p>
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	guide for French designated areas.
Obtain Approval	<p>Before producing a physical sign, email a digital proof to MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca to obtain approval of the design. Please cite the project identification number included in the original ministry approval funding letter.</p> <p>For projects that are co-funded, such as by a municipality or the federal government, use the Ontario Builds visual identity guide for partnership signage. Please arrange signage approval from all partners.</p>
Installation & Maintenance	<p>Once school boards receive design proof approval notification from the ministry, they can arrange production and installation of signs. Boards are responsible for all related costs. Install signs in a prominent location that does not obstruct traffic or cause safety concerns, particularly if the sign is located near roads.</p> <p>To avoid potential safety issues, school boards should consult appropriate provincial and municipal authorities.</p> <p>Signs should be posted at all stages of a project and maintained in a good state of repair. This includes before construction work starts and throughout construction.</p>
Confirm Installation	<p>Once signage is in place, it is required that school boards email a photograph of the installed sign to the ministry at MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca. Please remember to cite the project identification number included in the ministry funding approval letter.</p>
Signage Removal	Signs can be removed within six months of the completion of the project.

Contact

For questions or support on the communications protocol, please email the ministry at MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca.

Note: This communications protocol does not replace school boards’ existing partnership with the Ministry of Education’s regional offices. Regional offices should still be regarded as school boards’ primary point of contact for events and should be given updates in accordance to existing processes.