

# 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 public 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.

## Events and Announcements

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.

A communications embargo applies to media releases and media/public events for the following 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 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; however, signage installation should not take place until the embargo is lifted.

**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](mailto: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 signage is required for all infrastructure projects, including constructing, modernizing, expanding, renovating, replacing and rehabilitating infrastructure. This supports increased transparency in public communications of the government's investments to build modern schools faster to support the needs of growing communities and ensure value for taxpayer dollars.

Signage is required for Capital Priorities and school-based child care projects approved since 2019-20, as well as renewal projects funded with School Renewal Allocation and School Condition Improvement funding supported by provincial investments that exceed \$250,000 or have a project duration of 90 days or more (may include one or more projects at a site occurring within a school year).

### Capital Priorities and child care projects

#### **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 for Capital Priorities projects:

<p><b>Signage Instructions</b></p>	<p>To create a sign, boards can access the Ontario Builds templates, artwork and visual identity guide at <a href="http://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-builds-templates">www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-builds-templates</a>. <b><u>Below is an example that includes reference of provincial investment that is to be included.</u></b></p> <p>Project descriptions should align with the one of the following examples on the signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New School: “New Elementary School”; “New Secondary School”</li> <li>• New School with Child Care: “New Elementary School with Child Care Centre”</li> <li>• School Addition: “New School Addition”</li> <li>• School Addition with Child Care: “New School Addition with Child Care Centre”</li> <li>• Only Child Care Addition: “New Child Care Centre”</li> </ul> <p>For Designated French Areas, please ensure to post signage in both English and French, based on the visual identity guide.</p>
<p><b>Obtain Approval</b></p>	<p>Before producing a physical sign, email a digital proof to <a href="mailto:MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca">MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca</a> to obtain approval of the design. Please cite the <b>project identification number</b> 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>
<p><b>Installation &amp; Maintenance</b></p>	<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>
<p><b>Confirm Installation</b></p>	<p>Once signage is in place, it is required that school boards email a photograph of the installed sign to the ministry at <a href="mailto:MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca">MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca</a>. <b>Please remember to cite the project identification number included in the ministry funding approval letter.</b></p>
<p><b>Signage Removal</b></p>	<p>Signs can be removed within 90 days of project completion.</p>

## NEW - Renewal Projects

School boards will be required to display Ontario Builds Signage at schools benefitting from school renewal projects where the total renewal investment (individual or combination of projects supported with School Condition Improvement Funding and/or School Renewal Allocation) is greater than or equal to \$250,000 or construction duration that lasts more than 90 days.

Renewal projects associated with technical improvements (e.g., updates to an information/security/video system, etc.) **do not require signage** and can be excluded when assessing overall renewal investment at a school site.

To leverage existing processes and mitigate additional administrative tasks, the ministry will require school boards to report their eligible renewal projects through the VFA Facility system (VFA). Boards will need to maintain their project data over the regular financial reporting cycles to support the ministry's reporting requirements to Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI).

### **Timelines for Signage Placement:**

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

- **School renewal projects:** Signage is required to be installed **within 60 days** of approval, but no later than the project start date. For projects already approved, signage is required within 60 days of the project start date.

### **Signage Process to Follow:**

<b>Signage Instructions</b>	<p>To create a sign, boards can access the Ontario Builds templates, artwork and visual identity guide at <a href="http://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-builds-templates">www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-builds-templates</a>.</p> <p>To recognize the volume of school renewal activity and minimize administrative burdens, the ministry has provided <b>pre-approved generic signage</b> design below that is to be used. :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School Renewal Project: "School Facility Renewal Project"</li></ul> <p>For Designated French Areas, please ensure to post signage in both English and French based on the visual identity guide.</p>
<b>Obtain Approval</b>	<p>Signage design is to align with the renewal signage design below. Approval is not required from the ministry for school renewal projects prior to installing on the school site.</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>
<b>Installation &amp; Maintenance</b>	<p>School boards are responsible for arranging 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</p>

	construction.
<b>Confirm Installation</b>	Ministry staff expect school boards to start installing signs on renewal projects after boards identify eligible projects. Once signage is in place, it is required that school boards upload a photo confirming installation as part of their school renewal project reporting on VFA. Facility.
<b>Reporting Requirement</b>	School boards are expected to complete reporting aligned with the ministry's financial reporting cycles.
<b>Signage Removal</b>	Signs may be removed within 90 days of project completion.

**Contact**

For questions or support on the communications protocol, please email the ministry at [MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca](mailto: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

**Sample Signage**

**New school construction and additions:**



**School renewal projects:**

