



## 2019-20 Provincial Budget Overview

Today, Finance Minister Vic Fedeli delivered the [2019-20 Ontario Budget: \*Protecting What Matters Most\*](#). The government's approach has four key priorities:

- Restoring trust in Ontario's finances
- Putting people first
- Protecting what matters most
- Open for Business, Open for Jobs

Total government spending will be \$163.4 billion – up 3.4% from \$158 billion last year. Education sector funding will be approximately \$29.8 billion, up 2.4% from \$29.1 billion last year, or 18.2% of the total provincial Budget. The increase is primarily due to higher student enrolment. This funding will largely flow through the Grants for Student Needs, expected to be announced by the end of April. By 2021-22, education sector expenses are projected to increase to \$30.1 billion, representing average annual growth of 1.2%. The Budget projects a deficit of up to \$10.3 billion in 2019-2020, down from the projected \$11.7 billion in 2018-19.

The government is proposing a new accountability framework called the Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act, which would require the government to deliver the Budget by March 31 each year.

### **Budget Highlights:**

#### **Education (See [Chapter 1, Section C: Protecting What Matters Most](#))**

- The creation of a Minister's Task Force on School Boards to look at all aspects of the education system, including school board operations, while respecting the four publicly funded education systems in Ontario. The Ministry of Education will be undertaking a thorough review of how boards can conduct their operations in the most efficient manner to best serve students and parents while ensuring their long-term sustainability. A task force framework will be available by the end of the 2018-19 school year.
- \$3.7 million in 2019-20 to fund a revised First Nations, Métis and Inuit studies curriculum, for Grades 9-12 and the Indigenous Graduation Coach Program in targeted district school boards.
- The conditions under which school boards can run in-year deficits will now be outlined in regulation, as opposed to being part of the *Education Act*.
- An amendment to the *Education Act* to align the authority of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations regarding First Nations representation on school boards with recently made amendments to the Act, establishing the new Reciprocal Education Approach.
- More than \$500,000 over three years to increase opportunities for students to participate in physical activities, such as cricket, at school. This funding would provide seed funding to school

boards and third-party organizations to promote cricket as an opportunity to meet the diverse needs and interests of students.

- Working with various organizations, including the education sector, to develop a Sports Action Plan to support sports for all age ranges.
- Finding internal efficiencies in the Ministry of Education, through modernization initiatives, including greater use of virtual meetings, and limiting the use of consultants, to generate an estimated savings of \$25 million annually by 2021-22.
- Examining opportunities to enhance school board participation in formal buying consortia and group purchasing initiatives to leverage economies of scale.
- The government's Agency Review Task Force has recommended the dissolution of the Curriculum Council. The Ministry will now obtain specific curriculum advice from stakeholder/expert working groups, rather than this agency.

### **Skilled Trades**

- Establishment of program that encourage Ontarians to enter the skilled trades, get retrained and become aware of the benefits of jobs in the trades.
- Developing a "one-window digital portal" for apprenticeships.

### **Postsecondary**

- Incentives for postsecondary institutions to provide the education and training students need to get jobs by tying 60% of funding to performance outcomes by the 2024-25 school year.
- Lowering tuition by 10% at all postsecondary institutions and making non-essential ancillary student fees optional.

### **Northern and Rural Ontario**

- Help for smaller postsecondary schools in Northern Ontario to adjust to lower tuition rates for students.
- Creating a new Northern Ontario Internship Program that will remove a requirement that internship applicant be recent university or college graduates.
- \$315 million over five years for regional and shovel-ready broadband and cellular infrastructure projects. A new Broadband and Cellular Strategy will be released later this year.

### **Child Care**

- A new Ontario Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses (CARE) tax credit, which is estimated to cost \$390 million per year. Benefits will be provided on a sliding income scale up to family incomes of \$150,000, with credits of up to \$6,000 per child under seven, \$3,750 per child between the ages of seven and 16, and up to \$8,250 per child with a severe disability.
- Up to \$1 billion over five years to create up to 30,000 child care spaces in schools, including approximately 10,000 spaces in new schools.

## Health Care

- \$3.8 billion for mental health, addictions and housing supports over 10 years, beginning with the creation of a mental health and addictions system.
- In 2019-20, an investment of \$174 million will be made to support mental health and addictions services, mental health and justice services, supportive housing and acute mental health inpatient beds.
- \$384 million for hospitals and \$267 million for home and community care to increase front-line delivery, personal support services, nursing, therapy and home services.
- 15,000 new long-term care beds and the upgrading of another 15,000 beds to meet modern standards.
- A dental program for low income seniors.

The Budget reiterates several proposals outlined in the *Education That Works for You* document that the Minister released on March 15, including:

- A new math curriculum focusing on fundamentals
- A renewed focus on STEM, skilled trades and financial literacy
- A modern and age-appropriate Health and Physical Education curriculum
- Improved teacher mobility (Regulation 274)
- Development of a Parents' Bill of Rights
- Modernizing standardized testing
- Implementing a new math strategy focused on the "fundamentals."

The Budget also re-announced \$1.4 billion in school renewal funding that originally appeared in the 2018-19 Budget.

## Additional Information

Government News Release: [2019 Ontario Budget: Ontario's Plan to Protect What Matters Most](#)

A full copy of the Budget can be found at [www.ontario.ca/budget](http://www.ontario.ca/budget).

[Highlights of the 2019 Ontario Budget](#)

[Backgrounder with Education details](#)

**Note:** OPSBA responded to [earlier Ministry of Education announcements](#) through official statements and a news release:

- [Secondary Class Size](#) Statement
- [OPSBA welcomes continued engagement but has class size concerns](#)
- [Support for Students with ASD Statement](#)