



ONTARIO PUBLIC  
SCHOOL BOARDS'  
ASSOCIATION

**Leading Education's Advocates**

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Laurie French  
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November 8, 2017

The Honourable Mitzie Hunter  
Minister of Education

via email: [mitzie.hunter@ontario.ca](mailto:mitzie.hunter@ontario.ca)

Dear Minister Hunter,

One of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association's (OPSBA) priorities is Education Funding and we believe that strong and equitable education funding is a foundational factor in setting the conditions that promote and sustain student achievement. With this in mind, and as we finalize our Association's submission for the 2018-19 Grants for Student Needs (GSN), we would like you and your staff to be aware of our support for the current advocacy actions undertaken by the Toronto District School Board and their request to have the regulation governing Education Development Charges (EDC) reviewed.

The issue of EDCs is not new for OPSBA and has been a discussion item for several years as boards struggle to find their own local solutions to capital and repair matters. In our GSN submission last year we stated, "*OPSBA recommends the ministry review the current education development charges regulation to allow boards more flexibility in terms of capital funding.*"

As you know, each and every school board is unique and must have the local funding autonomy to implement solutions that ensure student success, which includes building, renovating and retrofitting safe and welcoming learning environments. Another consideration is that new school buildings located on open pieces of land are not always the most economical and realistic option for all boards. The concept of a traditional school facility is no longer the norm and school boards are looking at creative ways to provide spaces and programs to educate their students.

In cities like Toronto, and other densely populated areas, a horizontal school expansion is not always feasible. These areas of "pocket growth" are not taken into consideration under the current regulation as the entire board may not be experiencing growth and may have some schools with excess capacity. This unfairly penalizes those students and families living in growth areas.

It bears reminding that changing the regulation to allow boards to use EDC funding for other capital needs will not negatively affect other school boards who are not experiencing overall growth or pockets of growth. In fact, some of our member boards who are not currently in this situation indicated that there could be a time soon when they too would have growth areas and need access to flexible capital funding.

OPSBA recommends the ministry convene a working group that includes school board/trustee associations and other key stakeholders to:

- Assess potential EDC by-law implications for all boards across the province; and
- Review Ontario Regulation 20/98 Education Development Charges — General and develop a revised directive that allows more local flexibility for capital and renewal needs.

We look forward to hearing from your staff on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie French". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laurie French  
President  
Ontario Public School Boards' Association

CC:

Bruce Rodrigues, Deputy Minister

Joshua Paul, Assistant Deputy Minister Assistant Deputy Minister, Capital and Business Support Division

Sam Andrey, Chief of Staff - Minister's Office

Chris Martin, Senior Policy Advisor - Minister's Office

Robin Pilkey, Chair, Toronto District School Board

John Malloy, Director of Education, Toronto District School Board

OPSBA Board of Director Members