

# 2023-24 GSN Initial Review

*April 28, 2023*

The 2023-24 Grants for Student Needs (GSN) and Priorities and Partnerships (PPF) funding were announced on April 17, 2023. Grant funding is projected to be \$27.6 billion, which represents an increase of 2.1% over the prior year. The average per-pupil funding amount is projected to be \$13,125.

OPSBA's submission to the ministry for consideration in the 2023-24 GSN included supports for:

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- Mental Health
- Special Education
- Skilled Trades and Apprenticeships
- Indigenous Education
- Trustee Professional Development
- Northern and Rural Challenges
- Student Transportation
- Technology and Broadband
- Labour Relations

Examples of funding support announced within the GSN and PPF grants in alignment with some of these areas:

## **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

- \$6.6 million to provide transportation and stability supports for children and youth in care.
- \$4.7 million to fund the graduation coach program for Black students.
- \$3.24 million to fund Human Rights and Equity Advisors at select school boards.
- \$103.7 million to implement de-streaming and transition to secondary school.
- \$0.3 million to address antisemitism.
- \$2.5 million for Demographic Data Gathering Allocation to support school board capacity to collect, analyze, and use voluntary student and workforce demographic data.

## **Mental Health**

- \$36.7 million in supporting student mental health allocation, to foster the learning and well-being of students.
- \$26.5 million for mental health workers in secondary schools.
- \$10.8 million for mental health leaders in every school board to work with system leaders, educators, and community partners to support student mental health.
- \$10.5 million for student mental well-being allocation.
- \$12 million for mental health summer funding.
- \$6.5 million for School Mental Health Ontario.

- \$3.2 million in well-being and positive school climates allocation, to support school boards to meet local needs/priorities to promote wellness.

### **Special Education**

- Early Math Intervention support funding for Students with Special Education Needs is included in the overall Special Education Grant.
- \$8.3 million to help increase student engagement, close learning gaps, and ensure students are prepared for foundational Grade 9 math and early preparation for secondary school.
- \$10 million for school boards to deliver transition programs in the summer.
- \$6 million of application-based funding for school boards to implement projects that prevent and remove accessibility barriers experienced by students with special education needs / disabilities.
- \$4.5 million provided to the Geneva Centre for Autism for online training opportunities to build educator and education worker capacity to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other special education needs.
- \$2.1 million to select school boards for the first of three years of funding to provide targeted supports for students with disabilities in cooperative education placements to help them acquire the skills required for success after graduation.
- \$1.4 million to continue to subsidize educators and principals to complete Additional Qualifications (AQs) in special education.

### **Skilled Trades and Apprenticeships**

- \$55.6 million to school boards for Specialist High Skills Majors programs, including support for the expansion in the 13 sectors with the strongest focus on technological education and the skilled trades.
- \$46.7 million for the School College Work Initiative, including expansion of Dual Credits in key labour market sectors in healthcare, early childhood education, technological education, as well as for level 1 Apprenticeship training.
- \$20 million from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development to school boards to support delivery of Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program.
- \$3 million to provide experiential professional learning opportunities for all guidance teacher/counsellors.
- \$1.8 million to promote entrepreneurship education for students.
- \$1 million to select school boards to allow students to earn a credit towards their Ontario Secondary School Diploma.
- \$1 million to school boards to provide \$1,000 bursaries to Grade 11 or 12 students.
- \$0.5 million to support school boards in the implementation of adult education programs.
- \$0.3 million to create better connections among schools and local employers to prepare students for in-demand jobs.

### **Indigenous Education**

- \$4.8 million to fund the graduation coach program for Indigenous students.
- Continued access to summer learning programming for First Nation students living on reserves is being provided in summer 2024 at no cost to the First Nation.
- Funding for Indigenous Education is being realigned for next year, reducing the overall grant amount for many school boards. Realignment includes reducing grant funding from Indigenous Education course credits, and moving grant funding into the Board Action Plan. There is some recognition that funding reductions will take place, and some transition money has been included in the GSN announcement. Board Action Plan grant funding is required to be held until ministry direction is received on how it may be spent.

### **Student Transportation**

- The Student Transportation review has now been released. The Grant is projected to be \$1,233.2 million in 2023-24 and is made up of the Transportation Services Allocation (\$1,225.8 million), the School Bus Rider Safety Training Allocation (\$1.7 million), and the Transportation to Provincial or Demonstration Schools Allocation (\$5.7 million).

### **Labour Relations**

- A \$1 per hour increase in education worker salary benchmarks supporting the recently ratified Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW) central collective agreements, as well as a labour provision for other education worker unions.
- A 1.25 per cent increase for teacher salary as a labour provision.
- Continuation of Supports for Students Fund (SSF) in the 2023–24 school year, also known as Investment in Systems Priorities in some former collective agreements.

### **Other Highlights Include**

- \$19.9 million for a new Safe and Clean Schools Supplement included in the Learning Opportunities Grant for additional services that support student well-being and maintain clean schools. Funding is allocated to support additional Professionals/Paraprofessional staff (\$11.9mil), Educational Assistants (\$4mil), and Custodians/Maintenance staff (\$4mil).
- The ministry is undertaking a review to modernize the SIP Allocation and temporarily adjusting the SIP funding approach by using a formula to calculate the amount for each school board.
- 2 per cent cost update to the non-staff portion of the School Operations Allocation benchmark to assist in managing inflation. A 2% inflationary increase has been a fairly standard factor over the last several years, and does not offset the actual increase to the cost of goods and utilities schoolboards are experiencing. Also, this increase is of no help in offsetting the significant statutory benefit increases (EI and CPP) and the additional pension responsibilities schoolboards are obligated to cover.
- 0.167 per cent decrease in the benefits funding benchmark, as we enter the final year of a 12-year phase-out of the retirement gratuities.
- Increase in assumption from 15 to 22.5% of secondary students enrolled in online learning, leading to a reduction in the secondary pupil foundation allocation based on higher funded class size for online learning.
- Final year of phase in of supplementary area factor, decreasing the funded average class size moving from 22 to 23.
- Enhanced Accountability announced in relation to student enrolment audits, as well as staff audits to support reconciliations with benefit trusts.
- PPF grants are estimated to be approximately \$516.22 million, supporting school boards and other education partners. Approximately \$372.2 million have been allocated to school boards and isolate school authorities to support ministry priorities.
- School Renewal Allocation (school renewal and school condition index funding) will now expire within 2.5 years, whereas historically the amounts were allowed to rollover indefinitely. The funds will be recovered at the end of the province's year end (March 31), in the third year after the funding was in effect.