

Ministry of Education

Deputy Minister

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Telephone (416) 325-2600
Facsimile (416) 327-9063

Ministère de l'Éducation

Sous-ministre

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Téléphone (416) 325-2600
Télécopieur (416) 327-9063



MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Director, Provincial Schools Branch

FROM: George Zegarac
Deputy Minister

DATE: January 30, 2013

RE: **Student Injury Prevention Initiative Funding**

In Ontario, we recognize that all students and staff have the right to be safe and feel safe at school. An important part of supporting student achievement and inspiring confidence in publicly funded education is ensuring that our schools and classrooms are safe, healthy and well-maintained.

Ontario schools have been described as some of the safest in the world. When accidents do occur in schools, we are reminded of our obligation and ongoing commitment to safety mindedness as well as to compliance with relevant federal, provincial and municipal health and safety legislation and by-laws. This requires school boards to undertake activities that ensure injury prevention is the highest of priorities in schools.

To assist school boards in this regard, I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry will allocate one-time funding in the amount of approximately \$20 million for the 2012-13 school year to be used for the purpose of student injury prevention initiatives. There are two funding sources forthcoming: one for improving student safety in technological education facilities and science labs; and, the second for securing entry to elementary schools, giving priority to establishing procedures on locking entry doors of schools.

Funding for Technological Education Facilities and Science Labs

Between September 2011 and June 2012, Ministry of Labour (MOL) inspectors visited Ontario schools to determine compliance with the minimum requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* and its regulations.

The inspections focused on elementary schools (grades 7 and 8) and secondary schools with technological education facilities and science labs. Chemical storage, housekeeping practices, equipment maintenance and safe operation of equipment, as well as availability of appropriate personal protective equipment, eye-wash stations and dousing showers are examples of what was assessed for compliance with the OHSA.

The inspections helped to raise awareness about occupational health and safety but also noted areas within schools that did not meet the OHSA requirements. Accordingly, an allocation of \$9.9 million will be provided to all boards for the purpose of supporting a culture of safety mindedness. This includes a priority focus on procedures and environmental concerns in technological education facilities and science labs. I encourage all school boards to invest as much of their allocation as possible by March 31, 2013, in support of this important initiative.

The Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) has been engaged to assist the Ministry with co-ordination of this initiative. CODE will establish a health and safety team to be tasked with identifying a common set of provincial health and safety promising practices, developed from existing resources and best practices in existing programs, for use in technological education facilities and science labs. The CODE health and safety team will also be available to support boards including training of school and board staff who work in and/ or oversee technological education facilities and science labs and for inspections of these facilities. Boards will be able to access advisory support at their discretion, based on local needs. CODE will be liaising with school boards about their reports on expenditures.

There are two components to this funding:

1. Funding for improvements to board-level safety activities in technological education facilities and science labs (a minimum of 35%). This includes expenditures related to:

Board Plan Development/ Update

- Review and develop/ update existing school board health and safety plan(s) for technological education facilities and science labs. The CODE health and safety team could assist with providing advice on the board plan.
- Boards may use funds to conduct an independent inspection of technological education facilities and science labs.

Board Plan Implementation

- As part of ensuring the establishment of safe technological education facilities and science labs, school boards could use the funds for professional development for staff and for training students.
- The CODE health and safety team could support developing or enhancing board communication/ awareness/ promotional activities for staff and students.

2. Funding for safety issues and environmental concerns in technological education facilities and science labs (a maximum of 65%). This includes expenditures related to:

- installation of emergency safety stops and machine guards, magnetic starters, lock out procedures and upgrades to shop ventilation, dust collectors and other dust and fume extraction equipment, eye-wash stations, chemical storage cabinets
- costs related to the certification and repair of equipment e.g., lifting devices or other equipment maintenance requirements, and
- safe operation of equipment in technological education facilities and science labs.

Funding for these two components will be provided to school boards in February 2013 through a transfer payment. Each board will receive a base amount of \$500.00 as well as an amount calculated according to credits earned in secondary technological education and science courses in 2010-11. The attachments to this memo contain the appendix to the Master School Board 2012-13 Transfer Agreement as well as a table of allocations for each school board.

If boards wish to modify the suggested funding percentages, they should contact Aldo Cianfrini by telephone at: 416.325.2669 or by e-mail at: aldo.cianfrini@ontario.ca

Safe Welcome Program

As you know, the Premier announced that the government is providing one-time funding of \$10 million through the Safe Welcome program to help school boards ensure the safety of elementary schools by establishing procedures for secure doors and to install security access devices. Details about funding for this initiative were recently sent to you.

In addition, I ask that all boards review their safety and emergency procedures, including lockdown drills and safe entry procedures to ensure only authorized visitors enter our schools.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact your Regional Office.

Sincerely,



George Zegarac

c: EDU Regional Office Managers

Members, The Education Partnership Table

Sophie Dennis, Assistant Deputy Minister
Operations Division, Ministry of Labour

Wayne De L'Orme, Director (Acting)
Occupational Health and Safety Branch, Operations Division, Ministry of Labour

Frank Kelly, Executive Director
CODE

Attachments:

Appendix A: Transfer Payment Agreement Appendix
Appendix B: Board funding allocations