

Federal government provides \$381 million to support safe reopening of Ontario schools

kawarthanow.com/2020/08/26/federal-government-provides-381-million-to-support-safe-reopening-of-ontario-schools/

August 26, 2020

Province will use funds for health and safety in schools and on school buses, remote learning, mental health supports, and hiring additional public health nurses

By [kawarthaNOW](#) -
Published



Ontario premier Doug Ford announced on August 26, 2020 at Queen's Park that the federal government is providing \$381 million to support the safe reopening of Ontario's schools. Ford also announced that Dr. Dirk Huyer, the province's chief coroner and its lead on COVID-19 testing, will also lead the province's efforts on outbreak management in schools, child care centres, agriculture, and health care settings, including long-term care facilities. (CPAC screenshot)

The federal government is providing an immediate payment of \$381 million to support the reopening of schools in Ontario, in addition to the \$900 million in funding already announced by the Ontario government.

Ontario premier Doug Ford made the announcement on Wednesday (August 26) during a media conference at Queen’s Park, along with education minister Stephen Lecce, chief medical officer of health Dr. David Williams, and Dr. Dirk Huyer, the province’s chief coroner and its lead on COVID-19 testing.

“This is good news because, because as I told Prime Minister during our meeting last Friday, when it comes to keeping our kids safe, we’re all in this together,” Ford said. “We will target that funding where the extra supports will be most effective, for ventilation, shoring up PPE supplies, additional remote learning supports, enhancing safety measures on school buses, and hiring more teachers — and hiring 125 more public health nurses, for a total of 625 public health nurses in our schools.”

Advertisement - story continues below

Ford also announced the Ontario government is releasing COVID-19 management plans for school boards.

“We have robust plans for schools and school boards, so that when a case or an outbreak occurs, everyone knows what to do — so we can quickly find, isolate, and contain the virus,” Ford said. “We are providing public health units with guidance on how to assist schools in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak.”

“We’re also providing guidance documents to parents because, as parents, you deserve to see the same information I see. You deserve to know what I know and to know that when schools reopen, we will be prepared.”

The guidance documents were developed in consultation with Dr. David Williams and other health experts, Ford said.

The documents are available at ontario.ca/page/operational-guidance-covid-19-management-schools. Among other things, they outline recommended responses in various scenarios, including when a student becomes ill during the school day, if a school bus driver becomes ill during the work day or tests positive for COVID-19, if a parent tests positive for COVID-19, and if staff or a student has tested positive for COVID-19.

Ford also announced that Dr. Dirk Huyer would lead the province’s efforts on outbreak management in schools, child care centres, agriculture, and health care settings, including long-term care facilities.

Advertisement - story continues below

The province released further details on how the \$381 million in federal funding will be spent:

Reopening Plan Implementation – \$200 million

- \$100 million to complement the health and safety components of school reopening plans, in consultation with local public health units, including the hiring of custodians, HVAC, improvements, internet connectivity for students, and other local needs.
- \$30 million to support additional personal protective equipment (PPE) for schools.
- \$70 million for the temporary hiring of educators as required.

Student Transportation – \$70 million

- \$44.5 million in support of the Driver Retention Program.
- \$25.5 million for route protection and to help reduce the number of students on buses.

Special Education and Mental Health Supports Enhancement – \$12.5 million

Will allow boards to hire and train additional staff and provide more mental health supports for students.

Additional Public Health Nurses – \$12.5 million

Supports up to 125 additional nursing positions in public health units across the province to help schools manage potential COVID-19 cases.

Remote Learning – \$36 million

Ensures that every school board offering virtual learning has a dedicated principal and administrative support for both its secondary and elementary virtual schools.

The province is also setting aside \$50 million of the federal government funding for any future needs related to learning during the pandemic.

© Copyright kawarthaNOW® 1996 - 2020. All rights reserved. Unauthorized distribution, transmission, or republication strictly prohibited. Trademarks owned by kawarthaNOW include kawarthaNOW®, Keep It In The Kawarthas®, Web Sites That Work®, businessNOW™, musicNOW™, artNOW™, nightlifeNOW™, and KNosh™.