



w w w . w c d s b . c a

Board of Trustees' Board Meeting  
Monday, February 26, 2018  
Appendix A:  
8.2 OCSTA/CCSTA Communications



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

Box 2064, Suite 1804  
20 Eglinton Avenue West  
Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8  
T. 416.932.9460 F. 416.932.9459  
[ocsta@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:ocsta@ocsta.on.ca) [www.ocsta.on.ca](http://www.ocsta.on.ca)

Patrick Daly, *President*  
Beverley Eckensweiler, *Vice President*  
Nick Milanetti, *Executive Director*

February 2, 2018

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada  
The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau & Minister Hajdu:

I am writing you to express the deep concern of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association with regard to the additional requirements of the application process of the Canada Summer Jobs Program. Our Association was founded in 1930 and represents the 29 English Catholic District School Boards in Ontario. These publicly funded school systems educate approximately 545,000 students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 and many thousands more through our Continuing Education Programs. Collectively the locally elected trustees who serve on these boards represent the almost 2.2 million Catholic School ratepayers in Ontario.

For many years Catholic School Boards in Ontario have applied for and received grants through the Canada Summer Jobs Program. The grants received enable them to provide meaningful employment to a number of young people. Consistent with their missions, these Catholic School Boards often target this funding to socio-economic disadvantaged youth in their communities.

The requirements in the current application process clearly and most unfairly violate religious freedom and will serve to deny many vulnerable and disadvantaged young people summer employment. We urge and call upon you to immediately amend the Summer Jobs guidelines and application process so as to permit faith based organizations like those we represent to remain true "to their communal identity and beliefs".

Yours very truly,

Patrick J. Daly  
President

**2017 Accessibility Survey:  
Results in Context  
K-12 Sector**

**Presented by:  
Accessibility Directorate of Ontario  
Orientation Meeting  
February 5, 2018**

# Purpose

- This presentation outlines the results of a survey focused on barriers to accessibility in education, both K-12 and post-secondary.
- The survey was developed and shared by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.
- The survey was available for public response in the spring/summer of 2017, and closed in October.
- This presentation provides an initial overview of feedback, and is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of responses. More in-depth information from the survey is available to the Committee on request.

# Context

- The survey format was designed to give respondents the opportunity to provide written responses.
- Survey respondents shared personal narratives, experiences, and recommendations related to accessibility in education, from a range of perspectives.
- The survey results, along with additional reports and resources are intended to inform Committee discussions around identification of barriers.
- Committee members are encouraged to combine this material with their own expertise and experience as they begin to determine potential focus areas.

# Survey Themes

- The survey asked respondents to comment on barriers and best practices in five areas:
  1. Accessibility Awareness and Training
  2. Awareness of Accessibility Accommodations (Policies, Processes, Programs)
  3. Information, Communication, and Inclusive Decision-Making
  4. Transition Planning
  5. Inclusive and Accessible Learning Spaces

# Survey Themes (cont'd)

- Themes were drawn from a review of current requirements, programs, and policies that support accessibility in education and from preliminary research about barriers faced by students with disabilities, including a third-party interjurisdictional review completed by KPMG.
- In addition, open-ended questions encouraged respondents to share their perspectives about any other barriers or best practices not addressed in the survey.

# Survey Respondents

- As of October 16, 2017, the survey received a total of 2,988 responses (2,820 English and 168 French).
- Survey respondents from the K-12 and post-secondary sectors included:
  - Students (20%)
  - K-12 Educators and Professionals (28%)
  - Post-Secondary Educators and Professionals (21%)
  - People with disabilities (18%)
  - Parents and guardians (32%)
  - Other stakeholders, e.g. allied health professionals (8%)
- Survey respondents were able to select multiple responses (e.g., student and person with a disability), so there is a significant amount of overlap across demographic categories.

# Response Summaries

- The following are high-level summaries of responses provided to each question within the survey for the K-12 sector.
- These summaries provide a snapshot of key concerns and themes across stakeholder responses.

# Accessibility Awareness and Training

- **Improving accessibility awareness in schools:**
  - Ongoing accessibility training opportunities for staff and educators
  - Establish parent councils focused on accessibility and student supports
  - Increase classroom supports, (e.g., Educational Assistants)
  - Decrease classroom sizes
- **Effective resources, tools or policies in schools:**
  - Clear, frequent communications with staff, students and families
  - Use of Identification, Placement, and Review Committees (IPRCs)
  - Clear Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) with follow through
  - Collaborations with disability service providers and related organizations to create programs and tools

# Awareness of Accessibility Accommodations

- **Challenges to accessing supports, programs, or services in schools:**
  - Timely accommodations
  - Waitlists for assessments
  - Awareness of the system and supports available
  - Access to supports (e.g., ASL interpreters, Educational Assistants)
- **Effective resources, tools, or policies in schools:**
  - Clear and practical training resources in multiple formats
  - A designated person to help navigate services and opportunities
  - Training for staff and educators

# **Information, Communication, and Inclusive Decision-Making**

# Transition Planning

- **Challenges in transitioning across educational institutions:**
  - Lack of clear process
  - Lack of communication between institutions
  - “Starting over” with documentation and negotiation of supports at every move
  - Inconsistencies in support/accommodation offerings across schools/institutions
- **Challenges to planning for employment, post-secondary education or training, or community living:**
  - Lack of opportunities
  - Lack of awareness of supports/services/opportunities
  - Delays in the transmission of information between institutions
  - Long waitlists for community programs
  - Lack of accessible transportation to get to/from school/programs

# Transition Planning (cont'd)

- **Effective resources, tools, or policies to support smooth transitions:**
  - Planning ahead
  - Having a clear and central “navigator”
  - Transition programs for parents and students

# Inclusive and Accessible Learning Spaces

- **Challenges navigating educational built environment:**
  - Elevator availability and service disruptions
  - Door operators (not enough of them and not working)
  - Space for mobility aids and service animals in classrooms
  - Accessible washrooms
  - Wayfinding and accessible signage

# Inclusive and Accessible Learning Spaces (Cont'd)

- **Effective resources, tools, or design practices to improve accessibility in older buildings:**
  - Funding
  - Flexible furnishings
  - New technology
  - More door openers
  - Elevator accessibility and service disruptions
- **Other ways of enhancing the physical accessibility of schools:**
  - Flexible lighting
  - Acoustics
  - Space for people with sensory needs
  - Accessibility of gymnasiums and play spaces

# Other Barriers

- **Other accessibility barriers experienced by students and parents and ways to address them through a new standard:**
  - Inaccessible field trips and extracurricular activities
  - Staff turnover
  - Support for service animals in the classroom
  - Costs associated with testing
  - Segregated classrooms
  - Lack of appeals mechanisms for accommodations

## Other Barriers (cont'd)

- **Other barriers to providing an accessible education faced by professionals, and how to address them through a new standard:**
  - Support for professional development
  - Having more prep time to dedicate to accommodations
  - Understanding roles and rights for service animals
  - Mental health awareness and supports
  - Lack of appeals mechanisms for accommodations
  - Lack of services for non-English speaking and newcomer families
  - Issues with digital learning and accessibility of digital materials

# Discussion



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

P.O. Box 2064, Suite 1804  
20 Eglinton Avenue West  
Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8  
T. 416.932.9460 F. 416.932.9459  
[ocsta@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:ocsta@ocsta.on.ca) [www.ocsta.on.ca](http://www.ocsta.on.ca)

Patrick Daly, *President*  
Beverley Eckensweiler, *Vice President*  
Nick Milanetti, *Executive Director*

February 12, 2018

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Chairpersons and Directors of Education  
- All Catholic District School Boards

**FROM:** Patrick J. Daly, President

**SUBJECT: Education Accessibility Standard Working Group Update**

---

As you are aware, the Accessibility Directorate of the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services recently established an appointed working group to assist in the development of an accessibility regulation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“AODA”). The group is called “K-12 Education Standards Development Committee” (“working group”). This represents the second stage of the government’s consultation process, following the July 2017 Discussion Guide that outlined several “themes” an education accessibility standard should address, such as, awareness training, awareness of current accessibility accommodations in schools, communication and inclusive decision making and transition planning. (see attached OCSTA submission).

**Chair and Participants of the Working Group**

The working group is comprised of several groups of education and disability rights stakeholders and is chaired by Lynn Ziraldo, former Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of York Region. OCSTA is represented by Stephen Andrews, Director of Legislative and Political Affairs who was appointed to this working group by the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. In addition, recently retired Dufferin-Peel CDSB Associate Director Sheila McWatters and retired Huron-Superior CDSB Director John Stadnyk were also appointed to the working group. The working group is supported by several staff from the Accessibility Directorate and the Ministry of Education.

**Mandate and Deliverables**

The working group held its first meeting on Monday, February 5, 2018 to discuss the mandate and process of the group. Its’ mandate is to “develop recommendations that address barriers in publicly funded schools” for students with disabilities. The working group will meet every two months and is to prepare a draft work plan, including key milestones and timelines, that identify key policy priorities and make preliminary recommendations for an education accessibility standard or

regulation. The working group will also be responsible for developing a public consultation strategy on the proposed education accessibility standard.

The working group's first task is to deliver a report on key priorities to the Ministers of Consumer and Government Services and Education by October 2018, at which time the report will be posted for public input. The next stage is for the working group to develop recommendations on accessibility regulation similar to the regulations already in place under the AODA. The recommendations are to be received by the Minister 18 months after the priorities report in October 2018.

### **Next Steps**

The next meeting of the working group is scheduled for early April where OCSTA will be present. We would encourage boards to send any issues and concerns about an education accessibility standard to Stephen Andrews at [sandrews@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:sandrews@ocsta.on.ca).

For your information, we have also attached a summary of a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and the Accessibility Directorate.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Stephen Andrews at [sandrews@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:sandrews@ocsta.on.ca).

*Attachments*

Response to  
Ministry of Education's  
**Engagement Guide for the Development of  
an Accessibility Standard for Education**

**July 10, 2017**



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association



## **Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association**

### **Mission Statement**

Inspired by the Gospel, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association provides the provincial voice, leadership and service for elected Catholic school trustees to promote and protect publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario.

### **Vision Statement**

Ontario is enriched by a publicly funded Catholic education system, governed by locally elected Catholic school trustees who serve with faith, commitment and compassion.

## **Introduction**

On behalf of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association ("OCSTA") we are pleased to provide you with our submission on the development of an "Accessibility Standard for Education". The recommendations contained within this report reflect extensive consultations with our Catholic school boards.

OCSTA was founded in 1930. It represents 237 elected Catholic trustees who collectively represent 29 English-language Catholic district school boards. These school boards educate approximately 545,000 students from junior kindergarten to grade 12 and adults in continuing education programs province-wide.

Inspired by the Gospel, the Mission of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association is to provide leadership, service and a provincial voice for elected Catholic school trustees who seek to promote and protect publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario.

## **Context for the Development of an Accessibility Standard in Catholic School Boards**

Since the passage of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, ("AODA") and its key regulations O. Reg. 429/07 and O.Reg. 191/11 providing schools with specific requirements in customer service and standards for accessibility, Ontario's 29 Catholic school boards have worked diligently to provide an environment in each of its facilities that fosters independence, dignity and respect for all board students and staff with disabilities. Our school boards are fully committed to providing services that are free of barriers and biases to our students, parents and the broader school community.

Our member boards strive to ensure that the principle of equal opportunity is reflected and valued in our learning and working environments. They are committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to access services, programs and educational experiences that are available to all others they serve.

Catholic school boards in Ontario have continued to meet all targets and timelines in respect of the implementation of accessibility requirements in customer service, employment, information and communication, and student transportation. In addition, Ontario's Catholic school boards have developed multi-year accessibility plans, as required by O. Reg. 191/11 on Accessibility Standards. In general, these plans describe the measures each board will take over several years to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn and participate in the school community primarily in the areas of customer service, employment, information and communication, and student transportation.

## **School Board Process and Policy Development**

In terms of the manner through which these multi-year plans are developed, Catholic school boards have accessibility working groups comprised of senior board staff and student representatives. These working groups consult with their Special Education Advisory Committees, Catholic School Councils, local Principal/Vice Principal Associations, local Union Representatives and persons with disabilities in establishing specific barrier removal and prevention strategies. These multi-year plans are also reviewed annually and are subject to overall school board approval. Each board is required to issue an “annual report” on the progress made in achieving the goals outlined in its multi-year plan. Also boards are required to file periodic progress reports on compliance with the regulations for accessibility.

With regard to the funding of specific initiatives within school boards’ multi-year plans, through the standard budgeting processes key barrier removal projects are identified, prioritized and completed in a coordinated effort from within existing board financial resources. Without specific, earmarked provincial funding for accessibility requirements, boards will struggle to reach full compliance by 2025.

## **Defining an Education Accessibility Standard**

According to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Alliance (“Alliance”) Discussion Paper<sup>1</sup>, an “education accessibility standard” is:

An enforceable regulation that the Ontario government would enact under the AODA. It would set out measures that school boards must take to remove and prevent accessibility barriers that impede students with disabilities from fully participating in, being fully included in, and fully benefitting from education programs in Ontario. It would set deadlines for action.<sup>2</sup>

The Alliance Discussion Paper goes on to describe some of the features of an Accessibility Standard for Education that need to be addressed. For example, the concept of disability should include students with physical, mental, sensory, intellectual, mental health, learning, communications, and neurological impairments. These forms of disability are currently covered by the Ontario Human Rights Code. In addition, the Accessibility Standard for Education should also include the following measures:

- Actions that make it easier to include students with disabilities in the mainstream of school activities and programs;
- Accessibility standards for new buildings;
- Digital accessibility requirements for on-line learning;
- Provincial standards on service animals;
- Curriculum based “universal design in learning principles”;
- Measures to remove attitudinal barriers that impede full inclusion of students with disabilities.

<sup>1</sup> This advocacy group is comprised of several non-profit disability rights groups. These include the CNIB, Canadian Mental Health Association, Easter Seals and March of Dimes among several other local groups across Ontario.

<sup>2</sup> See page 2 Discussion Paper, November 2016 ([www.aodalliance.org](http://www.aodalliance.org))

OCSTA supports many of these general recommendations; however, individual school boards should maintain the autonomy and flexibility to determine local board policies. For example, the province may prescribe the need for school boards to have a service animal policy or procedure, but not dictate the specific requirements of that policy or procedure.

The Discussion Paper suggests that achieving an Education Accessibility Standard should not entail new government funding. However, this suggestion fails to appreciate the financial resources, staff time and other capital and operational resources required to support students with the range of disabilities identified above. It also fails to understand the costs associated with some of the key implementation requirements of such a standard. For example, the necessary in-service training programs for board staff that must be created to implement an education accessibility regulation and the costs associated with creating educational materials in accessible formats.

### **Tools to Support Accessible Education**

The Ontario Education Services Corporation (“OESC”), a joint initiative of all trustee and school board associations, has developed a comprehensive set of resources to support school boards with complying with the requirements in respect of accessibility standards in education. In addition, the “Teachable Project” developed by OESC, provides specific resources to teachers and school boards as they develop accessibility policies for students with various disabilities<sup>3</sup>. Our school boards have collectively demonstrated leadership in ensuring that our schools are accessible and meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

### **Recommendation:**

The Ministry and the Accessibility Directorate (and the Education Standards Committee) should continue to fund and provide support to the OESC as it develops implementation strategies and tools to enable school boards to implement an Education Accessibility Standard.

### **Current Challenges Facing Catholic School Boards**

OCSTA’s Catholic school boards will face a number of challenges in fully implementing the requirements of an Education Accessibility Standard. Based on our boards’ experience with the requirements in meeting customer service and standards for accessibility described in O. Reg. 191/11, the financial costs are significant. The Ministry of Education currently does not fund via the GSN or EPO specific program dollars to assist boards in meeting the requirements of the regulation. This problem will be exacerbated with an additional Education Accessibility Standard regulation, assuming no new money is attached to its implementation. This means boards will have to adjust their existing accessibility plans and priorities and this will likely impact the timelines for full implementation of the regulations.

In addition, 28 of 29 Catholic school boards in Ontario are currently running financial deficits in their special education program areas. Boards must adjust various budget items to ensure special education students receive the programs and services required. Adding additional requirements

<sup>3</sup> See <http://theteachableproject.org/accessibility/index/>. The resources include policy statements, lesson plans, research reports and articles all related to accommodating students with disabilities.

through an Education Accessibility Standard without any new funding would put significant stress on already over extended budgets.

Further challenges include:

- Balancing the needs of students with multiple accommodation needs. Many students with disabilities have intersecting needs related to race, gender, cultural heritage and their specific disability. This may impact the ways in which boards provide accessible educational programs.
- Potential conflicts between making schools accessible for students with specific behavioural disabilities and ensuring schools are safe places for learning.

### **Recommendations:**

OCSTA would strongly recommend that transitional funding is specifically allocated to any new regulations related to an Education Accessibility Standard.

In terms of multiple student accommodation needs, ensure school boards maintain the autonomy and flexibility to design programs, procedures, processes and facilities that meet their local circumstances.

### **Key Issues in Developing an Education Accessibility Standard**

The Ministry of Education’s Discussion Guide for the development of an Education Accessibility Standard (“the Guide”), outlines a number of themes the standard should address.

- 1. Accessibility Awareness and Training.** Accessibility awareness and training programs are currently required under the AODA and supported by the Ontario Education Services Corporation and the Accessibility Directorate. School boards will continue to identify new training and awareness gaps in their accessibility plans to accommodate any new requirements emerging from the Education Accessibility Standard.
- 2. Awareness of Accessibility Accommodations—school board policies, programs and processes.** Ensuring that parents, students and board staff have access to information about board policies and procedures is generally a key feature of the multi-year plans. This information is on school board web sites and is available in accessible formats. Hard copies will be made available at board offices, departments, schools and various advisory councils.
- 3. Information, Communication and Inclusive Decision Making.** Catholic school boards strive to ensure that all voices are heard in identifying barriers and removing them to accommodate students with disabilities. In addition, many boards have advisory committees, Special Education Advisory groups and accessibility working groups with student with disabilities participating in them. These groups also have in many cases the mandate to update long term accessibility plans. With the new Education Accessibility Standard, these working groups will likely have an expanded mandate to identify barriers and propose barrier removal/prevention strategies to the school board.

4. **Transition Planning.** Supporting children entering school from child care presents significant challenges to school boards. For example, the large increase in children on the autism spectrum entering school presents challenges in respect of obtaining the proper educational and behavioural supports and funding that most boards are struggling with. Also the coordination with various child care agencies often presents logistical issues in obtaining information in a timely manner that respects privacy issues for parents and students. To support the transition from secondary to work or post-secondary education, boards currently have a range of measures in place to support students with disabilities. Work placement programs and outreach with youth employment agencies and social service groups, are examples.
5. **Inclusive and Accessible Learning Spaces:** Currently school boards have made significant gains ensuring accessibility features in the design and functioning of schools. Boards are using the principles of universal and barrier free design to meet Ontario building code requirements and prioritize key capital and construction projects to remove various barriers for students and staff with disabilities. However, this mandate is met largely on a “reactive” basis due to limited funding sources. Specific funding allocated towards accessibility needs would enable school boards to develop a more systematic, effective and efficient approach to achieving accessibility standards by 2025.

## **Conclusion**

As was stated in the outset of our submission, Catholic school boards are committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to access services, programs and educational experiences currently available to all other students they serve. Ontario’s Catholic school boards have demonstrated a commitment to and leadership for inclusive education for many years. OCSTA welcomes the opportunity to participate in the development of an Education Accessibility Standard.

1. OCSTA believes strongly that local school boards need additional transitional funding allocated to any new regulations related to an Education Accessibility Standard.
2. In terms of addressing multiple student accommodation needs, OCSTA recommends that school boards maintain the autonomy and flexibility to design programs, procedures, processes and facilities that meet their local circumstances.
3. In terms of the implementation of the education accessibility standard, the Ministry of Education, the Accessibility Directorate and other agencies should explore how various tools and training programs can be more effective in supporting school boards. The lessons learned from the implementation of existing regulations could be a starting point for such discussions.
4. In addition, the Ministry should provide funding to OESC as they develop supports for school boards in Ontario.

Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2016-2017

---

Patrick Daly, President	Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Beverley Eckensweiler, Vice President	Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board
Kathy Burtnik, Past President	Niagara Catholic District School Board
Ann Andrachuk	Toronto Catholic District School Board
Michael Bellmore	Sudbury Catholic District School Board
Clifford Casey	Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board
Carol Cotton	York Catholic District School Board
Michael Del Grande	Toronto Catholic District School Board
Marino Gazzola	Wellington Catholic District School Board
Michelle Griepsma	Peterborough Victoria Northumberland & Clarington CDSB
Arlene Iantomasi	Halton Catholic District School Board
Todd Lalonde	CDSB of Eastern Ontario
Colleen Landers	Northeastern Catholic District School Board
Paul Landry	Kenora Catholic District School Board
Mark Mullan	Ottawa Catholic School Board
Mario Pascucci	Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
Thomas Thomas	Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
Linda Ward	St. Clair Catholic District School Board
Bishop John Boissonneau	ACBO Liaison to OCSTA
Fr. Patrick Fitzpatrick	Chaplain
Nick Milanetti	Executive Director



---

Box 2064, Suite 1804, 20 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8  
Tel: 416-932-9460 Fax: 416-932-9459 Email: [ocsta@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:ocsta@ocsta.on.ca) Website: [www.ocsta.on.ca](http://www.ocsta.on.ca)



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**DRAFT PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**  
**GUIDELINE**

January 2018

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **PREAMBLE**

- I. PURPOSE**
- II. INTRODUCTION**
- III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**
- IV. SCHOOL BOARD ACCOMMODATION REVIEW POLICIES**
- V. SCHOOL BOARD PLANNING PRIOR TO AN  
ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**
- VI. ESTABLISHING AN ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**
- VII. THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**
- VIII. SCHOOL INFORMATION PROFILE**
- IX. CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS**
- X. PUBLIC MEETINGS**
- XI. COMPLETING THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**
- XII. TRANSITION PLANNING**
- XIII. TIMELINES FOR THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS**
- XIV. MODIFIED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS**
- XV. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESS**
- XVI. EXEMPTIONS**
- XVII. DEFINITIONS**

### **APPENDIX A – ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PETITION TEMPLATE**

## PREAMBLE

School boards are responsible for managing their school capital assets in an effective manner. They must respond to changing demographics and program needs while being cognizant of the impacts of their decisions on student programming and well-being, school board resources and the local community.

One aspect of a school board's capital and accommodation planning is reviewing schools that have underutilized space. These are schools where the student capacity of the school is greater than the number of students enrolled. When a school board identifies a school that is projected to have long-term excess space, a school board would typically look at a number of options such as:

- moving attendance boundaries and programs to balance enrolment between over and underutilized schools;
- offering to lease underutilized space within a school to a coterminous school board;
- finding community partners who can pay the full cost of operating the underutilized space; and/or
- decommissioning or demolishing a section of the school that is not required for student use to reduce operating costs.

If none of these options are deemed viable by a school board, the board may determine that a pupil accommodation review process take place which could lead to possible school consolidations and closures. These decisions are made within the context of supporting the school board's student achievement and well-being strategy and to make the most effective use of its school buildings and funding.

The Ministry of Education expects school boards to work with their community partners when undertaking capital planning, including when a school board is beginning to develop options to address underutilized space in schools. The Ministry of Education's *Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline* (CPPG) outlines requirements for school boards to reach out to their local municipalities and other community partners to share planning related information and to explore potential partnership opportunities. The *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline* (the "*Guideline*") builds upon the CPPG by providing requirements for school boards to share information with and seek feedback from their local municipalities and other community partners related to any pupil accommodation reviews a school board initiates.

If a pupil accommodation review results in a school closure decision, a school board will then need to decide whether to declare that school as surplus, potentially leading to the future disposition (that is, sale or lease) of the property. These sales are governed by Ontario Regulation 444/98 – Disposition of Surplus Real Property. Alternately, a school board may decide to use a closed school for other school board purposes, or hold the property as a strategic long-term asset

of the school board due to a projected need for the facility in the future. Each school board decides when it is appropriate to review its strategic property holdings to determine if these properties are still required to be held or should be considered surplus to the school board's needs and considered for a future disposition.

This document provides direction to school boards on one component of their capital planning - the pupil accommodation review process. It provides the minimum standards the province requires school boards to follow when undertaking a pupil accommodation review. It is important to note that school boards have flexibility to modify their pupil accommodation review policies to meet their local needs, and can develop policies that exceed the provincial minimum standards outlined in this document.

## **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the *Guideline* is to provide a framework of minimum standards for school boards to undertake pupil accommodation reviews to determine the future of a school or group of schools. This *Guideline* ensures that where a decision is taken by a school board regarding the future of a school, that decision is made with the involvement of an informed local community and is based on a broad range of criteria regarding the quality of the learning experience for students.

This *Guideline* is effective upon release and replaces the previous *Guideline* of March 2015.

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

Ontario's school boards are responsible for deciding the most appropriate pupil accommodation arrangements for the delivery of their elementary and secondary programs. These decisions are made by school board trustees in the context of carrying out their primary responsibilities of fostering student achievement and well-being, and ensuring effective stewardship of school board resources. In some cases, to address changing student populations, this requires school boards to consider undertaking pupil accommodation reviews that may lead to school consolidations and closures.

Under paragraph 26, subsection 8 (1) of the *Education Act*, the Minister of Education may issue guidelines with respect to school boards' school closure policies.

## **III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The *Guideline* has been established to align with the Ministry of Education's vision and as such, focuses on achieving excellence, ensuring equity, promoting well-being and enhancing public confidence.

All school board pupil accommodation review policies should be designed to align with these guiding principles.

#### **IV. SCHOOL BOARD ACCOMMODATION REVIEW POLICIES**

School boards are responsible for creating and implementing a policy to address pupil accommodation reviews to serve their local needs. School boards are required to consult with local communities prior to adopting or subsequently amending their pupil accommodation review policies.

All pupil accommodation review policies must be clear in stipulating that the final decision regarding the future of a school or group of schools rests solely with the Board of Trustees. If the Board of Trustees votes to close a school or schools in accordance with their policy, the school board must provide clear timelines regarding the closure(s) and ensure that a transition plan is communicated to all affected school communities within the school board.

It is important to note that this *Guideline* is intended as a **minimum** requirement for school boards in developing their policies. School boards are responsible for establishing and complying with their pupil accommodation review policies to serve their local needs.

A copy of the school board's pupil accommodation review policy and the government's *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline* are to be made available to the public as determined in the school board's policy, and posted on the school board's website.

The *Guideline* recognizes that pupil accommodation reviews include a school or group of schools to facilitate the development of viable solutions for pupil accommodation that support the guiding principles.

School board pupil accommodation review policies will include statements that encourage the sharing of relevant information as well as providing the opportunity for the public and affected school communities to be heard.

The Ministry of Education recommends that, wherever possible, schools should only be subject to a pupil accommodation review once in a five-year period, unless there are circumstances determined by the school board, such as a significant change in enrolment.

#### **V. SCHOOL BOARD PLANNING PRIOR TO AN ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**

As described in the *Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline*, school boards must undertake long-term capital and accommodation planning, informed by any relevant information obtained from local municipal governments and other

community partners, which takes into consideration long-term enrolment projections and planning opportunities for the effective use of excess space in all area schools.

School boards must document their efforts to obtain information from local municipal governments as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review; and provide any relevant information from municipalities and other community partners as part of the initial staff report (see Section VI).

## **VI. ESTABLISHING AN ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**

School boards may proceed to establish a pupil accommodation review only after undertaking the necessary assessment of long-term capital and accommodation planning options for the school(s).

### ***Initial Staff Report***

Prior to establishing a pupil accommodation review, the initial staff report to the Board of Trustees must contain at least three options to address the accommodation issue(s): a recommended option, an alternative option and a status quo option. The initial staff report must also include information on actions taken by school board staff prior to establishing a pupil accommodation review process and supporting rationale as to any actions taken or not taken.

Boards must use the ministry-approved template<sup>1</sup> to write their initial staff reports.

The option(s) included in the initial staff report must address the following four impacts:

- Impact on student programming;
- Impact on student well-being;
- Impact on school board resources; and
- Impact on the local community\*.

\* Impact on the local community must include consideration of the local economy if at least one school that is eligible to receive support from the Rural and Northern Education Fund (RNEF) is included in a pupil accommodation review at any time.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> An initial staff report template is under development.

<sup>2</sup> An economic impact assessment template is under development.

Boards should refer to section 5.6 (1) of *Ontario Regulation 193/10 – Restricted Purpose Revenues* (O. Reg. 193/10) for a description of the location of the list of schools eligible for Rural and Northern Education Fund Allocation. The list of RNEF-eligible schools for the 2017-18 school year can be found here: [http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/1718/list\\_of\\_schools\\_eligible\\_rural\\_northern\\_all\\_ocation\\_en.pdf](http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/1718/list_of_schools_eligible_rural_northern_all_ocation_en.pdf)

If a school board has included a new school on the list through board motion, then the board should confirm that it has been included in the ministry's list of schools eligible for Rural and Northern Education Fund Allocation (as per O. Reg. 193/10) prior to the initial staff report to the Board of Trustees.

School boards will *have discretion* to undertake economic impact assessments in other communities, if needed, however this will only be *required* if at least one RNEF-eligible school is included in a pupil accommodation review at any time.

To support these impact analyses, the following factors should be included for each accommodation option:

- summary of accommodation issue(s) for the school(s) under review;
- where students would be accommodated;
- if proposed changes to existing facility or facilities are required as a result of the pupil accommodation review;
- identify any program changes as a result of the proposed option;
- how student transportation would be affected if changes take place;
- if new capital investment is required as a result of the pupil accommodation review, how the school board intends to fund this, as well as a proposal on how students would be accommodated if funding does not become available; and
- any relevant information obtained from municipalities and other community partners prior to the commencement of the pupil accommodation review, including any confirmed interest in using the underutilized space.

Each accommodation option must also include a timeline for implementation.

The initial staff report and School Information Profiles (SIPs) (see Section VIII) will be made available to the public, as determined in the school board's policy, and posted on the school board's website following the decision to proceed with a pupil accommodation review by the Board of Trustees.

School boards must ensure that individuals from the school(s) under review and the broader community are invited to participate in the pupil accommodation review consultation. At a minimum, the pupil accommodation review process must consist of the following methods of consultation:

- Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) (see Section VII);

- consultation with municipal governments local to the affected school(s) (see Section IX);
- public meetings (see Section X); and
- public delegations (see Section XI).

## **VII. THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Role**

School boards must establish an ARC that represents the school(s) under review and acts as the official conduit for information shared between the school board and the school communities. The ARC may comment on the initial staff report and may, throughout the pupil accommodation review process, seek clarification of the initial staff report. The ARC may provide other accommodation options than those in the initial staff report; however, it must include supporting rationale for any such option.

The ARC members do not need to achieve consensus regarding the information provided to the Board of Trustees.

The school board's staff resources assigned to the ARC are required to compile feedback from the ARC as well as the broader community in the Community Consultation section of the final staff report (see Section XI) to be presented to the Board of Trustees.

### **Membership**

The membership of the ARC should include, at a minimum, parent/guardian representatives from each of the schools under review, chosen by their respective school communities.

Where established by a school board's pupil accommodation review policy, there may also be the option to include students and representation from the broader community. For example, a school board's policy may include a requirement for specific representation from the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities. In addition, school board trustees may be ad hoc ARC members to monitor the ARC progress.

### **Formation**

The ARC should be formed following the Board of Trustees' consideration of the initial staff report but prior to the first public meeting. The school board will invite ARC members from the school(s) under review to an orientation session that will describe the mandate, roles and responsibilities, and procedures of the ARC.

### Terms of Reference

School boards will provide the ARC with Terms of Reference that describe the ARC's mandate. The mandate will refer to the school board's education and accommodation objectives in undertaking the ARC and reflect the school board's strategy for supporting student achievement and well-being.

The Terms of Reference will also clearly outline the school board's expectations of the roles and responsibilities of the ARC; and describe the procedures of the ARC. At a minimum, the ARC will provide feedback on the initial staff report option(s).

The Terms of Reference will outline the minimum number of working meetings of the ARC.

### Meetings of the Accommodation Review Committee

The ARC will meet to review materials presented by school board staff. It is recommended that the ARC hold as many working meetings as is deemed necessary within the timelines established in their school board's pupil accommodation review policy.

## **VIII. SCHOOL INFORMATION PROFILE**

School board staff are required to develop School Information Profiles (SIPs) as orientation documents to help the ARC and the community understand the context surrounding the decision to include the specific school(s) in a pupil accommodation review. The SIP provides an understanding of and familiarity with the facilities under review.

The SIP is expected to include data for each of the following four considerations about the school(s) under review:

- Impact on student programming;
- Impact on student well-being;
- Impact on school board resources; and
- Impact on the local community.\*

\* Impact on the local community must include consideration of the local economy if at least one school that is eligible to receive support from the Rural and Northern Education Fund (RNEF) is included in a pupil accommodation review at any time.

A SIP will be completed by school board staff for each of the schools under review. The following are the minimum data requirements and factors that are to be included in the SIP:

- Facility Profile:
  - School name and address.
  - Site plan and floor plan(s) (or space template) of the school with the date of school construction and any subsequent additions.
  - School attendance area (boundary) map.
  - Context map (or air photo) of the school indicating the existing land uses surrounding the school.
  - Planning map of the school with zoning, Official Plan or secondary plan land use designations.
  - Size of the school site (acres or hectares).
  - Building area (square feet or square metres).
  - Number of portable classrooms.
  - Number and type of instructional rooms as well as specialized classroom teaching spaces (e.g., science lab, tech shop, gymnasium, etc.).
  - Area of hard surfaced outdoor play area and/or green space, the number of play fields, and the presence of outdoor facilities (e.g., tracks, courts for basketball, tennis, etc.).
  - Ten-year history of major facility improvements (item and cost).
  - Projected five-year facility renewal needs of school (item and cost).
  - Current Facility Condition Index (FCI) with a definition of what the index represents.
  - A measure of proximity of the students to their existing school, and the average distance to the school for students.
  - Percentage of students that are and are not eligible for transportation under the school board policy, and the length of bus ride to the school (longest, shortest, and average length of bus ride times).
  - School utility costs (totals, per square foot, and per student).
  - Number of parking spaces on site at the school, an assessment of the adequacy of parking, and bus/car access and egress.
  - Measures that the school board has identified and/or addressed for accessibility of the school for students, staff, and the public with disabilities (i.e., barrier-free).
  - On-the-ground (OTG) capacity, and surplus/shortage of pupil places.
  
- Instructional Profile:
  - Describe the number and type of teaching staff, non-teaching staff, support staff, itinerant staff, and administrative staff at the school.
  - Describe the course and program offerings at the school.
  - Describe the specialized service offerings at the school (e.g., cooperative placements, guidance counseling, etc.).
  - Current grade configuration of the school (e.g., junior kindergarten to Grade 6, junior kindergarten to Grade 12, etc.).
  - Current grade organization of the school (e.g., number of combined grades, etc.).
  - Number of out of area students.
  - Utilization factor/classroom usage.

- Summary of five previous years' enrolment and 10-year enrolment projection by grade and program.
- Current extracurricular activities.
- Other School Use Profile:
  - Current non-school programs or services resident at or co-located with the school as well as any revenue from these non-school programs or services and whether or not it is at full cost recovery.
  - Current facility partnerships as well as any revenue from the facility partnerships and whether or not it is at full cost recovery.
  - Community use of the school as well as any revenue from the community use of the school and whether or not it is at full cost recovery.
  - Availability of before and after school programs or services (e.g., child care) as well as any revenue from the before and after school programs and whether or not it is at full cost recovery.
  - Lease terms at the school as well as any revenue from the lease and whether or not it is at full cost recovery.
  - Description of the school's suitability for facility partnerships.

School boards may introduce additional items that could be used to reflect local circumstances and priorities which may help to further understand the school(s) under review.

Each school under review will have a SIP completed at the same point-in-time for comparison purposes. The Ministry of Education expects school boards to prepare SIPs that are complete and accurate, to the best of the school board's ability, prior to the commencement of a pupil accommodation review.

While the ARC may request clarification about information provided in the SIP, it is not the role of the ARC to approve the SIP.

## **IX. CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS**

Following the Board of Trustees' approval to undertake a pupil accommodation review, school boards must invite affected single and upper-tier municipalities as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review to discuss and comment on the options in the school board's initial staff report.

Invitations for this meeting will be sent to the elected Mayor, Chair, Warden, Reeve or equivalent, and to the Chief Administrative Officer, City Manager or equivalent for the affected single and upper-tier municipalities.

The affected single and upper-tier municipalities, as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review, must provide their response on the options in the school board's initial staff report

before the final public meeting. School boards must provide them with advance notice of when the final public meeting is scheduled to take place.

School boards must document their efforts to meet with the affected single and upper-tier municipalities, as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review; and provide any relevant information from this meeting as part of the final staff report to the Board of Trustees (see Section XI).

## **X. PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Once a school board has received an initial staff report and has approved the initiation of a pupil accommodation review, the school board must arrange to hold a minimum of three public meetings for broader community consultation on the initial staff report. School board staff are expected to facilitate the public meetings to solicit broader community feedback on the recommended and alternative option(s) contained in the initial staff report<sup>3</sup>.

The public meetings are to be announced and advertised publicly by the school board through an appropriate range of media as determined by the school board.

At a minimum, the first public meeting must include the following:

- an overview of the ARC orientation session;
- the initial staff report with recommended and alternative options; and
- a presentation of the SIPs.

## **XI. COMPLETING THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**

### **Final Staff Report**

At the conclusion of the pupil accommodation review process, school board staff will submit a final staff report to the Board of Trustees which must be available to the public as determined in the school board's policy, and posted on the school board's website.

The final staff report must include:

- A Community Consultation section that contains feedback from the ARC and all public consultations as well as any relevant information obtained

---

<sup>3</sup> A template is under development for initial staff reports, which will have the intention of providing guidance on how options should be presented in order to ensure community understanding of the impacts on student programming, well being, school board resources, and the broader community.

from municipalities and other community partners prior to and during the pupil accommodation review.<sup>4</sup>

- A section that summarizes secondary school student feedback for pupil accommodation reviews involving one or more secondary schools. School boards will determine how best to involve secondary school students in the pupil accommodation review process, to promote their voice and ensure their well-being. Potential options could include a dedicated meeting for students or an online tool for students to submit anonymous feedback.

School board staff may choose to amend their proposed option(s) included in the initial staff report. However, if a new school closure is introduced as part of any option in the final staff report, then an additional public meeting must be held no fewer than 20 business days from the posting of the final staff report.

The recommended option(s) must also include a proposed accommodation plan, prepared for the decision of the Board of Trustees, which contains a timeline for implementation.

---

<sup>4</sup> A template is under development for community partners to engage boards with proposed alternatives to closures and proposals for community use of schools.

### Delegations to the Board of Trustees Meeting

Once school board staff submits the final staff report to the Board of Trustees, the school board must allow an opportunity for members of the public to provide feedback on the final staff report through public delegations to the Board of Trustees. Notice of the public delegation opportunities will be provided based on school board policy.

After the public delegations, school board staff will compile feedback from the public delegations which will be presented to the Board of Trustees with the final staff report.

### Decision of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will be provided with the final staff report, including the compiled feedback from the public delegations, when making its final decision regarding the pupil accommodation review.

The Board of Trustees has the discretion to approve the recommendation(s) of the final staff report as presented, modify the recommendation(s) of the final staff report, or to approve a different outcome.

The Ministry encourages school boards not to make final pupil accommodation review decisions during the summer holiday period (typically from July 1 to the day after Labour Day).

## **XII. TRANSITION PLANNING**

The transition of students should be carried out in consultation with parents/guardians and staff. Following the decision to consolidate and/or close a school, the school board is expected to establish a separate committee to address the transition for students and staff.

## **XIII. TIMELINES FOR THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS**

The pupil accommodation review process must comply with the following minimum timelines:

- Following the date of the Board of Trustees' approval to conduct a pupil accommodation review, the school board will provide written notice of the Board of Trustees' decision within 5 business days to each of the elected Mayors, Chairs, Wardens, Reeves or equivalent and to the Chief Administrative Officers, City Managers, or equivalent of the affected single and upper-tier municipalities, other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review; and include an invitation

for a meeting to discuss and comment on the options in the school board's initial staff report. School boards must also notify the Director(s) of Education of their coterminous school boards and the Ministry of Education through the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Capital and Business Support Division.

- The affected single and upper-tier municipalities, as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review, must provide their response on the options in the school board's initial staff report before the final public meeting.
- Beginning with the date of the Board of Trustees' approval to conduct a pupil accommodation review, there must be no fewer than 30 business days before the first public meeting is held.
- There must be a minimum period of 60 business days between the first and final public meetings.
- The final staff report must be publicly posted no fewer than 10 business days after the final public meeting.
- From the posting of the final staff report, there must be no fewer than 10 business days before the public delegations.
- If a new school closure is introduced as part of any option in the final staff report, then an additional public meeting must be held no fewer than 20 business days from the posting of the final staff report.
- If there is an additional public meeting, there must be no fewer than 10 business days before the public delegations.
- There must be no fewer than 10 business days between public delegations and the final decision of the Board of Trustees.

#### **XIV. MODIFIED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS**

In certain circumstances, where the potential pupil accommodation options available are deemed by the school board to be less complex and do not include one or more schools eligible to receive support from the ministry's Rural and Northern Education Fund (RNEF), school boards may find it appropriate to undertake a modified pupil accommodation review process. The *Guideline* permits a school board to include an optional modified pupil accommodation review process in its pupil accommodation review policy.

A school board's pupil accommodation review policy must clearly outline the conditions where a modified pupil accommodation review process could be initiated by explicitly defining the factors that would allow the school board the option to conduct a modified pupil accommodation review process. The conditions for conducting a modified pupil accommodation review process are satisfying condition one and two or more of conditions two to five:

1. exclusion of any RNEF-eligible school in the pupil accommodation review; and, either
2. distance to the nearest available accommodation; or
3. utilization rate of the facility; or
4. number of students enrolled at the school; or
5. when a school board is planning the relocation (in any school year or over a number of school years) of a program, in which the enrolment constitutes more than or equal to 50% of the school's enrolment (this calculation is based on the enrolment at the time of the relocation, or the first phase of a relocation carried over a number of school years).

School boards may consider additional factors that are defined in their pupil accommodation review policy to qualify for the modified pupil accommodation review process. Multiple factors may be developed by the school board to appropriately reflect varying conditions across the board (e.g., urban, rural, elementary panel, secondary panel, etc.). The Board of Trustees must approve these explicitly defined factors, after community consultation, in order to adopt a modified pupil accommodation review process as part of their school board's pupil accommodation review policy.

The guiding principles of this *Guideline* apply to the modified pupil accommodation review process.

Even when the criteria for a modified pupil accommodation review are met, a school board may choose to use the standard pupil accommodation review process.

### *Implementing the Modified Accommodation Review Process*

The initial staff report will explain the rationale for exempting the school(s) from the standard pupil accommodation review process, in accordance with the school board's pupil accommodation review policy.

The initial staff report and SIPs must be made available to the public, as determined in the school board's policy, and posted on the school board's website.

A public meeting will be announced and advertised through an appropriate range of media as determined by the school board.

Following the public meeting, school board staff will submit a final staff report to the Board of Trustees which must be available to the public as determined in the school board's policy, and posted on the school board's website. However, if a new school closure is introduced as part of any option in the final staff report, then an additional public meeting must be held no fewer than 20 business days from the posting of the final staff report.

The final staff report must include:

- A Community Consultation section that contains feedback from all public consultations as well as any relevant information obtained from municipalities and other community partners prior to and during the modified pupil accommodation review.
- A section that summarizes secondary school student feedback for pupil accommodation reviews involving one or more secondary schools. School boards will determine how best to involve secondary school students in the pupil accommodation review process, to promote their voice and ensure their well-being. Options could include a dedicated meeting for students or an online tool for students to submit anonymous feedback.

Once school board staff submit the final staff report to the Board of Trustees, the school board must allow an opportunity for members of the public to provide feedback through public delegations to the Board of Trustees. Notice of the public delegation opportunities will be provided based on school board policy.

After the public delegations, school board staff will compile feedback from the public delegations which will be presented to the Board of Trustees with the final staff report.

The Board of Trustees has the discretion to approve the recommendation(s) of the final staff report as presented, modify the recommendation(s) of the final staff report, or to approve a different outcome.

The Ministry encourages school boards not to make final pupil accommodation review decisions during the summer holiday period (typically from July 1 to the day after Labour Day).

A transition plan will be put in place following the decision to consolidate and/or close a school.

### *Timelines for the Modified Accommodation Review Process*

The modified pupil accommodation review process must comply with the following minimum timelines:

- Following the date of the Board of Trustees' approval to conduct a modified pupil accommodation review, the school board will provide written notice of the Board of Trustees' decision within 5 business days to each of the elected Mayors, Chairs, Wardens, Reeves or equivalent and to the Chief Administrative Officers, City Managers, or equivalent of the affected single and upper-tier municipalities, other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the modified pupil accommodation review; and include an invitation for a meeting to discuss and comment on the option(s) in the school board's initial staff report. School boards must also notify the Director(s) of Education of their coterminous school boards

and the Ministry of Education through the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Capital and Business Support Division.

- The affected single and upper-tier municipalities, as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the modified pupil accommodation review, must provide their response on the recommended option(s) in the school board's initial staff report before the final public meeting.
- The school board must hold at least one public meeting. Beginning with the date of the Board of Trustees' approval to conduct a modified pupil accommodation review, there must be no fewer than 30 business days before this public meeting is held.
- The final staff report must be publicly posted no fewer than 10 business days after the final public meeting.
- From the posting of the final staff report, there must be no fewer than 10 business days before the public delegations.
- If a new school closure is introduced as part of any option in the final staff report, then an additional public meeting must be held no fewer than 20 business days from the posting of the final staff report.
- If there is an additional public meeting, there must be no fewer than 10 business days before the public delegations.
- There must be no fewer than 10 business days between public delegations and the final decision of the Board of Trustees.

## **XV. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESS**

### *What is an Administrative Review?*

The Ministry of Education encourages students, parents and community members to get involved in the accommodation review process.

If during the course of the pupil accommodation review process, you become concerned that the board is not following its pupil accommodation review policy, you may want to consult the board's policy and advise the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) of your concerns.

You can find a copy of the board's policy on its website, or you can request it from the board.

If at the end of the process, you believe that the board did not follow its pupil accommodation review policy, then you can request an Administrative Review from the ministry.

### *Steps to Request an Administrative Review*

Once the trustees have made their final decision, there are 30 calendar days to submit a petition to the ministry. The ministry will notify the contact person when the petition has been received. Within 60 calendar days, the ministry will decide whether to appoint a facilitator to undertake an Administrative Review.

A review of a school board's accommodation review process may be sought if the following conditions are met.

An individual or individuals must:

### **Step 1**

- Review the board's policy governing pupil accommodation reviews and identify areas where you believe the board did not follow its policy. Submit a copy of the board's pupil accommodation review policy highlighting how the pupil accommodation review process was not compliant with the school board's pupil accommodation review policy. Some examples could include:

- o The board policy may require that public meetings be held over a 90 day period, but the meetings were held over a 70 day period.

- o The board policy may require board staff to analyze a certain number of accommodation options developed by the ARC, and the board staff may not have done so.

### **Step 2**

- Collect signatures of people who also believe the board did not follow its policy and who support a request for an Administrative Review. Demonstrate the support of a portion of the school community through the completion of a petition signed by a number of supporters equal to at least 30% of the affected school's student headcount (e.g., if the headcount is 150, then 45 signatures would be required). Parents/guardians of students and/or other individuals that formally participated in the accommodation review process are eligible to sign the petition.

- Eligible signatures are from:

- o parents or guardians of students who attend the school

- o other individuals who formally participated in the accommodation review process by attending a meeting, presenting a submission in person or in writing (including by email), or as ARC members.

- The petition<sup>5</sup> should clearly provide a space for individuals to print and sign their name or provide an e-signature<sup>6</sup>; address (street name and postal code); and to indicate whether they are a parent/guardian of a student attending the school subject to the accommodation review, or an individual who has formally participated in the review process.

### Step 3

- Write a letter or email to the Minister of Education to accompany your petition. You may want to follow the format provided in Appendix A. Your letter or email must explain in detail how you think the board did not follow its accommodation review policy.
- Submit the petition, letter, and justification to the school board and the Minister of Education within thirty (30) calendar days of the board's closure resolution. Your letter or email must identify one person as the contact person. One copy of your letter or email is to be sent to the Ministry and another copy is to be sent to the board.

The school board is then required to:

- Confirm to the Minister of Education that the names on the petition are parents/guardians of students enrolled at the affected school and/or individuals who formally participated in the review process.
- Prepare a response to the individual's or individuals' submission regarding the process and forward the board's response to the Minister of Education within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the petition.

If the conditions set out above have been met, the Ministry is then required to:

- Undertake a review by appointing a facilitator to determine whether the school board accommodation review process was undertaken in a manner consistent with the board's accommodation review policy within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the school board's response.

---

<sup>5</sup> Information contained in the petition is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990*.

<sup>6</sup> Guidelines regarding the use of e-signatures are under development.

## XVI. EXEMPTIONS

This *Guideline* applies to schools offering elementary or secondary programs. However, there are specific circumstances where school boards are not obligated to undertake a pupil accommodation review. These include:

- where a replacement school is to be built by the school board on the existing site, or built or acquired within the existing school attendance boundary, as identified through the school board's policy;
- where a replacement school is to be built by the school board on the existing site, or built or acquired within the existing school attendance boundary and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students and staff during the reconstruction, as identified through the school board's policy;
- when a lease for the school is terminated;
- when a school board is planning the relocation (in any school year or over a number of school years) of grades or programs, in which the enrolment constitutes less than 50% of the school's enrolment (this calculation is based on the enrolment at the time of the relocation, or the first phase of a relocation carried over a number of school years);
- when a school board is repairing or renovating a school, and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students during the renovations;
- where a facility has been serving as a holding school for a school community whose permanent school is over-capacity and/or is under construction or repair; or
- where there are no students enrolled at the school at any time throughout the school year.

In the above circumstances, a school board is expected to inform school communities about proposed accommodation plans for students before a decision is made by the Board of Trustees. The school board will also provide written notice to each of the affected single and upper-tier municipalities through the Clerks Department (or equivalent), as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the exemption, and their coterminous school boards in the areas of the affected school(s) through the Director of Education, and to the Ministry of Education through the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Capital and Business Support Division no fewer than 5 business days after the decision to proceed with an exemption.

A transition plan will be put in place following the Board of Trustees' decision to consolidate, close or move a school or students in accordance with this section.

## **XVII. DEFINITIONS**

**Accommodation review:** A process, as defined in a school board pupil accommodation review policy, undertaken by a school board to determine the future of a school or group of schools.

**Accommodation Review Committee (ARC):** A committee, established by a school board that represents the affected school(s) of a pupil accommodation review, which acts as the official conduit for information shared between the school board and the affected school communities.

**ARC working meeting:** A meeting of ARC members to discuss a pupil accommodation review, and includes a meeting held by the ARC to solicit feedback from the affected school communities of a pupil accommodation review.

**Business day:** A calendar day that is not a weekend or statutory holiday. It also does not include calendar days that fall within school boards' Christmas, spring, and summer break. For schools with a year-round calendar, any break that is five calendar days or longer is not a business day.

**Consultation:** The sharing of relevant information as well as providing the opportunity for municipalities and other community partners, the public and affected school communities to be heard.

**Facility Condition Index (FCI):** A building condition as determined by the Ministry of Education by calculating the ratio between the five-year renewal needs and the replacement value for each facility.

**On-the-ground (OTG) capacity:** The capacity of the school as determined by the Ministry of Education by loading all instructional spaces within the facility to current Ministry standards for class size requirements and room areas.

**Public delegation:** A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees where presentations by groups or individuals can have their concerns heard directly by the school board trustees.

**Public meeting:** An open meeting held by the school board to solicit broader community feedback on a pupil accommodation review.

**School Information Profile (SIP):** An orientation document with point-in-time data for each of the schools under a pupil accommodation review to help the ARC and the community understand the context surrounding the decision to include the specific school(s) in a pupil accommodation review.

**Space template:** A Ministry of Education template used by a school board to determine the number and type of instructional areas to be included within a new school, and the size of the required operational and circulation areas within that school.

## APPENDIX A – ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PETITION TEMPLATE

Dear Minister,

I am writing to request an Administrative Review of the accommodation review process undertaken by the  [name of the school board]  for the following school(s):  [school name] ,  [school name] ,  [school name]  .

On  [date] , the Board of Trustees voted to  [describe board resolution to close school/s, move students, keep school/s open and/or build new school/s]  .

Attached please find our petition. The petitioners believe that the board did not follow its accommodation review policy in the following ways:

1) The board's policy states:  [describe relevant section of the board's policy]

Instead, the board  [describe how actual events differed]

2) The board's policy states:  [describe relevant section of the board's policy]

Instead, the board  [describe how actual events differed]

3) The board's policy states:  [describe relevant section of the board's policy]

Instead, the board  [describe how actual events differed]

[other examples as appropriate]

We believe the board did not follow its accommodation review policy, we hope that you will appoint an independent facilitator to review the board's accommodation review process.

Sincerely,

[Contact person for the petitioners]

Contact information



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

P.O. Box 2064, Suite 1804  
20 Eglinton Avenue West  
Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8  
T. 416.932.9460 F. 416.932.9459  
[ocsta@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:ocsta@ocsta.on.ca) [www.ocsta.on.ca](http://www.ocsta.on.ca)

Patrick Daly, *President*  
Beverley Eckensweiler, *Vice President*  
Nick Milanetti, *Executive Director*

February 12, 2018

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Chairpersons and Directors of Education  
- All Catholic District School Boards

**FROM:** Patrick J. Daly, President

**SUBJECT:** **Revised Pupil Accommodation Guideline Draft**

---

As you are aware, in June 2017 the Ministry of Education launched its phased consultation process to strengthen rural and northern education. Part of the process included a review of the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG) and the Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline (CPPG). In the fall, the Ministry established a working group to review and make recommendations on the PARG and CCPG involving OCSTA and other municipal and education stakeholders. Based on this input, the Ministry has released a revised PARG. The proposed changes include:

- Requiring boards to explore at least three accommodation options in the initial staff report including a status quo option, a recommended option and an alternative option. These options must address four impacts: student programs, student well-being, school board resources and impact on the local community;
- Allowing more opportunity for public input by requiring more meetings and extended timelines;
- Limiting the use of modified pupil accommodation reviews (MPARS);
- Strengthening the role for secondary students;
- Integrating the administrative review process into the PARG and the addition of e-signatures to the petition process.

In addition, the Ministry will work with education and municipal stakeholders to develop a new toolkit and resources to support boards in conducting pupil accommodation reviews to promote increased collaboration and community understanding. This information will be provided to stakeholders in the fall of 2018 and include standardized data requirements.

These changes reflect some of the key recommendations made by OCSTA in its December 4, 2017 submission. Specifically, maintaining the option of using MPARS in select circumstances, not requiring the disclosure of municipal participation in meetings and providing boards additional resources for community consultation.

### **Next Steps**

The Ministry will continue to seek feedback on the revised PARG (see attached) until **March 23, 2018**. We have attached our December 4<sup>th</sup> submission for your reference and strongly encourage you to send comments to the Ministry on the draft revised PARG ([information.met@ontario.ca](mailto:information.met@ontario.ca)).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Stephen Andrews at [sandrews@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:sandrews@ocsta.on.ca).

### *Attachments*

**Ministry of Education**

**Office of the ADM**

Capital and Business Support Division  
900 Bay Street  
20th Floor, Mowat Block  
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

**Ministère de l'Éducation**

**Bureau du sous-ministre adjoint**

Division du soutien aux immobilisations et  
aux affaires  
900, rue Bay  
20<sup>e</sup> étage, Édifice Mowat  
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



**2018: B02**

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Directors of Education  
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

**FROM:** Joshua Paul  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Capital and Business Support Division

**DATE:** **February 9, 2018**

**SUBJECT:** **Draft Revised Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline  
and Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline  
Updates**

---

I am writing to inform you of the ministry's:

- Proposed revisions to the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG).
- Next steps to support improved co-ordination of community infrastructure planning, including future revisions to the Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline (CPPG).

These policy initiatives were key elements of the province's Plan to Strengthen Rural and Northern Education. The plan responded to feedback received during the government's rural engagement in spring 2017 and aims to better support:

- Quality rural education;
- Sustainable use of school space in rural communities; and
- Decision-making around school closures.

The ministry undertook a consultation on proposed revisions to the PARG and CPPG between October 12 and December 6, 2017. The consultation included an online survey, 19 in-person engagement sessions during the ministry's fall education funding symposia and a meeting of the Minister's Reference Group on Community and Education Planning and Partnerships. The Minister's Reference Group includes representatives from the education and municipal sectors and an academic and its mandate is to

advise the Minister of Education on effective ways to improve co-ordination of community infrastructure planning from a public education perspective.

The policy reforms presented in the following sections respond to consultation feedback received by the ministry in fall 2017.

### **Draft Revised PARG – Summary of Key Changes**

The amendments to the PARG presented below will affect all school boards across the province, not just those which cover rural and northern communities. I therefore encourage your board to provide feedback to the draft revised PARG, which is posted here, along with a summary of fall 2017 consultation feedback:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/reviewGuide.html>

The ministry will accept feedback during this current second phase of the consultation until **March 23, 2018**.

In addition, the ministry plans to convene a technical working group comprised of school board and municipal representatives to discuss these amendments in detail.

### **Initial Staff Report**

The initial staff report to the Board of Trustees must contain at least **three** options to address the accommodation issue(s): a recommended option, an alternative option and a status quo option.

The option(s) included in the initial staff report must address the following **four** impacts:

- Impact on student programming;
- Impact on student well-being;
- Impact on school board resources; and
- Impact on the local community\*.

*(\* Impact on the local community must include consideration of the local economy if at least one school that is eligible to receive support from the Rural and Northern Education Fund (RNEF) is included in a pupil accommodation review at any time.)*

Boards will be required to use a ministry-approved template to write their initial staff reports. This template is currently under development and will provide boards with flexibility to accommodate the varying circumstances of each pupil accommodation review.

The ministry is considering the following issues to support development of the template:

- **Student programming** issues such as multi-grade classrooms.
- While measurable **student well-being** indicators continue to evolve, impact on extracurriculars, student transportation and school climate surveys could be considered for inclusion.

- To support analysis of the impacts on **school board resources**, the ministry will provide additional guidance where there are standards in reporting, such as school capacity and facility condition.
- The current requirement for school boards to consider **community impacts**, such as loss or gain of community use of school space, will be maintained and extended to include consideration of any possible impacts on First Nation communities on-reserve.
- If at least one school that is eligible to receive support from the Rural and Northern Education Fund (RNEF) is included in a pupil accommodation review at any time then **economic impacts** must also be given consideration for each accommodation option. School boards will have discretion to undertake economic impact assessments in other communities, if needed. The ministry will:
  - Develop guidance that will define key parameters it expects the economic impact assessment to address (such as, impact on local businesses, impact on family commutes / schedules and housing starts). We will consult with school boards and municipalities on how these key parameters are shaped;
  - Develop an approved list of vendors from which boards may select a third party to undertake this work.
  - Seek approval for additional funding for boards that will be required to undertake economic impact assessments.

More information about RNEF can be found in *Memorandum B09 - Plan to Strengthen Rural and Northern Education*, June 28, 2017.

These changes pertain to sections VI (Establishing An Accommodation Review) and VIII (School Information Profile) of the draft revised PARG.

### **Public Meetings**

For all standard PARs, a minimum of **three** public meetings for broader community consultation on the initial staff report must be held. There must be a minimum period of **60 business days** between the first and final public meetings.

For all standard and modified PARs, if a **new school closure** is introduced as part of any option in the final staff report, then an **additional public meeting** must be held no fewer than **20 business days** from the posting of the final staff report. If there is an additional public meeting, there must be no fewer than **10 business days** before the public delegations.

As a component of developing the template, the Ministry would like to hear from boards on what supports boards might need when undertaking PARs (i.e, facilitators, facilitation training).

These changes primarily pertain to sections X (Public Meetings), XIII (Timelines for the Accommodation Review Process) and XIV (Modified Accommodation Review Process) of the draft revised PARG.

### ***Final Staff Report***

For all standard and modified PARs, the final staff report must include a section that summarizes secondary school student feedback for pupil accommodation reviews involving one or more secondary schools. School boards will determine how best to involve secondary school students in the pupil accommodation review process, to promote their voice and ensure their well-being. Options could include a dedicated meeting for students or an online tool for students to submit anonymous feedback.

In addition, the ministry is developing a template for community partners to engage boards with proposed alternatives to closures and proposals for community use of schools.

These changes pertain to section XI (Completing the Accommodation Review) of the draft revised PARG.

### ***Modified PARs***

**A modified PAR may be not be undertaken** if one or more **RNEF-eligible schools** have been included in any of the accommodation options presented in the initial or final staff reports. That is, if a RNEF-eligible school is ever included in a PAR, that PAR must follow the standard process.

This change pertains to section XIV (Modified Accommodation Review Process) of the draft revised PARG.

### ***Administrative Review Process***

Guidance on administrative reviews has been integrated into the PARG. In addition, the ministry will develop guidelines regarding the use of e-signatures in petitions for administrative reviews.

These changes pertain to section XV (Administrative Review Process) of the draft revised PARG.

## Updates on Integrated Local Planning and the Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline

The ministry remains committed to updating the CPPG to further encourage joint responsibility for integrated community planning as we learn more from the new voluntary pilot program and other work across government. This decision was based on consultation feedback, which suggested that adding new requirements on school boards through the CPPG in an attempt to compel local partnerships is unlikely to be successful. Instead, the ministry plans to work with the Ministries of Infrastructure and Municipal Affairs to:

- Develop a new voluntary pilot program that will provide flexible support to municipalities, school boards, and other relevant local actors who wish to enhance their collective capacity for integrated local planning. Best practices and lessons learned will inform future policy and supports for integrated local planning across the province.
- Continue moving forward with initiatives to support *Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan*, such as:
  - Provincial funding to retrofit excess school space for use by community partners.
  - The Community Hubs Mapper, which is an online tool within the Community Hubs Resource Network website that displays information about provincial and school board properties ([www.communityhubsontario.ca/community-hubs-mapper/](http://www.communityhubsontario.ca/community-hubs-mapper/)).
  - The Surplus Property Transition Initiative, a program designed to provide more time for communities to determine the viability of acquiring surplus provincial properties while covering the holding costs in order to repurpose the asset to meet the needs of the local community.

The above work will be undertaken chiefly through the Minister's Reference Group on Community and Education Planning and Partnerships. We also welcome any further input from boards and other partners.

During this period, the Ministry of Education expects school boards to continue to use the existing CPPG, including the requirement of convening an annual CPP meeting. In addition to sharing planning information at the annual CPP meeting, we encourage partners to continue these important conversations outside of this meeting and to develop other processes to foster better communication at the local level.

## Next Steps

The ministry plans to release a final revised PARG in spring 2018, after which school boards will be expected to amend their existing PAR policies. As part of this process, the ministry expects school boards to undertake extensive community consultations to promote understanding of PAR processes. Only once revised PAR policies have been approved by trustees can any new PARs be started, unless PARs are required to support a joint-use school initiative between two school boards.

Details regarding the ministry's plans to release PARG support materials will be announced alongside the release of the final revised PARG.

Thank you for your continued work on these important policy initiatives, I look forward with interest to receiving your feedback. If you require further information about these changes, please contact Colleen Hogan at 416-325-1705 or [Colleen.Hogan@ontario.ca](mailto:Colleen.Hogan@ontario.ca) or Hitesh Chopra at 416-325-1887 or [Hitesh.Chopra@ontario.ca](mailto:Hitesh.Chopra@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,

*Original signed by:*

Joshua Paul  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Capital and Business Support Division

Copy: Superintendents of Business and Finance

Enclosure: Draft Revised Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline

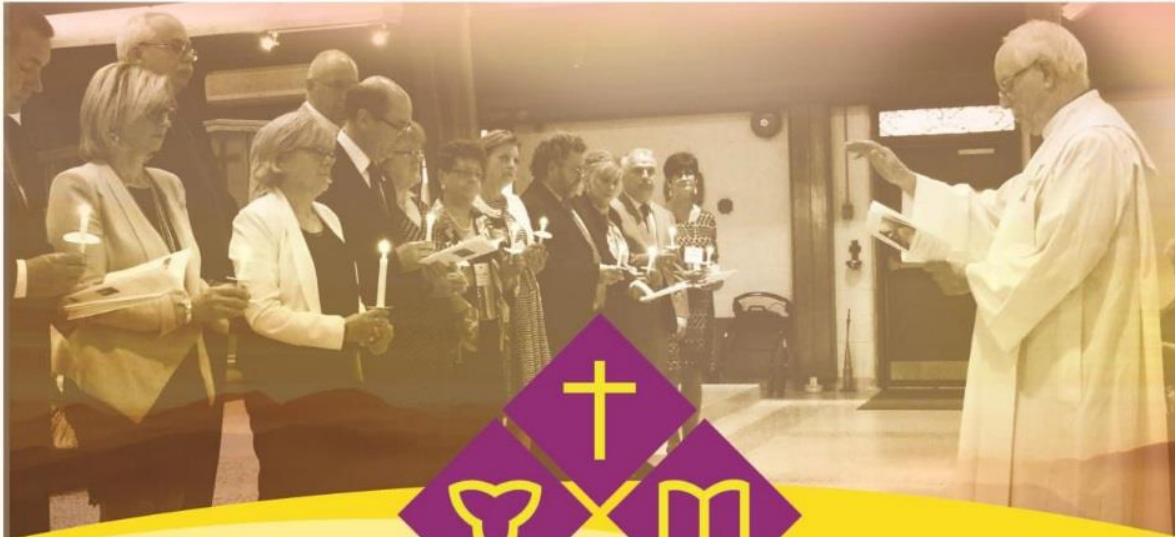
A Submission to the  
Minister of Education

**Re: Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines & Community  
Planning & Partnerships Guideline**

December 4, 2017



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association



## **Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association**

### **Mission Statement**

Inspired by the Gospel, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association provides the provincial voice, leadership and service for elected Catholic school trustees to promote and protect publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario.

### **Vision Statement**

Ontario is enriched by a publicly funded Catholic education system, governed by locally elected Catholic school trustees who serve with faith, commitment and compassion.

---

## Introduction

On behalf of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association ("OCSTA") we are pleased to provide you with our submission on the Ministry of Education's proposed revisions to the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline ("PARG") and the Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline ("CPPG"). The submission also reflects our recommendations to the ministry's earlier consultation "supporting students and communities: Ontario's rural education strategy" (June 2017) and are the result of consultations with our Catholic school boards.

The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) was founded in 1930. It represents 237 elected Catholic trustees who collectively represent 29 English-language Catholic district school boards. Together, these school boards educate approximately 545,000 students from junior kindergarten to grade 12 and adults in continuing education programs province-wide.

Inspired by the Gospel, the Mission of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association is to provide leadership, service and a provincial voice for elected Catholic school trustees who seek to promote and protect publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario.

## Context for the PARG and CPPG Proposed Reforms

As part of the province's *Plan to Strengthen Rural and Northern Education* the ministry of education indicated that it is committed to amending its PARG and to support improved co-ordination of community infrastructure planning which would involve revising the CPPG. The ministry of education's objectives in reforming the PARG and CPPG are:

- Create a more collaborative process that better promotes student achievement and well-being;
- Better recognizes the impact of school closures on rural communities.

## OCSTA General Position

OCSTA welcomes the ministry of education's next stage in its consultations on strengthening rural and northern education in Ontario. Developing specific tools and processes to improve collaboration and working relationships with municipal government and community organizations are a key component of developing long-term student accommodation plans that promote student achievement and well-being, while at the same time recognizes the impact of school closures on northern and rural communities. In our June submission, OCSTA called on the government to encourage all parties to work together in the best long-term interests of students. We also recommended that school boards "have adequate resources and funding to conduct meaningful PARs and MPARs and the autonomy and flexibility to respond to the needs of local communities" (p.6).

Catholic school trustees clearly recognize that decisions related to underutilized schools and possible school closures have a significant impact on their local communities, parishes, students, families and local businesses. The loss of a Catholic school in a rural community may mean the

---

loss of Catholic education in an entire region of the province. That is why Catholic school boards develop comprehensive, sensitive policies and processes for conducting pupil accommodation reviews in full compliance with the PARG. It should be noted as well that accommodation reviews take place after other options are explored by school boards for managing underutilized space such as:

- Moving attendance boundaries and programs to balance enrollment
- Offering to lease space to other school boards
- Finding community partners that can pay the full cost of operating the underutilized space.<sup>1</sup>

Below OCSTA offers comments on the policy options proposed to reform the PARG and CPPG.

### **Proposed Policy Options from the Ministry of Education**

#### **1. Revising Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) timeframes:**

- Extending the current minimum PAR timeframe beyond five months;
- Eliminating the minimum modified PAR timeframe of three months; and/or
- Further extending time-frames under specific circumstances, such as if new closure recommendations are added mid-way through the accommodation review process.

### **OCSTA Concerns and Recommendations**

The PARG has undergone extensive consultations over the past few years in an effort to improve the process for school boards, students and community stakeholders. In order to minimize disruption and substantive changes to existing school board PARG policies and planning frameworks, the revisions to the PARG should be minor and fill potential gaps in the planning process. This will ensure the resulting revisions do not create increased anxiety on parents, students and the school board community.

As a result, OCSTA recommends not changing the minimum time frame of five months for a PAR or the elimination of the Modified PAR time frame of three months. The modified PAR was developed for cases that are relatively straightforward and don't require extensive consultations, reports and protracted public debate. Eliminating this option for boards will remove the flexibility to conduct the appropriate sort of PAR given local circumstances.

OCSTA would support, however, extending time frames under specific circumstances where substantive new information is introduced into the PAR or new school closure recommendations occur mid-way through the review process but within a single school year. This would give school boards and other stakeholders the time necessary to review the new information or recommendations and respond accordingly.

---

<sup>1</sup> PAR Guideline, 2015 p. 3.

---

## 2. **Introducing Minimum Requirements for the Initial Staff Report by Requiring School Boards**

- At least three accommodation options (a recommended option, an alternative option and a status quo option).
- Information on how accommodation options will impact:
  - a. School board budget;
  - b. Student programming /achievement;
  - c. Student well-being; and
  - d. Community and/or economic impact.

### **OCSTA Concerns and Recommendations**

The current PARG requires school boards, in the initial staff report, to provide one or more options to address the accommodation issues facing the board. It also requires boards to develop a “recommended option” if more than one option is presented for consideration to the school board community. It is not clear how adding an alternative option and a status quo option would improve the accommodation planning process. The whole point of a PAR is that the “status quo” no longer serves the needs of the students or the school board and various options are being presented to improve the accommodations for students with the goal of providing the highest quality Catholic Education.

In addition, the current PARG requires boards to “identify any program changes as a result of the proposed option” and its impact on changes to existing facilities or any new facilities that may be required as a result of the PAR. It also requires boards to identify how it intends to fund any new capital investments that may fall out of the PAR. Also the current PARG directs boards to use information from local governments and community partners in their accommodation planning and options analysis. In other words, the current PARG directs boards to consider budget impacts, student impacts, and local community economic impacts. It is therefore unclear how these proposed changes to the initial staff report will capture any new information on the impact of a PAR process or clarify the potential impacts on the local community.

### **3. Promoting community input in the PAR processes by requiring:**

- School boards to invite elected municipal representatives and municipal staff to a meeting to discuss the initial staff report;
- School boards to disclose municipal participation / non-participation in PAR and Community Planning and Partnership (CPP) processes;
- A broader role for trustees throughout the PAR process, beyond ad hoc membership of Accommodation Review Committees, hearing public delegations and making the final decision; and
- A participatory role for secondary student representatives in PARs involving secondary schools.

---

## OCSTA Concerns and Recommendations

OCSTA believes that inviting elected municipal representatives and staff to meetings to discuss the initial staff report may be beneficial to the overall PAR process. However, we believe that local school boards are best able to make those decisions so as to reflect local circumstances without explicit direction from ministry guidelines.

School boards routinely consult with municipalities at the early stages of a PAR which include discussions of the accommodation options being considered. Boards are best able to make the judgements about how and when to involve local governments in the PAR process since there may be cases where the initial staff report is recommending accommodation options that don't impact or interest the local municipality.

In respect of school boards disclosing municipal participation or non-participation, this may have the unintended impact of complicating school board-municipal relationships in the PAR or CPP process. Municipal planning information—official city plans, growth information, land use plans and so are important for a PAR process and it should be readily available to school boards. But placing school boards in the position of potential rewarding or penalizing municipalities for participating in the process or not may not encourage municipal/board collaborative relationships.

In terms of school board trustee's involvement, OCSTA supports this being determined by local boards. OCSTA is interested in exploring this possible reform option in greater detail.

At the present time, OCSTA does not see the need to expand the participatory role of students in the PAR process. Many are involved in Accommodation Review Committees ("ARCs") under the current guidelines. Student trustee representatives on school boards can voice the concerns of students as required.

### **4. Reforming the PAR Administrative Review Process by:**

- Extending the timeframe to submit an administrative review petition from 30 to 60 calendar days;
- Reviewing the signature thresholds and requirements for launching an administrative review request.

---

## **OCSTA Concerns and Recommendations**

Administrative review of a school boards PAR process is generally sought when it is believed a board failed to follow its own PAR policies or did not meet the minimum requirements set out in the PARG. Individuals or groups must submit a copy of the boards PAR policy showing how the PAR did not conform to the policy along with a petition signed by a number of supporters from the school community equal to at least 30% of the affected school's student population. These two steps must be completed within 30 days and the request sent to the Minister of Education. OCSTA does not believe that any changes are required to the PAR administrative review process at this time. They are generally rare challenges to a school boards PAR process and extending the timeframe will only add delays and uncertainty to the process. Our Catholic school boards are very diligent in developing and strictly following their PAR policies and the PARG set out by the ministry of education.

### **Developing Ministry Supports, such as:**

- A PAR toolkit to standardize type and format of initial staff report information;
- A template for use by community partners to engage boards with proposed alternatives to school closures or other proposals for community use of schools; and
- New support for the review and validation of initial staff report information and community proposals by independent third parties.

## **OCSTA Concerns and Recommendations**

OCSTA believes that a standard format for initial staff reports and a "PAR toolkit" are welcome supports to the overall PAR process. This may assist to eliminate confusion among stakeholders and community members in respect of the PAR process.

Background templates to assist community groups with their involvement with boards is also a welcome support. However, OCSTA believes this is best suited to the CPPG consultation process and other pre-PAR accommodation planning processes. We encourage and support enhanced communication with municipalities and other stakeholders to facilitate their participation in CPPG processes.

OCSTA does not believe boards need support regarding alternatives to school closures and other proposals for the community use of schools. These issues are routinely discussed and evaluated within the context of existing PAR process and more informal discussions prior to the launch of formal PARs. In addition, school boards are substantively engaged with community partners and the community hub groups to find alternatives for underutilized space within their facilities. The central challenge for boards in this context are finding community partners with sufficient capital and sustainable funding sources to fully partner with school boards.

OCSTA does not support the use of third parties to validate initial staff report information and community proposals. Most school boards employ highly skilled and experienced staff who have the responsibility to develop accommodation proposals with input from various community stakeholders. Further, having third parties validate initial staff reports or the data relied upon may result in more complexity and delays in the process while undermining the

---

authority of school boards to make PAR related decisions.

OCSTA also believes the ministry could play additional roles in developing supports for the PAR and CPPG process. As we outlined in our June submission, the ministry of education could:

- Establish (secure Ministry funding) for a senior executive lead staff position at each school board that can develop and coordinate an integrated multi-year planning framework in collaboration with provincial and municipal governments;
- Identify key leading community partner groups that have sufficient human and financial resources to participate in school board, municipal and provincial planning processes.

**5. The ministry is also supporting improved co-ordination of community infrastructure planning by working with partner ministries and key stakeholders on the following three initiatives:**

- Building upon the Ministry of Municipal Affairs' ongoing integrated local planning work to better facilitate local relationships and partnerships, including between school board and municipal governments, particularly in rural and northern communities.
- Revising the CPPG to:
  - Better align with integrated local planning processes;
  - Encourage joint responsibility for integrated community planning, with a focus on communication between school boards, municipal governments and community partners about boards' capital plans;
  - Highlight the potential for community use of open and underutilized schools; and
  - Require that boards disclose municipal participation and non-participation in CPPG meetings.

### **OCSTA Concerns and Recommendations**

OCSTA generally supports these proposed changes to enhance relationships between local governments and school boards. However, we have some hesitation about schools being placed in the role of disclosing municipal participation and non-participation as mentioned above.

OCSTA also supports the proposed revisions to the CPPG to encourage joint responsibility for integrated community planning involving a boards capital plans. However, in the context of PARs and CPPs it must be clear that school boards are the decision makers and responsible for student achievement and well-being and thus must be the lead body in these processes. Joint responsibility for integrated planning as it involves school board facilities and resources must recognize school boards ultimate decision making authority.

The sharing of key information among all partners will improve the overall outcomes of a school boards long term capital and accommodation plans that best serve the needs of students, community groups and local governments.

---

In addition, school communities are more engaged and invested in an accommodation planning process that results in enhanced and new school facilities, including community agencies. A targeted stream of funding to make capital improvements to existing facilities or create new facilities is key to a successful process and higher degrees of community support. OCSTA looks forward to discussing these issues in more detail and how the proposed changes will enhance community infrastructure planning.

**6. Continuing its ongoing work with the Ministry of Infrastructure to support delivery of recommendations in *Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan***

**OCSTA Concerns and Recommendations**

Improving the utilization of surplus school space is beneficial to municipalities, school communities and the province. Increased coordination of financial resources to support long-term operation of the community partnerships with school boards is required going forward.

OCSTA supports the government of Ontario's community hubs initiative and will continue to be involved in various working groups and discussions on how to facilitate the community use of underutilized school board facilities. There continues to be a need to adequately fund capital and operating costs related to community hubs.

In support of community hubs, OCSTA requests that the ministry of education consider that schools identified as community hubs be funded at 100% of their capacity and not the current per pupil funding model.

**Summary**

OCSTA supports the ministry of education's goals of creating a more collaborative process that better promotes student achievement and well-being and a process that better recognizes the impact of school closures on rural communities. However, we have concerns about the extension of timeframes for the PAR process and changing the required content of initial staff reports. We do support the creation of "toolkits" to facilitate more informed involvement of community groups in the PAR process and supporting better partnerships between school boards and local government and community groups. The ministry needs to be mindful, however, of the need for local Catholic school boards to maintain their decision making autonomy and flexibility when it comes to the final decisions related to accommodation and capital planning for their students.

**Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**2017-18**

**Patrick Daly, President, Hamilton-Wentworth CDSB**  
**Beverley Eckensweiler, Vice President, Bruce-Grey CDSB**  
**Kathy Burtnik, Past President, Niagara CDSB**

<b>REGION</b>	<b>BOARDS</b>	<b>OCSTA DIRECTOR</b>	<b>TERM END DATE</b> (Immediately following AGM & Conference)
<b>Region 1</b>	Huron-Superior CDSB Nipissing-Parry Sound CDSB Northeastern CDSB Sudbury CDSB	Colleen Landers <i>Northeastern CDSB</i>	2019
<b>Region 2</b>	Kenora CDSB Northwest CDSB Superior North CDSB Thunder Bay CDSB	Paul Landry <i>Kenora CDSB</i>	2019
<b>Region 3 (at large)</b>	Northern Regions No. 1 & 2	Michael Bellmore <i>Sudbury CDSB</i>	2019
<b>Region 4</b>	Bruce-Grey CDSB Huron-Perth CDSB Waterloo CDSB Wellington CDSB	Marino Gazzola <i>Wellington CDSB</i>	2019
<b>Region 5</b>	London DCSB St. Clair CDSB Windsor-Essex CDSB	Linda Ward <i>St. Clair CDSB</i>	2019
<b>Region 6</b>	Toronto CDSB	Ann Andrachuk Michael Del Grande	2018
<b>Region 7</b>	Dufferin-Peel CDSB	Mario Pascucci Thomas Thomas	2018
<b>Region 8</b>	York CDSB	Carol Cotton	2018
<b>Region 9</b>	Durham CDSB Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland & Clarington CDSB Simcoe-Muskoka CDSB	Michelle Griepsma <i>Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland &amp; Clarington CDSB</i>	2019
<b>Region 10</b>	Algonquin & Lakeshore CDSB CDSB of Eastern Ontario Renfrew County CDSB	Todd Lalonde <i>CDSB of Eastern Ontario</i>	2019
<b>Region 11</b>	Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB Halton CDSB Hamilton-Wentworth CDSB Niagara CDSB	Clifford Casey <i>Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB</i> Arlene Iantomasi, <i>Halton CDSB</i>	2019
<b>Region 12</b>	Ottawa CSB	Mark Mullan <i>Ottawa CSB</i>	2018

Nick Milanetti, Executive Director  
 Bishop John Boissonneau, ACBO Liaison to the OCSTA Board of Directors  
 Father Patrick Fitzpatrick, Chaplain





Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

---

Box 2064, Suite 1804, 20 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8  
Tel: 416-932-9460 Fax: 416-932-9459 Email: [ocsta@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:ocsta@ocsta.on.ca) Website: [www.ocsta.on.ca](http://www.ocsta.on.ca)



CANADIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION  
*ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES COMMISSAIRES D'ÉCOLES CATHOLIQUES*

Catholic Education Centre, 570 West Hunt Club Road, Nepean, Ontario K2G 3R4  
Email: [ccsta@ocsb.ca](mailto:ccsta@ocsb.ca) Web site: [www.ccsta.ca](http://www.ccsta.ca) Twitter: [@CCSTACONnect](https://twitter.com/CCSTACONnect)

February 9, 2018

Presidents and Executive Directors  
Provincial Associations

Dear Presidents and Executive Directors,

As you know, our 2018 AGM/Convention will take place this June in Kelowna, BC and the 2019 AGM/Convention will be held in Canmore, AB. At this time, we are looking for a host for our 2020 AGM/Convention. Our Board members will be speaking with you regarding this at your next provincial meeting. In addition, I am writing to each of you at this time in hopes that you will also support this request.

Anyone interested in hosting our 2020 AGM/Convention can contact Jean Montminy at [jean.montminy@ocsb.ca](mailto:jean.montminy@ocsb.ca).

Also, please note that registration for our 2018 AGM will be open shortly. We will send an email via Constant Contact to all those registered in our database. If you have any updated trustee contacts you would like added to our database, please send the information to Jean Montminy in excel spreadsheet format. You may also add them directly by visiting our website.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Marino Gazzola  
President, CCSTA

cc: CCSTA Board of Directors

Enlivened by the Word of God and our tradition, we promote and protect the right to Catholic education in Canada.  
We speak as one.

Animés par la Parole de Dieu et notre tradition, nous assurons la protection et la promotion du droit à  
une éducation catholique au Canada. Nous parlons d'une même voix.

# Board of Directors'

## Highlights

FEBRUARY 2018

CCSTA  
ACCEC

### HIGHLIGHTS:

Justice James  
Higgins Award 1

New  
Chaplain Appointed 1

AGM/  
Convention Updates 2

Budget 2019 2

Audited  
Financial  
Statements 2

Local  
Engagement Strategy 3

Toonies for  
Tuition /  
Contest 3

New Board  
Members 3

## Justice James Higgins Award Winner



**Congratulations to Sr. Teresita Rose-Marie Kambeitz, OSU, on winning this well deserved award!**

The board reviewed a number of excellent nominations and determined that Sr. Teresita Rose-Marie Kambeitz, OSU, will be this year's recipient of the prestigious Justice James Higgins Award. The award is given annually to an individual or group who have made an outstanding contribution to Catholic education in Canada.

Sr. Kambeitz will be recognized at CCSTA's 2018 AGM/Convention in Kelowna, BC. Further details on Sr, Kambeitz's achievements will appear in a subsequent CCSTA newsletter, and in the 2018 AGM/Convention programme.

## New Chaplain Appointed

CCSTA is pleased to announce that, following approval from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Reverend Stefano Penna has been appointed as Chaplain to CCSTA.

A priest of the Diocese of Saskatoon since 1986, 31 blessed years, Fr. Stefano Penna's ministry, always rooted in parochial life, is dedicated to serving Catholic Education.

His work with all levels of Catholic Educational institutions on critical issues arising from engaging contemporary culture has led him to travel extensively across North America as lecturer, workshop facilitator, consultant, retreat master, mission preacher and animator of Catholic educational communities. He has graduate degrees from the Toronto School of Theology, the Gregorian University in Rome and Yale University. His particular loves are his nephews and nieces (ten), grand-nephews (three), gardening, and pasta. His greatest joy? Serving the Eucharistic Lord as Priest.



**CCSTA welcomes Reverend Stefano Penna to the Board**



**CANADIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES COMMISSAIRES D'ÉCOLES  
CATHOLIQUES**

Visit the **CCSTA website** to add your e-mail address to our database.



*“Enlivened by the Word of God and our tradition, we promote and protect the right to Catholic education in Canada. We speak as one.”*

## AGM/Convention Updates

Convention reports were received from Kelowna (2018) and Canmore (2019).

Convention planning is well underway for each venue, and [registration is open](#) for the Kelowna, BC AGM/Convention on June 7-9, 2018.

The Board approved the logo and speakers for the 2019 AGM/Convention in Canmore, AB.

CCSTA is accepting applications to host the 2020 AGM/Convention. Please contact the [CCSTA office](#) for more information.

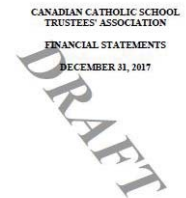


## Budget 2019

The Board approved a proposed balanced budget for 2019, based on a 2% membership fee increase.

## Audited Financial Statements

The auditor’s report and financial statements were reviewed and approved by the board. Although the original 2017 budget forecasted a balanced budget, the Association is very pleased to report a surplus of \$20,234. Special thanks to the 2017 Niagara Falls AGM/Convention organizers for the profit realized from the event. As CCSTA operates on a very limited budget, these additional funds will be well used as we continue to promote Catholic education in Canada.



Independent Auditor's Report  
Statement of Financial Position  
Statement of Changes in Net Assets  
Statement of Revenue and Expenditures  
Statement of Cash Flows

# Local Engagement Strategy



Following a very successful Lobby Day on Parliament Hill last fall, we are now engaging MPs in their own ridings and rolling out our strategy out on a province by province basis. In January, we began this endeavor in British Columbia where En-sight, our chosen government relations firm, worked with CCSTA’s provincial board member, Colleen Easson.

MP’s are identified and the local trustee is then asked to meet with their MP, speaking about Catholic Education and the impact it has on students across the country. To date we are very pleased with the results and have begun the process of setting up meetings in Alberta.

*Vivifiés par la parole de Dieu et notre tradition, nous veillons à promouvoir et à protéger le droit à l’éducation catholique au Canada. Nous parlons d’une même voix.*

# Toonies for Tuition / Contest

A reminder that our logo and poster contest closes at the end of February. We will be choosing the winner late March. Please visit the [CCSTA website](#) for more details.

The Toonies for Tuition campaign continues to gain traction and we would like to thank all schools, school boards and provincial associations who continue to raise funds to help students attend Catholic Schools where tuition fees are required. Please note that Toonies for Tuition now accepts donations on-line.



# New Board Members

CCSTA would like to welcome Paul Bourassa (AB/NWT Yukon) and Reverend Stefano Penna (Chaplain) to the CCSTA Board. We look forward to working together to promote and protect Catholic education in Canada.



**Paul Bourassa, ACSTA**



**Reverend Stefano Penna**

# SAVE THE DATE

# 2018 SUMMIT

# CHILDREN AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

**April 12 - 13, 2018** Beanfield Centre, CNE Grounds, Toronto

## **Beyond Collaboration: Towards Integrated Systems for Supporting Child and Youth Mental Health**

Presentations will focus on working across tiered systems of support for promotion, prevention and intervention.

### **Who should attend?**

Students / Parents / Educators  
Mental Health Professionals /  
Professional Student Services Agencies /  
Children's Services Advocates

### **Who is hosting this event?**

Hosted by the Ontario Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health - a multi-sectoral group committed to urgent and positive change for children and youth mental health services in Ontario

### **Early Bird Registration:**

Link available on OPSBA's website: [www.opsba.org](http://www.opsba.org) or

#### **LINK TO ONLINE REGISTRATION**

Please check the website for updated information and program.

### **For Exhibit Space**

Please contact Judith Nyman  
[jnyman@opsba.org](mailto:jnyman@opsba.org)

**ACCOMMODATION** Hyatt Regency Hotel, 370 King Street, Toronto.  
Block to open September 2017. **Shuttle service** to Beanfield Centre  
included in room rate.

### **Pre-Summit**

**Thursday, April 12, 2018**

**1:30 - Registration**

**2:00 - 5:00 p.m.** - Your choice of 1 of 3 half  
day in-depth sessions

### **Main Summit**

**Thursday Evening, April 12**

**5:00 - 8:30 p.m.** - Dinner Reception and  
Keynote Speaker (TBC)

and **Friday, April 13: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

#### ■ **Keynote Speaker Friday a.m.:**

**Mark Greenberg, PhD**

Edna Peterson Bennett Endowed Chair  
in Prevention Research, Professor of Human  
Development and Psychology

#### ■ **Plenary Panel Friday a.m.:**

**Sharon Hoover, PhD**

Co-Director, Center for School Mental Health  
and Associate Professor, University of  
Maryland School of Medicine, Child and  
Adolescent Psychiatry

**Alexia Jaouich, PhD**

Director of Implementation and Knowledge  
Exchange in the Provincial System Support  
Program (PSSP) CAMH

**Ian Manion, PhD**

Director, Youth Mental Health Research Unit,  
University of Ottawa Institute of Mental Health  
Research

#### ■ **Breakout Sessions Friday p.m.**

Your choice of 2 of 8 breakout sessions.



Ontario Coalition for  
Children and Youth  
Mental Health  
Let's put our heads together.

Coalition ontarienne  
pour la santé mentale des  
enfants et des adolescents  
Réfléchissons ensemble.

For these, and other stories, please visit our CCSTA Website.



## What's Happening in Catholic Education

We've got a lot to share this month, as we're welcoming new faces, showcasing technology in the classroom, and more!

Check out some of the stories we've shared this past month:

---

### [Paul Bourassa Welcomed as Alberta/NWT/Yukon Rep for CCSTA Board of Directors](#)

When Paul Bourassa talks about how he first became a Catholic school trustee six years ago, he has two things to say about it: he signed on by default and he is so happy he did.



And we're so happy he did, too! Paul's joined the CCSTA Board of Directors, and we welcome his experience, passion and commitment to Catholic education.

[Find out more about Paul](#)

---

## ["It makes kids do really cool stuff": Northern Ontario Catholic School Boards on Technology in the Classroom](#)

From docking a spacecraft to building an M-bot to designing a stop-motion picture production, students across two Catholic school boards in Northern Ontario have taken technology to an entirely new level - and it's because of their teachers' belief in what's to come.

Northwest Catholic District School Board and the Kenora Catholic District School Board recently teamed up to launch a video showcasing a collaborative project called The Impact of Learning Technologies.

[Read more about the boards' partnership and approach to technology](#)

---

## [Calling all Students: Develop our Toonies for Tuition Logo and Promotional Poster!](#)



To help promote the CCSTA Toonies for Tuition initiative, we're reaching out to young artists from across the country to get creative and design a Toonies for Tuition logo and poster that speaks to the cause.

The contest is open to all students enrolled in a Catholic school in Canada and they can be in JK or Grade 12 and everything in between, and runs until Feb. 28, 2018

[Read more about the contest and how to enter!](#)

---

## [Family Apostolate Resource Guide from OEC and COLF](#)

Did you make a 2018 commitment to deepen your faith? If so, then you'll want to check out a newly released resource that encourages conversation and reflection from the Office for Evangelization and Catechesis (OEC) and the Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF).

[Discover this Resource](#)

---

## [Are you an educator and using images and videos in the Classroom?](#)

The Copyright Consortium of the Council of the Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) has launched an online campaign for the K-12 teaching community in order to provide greater awareness of the educational use of fair dealing.

They've put together some really useful resources to help educators learn more about using copyrighted content in the classroom, and we wanted to share this useful tool with you!

[Discover the Copyright Decision Tool Website.](#)

---

## [Registration Open for the 2018 CCSTA Conference & AGM!](#)



We're thrilled to welcome you to beautiful Kelowna, BC for our 2018 CCSTA Conference and AGM!

The organizing committee have put together an amazing schedule including inspiring keynotes, hands-on workshops and unforgettable tours. Registration is now open, and you can find out all the details about the Conference!

[Discover the Conference Schedule and Register Now](#)

---

As we go into 2018, we look forward to connecting with you. If you have a Good News story you'd like to share with us, we'd love to hear from you. [Connect with CCSTA today.](#)

CCSTA | 570 West Hunt Club Road, Nepean, ON K2G 3R4 | Phone 613-224-4455 x2521



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

P.O. Box 2064, Suite 1804  
20 Eglinton Avenue West  
Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8  
T. 416.932.9460 F. 416.932.9459  
[ocsta@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:ocsta@ocsta.on.ca) [www.ocsta.on.ca](http://www.ocsta.on.ca)

Patrick Daly, *President*  
Beverley Eckensweiler, *Vice President*  
Nick Milanetti, *Executive Director*

February 16, 2018

**TO:** Chairs and Directors of Education  
- Catholic District School Boards

**FROM:** Patrick Daly, President

**RE:** Workplace Resource regarding Mental Health

---

OECTA, OCSTA, OSSTF/FESSO, OPSBA, ETFO and the Ministry of Education, have co-sponsored the production of a workplace resource with a focus on mental health in the workplace. The resource includes a video and a viewers' guide.

It is hoped that the resource will be a helpful tool that boards will choose to use with all staff in the context of professional learning, with a focus on Occupational Health and Safety and employee well-being. We recognize that most workers within the educational sector are not mental health experts and the resource is meant to simply provide an opportunity to start a conversation about a topic that can sometimes be difficult. The content provides information and brings awareness to mental health in the workplace, with a view to initiating a workplace conversation and highlighting certain existing community avenues of support for those who may require it. In the video, former Canadian Olympian Clara Hughes speaks directly about her own experiences, her thoughts on the continuing problems that result from the stigma associated with mental illness, and offers her insight on what she believes can be done to help reduce stigma and increase empathy.

The video and guide are accessible to all members belonging to the sponsor organizations but may not be reproduced. Viewing can be in a single session (running time is just over 18 minutes) or in three separate modules. The video is available with French subtitles as well as English subtitles for the hearing impaired.

The resource and other materials can be accessed through each of the co-sponsors and are posted on the OCSTA Members' Only Site at <http://www.ocsta.on.ca/members-centre/2018-workplace-resource-re-mental-health/>.

This resource is meant simply as a starting point within a broader consideration of how best to support a conversation about mental health and the workplace. We would encourage boards to advise mental health leads and other specialized staff in advance of the video being shared, in the event that any such specialized staff are contracted by employees who may seek assistance or referral(s).

Boards are encouraged to view the video and review the guide and thereafter consider how the resources can best be utilized and shared within their local context. The viewing guide contains discussion starters and suggestions regarding how to use the video, however, we encourage you to modify and/or adapt it to your context and staff needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincerest appreciation to Sharon Duffy for her work on this initiative. As always, please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

*Attachment: Mental Health in the Workplace, Facilitator's Guide*



# Mental Health in the Workplace

---

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

## Preamble

It is hoped that this resource will be a helpful tool that boards will choose to use with all staff in the context of professional learning, with a focus on Occupational Health and Safety and employee well-being. We recognize that most workers within the education sector are not mental health experts and this resource is meant to simply provide an opportunity to start a conversation about a topic that can sometimes be difficult. The content provides information and brings awareness to mental health in the workplace, with a view to initiating a workplace conversation and highlighting certain existing community avenues of support for those who may require it. In the video, former Canadian Olympian Clara Hughes speaks directly about her own experiences, her thoughts on the continuing problems that result from the stigma associated with mental illness, and offers her insight on what she believes can be done to help reduce stigma and increase empathy.

### Disclaimers

1. Information in this video and facilitator guide is not to be used for diagnosis, treatment, or referral services. Individuals should contact their medical practitioner and/or their local addiction or mental health agency for further information.
2. This video and guide is intended to support the mental health and wellness of staff. If, as an educator, you have a concern about the mental health and well-being of a student, please refer to:
  - *Supporting Minds, An Educator's Guide to Promoting Student Mental Health and Well-being* at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/SupportingMinds.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/SupportingMinds.pdf)
  - the School Mental Health ASSIST website for resources for educators: [www.smh-assist.ca](http://www.smh-assist.ca)
  - Your school board's Mental Health Leader who will be able to provide you with information regarding pathways to/through/from care specific to your school board.
3. References to materials/standards/programs or other items throughout the video/guide are not an endorsement of any of these items by any of the co-sponsors and should not be interpreted as such.

## MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

This video has been produced as a helpful tool to use with all staff in the context of professional learning, highlighting worker mental health. All workers have a role to play when it comes to ensuring that our workplaces are safe.

The video is available to all members of the sponsor organizations: OECTA, OCSTA, OSSTF, OPSBA, ETFO, and the Ministry of Education. It can be viewed in its entirety (just over 18 minutes) or in three separate modules. All versions are also available with English subtitles for the hearing impaired, and with French subtitles.

Within the video, Clara Hughes speaks candidly about her own experiences, and the continuing problems that result from the stigma associated with mental illness, as well as what she believes every worker can do to help reduce that stigma.

## BEFORE USING THE VIDEO

**Select a facilitator(s) who is comfortable discussing this subject and leading the audience as a whole or in small groups as they work through this resource. If possible have co-facilitators.**

### Things to Consider Before and After Facilitating:

- Watch the video in advance. Decide if it will be shown in three segments (preferred) or in one showing. Consider how your participants may react. Anticipate your response.
- Pre-plan the follow-up activity for the viewing of the video, including establishing norms for the session and self-care statements.
- Contact board supports to let them know that the video is being shared. People may be reaching out for assistance. Consider:
  - Your board's mental health lead.
  - Human Resources staff (EAP).
  - Other qualified professionals in the board (e.g., social worker).
- Have a self-care plan:
  - Ask your participants to consider their own self-care plan for watching the video.
  - Don't forget your own self-care plan. How will you deal with participants disclosing? Sharing details? In need?
- Where will you direct participants for support? What resources are available in your/their community? You will need to consider the composition of the audience, for example, do they all have access to the same resources?

- How / where will you direct people for support if they reach out to you after the presentation, e.g., the next day?
- Have someone scanning/spotting the room for any staff who may need immediate support.

Given the sensitivity of the topic, it might be helpful to set norms with the audience at the beginning of the session. Some examples of norms include:

- Identify start and end times. Identify a number of contact people for after the video (e.g. principal, vice-principal, branch/local representative).
- Review the three disclaimers at the beginning of this document with participants.
- Discuss that mental health can be a sensitive topic for many people.
- We need to be sensitive that a discussion like this can impact people in different ways.
- These conversations aren't always easy, but they are necessary to try to reduce stigma.
- None of us are qualified mental health professionals (unless the person presenting is).
- When we talk about mental health, it may bring up some issues for some people. Please consider what your plan is to manage your own self-care as we turn our attention to this issue - clearly indicate that anyone who doesn't want to participate in today's discussion is not required to.
- Be accepting, kind, and present.
- Identify a signal for wrapping up your conversation (ie hand up).

**The following are ideas for activities that can be utilized after viewing the video; some, or all, may not be appropriate for the particular facilitator/group.**

## AFTER VIEWING PART I

**Numbers 1-7 below are intended to be completed after viewing at least Part I of the video.**

The first two parts of question 1 should be presented separately (either orally or on a screen) as the intent is to generate spontaneous answers.

- 1 a) Take a moment to list as many adjectives as you can that first come to mind when referring to those who are mentally ill.  
b) Now list as many adjectives as you can that first come to mind when referring to a person with cancer. Compare the two lists and discuss reasons, if any, for the differences, and what you could do to reduce the differences.

Have two or three groups report their responses to the group at large.

*Facilitator notes: There are no correct or incorrect answers to this exercise; it is intended to reinforce the importance of everyday language, and to recognize that derogatory terms make it more difficult to discuss mental health issues and contribute to the stigma that prevents people in need from seeking help.*

- 2 Complete the Bell Let's Talk true or false questionnaire (p. 42 of the Bell Let's Talk Facilitator Guide, inserted below) and review the answers. This can be done as a group, in small groups, or individually.

*Facilitator notes: See p. 43 of the Bell Let's Talk Facilitator Guide for answers (on next page)*

True or False - Questionnaire		Handout 3	
Let's Talk: True or false?	TRUE	FALSE	
1. In any given week, at least 500,000 employed Canadians are unable to work because of mental health problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Canadians in the lowest income group are twice as likely as those in the highest income group to report fair to poor mental health.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. People with mental illness have a tendency to be violent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Across the world, 75% of those with a mental illness won't receive any treatment at all.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Mental illness is the 10th leading cause of disability and premature death in Canada.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Just 50% of Canadians would tell friends or co-workers that they have a family member with a mental illness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. The disease burden of mental illness is 1.5 times higher than all cancers put together.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Mental illness is a sign of weak character.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. In 2008, 46% of Canadians thought people used the term mental illness as an excuse for bad behaviour.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. In a survey of 556 UK respondents, 70% reported that either they or a family member had experienced stigma as a result of mental illness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

*p. 42 of the Bell Let's Talk Facilitator Guide*

# True or False - Answer Key

Handout 3

1. **True.** Of the 500,000 people off work in any given week due to mental health problems, there are 355,000 disability cases due to mental and/or behavioural disorders<sup>1</sup>, plus approximately 175,000 full-time workers absent from work due to mental illness.<sup>4</sup>
2. **False.** Canadians in the lowest income group are 3 to 4 times more likely than those in the highest income group to report fair to poor mental health.<sup>5</sup>
3. **False.** The Canadian Mental Health Association reports that “as a group, people with mental health issues are not more violent than any other group in our society. The majority of crimes are not committed by people with psychiatric illness, and multiple studies have proven that there is very little relationship between most of these diseases and violence. The real issue is the fact that people with mental illness are two and a half to four times more likely to be the victims of violence than any other group in our society.”<sup>6</sup>
4. **True.** For more information, see *Mental Illness and Addiction in Canada* from the Mood Disorders Society of Canada.<sup>7</sup>
5. **False.** Mental illness is the second leading cause of disability and premature death in Canada.<sup>8</sup>
6. **True.** Just 50% of Canadians would tell friends or co-workers that they have a family member with a mental illness, compared to 72% who would discuss a diagnosis of cancer and 68% who would talk about a family member having diabetes.<sup>9</sup>
7. **True.** This includes years lived with less than full function and years lost to early death.<sup>10</sup>
8. **False.** Statements like this seem to suggest that it is a person’s own fault if he or she develops a mental illness. While the cause of most mental disorders is not yet known, research shows that it is likely a mixture of factors.<sup>11</sup>
9. **True.** 27% said they would be fearful of being around someone who suffers from serious mental illness.<sup>12</sup>
10. **True.** People experienced stigma within their own family (56%), from friends (52%), from their doctor (44%), from other health care professionals (32%) and at work (30%).<sup>13</sup>

p. 43 of the Bell Let’s Talk Facilitator Guide

- 3 In a large group, or several smaller groups, discuss the following question: What do you think stops some people from seeking help?

*Facilitator notes: This exercise is meant to start a conversation amongst staff with the key goals of raising awareness and reducing stigma. Some of the reasons noted below are outlined in the Bell Let's Talk Facilitator Guide and may assist in adding to, or debriefing, the discussion once participants have provided their own views.*

*Answer key: Courtesy of Bell "Let's Talk Facilitator Guide" p. 49.*

- Services often don't exist nearby.
- They may not know what kind of help is available.
- They may know what help exists, but not be able to use the services because of barriers such as poverty.
- Many services are not covered under provincial health insurance, nor are transportation costs.
- Services are almost always provided in English or French, making them inaccessible to people who speak other languages.
- People may feel embarrassed, ashamed, judged or afraid, due to stigma.
- Stigma makes it difficult for people with mental illness to access physical health care.
- People's beliefs, actions, and opinions are considered to be due to mental illness and may be discounted.
- Discrimination against people with mental illness means it may be difficult for people to find or keep work, housing, and/or relationships if they admit to a mental health problem.
- People may not recognize that they have a problem.

- 4 There are limits to the confidentiality of discussions that educators can engage in, under what circumstances can confidentiality not be kept?

*Facilitator notes: When Clara says they are "trusting you with their story... it is sacred" - this is true, and okay to say; but when she goes on to say, "letting them know that you can be trusted with their story and with their experience," there is a risk that this implies confidentiality. Of course, we would want to keep most of what we hear from a colleague confidential; but, if someone tells you they are suicidal, homicidal, or a victim of abuse, this cannot be kept in confidence. We each have a responsibility to ensure safety, and this includes reporting a concern if there is a risk of suicide or violence.*

- 5 Discuss the meaning of the following statement: "Most people with mental health issues can and do recover, just by talking about it."

*Facilitator notes: While emphasizing that the goal of the video is to raise awareness, create empathy, and reduce stigma, note that an individual talking about their mental health problem(s) can have a variety of meanings. It may be as simple as talking about what they are going through with a trusted friend, family member, loved one, or co-worker. It may also entail speaking with a therapist, a psychologist, or a psychiatrist. It may involve all of the above. While mental health issues are complicated and unique to each individual, showing kindness and empathy can be a good first step to assisting someone. Most*

*people with mental health problems can and do recover, when problems are recognized early, and when they receive appropriate professional diagnosis and evidence-based intervention.*

- 6 Silently reflect on how reluctant you would be to discuss a mental health problem you were suffering from for fear that it might adversely affect your relationship with co-workers and/or your career opportunities. Then in your group, brainstorm suggestions that would help you or co-workers overcome this barrier.

Have two or three groups report their responses to the group at large.

This activity could be expanded as follows:

Four Corners

Place one of the following four statement/quotes in a corner (or other area) of the room. If you are working with a large group, you may need to duplicate the statements/quotes so that the groups are spaced out.

Note: quotes could be any that resonate with the facilitator – below are a few as examples:

“Mental illness is an illness, not a weakness.”

“One in five Canadians will go through a form of mental illness in their lifetime.”

“You have to look at the 60% of people [with a mental illness] who will not get help because they feel they are going to be judged.”

“On average across Canada, 30% of LTD claims are due to mental illness (MHCC) in the education sector; in Ontario that number is 42% (OTIP).”

Ask the group to move into the area of the room with the statement/quote that interests them, speaks to them, or intrigues them the most.

Once in the corner find one or two other people and discuss why did you choose that particular quote, and what do you think is meant by the statement?

Depending on timeframe of the session, you can have the group as a whole report out, or just the small group who chose the same statement report out within the small group, or have no report.

*Facilitator notes: In addition to the commentary above under the discussion, the expanded exercise is meant to facilitate and elicit more conversation amongst staff. Again, the goal of the video and activities is to raise awareness, create empathy, and reduce stigma. There are no incorrect answers to brainstorming activities. It is often helpful to remind participants to refrain from critiquing suggestions.*

- 7 Ask participants to consider two of the following questions to discuss after video.

Share/distribute questions in advance of showing. Participants can take notes if they like. Facilitator can group participants as they see fit (e.g., elbow partner, role alike groups, random)

- a) What is one thing Clara said that resonated with you? Explain and discuss.
- b) What work environment characteristics do you feel can help create a mentally healthy work environment?
- c) Do you believe there is a stigma attached with mental illness in the workplace? If so, what can we do about it?
- d) Why is it important to have a self-care plan?
- e) Clara speaks about non-verbal cues. What specific cues could you use if a colleague discloses a struggle to you?
- f) What concerns do you have about mental health in the workplace?
- g) If a colleague disclosed a mental illness to you, are you comfortable in engaging in that discussion? How would you handle it? How would you feel?
- h) Do you know where you could direct a colleague for professional mental health support?

*Facilitator notes: If hard copies of the questions are provided participants could record anonymous feedback on the back of the sheet and drop off on a table, if they have something they'd like to share with the facilitator.*

## AFTER VIEWING PART I and II

The following exercise can be completed after viewing at least parts I and II of the video, and is best completed by the facilitator breaking the audience into groups sorted by categories of workers, since answers may vary for different worker categories at a given worksite within a school board. It would also be beneficial for the facilitator to have contacted the respective worker union representatives and HR departments to obtain the correct responses for each unionized worker group.

- 8
- a) What mental health services are you aware of?
  - b) Are there any forms of services that might be available from community agencies, your employer, or your union/association?

*Facilitator notes: a) This question is meant to elicit a conversation amongst staff and to raise awareness. b) Family physician, CAMH website, Canadian Mental Health Association website, Mental Health commission of Canada website. Services available may vary depending on region; for example, CMHA offers the “Bounce Back” and “Rapid Access Psychiatry” programs. An example from York Region is the brochure “Overcoming Mild to Moderate Depression, Anxiety and Stress.” This brochure is just one of many produced by CAMH on mental health issues. In addition, the facilitator should check with, or refer participants to, their respective unions, contracts, and/or HR departments in order to provide specific details; however, many major medical benefit plans provide specific coverage for psychologists, family and marriage therapists, and/or social workers. Also, LTD plans such as those with OTIP provide access to additional services, such as “Feeling better now,” “Carepath,” and Early Intervention Plan services. The facilitator may also want to consider checking with the employer for details on any employee or employee and family assistance programs (EAP/EFAP) that are provided.*

The following exercises are best completed after viewing all three parts of the video. The facilitator can break the audience into smaller groups, or do this with everyone in the audience.

- 9
- a) How many of you have completed a basic first aid course?
  - b) How many of you have completed a CPR course?
  - c) Are you aware that a Mental Health first aid course is available? Has anyone had the opportunity to attend such a course? Are you willing to share your thoughts?
  - d) How many of you would be interested in taking this type of course if it was offered through a community resource, your employer, or some other avenue?

*Facilitator notes: The Canadian Mental Health Association offers Mental Health First aid courses. The 12-hour Basic Course covers substance-related disorders, mood disorders, anxiety and trauma-related disorders, and psychotic disorders. It also trains participants to provide crisis first aid intervention if they should encounter any of the following: an overdose, suicidal behaviour, panic attacks, psychotic episodes, or an acute stress reaction.*

- 10
- a) What year was the voluntary Canadian National Standard on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace released?  
i) 2003                  ii) 2009                  iii) 2013                  iv) 2015                  v) 2017

*Facilitator notes: 2013*

- b) Prior to viewing the video, were any of you aware of the voluntary National Standard on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace?
- c) Is anyone able to share any experiences regarding the voluntary standard?
- d) For those who wish for more information, the voluntary standard can be accessed at:  
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/national-standard>

11 To date, how many of the following organizations have implemented this voluntary standard?



Facilitator notes: All of these organizations have adopted the voluntary standard.

12 What are the four main areas of consideration that make up the business case for improving workplace psychological health and safety?

Facilitator notes:

- a) risk mitigation
- b) cost effectiveness
- c) recruitment and retention
- d) organizational excellence and sustainability.

**13** What are the eight guiding principles of the Standard?

*Facilitator notes: The Standard is based on the following guiding principles:*

- a) legal requirements associated with psychologically healthy and safe workplaces applicable to the organization will be identified and complied as a minimum standard of practice;*
- b) psychological health and safety is a shared responsibility among all workplace stakeholders and commensurate with the authority of the stakeholder;*
- c) the workplace is based on mutually respectful relationships among the organization, its management, workers, and worker representatives, which includes maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information;*
- d) individuals have a responsibility towards their own health and behaviour;*
- e) a demonstrated and visible commitment by senior management for the development and sustainability of a psychologically healthy and safe workplace;*
- f) active participation with all workplace stakeholders;*
- g) organizational decision making incorporates psychological health and safety into the processes; and*
- h) a primary focus on psychological health, safety, awareness, and promotion as well as the development of knowledge and skills for those persons managing work arrangements, organization, processes, and/or people.*

*Activities associated with this Standard, specifically related to planning, data collection, and evaluation requirements, are to be conducted in a psychologically safe, confidential, and ethical manner.*

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace - free download at: [www.csa.ca/z1003](http://www.csa.ca/z1003)

Assembling the pieces- An implementation guide to the National Standard on Psychological Health and Safety – free download at: [www.csa.ca/z1003](http://www.csa.ca/z1003)

Guarding Minds at Work: [www.guardingmindsatwork.ca](http://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca)

Mental Health First Aid. Course details and registration can be found at: [www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca)

Bell Let's Talk (including Facilitator Guide): [www.letstalk.bell.ca/en](http://www.letstalk.bell.ca/en)

### Suicide prevention

Mental Health Commission of Canada  
[www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/focus-areas/suicide-prevention](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/focus-areas/suicide-prevention)

Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention(CASP)  
[www.suicideprevention.ca](http://www.suicideprevention.ca)

Guarding Minds at Work  
[www.guardingmindsatwork.ca](http://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca)

