



## Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

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March 26, 2020

### MEMORANDUM

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

**FROM:** Beverley Eckensweiler, President

**SUBJECT:** **Ontario Economic Update and Ontario's Action Plan:  
Responding to COVID-19**

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On Wednesday March 25, 2020 the Minister of Finance tabled his Economic Update and *Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19*. The overall focus is responding to the current pandemic with significant stimulus spending to support the health care sector and individuals and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The government's action plan commits \$17 billion to assist with the impacts of the current situation.

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the formal provincial budget that was scheduled to be released today was postponed to a future date sometime before November 15, 2020. Below is a summary of the key provisions outlined in the action plan that affect school boards:

- Overall: Education sector expense is projected to increase by \$0.1 billion in 2019-20 and \$0.5 billion in 2020-21 primarily due to increased funding for school boards to support higher student enrolment and investments in child care programs;
- Education Property Tax will be deferred on June 30 for 90 days to support municipalities with \$1.8 billion deferrals to residents and businesses. The Ministry of Education will adjust the lost revenue through the GSN so boards will not be negatively impacted;
- Assistance for families to pay for the extra costs associated with school and daycare closures during the COVID-19 outbreak by providing a one-time payment of \$200 per child up to 12 years of age, and \$250 for those with special needs, including children enrolled in private schools;
- Providing new, additional support of \$26 million to Indigenous peoples and communities, including emergency assistance for urban Indigenous people in financial need and costs for health care professionals and critical supplies to reach remote First Nations;
- Funding to reflect a one per cent annual increase to compensation costs for teachers and education sector workers;

- Supporting student mental health, including providing \$25 million in permanent funding for approximately 180 mental health workers in secondary schools to serve students with mild to moderate mental health issues;
- Providing additional opportunities for students to focus on a career path that match their skills and interests through the expansion of programs, such as the Specialist High Skill Majors;
- Funding to support elementary and secondary education programs through the Priorities and Partnership Fund;
- Focusing on priority areas including Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

Specific education funding or program details were not included in the action plan or economic update.

### **Provincial Fiscal Situation**

- 2019-20 Interim Expenditure Forecast: \$29.8 B (*Interim represents the March 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update projection for the 2019–20 fiscal year; Excludes the Teachers' Pension Plan, which is included in Other Programs*).
- 2020-21 Planned Expenditure: \$30.3 B.
- \$20 billion deficit for 2020-2021 due to increased spending to offset the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please do not hesitate to contact Steve Andrews ([sandrews@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:sandrews@ocsta.on.ca)) or Dan Duszcyszyn ([dduszcyszyn@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:dduszcyszyn@ocsta.on.ca)) if you have any questions or concerns.