



### Update for May 13th, 2021

It's with a very heavy heart that I'm sharing that one of our long time members, Lina Lagreca suddenly passed away Tuesday evening. Lina was working at Sir William Osler and was adored by everyone that worked with her. After some back and forth emails last night, the flag at her school will be lowered in honor of Lina. Please keep her family and co-workers in your thoughts and prayers. We will observe a moment of silence at our meeting on Sunday morning for Lina.

**OSBCU Survey** - The deadline for completing the survey on Central Bargaining issues important to you is due tomorrow. Please take about 5-10 minutes of your day (and encourage your co-workers to do the same) to complete the survey so that OSBCU has the input from as many members as possible to shape their approach to Central Bargaining next year. You can find the survey here -

<https://survey-sondage.cupe.ca/index.php/317232?lang=en>

**GSN Analysis** - We all know that funding for schools comes from the Ministry of Education - but how much goes where and how does it affect us as education workers? The Grant for Student Needs (GSN) is the funding that affects us directly. Dan Crow from CUPE National who is assigned to the OSBCU and is a great guy with a real knack for digging into numbers and analyzing them has taken the provincial budget numbers from a few weeks ago and come up his findings which are attached to this email.

**Sunday GMM** - Sunday's monthly meeting has been changed back to a 10am start because we will be going over the bylaw revisions at a later date (will be explained Sunday). The invite, link and phone numbers for the meeting on Sunday are listed below for you to join in....

Topic: May Membership Meeting

Time: May 16, 2021 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81437043614?pwd=dTRldGt5RGpoUWhnU0Y0b1l0MFVldz09>

Meeting ID: 814 3704 3614

Passcode: 951493

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Meeting ID: 814 3704 3614

Passcode: 951493

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/951493>

There won't be an update again tomorrow unless something big and important happens today or tonight. Please get outside this weekend and enjoy the good weather that's in for the forecast with your immediate family. Work on the lawn, your garden, your car or just sit on your steps or deck and enjoy a cold beverage - just enjoy the time away from work!

Cheers,

Blake

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**To:** All school board locals and CUPE National Representatives servicing school board locals

**From:** Dan Crow, Researcher assigned to School Boards

**cc:** Joe Matasic; Ann Lennarson; Jo-Ann Breton; Garth Smith; Fred Ho; Jacqueline Lancaster

**Date:** May 11, 2021

**Re:** 2021-22 Grants for Student Needs and Priorities and Partnership Fund Announcement

**Introduction:**

On May 4, 2021 the Ministry of Education released the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) and Priorities and Partnership Fund (PPF) funding announcement. This includes projections for ongoing funding for school boards (GSN) as well as one-time or time-limited funding for COVID-19 related measures and limited term programs in school boards (PPF).

This briefing note addresses the overall trends in funding through the GSN and PPF for the 2021-22 school year. A follow up briefing note providing a board-by-board analysis will be sent shortly.

**GSN:**

Total projected GSN funding for 2021-22 is approximately \$25.595 billion, an increase of 2.2% over the revised estimates of expenditures for the current school year. However, if we adjust for increasing enrolment next year, the funding increase is only 1.2% on a per pupil basis. If we adjust for both enrolment growth and inflation this announcement equates to a real cut in per pupil funding of just under 1%.<sup>1</sup>

To make matters worse, overall funding appears to increase by 2.2% only because the Ministry spent less on the GSN in 2020-21 than originally intended. The 2020-21 GSN projected that school boards would be allocated \$25.523 billion, but the Ministry only spent \$25.034 billion – roughly \$489 million less in GSN spending than what was budgeted. Comparing the \$25.595 billion projected for the 2021-22 GSN to the original projection for 2020-21, there is actually

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<sup>1</sup> Adjustments for inflation made using the Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator on May 6, 2021  
(<https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>)

only an increase of \$71.9 million (or an increase of approximately 0.3% without adjusting for inflation).

In nominal terms (i.e. only comparing the dollar amount allocated this year to the amount spent last year without adjusting for inflation) there will be spending increases in most of the Grants that are used to fund CUPE jobs.

- Pupil Foundation Grant (used to fund in-class staff, including DECEs and EAs) increasing by 1.93%.
- School Foundation Grant (used to fund school office staff, including Office, Clerical and Technical positions) is increasing by 1.08%.
- Special Education Grant (used to cover costs of EAs and Professional and Paraprofessional staff)<sup>2</sup> is increasing by 2.18%.
- Languages Grant (covering English as a Second Language and French as a Second Language Instruction) is increasing by 7.49%.
- School Board Administration and Governance Grant (used to fund school board office staff) is declining by 0.56%. However, this is in part due to the move of some allocations that were part of the SBAGG to other Grants.
- School Operations Allocation (used to fund custodial and cleaning staff) is increasing by 2.03%. Increased funding includes a 2% increase to the benchmarks for the non-staff portions of the allocation.
- School Renewal Allocation (used for repairs and renovations to schools) increasing by 0.72%.
- Supports for Students Fund (formerly the Local Priorities Fund) will continue, per collective agreements. However, there is no additional funding to cover costs of wage increases or progression through wage grids.

Overall enrolment is projected to increase in 2021-22 after lower than expected enrolment in the current school year. Total enrolment in 2021-22 will still be slightly lower than in 2019-20. The lower than projected enrolment in the 2020-21 school year occurred entirely in elementary schools, and a large portion of that would be declining enrolment in Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten.

The projected rebound in enrolment in Elementary schools in 2021-22 does not quite make up for the entire loss during the current school year. This might be a sign that parents expect at least one more year of classes being disrupted by COVID-19, or it might signify a longer-term trend towards parents withdrawing from the publicly funded, publicly delivered education system. Ongoing monitoring of enrolment trends will be necessary. Uncertainty about

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<sup>2</sup> For clarity, funding in the Special Education Grant is not generated with specific benchmarks for staff. Funding is generated primarily on a per pupil basis and based on demographic projections. Boards do, however, use this funding to cover the costs of special education staff.

enrolment is identified by the Ministry in the GSN release: “As noted in memorandum 2021: B04 2021–22 School Year, school boards should take a conservative approach in their planning for the 2021–22 school year given the uncertainty in enrolment.”<sup>3</sup>

### Other Changes to GSN

#### COVID-19 Supports

- \$14.9 million in funding to replace and procure devices. This makes permanent (as part of the Pupil Foundation Grant) funds that were announced as temporary last year.
- \$10.1 million for mental health supports made permanent for 2021-22 as part of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Grant. Boards have flexibility on how to use the funds.
- Recent Immigrant Supplement: \$79.6 in time-limited funding to help mitigate temporary decline in recent immigration to be used for ESL/ELD (English Boards) and PANA (French Boards).

#### PPF Transfers to GSN

- Specialist High Skills Major (\$23.6 million) added to Learning Opportunities Grant.
- After-School Skills Development Program (\$6.1 million) supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other special education needs, moved to the Behaviour Expertise Amount Allocation of the Special Education Grant.
- Integrated Services for Northern Children (\$1.44 million) transferred into the Northern Adjustment under the DSENA allocation in the Special Education Grant.

#### Enhanced Accountability Measures

- Enhanced reporting for library staffing funding to get greater insight into how school boards are using the funding. Boards will need to report where library funding is not being used on library staffing.

### **Priorities and Partnership Fund & Planning for the 2021-22 School Year**

Released along with the GSN was the announcement of the Priorities and Partnership Fund (PPF) and ongoing funding related to COVID-19. The Ministry claims it is spending up to \$1.6 billion on COVID-related measures. However, \$507.9 million (or 31% of the \$1.6 billion) is merely giving school boards another year of access to the board reserves, with some potential funding from the government where boards do not have sufficient funds in reserves. For the most part it is not new money. In many cases it is money that boards have already planned to use for other purposes, if they have sufficient reserves at all. Furthermore, boards have accumulated reserves, in part, by underspending on staffing and other needs.

Boards have been told to budget half of the COVID-19 planning money for the first half of the school year. The other half will be subject to further Ministry approval. This suggests that the

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<sup>3</sup> Ontario Ministry of Education B-memo 2021:B08 “2021-22 Grants for Student Needs Funding” released May 4, 2021, [https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2021/B08\\_EN.pdf](https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2021/B08_EN.pdf)

Ministry will reassess these measures in the Fall and could, potentially, adjust (or possibly eliminate) the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the funding.

Funding allocated through this announcement should be treated as one-time, or time-limited funding. Any funding provided through the PPF, including money for COVID-19 mitigation, is intended to be released on a year-by-year basis (unlike the GSN which is considered ongoing, relatively permanent funding). Because it is time-limited or one-time funding, and jobs created with this money will likely also be treated as temporary positions by school boards. Where they have flexibility in how this money can be used we should be aware that they might use this flexibility in ways that are contrary to the interests of CUPE members (and students for that matter).

There will be \$304 million for staffing to promote school safety. However, this money is not sweated and allows boards to spend it on teachers, ECEs, EAs, custodians, school-based administrative support, principals/vice-principals, physical distancing, enhanced cleaning, and delivery of remote learning. Not only is this an insufficient amount to meet all of the needs in schools, the absence of sweatering gives boards far too much flexibility in how this money is used. In the absence of requirements to spend this money on CUPE jobs, especially those CUPE jobs that were created in 2020-21 with COVID-related funding, there is no guarantee that we will not face layoff of members hired with COVID-related funding in 2020-21. CUPE/OSBCU is following up with the Ministry to demand greater sweatering of funds to ensure that CUPE members hired to keep schools safe and clean during the pandemic are not laid off.

On August 4, 2020 the Ministry announced its first allocation of COVID-related funding, which included \$30 million for teachers, \$50 million for custodians, \$10 million for special education, and \$10 million for mental health supports (total of \$100 million in money directly related to staffing).<sup>4</sup> That funding was enhanced with federal money in an announcement on August 26, 2020. That money included an additional \$70 million for teaching staff, \$12.5 million for special education and mental health, \$100 million for a variety of purposes that included custodial staff (as well as air filtration improvements, additional space for teaching, and technological supports), and \$36 million for school office staff (which included secretarial staff as well as school principals to administer online learning).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Other funding in that announcement included \$10 million for health and safety training, \$60 million for PPE, \$25 million for cleaning supplies, \$40 million for student transportation to reduce the number of students per bus, and \$15 million for technology. Ontario Ministry of Education B-Memo 2020:B11 “Investments to Support School Reopening in Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak”, August 4, 2020, [https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2020/B11\\_EN.pdf](https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2020/B11_EN.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Other funding in the August 26 announcement included \$12.5 million for nurses, \$30 million for PPE, \$145.5 million for a variety of transportation measures. Ontario Ministry of Education B-Memo 2020:B14 “Additional Funding for School Reopening” August 26, 2020, [https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2020/B14\\_EN.pdf](https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2020/B14_EN.pdf)

The August 26 announcement included up to \$218.5 million that could be used for school staffing, for a total of up to \$318.5 million in funds that were potentially available for staffing in the 2020-21 school year. Since much of the \$100 million allotment in the August 26 announcement was allocated to priorities other than staffing, it is plausible for the Ministry to say that the \$304 million allocated to staffing in the 2021-22 PPF announcement is as much, or more, than what was allocated in the current year. However, the lack of sweatering will likely remain a problem that needs to be resolved.

#### Additional funding relevant to CUPE (COVID-19 Related funding)

- There will be an additional \$49 million in supports for mental health and special education.
  - Includes \$6.5 million to support equity initiatives focused on supports for Black, Indigenous and racialized students, students with disabilities, and students from low socio-economic communities.
  - Includes one-time funding of \$16.25 million for special education supports, including additional staffing, learning resources (e.g. assistive technologies) to address learning gaps.
  - Includes \$25.25 million for mental health supports, which can include staffing and professional learning for educators.
- \$29.4 million for additional costs related to running ventilation systems.
- \$20 million to re-engage students and address learning loss. This amounts to less than \$10 per student.
- \$20 million in connectivity supports for remote learning technology.
- \$65.5 million for enhanced cleaning in school transportation.

There will be \$450 million in PPE and additional supplies and equipment provided to schools through the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (i.e. through central procurement). Funding of \$86 million will be provided by the government to support “school focused nurses in public health units and testing in schools.”



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