

2017-18 Education Funding

A GUIDE TO THE GRANTS FOR STUDENT NEEDS



support every child
reach every student

 Ontario

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Introduction

Ontario is widely recognized as having one of the world's best elementary and secondary school systems, and is continuously working to improve it. This guide is intended to support the important conversations among partners in the education sector by providing a clear explanation of how education is funded in Ontario through the Grants for Student Needs, or GSN. It also sets out the accountabilities of school boards and the Ministry of Education for the use of education dollars and discusses efforts to continuously improve the formulas used to fund education in Ontario.

The GSN supports funding for the classroom, school leadership and operations, specific student-related priorities and local management by school boards. The GSN's purpose is to help the system achieve key goals, especially those of *Achieving Excellence*, Ontario's renewed vision for education.

Achieving Excellence consolidates the many gains made by the education system to date and sets out a commitment to take it to the next level. It was developed by the ministry through extensive consultations with its partners in the education system.

The renewed vision emphasizes the focus on classroom education, which is the foundation of the system. At the same time, it broadens the system's aims to look at more than academic achievement, particularly by supporting student well-being in a range of areas. It also recognizes the system's need to close the gaps, so that all students benefit from a strong educational system attuned to individual needs.

The Ministry of Education, school boards and other stakeholders in publicly funded education are working together to align funding for school boards with the aims of *Achieving Excellence*.

What GSN funding supports

- **Classrooms** (\$13.25B)
- **Schools** (\$3.88B)
- **Specific priorities** (\$4.49B)
- **Local management** (\$2.21B)

The goals GSN funding helps achieve

- **Achieving Excellence**
- **Ensuring Equity**
- **Promoting Well-being**
- **Enhancing Public Confidence**

How funding is structured

The Ministry of Education provides the bulk of operating funding to Ontario's 72 district school boards¹ through the annual GSN, also known as "the funding formula." The GSN is actually a collection of grants described in detail in a regulation under the *Education Act* each year.

Many grants are made up of two or more components, which are called "allocations." This guide sets out the funding provided by each grant and gives an explanation, including a high-level description of the calculation, of the major allocations within it.

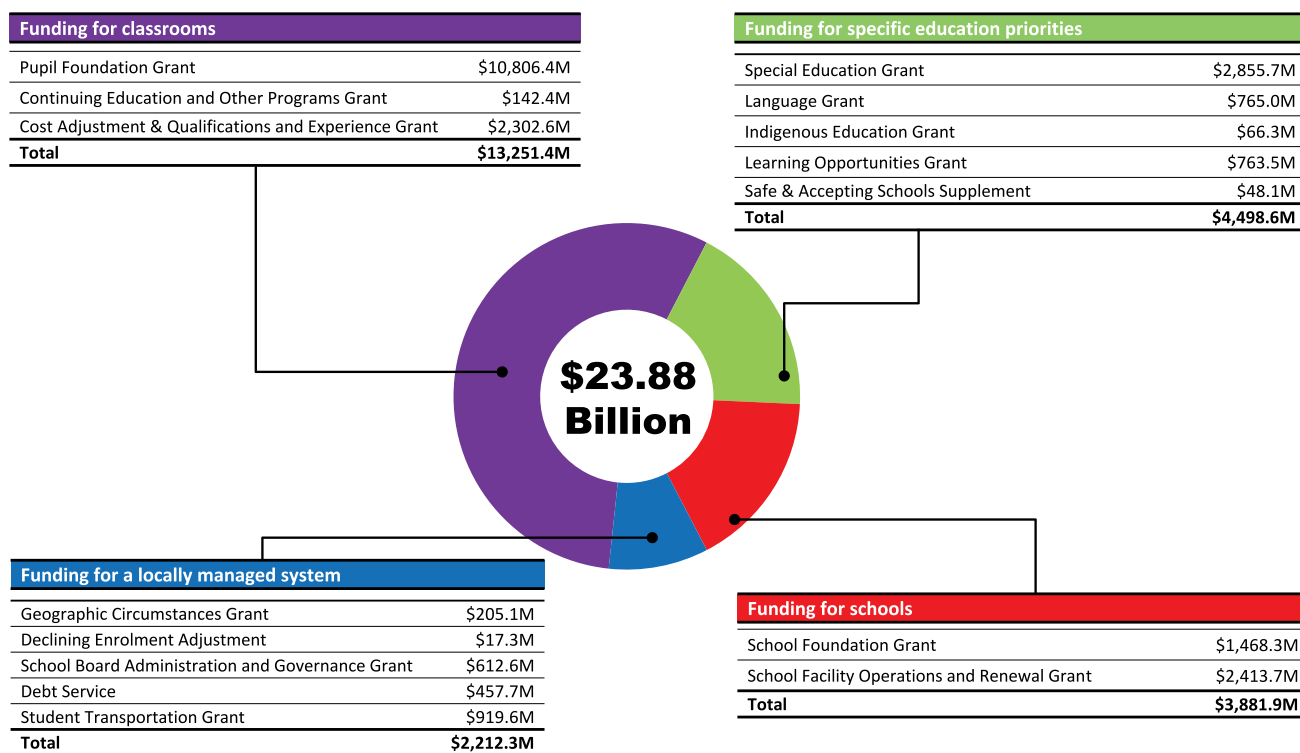
Because the ministry and its partners focus on aligning resources with the key goals of the education system, this guide has been structured to reflect those goals by grouping grants under the following headings:

- ***Funding for classrooms*** focuses on providing classroom resources.
- ***Funding for schools*** provides the resources to ensure schools have the leadership they need and are clean and well-maintained facilities for learning. Funding is also positioned to encourage the most efficient use of space possible.
- ***Funding a locally managed system*** aims to ensure board leadership carries out focused activities to support alignment of resources which help schools and students strive to achieve excellence.
- ***Funding for specific priorities*** speaks mainly to the *Achieving Excellence* goal of closing gaps by, for example, meeting special education needs and improving language proficiency.

The ministry recognizes that conditions vary widely across Ontario and the funding formulas cannot take every situation into account. This is why local school boards have flexibility in how they use funding, within the over-all accountability framework discussed in the next section.

¹ There are also 10 School Authorities, consisting of four geographically isolated boards and six hospital-based school authorities.

WHAT DOES THE GSN SUPPORT?



Note: School authorities funding (\$34.3 million) are included in the total, but not in the pie chart. Figures may not add due to rounding.

For the school board sector as a whole, GSN funding represents the overwhelming majority of revenues, more than 90%.

School boards also receive funding from the ministry for special, often time-limited programs, and from other ministries for specific purposes related to their mandates.

School boards may also raise funds on their own. Examples include renting out excess school space or charging fees for enhanced programming. These funds, however, should not be used to replace public funding for education or to support items funded through provincial grants. A [Guideline for School Fundraising](#) and a Guideline for Fees for Learning Materials and Activities may be found on the Ministry of Education [website](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca) (www.edu.gov.on.ca).

Accountability for education funding

A central aim of *Achieving Excellence* – and one that extends beyond the classroom or even the school – is enhancing public confidence in our education system.

The province invests about \$24 billion a year in education. A major part of enhancing confidence is ensuring accountability for the use of these resources.

The province, through the Ministry of Education, is accountable for the public education system as a whole and the policy decisions that determine funding for school boards. Given their key role in providing services at the local level, school boards have important accountabilities to students, parents and others with a stake in outcomes, as well as to the ministry.

A cornerstone of Ontario's education system is the principle that school boards have a responsibility to ensure the effective stewardship of resources. Thoughtful, transparent budgeting, aligned with a focused strategy, is vital and integral to this goal.

With respect to the GSN, a robust financial accountability framework has been developed between school boards and the Province. This framework recognizes that accountability to the ministry must be balanced against the need for school board flexibility to address local conditions. It includes:

- Legislative requirements, such as the provision that school boards balance their budgets;
- Requirements around budgeting and financial reporting, as well as monitoring, audit, review and, in some cases, supervisory activities by the Province;

- Enveloping, which means requiring that certain grants be used only for the purpose intended; and
- Program/grant specific reporting requirements overseen by various branches of the ministry.

Another important activity that supports accountability is collaboration. Ontario has a proud tradition of open and frank conversations about education funding. Through these conversations, the funding formula benefits from a stronger understanding of the perspectives of others in the system.

The ministry engages with many partners, including:

- School board representatives,
- Trustee associations,
- Principals and vice-principals,
- Teachers' federations and education worker unions,
- Parent groups and
- Student groups.

The annual engagement and other collaborations are invaluable in holding all parties, including the government, accountable for the ways education is funded.

This guide describes how several grants are in transition, with some changes being phased in over more than one year. These changes have been informed by the ministry's ongoing contact with the sector, including the annual GSN funding discussions and collaborative working groups that make technical recommendations on how to improve the GSN.

Funding for classrooms

Pupil Foundation Grant

This grant, which accounts for about half of the GSN, supports the elements of a classroom education that are generally common to all students. The largest single element of the GSN, it provides funding for the salaries of classroom teachers, early childhood educators for full-day kindergarten, educational assistants, and other teaching staff such as teacher librarians and guidance counsellors. It also funds textbooks, classroom supplies and classroom computers.

The grant is calculated on a per-pupil basis. There are three different per-pupil amounts at the elementary level, depending on the grade in which a student is enrolled – kindergarten, primary (grades 1 to 3), junior/intermediate (grades 4 to 8) – and one per-pupil amount for secondary students. For classroom teachers, the per-pupil amounts reflect benchmark salaries and benefits, class size requirements and the need for preparation time. (A separate allocation, discussed below, recognizes teachers' relative qualifications and experience.) For other staff, the per-pupil amount is based on salaries and benefits and staffing levels.

For 2017-18, funding through the Pupil Foundation Grant is projected to be \$10.81 billion.

Qualifications and Experience Grant

This grant provides additional support for classroom staff who have qualifications and experience above those provided for through the Pupil Foundation Grant. It is projected to total \$2.3 billion in 2017-18:

Allocation	2017-18 Amount
Teacher qualifications and experience	\$1.8 billion
Early childhood educator qualifications and experience	\$143.3 million
Benefits trusts allocation	\$206.0 million
Other allocations	\$150.5 million
Total	\$2.3 billion

- The **teacher qualifications and experience** allocation provides funding to boards with teachers who, because of their qualifications and experience, have average salaries different from the benchmark level used in the Pupil Foundation Grant.

- The early childhood educators qualifications and experience allocation is provided for boards with **early childhood educators** who, because of their qualifications and experience have average salaries different from the benchmark.
- The Benefits Trusts Allocation provides the incremental funding required to support the transition of benefit plans for staff to the Employee Life and Health Trusts.
- The other allocations under this grant include historical adjustments to the funding of non-teaching salary costs and funding for programs to mentor and train new teachers, as well as additional support for professional development for teachers and education workers. Additional details can be found in the technical paper available on the ministry [website](#).

Continuing education and other programs

This grant supports a range of programs aimed at adult learners and day-school students, including secondary students who have completed more than 34 credits and wish to continue their studies. The grant is projected to total \$142.4 million in 2017-18:

Allocation	2017-18 Amount
Adult day school	\$16.9 million
High-credit day school	\$6.4 million
Summer school	\$32.9 million
Continuing education	\$57.2 million
Other allocations	\$29.0 million
Total	\$142.4 million

- The **adult day school** allocation supports day school programming for students who are at least 21 years of age as of December 31 of the current school year.
- The **high-credit day school** allocation is for day school programming for secondary students who have completed more than 34 credits and wish to continue their studies.
- The **summer school** allocation supports programming offered during the summer for day school pupils.
- The **continuing education** allocation supports a variety of programs delivered inside and outside the classroom (for example, through correspondence, self-study or e-learning), including credit courses for the purpose of earning a secondary school graduation diploma.
- The other allocations of this grant support the teaching of international languages at the elementary level and assessments of mature students' prior learning. More details are provided in the technical paper, available on the ministry [website](#).

Funding for schools

School Foundation Grant

This grant provides funding for principals, vice-principals and office support staff, as well as administrative supplies. The total School Foundation Grant is projected to be \$1.47 billion in 2017–18. It is divided into an elementary school and a secondary school portion. It also makes provision for combined schools – that is, schools attended by both elementary and secondary pupils of the same board. This grant includes measures which:

- Recognize a school's remoteness as well as its size; and
- Provide greater funding overall for principals in combined elementary and secondary schools (subject to minimum enrolment limits), and in elementary or secondary schools with multi-buildings (subject to minimum enrolment limits).

School Operations and Renewal Grant

This grant supports the costs of operating, maintaining and repairing school facilities. Under the formula, funding is adjusted for boards that have older schools with unique design features such as wide hallways, large shop spaces, and auditorium spaces.

The current year marks the final year of a three-year transition to a new allocation method for many components of this grant.

The grant, consisting of two major allocations, is projected to total \$2.41 billion in 2017-18.

Allocation	2017-18 Amount
School operations	\$2.06 billion
School renewal	\$357.2 million
Total	\$2.41 billion

- The **school operations** allocation, which addresses operating costs such as heating, lighting, maintenance and cleaning of schools, consists of several components. The largest component is based on a benchmark operating cost associated with a standard floor area for each elementary and secondary pupil. This per-pupil benchmark is being increased to support the cost of operating space that students use.
- The **school renewal** allocation addresses the costs of repairing and renovating schools. Like the operations allocation, it consists of a number of components. The largest component is based on a benchmark renewal cost associated with a standard floor area for each elementary and secondary pupil. This per-pupil benchmark is being increased to support the cost of renovating the space that students use.

Funding is also adjusted to reflect the renewal needs of older schools and regional variations in construction costs.

Components to address the needs of underutilized space are changing in parallel with the changes to the operating allocation discussed above.

Funding a locally managed system

School Board Administration and Governance

This grant provides funding for board administration and governance costs, including those related to board-based staff and board offices and facilities. In 2017-18, it is projected to total \$612.6 million.

Allocation	2017-18 Amount
Board administration	\$553.3 million
Other allocations	\$59.3 million
Total	\$612.6 million

- The **board administration model**, developed in consultation with school boards, provides funding for board-level leadership, staff and related supplies and services. The model recognizes ten core functions that all boards, regardless of size, must perform. At the same time, it recognizes that enrolment is an important driver of higher administrative expenses. This new model replaces a way of allocating funding that relied more heavily on the size of boards' enrolment.
- The other allocations of this grant include funding for trustee compensation, parent engagement, consolidation accounting, internal audit, supports to improve school boards' information management, and the transformation of learning and teaching in the physical and virtual environment. Additional details can be found in the technical paper available on the ministry's [website](#).

Student Transportation Grant

This grant provides school boards with funding to transport students to and from school. It is projected to be \$919.6 million in 2017-18. The grant is based on the previous year's amount, with a number of possible adjustments and/or additional allocations:

- The **enrolment adjustment** is made only for school boards with increasing enrolment, and is based on the percentage increase in enrolment.
- The **cost update adjustment** factor, which recognizes the increasing costs of providing transportation services, is 2% for 2017-18. The calculation applies the adjustment factor to each board's 2016-17 transportation grant.
- The **fuel escalator and de-escalator** provides for funding increases or decreases by comparing the actual price of diesel fuel for southern school boards and northern school boards to a benchmark price.
- Details on the other allocations within this grant, which cover transportation to provincial or demonstration schools, impacts of effectiveness and efficiency reviews of transportation consortia, and full-day kindergarten transportation, can be found in the technical paper available on the ministry's [website](#).

Declining Enrolment Adjustment

Much of a school board's revenue is determined by enrolment. When enrolment goes down, funding also declines. School boards can adjust their costs downward as well, but this may take more than one year. The declining enrolment adjustment recognizes this need for extra time. The grant, which is projected to be \$17.3 million in 2017-18, is made up of a first-year and second-year component:

Component	2017-18 Amount
First-year	\$14.5 million
Second-year	\$2.8 million
Total	\$17.3 million

The **first year component** is based on a weighting of the difference between 2017-18 eligible revenues if enrolment had not changed from the previous year and 2017-18 revenue calculated using the current year's enrolment. It is available only if the current year's enrolment is less than the previous year's.

The **second-year component** is 25% of a school board's 2016-17 first-year component.

Geographic Circumstances Grant

This funding recognizes the higher costs related to the remoteness of rural boards and schools. It takes into account several factors, including the enrolment of boards and individual schools, board distance from urban centres and dispersion of schools over a board's geographic area.

The grant, which is projected to be \$205.1 million in 2017-18, is made up of two allocations.

Allocation	2017-18 Amount
Remote and rural	\$115.8 million
Supported schools	\$69.4 million
Rural and Northern Education Fund	\$20.0 million
Total	\$205.1 million

- The **remote and rural allocation** provides funding to: boards with enrolment of less than 16,000; boards that are distant from large urban centres; and boards whose schools are far from board offices and one another. The current year marks the final year of a three-year phase-in of updates to the data underlying these calculations to reflect urban population growth and other changes.
- The **supported schools allocation** helps make small, remote schools more viable by providing additional funding for teachers and, in some cases, early childhood educators. A school's eligibility is based on distance to the board's closest school of the same type (that is, elementary to elementary and secondary to secondary) with funding varying based on school enrolment.
- New in 2017-18, the **Rural and Northern Education Fund allocation** provides funding for school boards to further improve education for students in rural and northern communities through support for additional operating expenses, enhanced student transportation options and improved programming or staff supports.

Funding for specific priorities

Learning Opportunities Grant

The Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) provides funding to help students who are at greater risk of lower academic achievement. It is projected to total \$763.5 million in 2017-18.

Allocation	2017-18 Amount
Demographic	\$358.2 million
Local Priorities Fund	\$223.2 million
Student achievement envelope	\$162.9 million
Other allocations	\$19.2 million
Total	\$763.5 million

- The **demographic allocation**, which represents the largest share of LOG funding, is based on social and economic indicators that signal a higher risk of academic difficulty for students. The indicators are low household income, low parental education, a one-parent household, and recent arrival in Canada. This allocation is distributed to boards based on the ranking of each of their schools on these measures, and a weighting of the measures themselves. Boards can use this funding for initiatives such as breakfast programs, homework clubs, reading recovery and independent supports.
- As a result of the education sector labour negotiations, several targeted education investments were discussed, in addition to compensation and benefit enhancements. The ministry has agreed to establish a **Local Priorities Fund** to address a range of priorities including more special education staffing to support children in need, “at-risk” students and adult education.
- The **student achievement envelope** comprises seven discrete allocations. These allocations, which directly support programs introduced over the past decade to improve student achievement, are for:
 - **Literacy and math outside the school day**, which funds remedial courses or classes for students who are at risk of not meeting the curriculum standards for literacy or math and/or the requirements of the Grade 10 literacy test.
 - **Student Success, Grade 7 to 12**, which funds a range of resources and activities to improve student engagement in secondary schools.

- **Grade 7 and 8 Student Success and literacy and numeracy teachers**, which recognizes the need to help students in earlier grades so they are better prepared for the transition to secondary school and beyond.
- The **School Effectiveness Framework**, which helps schools and boards assess how well elementary schools are performing and develop plans for improvement.
- **Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership tutoring**, which helps boards set up and/or expand tutoring programs for students who are not achieving the provincial standard in reading, writing, or math.
- The **Specialist High Skills Major** program, which allows students to customize their secondary school experience and build on their strengths and interests by focusing on a specific economic sector.
- The **Outdoor Education** program, which provides elementary and secondary students with learning experiences in the outdoors.

There is flexibility in how boards may use the individual allocations, as long as the total funding is spent on the programs within the envelope. Any unspent funding must be used on the programs within the envelope in a future school year.

- The other allocations of this grant provide funding for mental health leaders, who spearhead efforts in boards to promote clear, integrated and responsive pathways to service for students in need, funding for teacher-librarians and/or library technicians and an adjustment to reflect the impacts of amalgamating school authorities. Additional details can be found in the Technical paper available on the ministry's [website](#).

Special Education Grant

This grant provides boards with funding for programs, services, and/or equipment for students with special education needs. Boards may use the grant only for special education, and must save any unspent funding to use for special education in a future school year. There is flexibility in how they may use some of the individual allocations within the grant, as long as the funds are spent on special education. The grant, which is projected to total about \$2.86 billion in 2017–18, is made up of six allocations:

Allocation	2017-18 Amount
Special Education per Pupil Amount (SEPPA)	\$1.48 billion
Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount (formerly High Needs Amount)	\$1.065 billion
Special Equipment Amount	\$102.4 million
Other allocations	\$209.9 million
Total	\$2.86 billion

- The **Special Education per Pupil Amount** provides every board with foundational funding toward the cost of special education supports. It is calculated using a board's total enrolment and a per-pupil amount. There are different per-pupil amounts for kindergarten to Grade 3 pupils, Grade 4 to 8 pupils, and Grade 9 to 12 pupils. The per-pupil amounts in the earlier grades are higher to direct more funding towards early intervention.
- Recognizing the variation across boards in the share of students with special education needs, the nature of the needs, and boards' ability to meet them, the new Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount (DSENA) aims to better align the allocation with boards' needs and resources. The new model was phased in over four years, with full phase-in completed for 2017-18. Additional details can be found in the Guide to the Special Education Grant to be made available on the ministry's [website](#).
- Under the **Special Equipment Amount**, each board receives a base amount plus a per-pupil amount, which together may be used to buy computers, software and other equipment for students with special education needs in line with funding guidelines. In addition, boards may submit claims to recover the costs, less a deductible, of other equipment recommended by a qualified professional for a student with specific special education needs.
- The other allocations of the grant are the Special Incidence Portion for students who require more than two full-time staff to address their health and safety needs and those of others at their school, the Facilities Amount for providing instruction in a care, treatment, custody or correctional facility, and an amount to support board-level expertise in applied behavioural analysis. Additional details can be found in the Technical paper available on the ministry's [website](#).

Language Grant

This grant provides funding to meet school boards' costs for language instruction. It is made up of five allocations, and is projected to total \$765.0 million in the 2017-18 school year:

Allocation	2017-18 Amount
English as a Second Language/English Literacy Development (ESL/ELD)	\$293.6 million
French as a Second Language (FSL)	\$267.4 million
French as a First Language (FFL)	\$81.6 million
Programme d'appui aux nouveaux arrivants (PANA)	\$5.8 million
Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF)	\$116.6 million
Total	\$765.0 million

- **English as a Second Language/English Literacy Development** funding is provided to English-language school boards to support students who need extra help developing proficiency in English. It consists of a Recent Immigrant component and a Pupils in Canada component. The former supports students who are eligible based on their country of birth and who have been in Canada four years or less. The latter reflects an estimate of the number of children in a board whose language spoken most often at home is neither English nor French.
- **French as a Second Language** funding, available only to English-language boards, supports the costs of French instruction. It provides a per-pupil amount for each student. At the elementary level the amount varies depending on whether the pupil is taking core French, extended French, or is in a French immersion program. At the secondary level, the amount reflects both the student's grade level and whether the course covers French as a subject or another subject taught in French.
- **French as a First Language funding** is available only to French-language boards, and recognizes the higher costs of instructional materials and support to provide French-language programs. It is made up of per-pupil amounts for boards' elementary and secondary enrolment, and a fixed amount for each new elementary school in a French-language board in the current school year.
- The **programme d'appui aux nouveaux arrivants** supports students from eligible countries who are newly arrived in Canada and do not have a Charter right to education in French, but have been admitted to French-language school boards and require extra help developing proficiency in French.

- **Actualisation linguistique en français** supports students in French-language boards who have a right to education in French because it is the language of one or both of their parents, but need extra help developing proficiency in French. It is calculated using a per-pupil amount that varies using a factor based on census data, that measures a board's cultural environment. The factor reflects the share of school-age youth with at least one parent having French as their first official language spoken.

Indigenous Education Grant

The Indigenous Education Grant, formerly the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Supplement, supports programs designed for Aboriginal students, as outlined in the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*. It is made up of four allocations:

Allocation	2017-18 Amount
Native Languages	\$9.7 million
Native Studies	\$25.4 million
Per-pupil amount	\$25.3 million
Board Action Plans Allocation	\$5.9 million
Total	\$66.3 million

- The **Indigenous Languages allocation (formerly Native Languages)** supports elementary and secondary Indigenous Language programs. At the elementary level, funding is based on the number of pupils enrolled in the Indigenous Language program and the average daily minutes of instruction. At the secondary level, funding is provided for each Grade 9 to 12 pupil enrolled in a credit course.
- The **Indigenous Studies allocation (Formerly First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Studies)** supports secondary credit courses in Indigenous Studies, providing a per-pupil amount for Grade 9 to 12 students.
- The **Per-Pupil Amount** supports Indigenous students, and reflects the estimated percentage of Indigenous students in a board's schools, based on census data. Some of these funds are required to support a dedicated Indigenous Education Lead in each school board.
- The **Board Action Plans allocation** supports the implementation of programs and initiatives aligned with the 16 strategies and actions identified in the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Framework Implementation Plan*.

Safe and Accepting Schools Supplement

This funding supports the Safe Schools Strategy and provides targeted support to secondary schools in priority urban neighbourhoods. The grant, made up of two allocations, is projected to total \$48.1 million in 2017-18:

Allocation	2017-18 Amount
Safe and Accepting Schools	\$38.1 million
Urban and Priority High Schools	\$10.0 million
Total	\$48.1 million

- The **Safe and Accepting Schools** allocation includes two components. One supports non-teaching staff such as social workers, child and youth workers, psychologists, and attendance counsellors who work to prevent and mitigate risks to the school environment. The other supports programs for long-term suspended and expelled students, and prevention and intervention resources. Both components provide a per-pupil amount and also reflect a board's demographic characteristics and dispersion distance.
- The **Urban and Priority High Schools** allocation helps boards respond to challenges in select secondary schools, such as a lack of access to community resources, poverty, conflict with the law, academic achievement issues or a combination of these factors.

Conclusion

Determining the best way to allocate funding to support [Achieving Excellence](#) and to put public resources to the most effective use in our school system is an ongoing process.

Funding arrangements will and must continue to change. For an effective education system, we must stay attuned to and gather information on the evolving needs of students, the costs that boards face, and how well our funding approaches support the outcomes we want from the system.

The ministry will continue to engage with school boards and others to ensure the collection and sharing of insights and information to support the goal of making the best possible decisions.

This guide has provided high-level summaries of grants, their purposes and their funding mechanisms.

This guide is not intended to describe the legal requirements around grant amounts or allocation methods. Readers looking for that information should consult the [Grants for Student Needs – Legislative Grants for the 2017-18 School Board Fiscal Year](#) regulation. The [Education Funding Technical Paper](#) for 2017-18 provides additional information on the calculations underlying many of the grants and more information about grants not discussed in detail here.

Appendix

This guide groups grants by the outcomes they are intended to support. In contrast, the GSN technical paper, which describes the grant calculations in more detail, uses only two broad categories: foundation grants and special purpose grants.

Foundation grants provide each board with funding based on number of students and number of schools. Special purpose grants, which provide additional funding to meet specific needs, generally use data more reflective of local conditions and students. In the Technical paper these grants are set out as a list.

The technical paper is available on the ministry website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding