

Application Guidelines Urban and Priority High Schools Funding

Purpose

The purpose of the Urban and Priority High Schools funding is to provide additional help for select secondary schools in urban neighbourhoods facing challenges such as poverty, criminal and gang activity, lack of community resources, and student achievement issues.

Background

New funding of \$10M for Urban and Priority High Schools was announced in the 2008-09 budget. This funding will be allocated to boards through the Grants for Student Needs (GSN). The funding will help provide needed supports in the school and to develop resources in the community that are targeted to students and their families. The initiative recognizes that ensuring all students have the opportunity and supports they need to develop to their full potential is a shared responsibility between the school and the community.

The expected outcomes of this initiative include improved school safety and increased student achievement.

This initiative is intended to provide intensive supports to a small number of urban schools. In order to meet the intent of the funding the Ministry is targeting funding for this initiative to secondary schools of 500 or more students and located in urban centres with a population of 200,000 or greater (a list of 285 schools attached) . However, not all 285 schools can be funded. To further target funding to the highest needs schools, Boards are invited to submit applications on behalf of up to 25% of their secondary schools using local school/community data, not available to the Ministry, such as youth crime statistics, poverty statistics, rates of school absenteeism to identify schools with high needs. Boards with less than one school eligible school after calculating the 25% of their total would be eligible to apply for one school only.

Depending on the funding proposed in the applications, 20 to 50 schools will be selected for funding. Actual funding will be based on the budget proposed in the individual applications but will be between a minimum of \$200,000 and up to a maximum of \$500,000 per school. Minimum funding is applied in keeping with the strategy of providing intensive supports to a small number of high needs schools providing a better opportunity to leverage change/improvements.

Application Guidelines

Boards must complete a separate application (funding application is attached) for each school that is to be considered for funding. The application form consists of four parts:

1. School/Community Assessment – including description of challenges and strengths.

2. An Action Plan (immediate and long-term)
3. Steering Committee
4. Budget

1. Needs Assessment

School/community needs must be demonstrated through the use of local community/school level data such as:

- Rate of credit accumulation of students at the end of grades 9 and 10 and other student achievement data
- Prevalence of youth crime in the community
- Rates of student absenteeism
- Local poverty statistics
- Number and type of violent incidents in the school
- Number of expulsions; and/or rate of recidivism
- Rate of school staff turnover
- Youth crime statistics by type of incident and gender/age
- percentage of parents with low educational attainment

2. Action Plan

Based on the school's needs assessment and knowledge of available resources (e.g. existing social, health, recreation, justice and other local service for students and their families) develop an Action Plan to improve school safety and student achievement.

The Action Plan for the school must include the following:

- A commitment to stable and willing leadership in the school (commitment by principal and other key staff to the Action Plan)
- Measurable outcomes which must include measures of student achievement, student safety, and identify specific targets for increasing credit accumulation for students in grades 9 and 10
- A Steering Committee to implement the Action Plan
- Activities that will address identified gaps
- A whole school/community approach to prevention and a commitment to early intervention

The Action Plan must also consider and include in the Plan other elements, as appropriate, such as:

- Activities that promote student engagement/leadership
- Activities that promote parent and community engagement
- Creation of new or expansion of existing school prevention/intervention programs/supports
- Actions that support non-academic needs of students as identified through such tools as Individual Action Plans and/or Student Action Plans for long-term suspended or expelled students

3. *Steering Committee*

The application must describe the membership and role of a Steering Committee to develop and implement the Action Plan and to provide input the Action Plan's refinement in future years. The Committee will be responsible for:

- Deciding how the funding is utilized,
- Deciding what the outcome measures should be,
- Evaluating progress against the outcome measures, and
- Reallocating resources, if necessary.

The Committee must consist of the school principal, a Student Success teacher, a parent representative, a student representative, a board representative, a cluster representative from the Student Support Leadership initiative and community partners, such as children's mental health agencies, youth justice sector, local police, recreation agencies, city/municipal agencies, community groups, and co-op placement partners.

4. *Budget*

The budget must provide a breakdown of the funding requested by activity; eligible costs include staff (could be permanent or contract), school/community programs and resources, staff training, supplies. Funds can be used to support existing programs currently funded from other sources within the board's budget. Funding cannot be used for capital investments.

Please remember that funding is intended for intensive supports in a small number of schools and schools are eligible for funding of between \$200,000 and \$500,000.

Timelines

Please complete and send the attached application form, by email, to Nick Laurella (nick.laurella@ontario.ca) no later than October 17, 2008. Any questions should also be addressed to Nick Laurella either via email or by phone (416)325-7749.