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**MEMORANDUM TO:** Directors of Education

**FROM:** Cathy Montreuil  
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French Language Teaching, Learning and Achievement Division

Richard Franz  
Assistant Deputy Minister (A)  
System Planning, Research and Innovation Division

Martyn Beckett,  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
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**DATE:** November 30, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Implementation of the Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel  
Recommendations: Funding to Support Success for All Students

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Following the Ministry of Education's recent announcements regarding the [equity action plan](#), [enhanced well-being strategy](#), [updated curriculum](#) and the [expansion of experiential learning](#), this memo provides details on additional funds available to district school boards over the next four years. These funds will support the implementation of the recommendations in the Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy: \$33.35M for 2017-2018, \$37.85M for 2018-2019, \$40.35M for 2019-2020, and \$40.35M for 2020-2021. This memo outlines the breakdown of funding for 2017-18. A breakdown of funding for future years will be communicated in a similar fashion in the Fall of each year. Throughout, the work will focus on deepening implementation of schools' education and career/life planning programs, with an emphasis on:

**Expansion of Community-Connected Experiential Learning: K-12 and Adult Learners**

- Creation of a new and dedicated Experiential Learning Coordinator in every district school board;
- Enhancements to support the expansion of experiential learning experiences;
- Expansion of Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Programs;
- Supporting outdoor education.

## Promoting Multiple Career Pathways, Skills and Competencies

- Continuing the Deeper Conversation on Education and Career/Life Planning for educators through ongoing professional development;
- Updating the Career Studies course;
- Fostering successful transitions to postsecondary pathways for students with developmental disabilities;
- Expanding Dual Credit programs for adult learners; and
- Increasing students' exposure to science, engineering and technology fields and developing global competencies.

It is important that we leverage our collective knowledge and skills from our shared successes. To create coherence and realize the goals outlined in *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*, boards are encouraged to coordinate the use of funds within various funding envelopes to support all students to become personally successful, compassionate, and contributing members of their communities. This may include, but is not limited to, the Learning Opportunities Grant, the Renewed Math Strategy, the Continuing Education and Other Programs Grant and the Indigenous Education Grant.

## CONTEXT

Building on the renewed goals of achieving excellence, ensuring equity and promoting well-being in *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*, the Ministry of Education is committed to helping all students develop the knowledge, skills and habits of mind that will lead them to become personally successful, economically productive and actively engaged citizens. We are committed to supporting our students as “whole learners” by deepening implementation of the province’s comprehensive education and career/life planning program as outlined in *Creating Pathways to Success (CPS)*. Since 2013, CPS has provided the framework for students to explore and reflect on their learning in four areas of inquiry through a variety of classroom, school-wide, and community-based opportunities. This framework has become an anchor that supports and deepens the development of the whole learner with respect to achievement, equity and well-being as supported through a number of ministry strategies.

We currently have more students graduating high school than ever before. In 2015-16, 86.5% of students were graduating within 5 years. More students are experiencing success; however, there is more work to be done. Opportunities for employment in a highly-skilled, technology-driven, globally-competitive environment are greatly diminished for those without a high school diploma. Studies suggest that two-thirds of new jobs are expected to require postsecondary education or training.<sup>1</sup>

In response, Ontario’s education system must adjust to ensure all students are prepared by supporting them to become architects of their own lives through effective education and career/life planning. We must also bridge the worlds of skills development, education and training by increasing access and enabling successful transitions to an initial postsecondary destination. *The Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel Report: Building the*

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<sup>1</sup> Future-proof: Preparing young Canadians for the future of work- Brookfield Institute. Retrieved October 25, 2017, from <http://brookfieldinstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/FINAL-FP-report-Onlinev3.pdf>.

*Workforce of Tomorrow, A Shared Responsibility*, June 2016, provides a number of recommendations that will assist our students in achieving these goals.

Ontario is committed to the successful implementation of these recommendations. These new investments will add momentum to existing efforts in realizing the holistic vision of success for all students as outlined in *Achieving Excellence*. We will enhance and expand programs and policies to ensure that all students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and Adult Learners have equitable access to a wide range of rich learning experiences, early and often, that are age- and developmentally-appropriate, culturally responsive, relevant and engaging, and that promote achievement, equity and well-being.

The following areas will be the focus for 2017-18 in order to align the goals of *Achieving Excellence* and the Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy by deepening implementation of the province's comprehensive education and career/life planning program.

### **EXPANSION OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: K-12 AND ADULT LEARNERS**

Part of the ministry's multi-year plan to fully realize the commitment in *Achieving Excellence* includes an intention to enhance parent/guardian and community connections to schools to support school experiences that reflect an integrated and coherent approach to student achievement, equity and well-being. Schools will be supported in providing opportunities for rich, meaningful experiences that include community-connected experiential learning. This will involve expanding deliberate opportunities for schools to connect with community partners to bring experiential learning resources to students.

Community-connected experiential learning provides an important vehicle by which diverse communities can collaborate to ensure that the interests, needs, strengths, and aspirations of all students are recognized and reflected in their educational experience. In particular, the interests of Indigenous students and the perspectives of Indigenous communities must be acknowledged and reflected in school, district and school authority plans and practices. Educators must collaborate with leaders from Indigenous communities and organizations to ensure that community-connected experiences are respectful and culturally responsive. It is expected that board leads will work with the board's Indigenous Education Lead and connect with their Indigenous Education Advisory Council when developing these activities. In addition, boards should include Indigenous-focused community-connected experiential learning opportunities in their Board Action Plan on Indigenous Education (BAP).

The following will help provide experiential learning opportunities to ensure that all students have multiple and varied experiential learning opportunities throughout their school years.

#### **a) Enhancements to Support Experiential Learning K – 12 and Adult Learners (\$10.25M)**

Publicly funded schools in Ontario, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, have a long tradition of reaching out to community partners to enrich their students' learning experience. School boards, schools and educators are adept at identifying and leveraging the resources and goodwill within their local context to provide community-connected experiential learning opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of the curriculum, while also acquiring education and career/life planning competencies. Community-connected experiential learning contributes to all students' sense of well-being by providing meaningful learning experiences and opportunities to express themselves in different contexts and by

opening possibilities to connect with community mentors. The funding of this initiative is meant to strengthen and grow these programs and opportunities for students that may already be underway. Enhancements to support Experiential Learning K-12 include:

**i) Experiential Learning Coordinators (\$3M)**

Funding will be provided for boards to hire a new, dedicated Experiential Learning Coordinator in each district school board. The Ministry will begin to support capacity building for the new Experiential Learning Coordinators on February 1, 2018. It is expected that every DSB will have its coordinator hired and ready to start no later than March 16, 2018.

- The Experiential Learning (EL) Coordinator will:
  - o Provide board-level leadership, direction and support to deepen implementation of schools' education and career/life planning programs and the expansion of community-connected experiential learning for Kindergarten to Grade 12, and adult learners;
  - o Have expertise in equity and inclusion, strategic planning, partnership development, and project management; and
  - o Work in concert with the board's School Effectiveness Lead, the Student Success Leader, the Special Education Lead, the Indigenous Education Lead, existing board leads (e.g., OYAP Leads, SHSM Leads, Cooperative Education Leads), as well as school principals and teachers.

Note - Funding for the Experiential Learning Coordinator is pro-rated for 2017-2018, with the earliest start date being February 1, 2018. The ministry will provide an online form for DSBs to enter the name and start date of their coordinator. This form will be communicated directly to DSBs in the near future. Any funding not used for the coordinator's salary (i.e., due to a later start date) can be used to support additional activities as described in Appendix A.

Funds will continue for the next three school years: \$6M for 2018-19, \$6M for 2019-20, and \$6M for 2020-21, with the portion for the coordinator pro-rated for this year only based on your coordinator's start date.

**ii) Additional Supports to Provide Effective Experiential Learning Opportunities (\$6.1M)**

- Boards will receive funding to promote student participation, encourage community partner involvement, and build teacher capacity that enables planning, implementation and program evaluation of community-connected experiential learning opportunities.
- Boards will receive funding to enable participation in regional professional learning sessions to support expansion of community-connected experiential learning.
- Boards will provide experiential learning opportunities that meet the needs and interests of diverse groups of students, including Indigenous students, children

and youth in care, students with special educational needs, and/or students who are seeking re-engagement opportunities.

**iii) Community-Connected Experiential Learning Projects (\$0.5M)**

- Continued funding will be provided to school boards to support the delivery of innovative Community-Connected Experiential Learning Projects through a Call for Proposals.
- All projects should provide experiences that are relevant and fully accessible to students from diverse backgrounds, abilities and communities.
- Specific areas of focus include:
  - o Projects involving Kindergarten to Grade 8 students;
  - o Rural and northern focused projects; and
  - o Innovative cooperative education projects.

**iv) Enhancements to Support Experiential Learning for Adult Learners (\$0.75M)**

The ministry is committed to ensuring adult learners have access to quality experiential learning opportunities that are adaptable and appropriate to their needs. In support of this commitment, funding has been dedicated to help enhance adult learners' engagement, achievement and well-being through robust, meaningful and innovative experiential learning opportunities, while also building professional capacity in this area.

School boards and schools have been invited to submit project proposals focused on the needs and goals of adult learners that support teaching and learning opportunities beyond the classroom within Adult Education programs. For more information, please see the memo entitled "[Experiential Learning for Adults: Call for Proposals for 2017-2018 Projects](#)".

**v) Resource Development**

Resources are in development for use in all divisions and a variety of subject areas in order to broaden and deepen educators' understanding and use of community-connected experiential learning as an effective pedagogical approach.

**b) Specialist High Skills Major Program Expansion (\$10.1M)**

The ministry will support district school boards in growing the SHSM program's overall provincial footprint from 14% to 25% participation among all Grade 11 and 12 students. The program supports high school students in their education and career/life planning by providing them with an opportunity to focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests. Expansion supports include:

- Funding for staffing (e.g., teacher release time, administrative support);
- Program outreach and promotion to targeted groups of learners;
- Professional development for educators and board leads;
- Program application, review and approval processes; and
- Reporting from boards on program implementation, participation, completion and achievement data.

Funding to boards will be in the form of a combination of Grants for Student Needs (GSN) and Transfer Payments. The Transfer Payment amount may vary based on boards' confirmation of programs and actual student enrolment for the 2017-18 school year. See your board-specific memo entitled "Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Funding - 2017-18" for further details. Expansion funding above the existing \$25.3M to support the targeted 25% participation will continue with \$15.6M for 2018-19, \$18.1M for 2019-20, and \$18.1M for 2020-21.

### **c) Outdoor Education (\$17.1M)\***

2017-18 Grants for Student Needs funding to support Outdoor Education provides students with community-connected experiential learning opportunities in the outdoors. Such experiences encourage students to engage in active and healthy living activities. Special attention should be paid to ensure that outdoor experiences are relevant and fully accessible for students from diverse backgrounds, abilities and communities and align with OPHEA guidelines and board safety protocols.

\* This funding has already been flowed through the 2017-18 GSN and is not part of the new HSW funding. Rather, it has been included in this memo to demonstrate the alignment of Outdoor Education with HSW-funded initiatives.

## **PROMOTING MULTIPLE CAREER PATHWAYS, SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES**

The reality of our rapidly-changing global economy is resulting in constantly evolving jobs and careers. In order to best prepare our students for this ever-changing landscape, it is important to support the development of global competencies - transferable skills, knowledge and attitudes - and expose them to a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional careers and nonlinear pathways. In response to HSW recommendations, the ministry is committed to working collaboratively with educators, community partners and other ministries to develop new ways of introducing students to different careers and pathways and to support innovative approaches to teaching and learning that foster the development of global competencies.

### **a) Deeper Conversations on Education and Career/Life Planning: Professional Learning for Educators (\$1M)**

During February and March of 2017, The Ministry of Education (EDU) and the Ministry for Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) led professional learning sessions entitled *A Deeper Conversation on Education and Career/Life Planning*. These sessions marked the beginning of a 5-year professional learning strategy to foster dialogue and create a culture in schools where students value education and career/life planning and where educators see themselves as important contributors to the school's comprehensive education and career/life planning program.

Part two of these regional sessions will be offered in 2017-18 and will provide a forum for district teams, school teams, and EDU/MAESD to share effective practices that address the challenges and share best practices associated with the delivery of education and career/life planning programs that help all students become personally successful, and economically and actively engaged citizens within a highly skilled workforce. Following this memo, the ministry will be inviting a team from each district school board including representatives from

past Creating Pathways to Success Professional Learning Communities Lead Boards to take part in the regional planning teams for these sessions.

### **b) Career Studies Course (\$0.5M)**

The ministry will continue and expand the Career Studies projects to include representation from each district school board with a focus on the effective promotion and assessment of transferable skills within four content areas: financial literacy, digital literacy, pathways planning and innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.

These projects are meant to collaboratively:

- Inform the revision of the Career Studies curriculum;
- Build capacity for teaching and assessing transferable skills;
- Engage Career Studies teachers in meaningful professional development activities that support innovative practice; and
- Facilitate the sharing of inquiries into effective Career Studies teaching strategies.

### **c) Special Education Pilot to Support Transitions to Postsecondary Pathways for Students with Developmental Disabilities (\$478K)**

In alignment with the government's [Access Talent: Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities](#), the Ministry of Education will pilot a Transition Coordinator in two District School Boards (DSBs) to work collaboratively with their respective school boards, community agencies and employers to support students with developmental disabilities in order to improve their educational outcomes by supporting the transition to work, community or postsecondary education.

In addition, these two transition coordinators will lead a provincial professional learning collaborative that includes six additional DSBs in order to share best practices/resources/tools that lead to successful transitions to postsecondary pathways for students with developmental disabilities. Consideration is being given as to how to share these best practices province-wide in the future.

### **d) Dual Credit Pilots for Adult Learners (\$1M)**

Dual Credit programs allow students, while in secondary school, to take college or apprenticeship courses that count towards both their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and a postsecondary certificate, diploma, degree or a Certificate of Apprenticeship.

In 2017-18, funding was approved to offer Dual Credits for adult learners, aged 21 and over that builds on existing Dual Credit programming. Ontario's multi-ministry Adult Education Strategy has a focus on making adult education more learner-centered. Providing adults with options to pursue Dual Credits supports the commitment to develop a seamless, learner-centered Adult Education System that reaches more adults seeking to complete secondary school and transition to postsecondary education.

The target audience is adults who need the additional support that Dual Credit programs offer in order to earn their OSSD and make a successful transition to postsecondary education. Students must be within reach of graduation, have the potential to succeed in college or

apprenticeship, and be 21 years of age or older. See the memo from School College Work Initiative (SCWI) entitled "[Inviting Proposals for Adult Dual Credit Pilot Programs, 2017-18](#)" for more information.

### **e) Innovation in Learning Fund (ILF) and Global Competencies (\$10M) \***

As identified in the memo entitled "[New Innovation in Learning Fund \(ILF\)](#)", the ministry is investing \$10M a year in fostering greater innovation in learning and teaching to support the development of global competencies (e.g. transferrable skills) in students.

The ILF will provide funding to school boards for:

- Innovations in learning and teaching ("innovation projects") that will help to foster deeper learning and global competencies in students; and
- Professional development for educators to facilitate experiences to enable deeper learning and global competencies in students.

\* This funding has already been flowed through Letters of Agreement this Fall and is not part of the new HSW funding. Rather, it has been included in this memo to demonstrate the alignment of the ILF with HSW-funded initiatives.

## **RESEARCH, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Research, monitoring and evaluation play an important role in informing decisions and supporting implementation strategies in order to meet our collective goals. While the reporting methods for each of the aforementioned strategies may be different in nature, scope and form, all feedback and evidence will be used to better support our students. Details for each report will be forthcoming.

The information that may be gathered from students' engagement in the education and career/life planning process and the reflections shared from their portfolios and Individual Pathways Plans is important. It serves as a source of student voice to inform educators in the co-construction of opportunities that are responsive to student interest and need. See Appendix B for more details.

## **NEXT STEPS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Over the coming weeks and months, EDU/MAESD, district school board teams and community partners will work together to plan the various components of HSW implementation. The work to implement the HSW recommendations in service of the greater goal of supporting students in their education and career/life planning is complex and the ministry aims to support coherence by reducing the number of discrete initiatives and by working closely with Regional Field Services Branch offices and Regional Student Achievement Officers. We recognize that you may wish to explore and enhance further opportunities for work already in place that align with these overarching learning goals and other Ministry related work.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions and engage with ministry staff, especially those serving your board, as you consider the contents of this memorandum.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Marg Connor, Director, Program Implementation Branch at [marg.connor@ontario.ca](mailto:marg.connor@ontario.ca), 416-325-2564 or, Luc Davet, Director, French-Language Teaching, Learning and Achievement Division at [luc.davet@ontario.ca](mailto:luc.davet@ontario.ca), 416- 325-9072.

We are committed to ensuring that all students, from a young age, are given equitable opportunities to develop competencies and skills to make informed choices, and have experiences that allow them to identify and pursue their passions and explore pathways to apprenticeship, college, community living, university or work. When we help students make more informed decisions, we promote the development of a strong sense of self/spirit, foster well-being and better position them to reach their full potential.

We look forward to working with you in supporting student achievement, equity and well-being.

*Original signed by*

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Cathy Montreuil  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Student Achievement Division

*Original signed by*

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Denys Giguère  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
French Language Teaching, Learning  
and Achievement Division

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Richard Franz  
Assistant Deputy Minister (A)  
System Planning, Research and  
Innovation Division

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Martyn Beckett  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Student Support and Field Services  
Division

**Attachments:**

Appendix A: 2017-18 Funding to Support Implementation of HSW Recommendations  
Appendix B: Reporting Summary

CC: Denise Dwyer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Indigenous Education and Well Being  
Division

Erin McGinn, Assistant Deputy Minister, Workforce Policy and Innovation Division

## Appendix A: 2017-18 Funding to Support HSW Recommendations

Component	Description	Provincial Investments
Enhancements to Support Experiential Learning: K-12	<p>Funding for the Community-Connected Experiential Learning (CCEL) Call for Proposals is allocated at \$500,000 for approved projects from DSBs through Transfer Payment.</p> <p>Funding for one EL Coordinator per DSB is allocated through Transfer Payment at a base amount of \$83,050*, funding for participation in a regional professional learning session, and with additional funding to support activities in the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enabling student participation (minimum of 30%);</li> <li>• building teacher capacity (minimum of 20%); and</li> <li>• promoting community partner involvement** (maximum of 35%).</li> </ul> <p>*This is the annual allocation. This amount will be pro-rated to coincide with the actual start date for the EL Coordinator in 2017-2018.</p> <p><i>**This portion could support the hiring of additional staff who would engage strictly in community outreach on behalf of the DSB and its schools.</i></p> <p>Funding for Adult Community-Connected Experiential Learning Projects is allocated through Transfer Payment at \$750,000 for approved projects from DSBs.</p>	\$10.25M
Specialist High Skills Major Program Expansion	Funding to boards will be in the form of a combination of GSN and Transfer Payments. The Transfer Payment amount may vary based on your confirmation of programs and actual student enrolment for the 2017-18 school year.	\$10.1M
Outdoor Education	Funding provided through the GSN is based on a fixed amount of \$5,000 per school board with the balance proportionally allocated based on a per-pupil allocation using average daily enrolment. \$5,000 per board + (\$8.51 x 2017-18 ADE).	\$17.1M
Deeper Conversation on Education and Career/Life Planning	Funding for regional professional learning sessions will be allocated regionally to support and broaden the implementation of education and career/life planning.	\$1M

<b>Component</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Provincial Investments</b>
Career Studies Course	Funding at \$5,000-10,000 per board to provide teacher release and offset travel costs for teachers participating in the Career Studies projects for 2017-18 (through Transfer Payment).	\$0.5M
Special Education Transition Pilots	Funding for Special Education Pilot to Support Transitions to Postsecondary Pathways for Students with Developmental Disabilities is being allocated through Transfer Payment at \$104 000 for lead boards (2) and \$45,000 for supporting boards (6).	\$478K
Dual Credit Pilots for Adult Learners	Funding to support adult Dual Credit programs in 2017-18. These funds are distributed to approved school boards and colleges through CODE.	\$1M
Innovation in Learning Fund	Funding at \$109,500 per board to support innovation projects and professional development for educators.	\$10M

## Appendix B: Reporting Summary

Initiative	Reporting Tool	Deadline
Education and Career/Life Planning Programs	PRISA	Final Report (July 2018)
Enhancements to Support Community-Connected Experiential Learning K – 12	PRISA	January 2018 July 2018
Community-Connected Experiential Learning Projects	As per application process	August 31, 2018
Community-Connected Experiential Learning for Adult Learners	As per application process	August 31, 2018
Expansion of Specialist High Skills Majors Programs	EDCS	multiple report-backs
Outdoor Education	PRISA	July 2018
Special Education Transition Pilot	As per Transfer Payment Agreement	September 2018
Dual Credit Pilots for Adult Learners	EDCS	Interim report (March 2018), Final report (July 2018)
Innovation in Learning Fund (ILF) and Global Competencies	TBD	July 2018