



News Release

For Immediate Release

December 6, 2017

School Board Funding Formula Last Fully Reviewed in 2002: Auditor General

(TORONTO) “The last full independent review of the Ministry of Education’s funding formula for school boards was done in 2002,” Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk says in her *2017 Annual Report*, tabled today in the Legislative Assembly.

As of the 2016/17 school year, the Ministry of Education and municipalities provided 72 district school boards in Ontario with \$23 billion in operating funding to provide elementary and secondary education to about two million students.

In 2002, an independent task force reviewed the Ministry’s complex formula for determining school board funding, and recommended that it annually review and update the benchmarks in the formula. It also recommended the Ministry do a more comprehensive overall review every five years. Fifteen years later, the Ministry has not commissioned another independent review of the funding formula.

The audit found the Ministry gives school boards total discretion in how they spend the non-restricted funding they receive, even when some of the funding is provided for specific provincial education priorities. The Ministry also does not require boards to report how the funding for these priorities is used. This limits the Ministry from fully understanding whether the funding allocation for these education priorities meet actual student needs no matter which school board they attend in the province.

Among the findings in the Report:

- Half of the annual restricted special-education funding is allocated based on a school board’s average daily enrolment of all its students, instead of the number of students actually receiving special-education programs and services. Had the Ministry allocated this half of the special-education funding based on the actual number of students receiving special-education programs and services, \$111 million would have been disbursed differently across the boards.
- Students have been performing below the standard in Grades 3 and 6 math and Grade 9 applied math since at least 2008/09. Although elementary schools have single-subject teachers for certain subjects, generally this is not the case with math.
- The Ministry does not compare and analyze actual expenses of school boards on a per-student or per-school basis. The audit found significant differences in expenses per student by region—and between boards in the same region. Such analysis could provide the Ministry with insight as to how school boards are operating in Ontario. This would help them make more informed funding decisions.

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Visit www.auditor.on.ca to read the Report.

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