



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

**COMMUNITY PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS  
GUIDELINE**

March 2015

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the *Community Planning and Partnerships (CPP) Guideline* is to encourage school boards to reach out to community organizations to share planning information with community organizations on a regular basis. In particular, boards are encouraged to ensure that additional efforts are made to share this information with community organizations prior to commencing a pupil accommodation review.

This information sharing will allow school boards and other entities to work together to the benefit of boards, students and the community, and to optimize the use of public assets owned by school boards. This *Guideline* is intended to assist boards in establishing more facility partnerships, and to support effective planning with community partners regarding land-use and green space/park planning. Boards are expected to revise or develop their own policy/policies that are consistent with this *Guideline*.

This *Guideline* focuses on opportunities to share facilities with community partners when building new schools and undertaking significant renovations, when considering the use of unoccupied space in schools, and when considering properties associated with schools that -

- Maximize the use of public infrastructure through increased flexibility and utilization; and
- Provide a foundation for improved service delivery for communities.

The *Guideline* has eight components, outlined below:

1. The identification of CPP opportunities in board planning.
2. The development or review of board CPP policies.
3. The development of a process to notify community partners.
4. Planning for an annual CPP meeting.
5. School board planning prior to a pupil accommodation review.
6. The consideration of opportunities for co-building with community partners.
7. The consideration of opportunities for sharing unused space in schools with community partners.
8. Partnership agreements and cost-recovery.

School boards have the authority to make decisions regarding their school facilities and the use of their properties that are consistent with the *Education Act*. This *Guideline* does not prevent boards from building, renovating or closing schools or from disposing of surplus assets when required. Boards will continue to identify which schools will or will not be suitable for facility partnerships based on board-determined criteria.

Boards will continue to follow Ontario Regulation 444/98 regarding the lease or sale of surplus assets, including schools or parts of schools. Boards currently have the authority to co-build schools with other entities and to enter into a variety of facility partnerships through license or joint use agreement as outlined in paragraph 44 of subsection 171 (1), paragraph 4 of subsection 171.1 (2), and sections 183, 194 and 196 of the *Education Act*, although the *Education Act* requires Minister approval in some circumstances. While boards will continue to declare facilities and unused space surplus where appropriate, the Ministry recognizes



- Entities that provide competing education services such as tutoring services, JK-12 private schools or private colleges, and credit offering entities that are not government-funded, are not eligible partners.

At a minimum, board CPP policy or policies are expected to reflect the requirements of the Ministry *Guideline*. Where a board has more than one policy related to facility partnerships, the board is encouraged to ensure all relevant policies are accessible to and understandable by the public.

Facility sharing between publicly funded school boards through co-ownership, lease or other agreements remains a priority for the Ministry and school boards. Board facility partnerships policies should not disadvantage co-terminous boards that have priority status under O. Reg 444/98.

### 3. CPP Notification Process

For surplus space being offered for sale or lease, boards will continue to follow the circulation process outlined in O. Reg. 444/98. For non-surplus space, boards will follow a new notification process similar to the circulation process in O. Reg. 444/98.

For the notification process, boards are to post information on their website regarding their intention to build new schools and to undertake significant renovations and information regarding unused space in open and operating schools and administrative buildings that is available for facility partnerships. This information should be updated at least once a year in the case of space in existing schools, and as needed in the case of co-building opportunities. Boards are also expected to post on their website the name and contact information of the staff member at the board who will respond to questions regarding facility partnerships throughout the year.

Boards are also expected to inform entities on their notification list when key information regarding community planning or facility partnerships is changed or updated. To create the notification list, boards will address the following requirements:

- List will reflect at a minimum the entities listed in Ontario Regulation 444/98 – Disposition of Surplus Real Property, and must specifically include:
  - All applicable levels of municipal government (single, upper, lower tiers)
  - Applicable District Social Services Administration Board(s) or Consolidated Municipal Service Manager(s)
  - Applicable Public Health Boards, Local Health Integration Networks and Children’s Mental Health Centres
- Boards may prioritize their notification list as they see fit.
- If child care operators or government-funded organizations request it, they will be added to the notification list.
- Boards may add any other entity to their notification list based on their CPP policy.

### 4. Annual CPP Meeting

Boards are to hold **at least** one meeting per year to discuss potential planning and partnership opportunities with the public and community organizations. Additional staff-level meetings may be held to discuss additional information with relevant entities. Boards are

expected to notify both the entities on their notification list and the general public about the annual meeting.

During the annual CPP meeting, the school board will provide/present all or a portion of the board's capital plan (as described in Section 1.), details of any schools deemed eligible for facility partnerships, relevant information available on their website and any supplementary

for a new facility and to identify funding sources. As part of the planning process, when considering building a new school or undertaking a significant addition or renovation, boards are expected to notify the entities on their notification list 1 to 3 years prior to the potential construction start date. Boards should provide as much information as possible about their plans and the site to support potential partners in determining the project's suitability for their purposes.

The notification should be supported by a board resolution. Boards do not need to have an identified source of funding or Ministry approval when they notify their partners of their plan or intention to build. Similarly, plans to build may be contingent on board decisions that have not yet been made.

Once notified, entities may express their interest in co-building with the board. The board will then evaluate the expressions of interest to select partner(s) based on its CPP policy. The Minister's approval may be required depending on the provision under the *Education Act* authorizing the transaction. Partnership agreements cannot be finalized until both the board and the partner/s have an approved source of funding. Requests for Ministry funding and requests for transfer from reserve approvals are expected to reflect that boards have already solicited interest from partners. The Ministry prefers that boards and facility partners have ownership of their respective portions of the facility, where the portions are sizeable.

Boards should encourage community partners to provide notification to the board when community partners have proposals or plans to build their own new facilities. Boards should enable community partners to provide this information directly or during the facility partnership-related public meetings held by the board. When building or renovating schools, school boards and the Ministry often have deadlines related to student accommodation needs or funding parameters. School boards are expected to make their timelines clear to potential partners and may establish policies to ensure that timelines are maintained.

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## 7. Sharing Unused Space in Existing Schools with Community Partners

The Ministry expects that boards will review underutilized open and operating schools and administrative facilities for their suitability for partnership, based on criteria outlined by the 7.

information about the available space, including but not limited to size, location, facility amenities, and required renovations, if needed.

Entities may then express their interest in using the space. Boards will evaluate the expressions of interest to select partner(s) based on their CPP policy. Boards then may enter into a license or joint use agreement. T