

5. List of Recommendations and Summary of Estimated Costs

List of Recommendations

In introducing this list of recommendations, I wish to reiterate a point I made at the beginning of Chapter 4. With the exception of recommendations 2, 24, and 29, my recommendations are for measures that, if implemented, would begin to take effect in the 2003–04 school year as part of a multi-year funding plan. By “multi-year funding plan,” I mean over three years. The government may wish to fully implement some measures earlier.

Recommendations 2, 24, and 29 are for, respectively, funding for collective bargaining with teaching and support staff, funding under the Special Education Grant for Intensive Support Amount (ISA) claims that have been approved up to the end of cycle 3 of the ministry’s comprehensive review of ISA funding, and funding for boards’ most pressing needs related to student transportation.

These three recommendations reflect the priorities that I discerned through my consultations and subsequent analysis of the issues. I believe that if these recommendations are implemented in the 2002–03 school year they will foster stability in the education sector.

I recommend that:

1. the Ministry of Education update the benchmark costs for all components of the funding formula (the Foundation Grant, the Special Purpose Grants, and the Pupil Accommodation Grant) to reflect costs through August 2003, and that funding that reflects these updated benchmark costs be phased in over three years, starting in 2003–04, as part of a multi-year funding plan

I estimate that the updated benchmark costs covering costs through August 2003 will total \$1.08 billion, excluding the additional cost of updating salaries and benefits in 2002–03 (see recommendation 2). The \$1.08 billion estimate comprises updates of benchmark costs to August 2002 (\$1.01 billion) plus updates of non-salary-and-benefit costs to 2003 (\$70 million). The estimated \$1.08 billion should be phased in over three years, starting in 2003–04, as part of a multi-year funding plan.

2. to foster stability in the education sector, the Ministry of Education allocate funds to school boards in the current school year (2002–03) for the current round of collective bargaining with teaching and support staff

3. the Ministry of Education, in consultation with school boards and other members of the education community, develop mechanisms for annually reviewing and updating benchmarks in the funding formula and for conducting a more comprehensive overall review of the funding formula every five years
4. the Ministry of Education, in consultation with school boards, other members of the education community, and other appropriate stakeholders, review and consider grouping all of the Special Purpose Grants in the funding formula that have a focus on readiness to learn for preschool children, in-school students, and youth making the transition from school to work/postsecondary education, with the goal of ensuring that these Special Purpose Grants are designed to meet the needs of at-risk children and youth effectively
5. the Ministry of Education determine the appropriate funding magnitude of the Demographic Component of the Learning Opportunities Grant by collecting and analysing data on programs and services for students at risk from a representative sample of school boards that offer effective programs and services of this nature
6. as an interim measure, pending the collection and analysis of the data on programs and services for students at risk described in recommendation 5, the Ministry of Education invest an additional \$50 million in the Demographic Component of the Learning Opportunities Grant, using the current allocation model based on the 1996 census
7. the Ministry of Education review the current allocation models for the Demographic Component of the Learning Opportunities Grant to ensure that the distribution of funds to school boards under this grant is fair and equitable, and further, that the ministry update the socio-economic factors in the formula using 2001 census data
8. beginning in 2003–04, the Ministry of Education reallocate the unused portion of the Grades 7 to 10 Component of the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) to the LOG for programs and services for students who need remedial literacy and math programs, and further, that the ministry require school boards, as part of their accountability, to report on how the funds have been used for this purpose
9. the Ministry of Education require school boards that receive funds through the Learning Opportunities Grant to report publicly on how the expenditure of these funds is contributing to continuous improvement in student achievement and to the reduction of the performance gap between high and low achievers in their schools while maintaining high standards
10. the Ministry of Education increase the funds allocated under the Language Grant to reflect five years of language training for English as a Second Language/English Skills Development and for *Perfectionnement du français*

I estimate that the increase to the Language Grant for English as a Second Language/English Skills Development and Perfectionnement du français to reflect five years of language training will cost \$65 million.

11. the Ministry of Education obtain accurate data to establish the extent of school boards' needs related to the provincial role in the education of Aboriginal students and, on the basis of this data, implement a new grant targeted at the educational needs of Aboriginal students who are not living on reserves, and further, that the ministry require boards that are eligible for this grant to spend it on programs and services for Aboriginal students and to publicly account both for the expenditures and the results achieved
12. the Province work with Aboriginal leaders and the federal government to ensure that there is an integrated approach to and adequate funding for the education of Aboriginal students
13. the government establish a Cabinet-level advisory council on integrated services for children and families, composed of representatives from the Ministries of Community, Family, and Children's Services, Education, Health and Long-Term Care, Public Safety and Security, and Tourism and Recreation, to meet on a regular basis to align the work and the funding mechanisms of the ministries that serve families, children, and youth
14. the Ministry of Education review the brief submitted to the task force by the 12 French-language school boards, together with the Association des conseillères et des conseillers des écoles publiques de l'Ontario and the Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques, and amend the funding formula as appropriate to ensure that each of the grants in the formula recognizes the higher costs experienced by French-language boards in delivering education programs and services
15. the Ministry of Education allocate core-support funding through the Geographic Circumstances Grant to school boards that have decided to keep open a small school in a single-school community and that, under the updated Foundation and Special Purpose Grants (that is, updated as described in recommendation 1), do not have an average school size that is sufficient to generate funding for core-support staff for that small school, and further, that the core-support funding cover the following:
 - a full-time principal and secretary for each elementary and secondary school
 - a full-time support staff person for each elementary and secondary school to ensure a safe, clean, and well-maintained school, and
 - a full-time individual in a secondary school to provide advice on careers and postsecondary education to secondary school students and advice to Grade 8 students on secondary school placements

I estimate that core-support funding for small schools in single-school communities will cost \$50 million.

16. the Ministry of Education extend the duration of the Declining Enrolment Adjustment to three years

I estimate that extending the duration of the Declining Enrolment Adjustment will cost \$5 million.

17. the Ministry of Education reconstitute the Local Priorities Amount as 5% of the Basic Amount of school boards' Foundation Grants (updated as per recommendations 1 and 2), and that boards apply the Local Priorities Amount to locally established priorities, programs, and services aimed at the continuous improvement of student learning and achievement
18. the Ministry of Education require school boards, through their directors of education, to consult with principals and school councils for the purposes of developing a plan for the use of the Local Priorities Amount, and to annually review the plans and report publicly to all stakeholders and to the ministry on the results achieved through the implementation of the plans, in individual schools and in the district as a whole
19. the Ministry of Education make a new strategic investment of \$50 million in the School Renewal Allocation for school boards to use to address their most pressing school renewal needs
20. the Ministry of Education allocate a new strategic investment of \$200 million annually to a "deferred maintenance amortization fund," which would fund the principal and interest costs of school boards' payments to service the debts boards would incur in borrowing funds so that they could begin to address their deferred maintenance needs
21. the Ministry of Education review the benchmark costs in the New Pupil Places Allocation with a view to distinguishing between benchmark costs for construction that is under way or has been completed and benchmark costs for construction that is projected, and that it update and review, as described in recommendations 1 and 3, only the benchmark costs for construction that is projected
22. the Ministry of Education review and consider the recommendations in the brief submitted to the task force by the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education
23. in the 2003–04 school year, following completion of the comprehensive review of the Intensive Support Amount funding, the Ministry of Education fund school boards for all claims approved during the review
I estimate that the annual cost of funding all approved Intensive Support Amount claims will be approximately \$250 million.
24. to foster stability in the education sector, the Ministry of Education allocate \$130 million to school boards in the current school year (2002–03) to fund all claims approved up to the end of cycle 3 of the comprehensive review of Intensive Support Amount funding
25. the Ministry of Education develop a funding policy for the transportation of students with special needs

26. the Ministry of Education increase the Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) for secondary school students to offset the estimated decline in enrolment that will result from the reduced number of years in the secondary school curriculum, and that it then increase the SEPPA by a further 10% to support a high level of special education programs and services at the secondary school level

I estimate that the cost of increasing the SEPPA as described in recommendation 26 will be \$19 million.

27. the Ministry of Education, following a brief period of consultation on its “Proposed Standards for Special Education Programs and Services Common to All Exceptionalities,” publish an approved set of standards and, if necessary, adjust the funding formula to provide school boards with funding to implement the new standards
28. the Ministry of Education complete the development of a Transportation Grant that is based on need, that includes a mechanism for annual reviews and updates of school boards’ student transportation costs, and that recognizes the costs associated with the transportation of students with special needs and the implementation of transportation safety programs
29. to foster stability in the education sector, the Ministry of Education allocate the \$20 million increase in funding for school transportation that was announced in the government’s 2002 budget to school boards in the current school year (2002–03), and that it direct these funds to those boards that are most in need to help them address transportation cost pressures
30. the Ministry of Education consult school boards and other appropriate stakeholders to facilitate a move towards the implementation of a “regional service boards” approach to the delivery of student transportation
31. the Ministry of Education adjust the credit-load factor in the funding formula in light of the new secondary school curriculum
32. the Ministry of Education promote standardization, where appropriate, of instructional software and classroom information and communications technology (ICT) systems, and that it work with school boards to promote the effective and efficient management of boards’ administrative ICT systems
33. the Minister of Education review, in consultation with all education partners, the education governance structure and the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners

Summary of Estimated Costs

The estimated total cost of my recommendations, as far as I am able to calculate it, is \$1.769 billion. This estimate does not include all the costs that may result from my recommendations, for two reasons:

- I am unable to estimate the teaching and support staff salary and benefits costs being negotiated during the current school year (2002–03). These salary and benefits costs will not be known, of course, until the current round of collective bargaining is complete. When they are known, they will have to be added to my estimated total.
- Some of my recommendations ask the Ministry of Education to collect and analyse data and to analyse aspects of the funding formula to ensure that the benchmark factors and costs in the formula are appropriate. If the formula is adjusted as a result, additional costs may be involved.

The table below summarizes the estimated costs of my recommendations. For more detail on my approach to updating the benchmark costs and for more detailed calculations, see Appendices H, I, and J.

Summary of Estimated Costs of the Education Equality Task Force’s Recommendations

Item	Cost (Millions)
Update of all benchmark costs to August 2002	\$1,010
Update of all benchmark costs from August 2002 to August 2003, <i>not including</i> the cost of salaries and benefits being negotiated in 2002–03	70
New investments	689
Total estimated cost of recommendations, <i>not including</i> the cost of salaries and benefits being negotiated in 2002–03	\$1,769

Source: Appendix I, Table I.1.