MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Pauline McNaughton
Director (A)
Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategic Policy Branch

Denys Giguère
Director
French-Language Education Policy & Programs Branch

DATE: September 26, 2014

SUBJECT: Funding for Outdoor Education 2014-15

This memo is to provide details of the funding for learning activities in the outdoors for 2014-15. The master transfer agreement includes a schedule that addresses this funding.

“Ontario’s education system needs to help students build the knowledge and skills associated with positive well-being and become healthy, active and engaged citizens” (Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario 2014). Learning experiences in the outdoors are a valuable tool to encourage students to engage in active and healthy activities. The Education Funding (B6) memo from the Ministry of Education on March 27, 2013 identified funding to support student learning activities in the outdoors.

For 2014-15, the funding model will repeat the approach used in 2013-14: each school board receives a $5,000 base and the remaining funding has been allocated proportionally based on the board’s total elementary and secondary enrolment in 2012-13. Your board’s allocation is $X and will arrive in two payments:
- October 2014 ($X) on receipt of the signed transfer payment contract
- Late spring 2015 ($X) on receipt of the attached funding report.
Similar to 2013-14, this funding is for expenses associated with outdoor learning activities that directly connect to student participation. Developing partnerships with community groups will again be required for 2014-15 to continue to expand connections between boards and not-for-profit and community groups. Allowable expenses are:

- fees related to participation in outdoor learning activities provided by school boards or by third party organizations, such as not-for-profit or community groups;
- to enlist the expertise and/or facilities/resources of community agencies in outdoor learning activities;
- transportation costs;
- teacher release time.

In 2014-15, this funding may not be used for:
- staffing;
- administrative costs;
- costs associated with board outdoor education facilities, e.g., repairs, equipment;
- the purchase or development of learning resources.

Attached is a template (Appendix A) similar to this year’s report to be completed and submitted by each school board by **May 1, 2015**. Reports should indicate actual and projected expenses to August 31, 2015 for the 2014-15 school year. From the results we are particularly interested to learn how community partners were involved, as well as the role those partners played in the implementation or delivery of outdoor learning activities.

A review of the 2013-14 reports from boards on how this funding was spent indicated the following:

- Over 666,400 students participated in outdoor education activities;
- Over 800 different community partners across the province were involved, an increase from 600 community partners in 2012-13;
- 44% of activities involved elementary students, 16% secondary students, and 40% involved students from both levels.

School boards engaged a variety of not-for-profit and community organizations for student activities including visits to pioneer villages for social studies, ropes courses for health and physical education, outings to conservation areas for environmental science, and outdoor nature workshops for the arts.
Thank you for your continued commitment to Student Success. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Audrey Cartile, Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategic Policy Branch, (audrey.cartile@ontario.ca, 416-326-0552).

Pauline McNaughton
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c: EDU Regional Offices
   Board’s Outdoor Education Contact

Attachments:

2014-15 Expenditure report template
Transfer payment contract