



# DOWNEY DIGEST

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## **A NOTE FROM DOUG**

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Happy New Year! 2022 has arrived, and I know that it has brought with it more challenges for many of us. While we had a rocky start to the year, things are slowly getting back on track. Children have now returned to school, and restrictions will soon be eased. I know it hasn't been easy for our community, and I'm grateful for your continued positivity and support of each other to help us get through this. Below you'll find information on schools and small business supports, as well as the current budget consultations online.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to my office if you have any questions, comments or feedback. I look forward to seeing many of you in 2022!

# SUPPORTS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

The Ontario government is providing targeted relief for businesses and people impacted by the current public health measures aimed at blunting the spread of the Omicron variant. As part of this plan, the government is introducing a \$10,000 grant for eligible businesses that are subject to closures under the modified Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen and is providing additional electricity-rate relief for businesses, as well as workers and families spending more time at home. Available supports include:

- Ontario COVID-19 Small Business Support Relief Grant
- Ontario Business Costs Rebate Program
- Provincially Administered Tax Deferrals
- 21 days of electricity rate relief



# SUPPORTS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

These measures will build on Ontario's support for businesses and workers, including, but not limited to:

- Cutting wholesale alcohol prices to provide approximately \$60 million in annual support to restaurants, bars and other businesses, as well as making it easier for businesses to create and extend patios and permanently allowing licenced restaurants and bars to include alcohol with food as part of a takeout or delivery order.
- Extending COVID-19 paid sick days until July 31, 2022 to keep workers safe and ensure they do not lose pay if they need to miss work for reasons related to COVID-19.
- Enabling an estimated \$10.1 billion in cost savings and support to Ontario businesses in 2021, with more than 60 per cent, or \$6.3 billion, going to small businesses, including:
  - Supporting a reduction in Workplace Safety and Insurance Board premiums.
  - Allowing businesses to accelerate write-offs of capital investments for tax purposes.

## BUDGET CONSULTATIONS 2022

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the government engaged people and businesses in a series of consultations to help inform the Province's ongoing response to fight this virus. This is a critical time for the government to protect Ontario's progress against COVID-19 and, more specifically, the newer threat posed by Omicron. The government will continue its conversations with the people of this province by asking them what they want to see in the 2022 Budget.



## BUDGET CONSULTATIONS 2022

People and organizations are welcome to share their ideas via an online survey, emailed or mailed submissions to the Ministry of Finance, or through a series of virtual consultations across the province that began Monday, January 17.

Visit [Ontario.ca/budgetconsultations](https://Ontario.ca/budgetconsultations) to learn how to submit your ideas by email, mail, or by filling out a survey. The 2022 Budget consultations will close on February 11, 2022.



The 2022 Budget will be delivered by March 31, 2022.

# BACK TO SCHOOL

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In-person learning is critical for the mental health, development, and academic achievement of Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte children. Parents, educators and children have all demonstrated incredible resilience and adaptability since the start of the pandemic, but our kids deserve to be in school, where they can learn alongside their friends and teachers. That's why elementary and secondary students across Ontario returned to in-person learning on January 17th.



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For local families, our government is providing a projected amount of \$24.29 million to the Simcoe County District School Board, in COVID-19 resources, for the 2021-22 school year.

- \$14,633,343 in ventilation improvements since the onset of COVID
- \$7.5 million to hire additional staff
- 426 HEPA units in schools
- 249,600 non-fit-tested N95s for educators
- 118,790 cloth masks for students
- 88,763 rapid antigen tests for symptomatic students and staff.

Additionally, it is projected that the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board will receive \$10.99 million in COVID-19 resources, from the Ontario government, for the 2021-22 school year.

- \$9,487,267 for ventilation improvements since the onset of COVID
- \$3.47 million to hire additional staff this school year
- 178 HEPA units in schools
- 40,400 non-fit-tested N95s for educators
- 35,630 rapid antigen tests for symptomatic students and staff
- This board attested they have sufficient supply on hand to provide 2 masks to each student



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