

2022 04 21 BCAC letter to local MPPs re Ontario School Travel Funding

Dear MPP **Last Name**,

In the riding of **Riding Name**, local schools have become safer, healthier, and more sustainable thanks to support from the Ontario Active School Travel (OAST) program.

The OAST program is led by Green Communities Canada, with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Education. The OAST Program includes a [Fund](#) that directly invests in local communities, offering grants that increase opportunities for students to travel by active modes, support safe accessible schools, improve student transportation services, and reduce traffic congestion in school zones.

Since 2017, OAST has invested \$2.8M into 61 communities. The City of Brampton has benefited directly by working with Green Communities Canada, who have tasked Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's educational team to work with BikeBrampton to deliver excellent active school travel programming to our local schools. **The Government of Ontario has been a champion of this important work, and our community has been the direct beneficiary.**

We have received an indication that funding for OAST has not been included in the 2022-2023 Ministry of Education Budget. **We implore the Government of Ontario to recommit funding for this program as a high-impact and high-visibility investment in children's health and safety.** City of Brampton has a diverse group of students, many of whom are recent immigrants. Active School Travel creates life-long positive behaviours that benefits the physical and mental health of our community.

We know COVID-19 has increased rates of driving for the trip to school, and decreased rates of active school travel and school bus ridership. As we work to reverse this trend and support schools to safely return to normal operations, your ongoing support for OAST is vital. This support is needed now to ensure that critical momentum and local capacity is not lost.

We are requesting that funding for the Ontario Active School Travel program be included in the Government of Ontario's 2022-2023 budget. Please do not hesitate to reach out to learn more about the positive impact this program has had in our community.

Your Sincerely,