

# How We Listened:

## Well-Being in Our Schools, Strength in Our Society



### Participant Voices

September 2017

Beginning in November 2016, the Ministry of Education reached out across the province to learn more about student well-being and how it is being supported in schools. We cast a wide net to collect feedback from educators, parents<sup>1</sup>, students, community partners, and interested stakeholders with a strong effort to hear voices that are sometimes not heard. We heard directly from more than 4,500 Ontarians through multiple entry points.



Provincial event  
(960 participants)



Regional engagement sessions  
(over 1,200 participants)



Online engagement portal  
with survey  
(~2,000 responses)



Engagement kit  
(55 submissions)



Targeted engagements sessions  
(278 participants)



Ongoing discussions

### 1. Provincial event

We launched the process of collecting feedback with a two-day provincial event, Partners in Dialogue, on November 9 and 10, 2016. The provincial event drew 960 participants over two days. Over the next several months, we listened to feedback from people from across Ontario.



### 2. Regional well-being engagement sessions

Nine regional sessions facilitated by staff from the Rotman School of Management's I-Think Initiative were held in locations across the province. Sessions were held in



1. The word *parents* is used in this document to refer to parent(s) and guardian(s). It may also be taken to include caregivers or close family members who are responsible for raising the child.

English and French and in satellite locations with online participation. Over 1,200 participants (students, parents, educators, staff and community members) from across Ontario participated in these sessions. School boards invited participation from community agencies and those who support student well-being both inside and outside the school. Students had a strong presence at every session and table groups were mixed so that student, community and educator voices contributed together to the conversation.

Design Thinking methodology was used to draw out creative and innovative approaches to supporting well-being, centred on the strengths and needs of the student.

**Design Thinking** is a methodology for problem-solving that is used world-wide by researchers, engineers and system-thinkers. It is used to generate ideas that are tested with prototypes in order to imagine innovative, creative and doable approaches to complex issues.

Design Thinking is:

- solution-focused and action-oriented
- focused on a “preferred future”
- centred on the people for whom we are designing solutions

### 3. Online engagement portal with survey

An online survey with questions from the engagement paper was customized to each respondent group: students, parents, educators, community partners and engaged stakeholders. Approximately 38% of the contributions were from students.



### 4. Engagement kit

Community organizations and partners were encouraged to use the engagement kit to facilitate their own sessions in their communities, and submit their input to the Ministry.



### 5. Targeted engagements

Ministry of Education staff met with a wide range of community organizations (e.g., social service and settlement agencies, Premier’s Council on Youth Opportunities, Kids Help Phone).



### 6. Ongoing discussions

We continue to have ongoing discussions with Indigenous partners and communities to co-develop work to support the well-being of Indigenous students. We are working with our education partners to learn how we can best support the well-being of staff in our schools. We understand that while staff and student well-being are related, staff well-being is important in its own right. We also continue to have ongoing conversations with Early Years partners on a range of initiatives that support the well-being of children and families. We have been moving forward with *Ontario’s Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework* (2017), which sets a vision for an Early Years system in which all children and families have access to a range of high-quality, inclusive and affordable supports that are child- and family-centred and contribute to children’s learning, development and well-being. And to support the unique needs of Indigenous children and families, the ministry is working to expand access to culturally relevant early years supports, on and off reserve.



### More information

If you would like more information on Ontario’s work to promote and support student well-being, visit [ontario.ca/studentwellbeing](https://ontario.ca/studentwellbeing).