



Student Well-Being Engagement Kit

Well-Being in Our Schools, Strength in Our Society

Facilitator's Guide and Script

What is the best format to promote discussion?

You know best. We encourage you to decide on a format that best reflects the needs of your community. In some cases, this might include a number of specific meetings across a region to examine the discussion questions that follow. In other cases, the engagement might be part of regularly scheduled community meetings. Whatever format you choose, it should facilitate an energetic, informed discussion that includes a wide range of voices from your community or organization.

What is the role of the facilitator?

Facilitators have an important role to play in encouraging participants to share their ideas.

Facilitator Tasks:

- Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to express their views.
- The facilitator must keep their own biases from shaping the conversation. The facilitator is there to encourage open discussion.
- Use the prompt questions in the script in case the conversation stalls. These prompts are only to clarify the main questions.
- If a facilitator feels that a participant feels very strongly about a particular initiative or has raised many concerns that detracts from the spirit of a group discussion, the facilitator can ask that person to offer their detailed thoughts through the online submission process.
- The facilitator should advise the note taker to ensure the notes are clear and easy to follow. While a verbatim transcript of the discussions is not required, the notes will need to be self-explanatory to the data analysts working at the ministry who will be receiving and reviewing the information. Note takers should be advised to avoid short-hand and acronyms, and as much as possible write in complete sentences.
- The facilitator should review the notes at the end of each session to make sure they are legible and understandable.

Welcome! Let's get started (Suggested time: 5 minutes)

Hello, everyone, and thank you for participating in this well-being engagement session. My name is [INSERT NAME] and it is my pleasure to serve as your facilitator for these table discussions. I [or NAME of supporting members] will also be taking notes of the discussion.

Before we begin, I would like to give you a little background. In the fall/winter of 2016-17, the Ministry of Education invited organizations and community groups across Ontario to participate in provincial well-being engagement sessions. These engagement sessions were intended to deepen our understanding of the links between student well-being and achievement, and focused on three key themes:

- 1. Understanding Well-Being:** What does well-being mean to you? What are some of the factors that contribute to positive well-being?
- 2. Promoting and Supporting Student Well-Being:** What are some of the conditions that promote well-being and that support the healthy development of all students in our schools?
- 3. Knowing Our Impact:** What we will look for to determine if we've been successful in promoting and supporting student well-being.

Introductions: Who's in the room? (Suggested time: 10-15 minutes)

Before we get into the discussions, let's take a moment to introduce ourselves. I'll go first: [INSERT BRIEF BACKGROUND – title and/or role, connection to education system, if any]. Let's go around the table, starting to my left.

[Go around table, asking for brief intro from each participant. Remind participant to provide their name and title on the Participant Sign-In Sheet if they have yet to do so]

Thank you.

Context: How are we doing? (Suggested time: 5 minutes)

[If audio/visual equipment is available, consider viewing the Student Well-Being video together]

Canadian students are recognized as achieving substantially above global averages in the critical areas of reading and creative problem solving¹, and Ontario's education system is considered one of the best in the world. We now have a high school graduate rate of 85.5% – a growth of 17 percentage points since 2004 – however there is some evidence of increasing concerns in the areas of emotional well-being and mental health.

[Hand out copies of the Well-Being Mind Map Graphic]

The Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC), is composed of over 60 high school students from Grades 7–12, from across the province. They developed this graphic that expresses their ideas about well-being. Consider these perspectives as we begin our

1 OECD, *How's Life in Canada?* OECD Better Life Initiative, May 2016.

discussion. If our goal in Ontario is for all of our students to become active members of their communities, able to bring about positive change and to flourish in society, we must also acknowledge that the well-being of our children and youth is our priority as a society.

Theme 1: Understanding Well-Being (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

Ontario's education system serves a diverse population, with diverse perspectives, needs, and approaches to well-being. In Ontario schools, diversity is valued and all members of the schools community – regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, sex, physical or intellectual ability, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other factors – are welcomed, included, treated fairly and respected.

[Record feedback on Theme 1 in the Note Taker's Template]

- What does student well-being mean to you/your organization: what does it look like, feel like, sound like?

[Go around the table/room, asking each participant to respond in turn, and note the responses on the Note Taker's Template]

Thank you for your thoughtful answers. Now let's open things up a bit. Any further comments you would like to add in response to this question?

[Facilitate discussion, ensuring that all voices are heard and that no participants dominate the discussion. If required, prompt participants to elaborate, clarify, or extend their response by asking prompting questions that elicit related and more detailed information]

For example,

- "Can you tell me more about that?"
- "Can you give me an example of that?"
- "Can you clarify what you mean by...?"

[With 2 minutes left in the session]

We are just about out of time for this portion of the discussion. I want to thank you for your thoughts, ideas and input. Let's move now from understanding what well-being means to discuss ways in which it can be promoted and supported.

Theme 2: Promoting and Supporting Student Well-being

(Suggested time: 30 minutes)

Investing in the well-being of our students continues to be a priority for the Ontario government. We need to know what has been working and what was tried but failed to deliver expected results. Are schools and school boards able to support student well-being effectively with the resources they have? Is staffing adequate to meet the needs of students? Do schools and boards have the flexibility to make effective use of the resources available to them?

[Record feedback on Theme 2 in the Note Taker's Template]

- In your current role, how do you promote and support student well-being?
- Where might resources be better directed to more effectively promote and support student well-being in our education system?

Let's go around the table/room, and start with your initial thoughts:

[Continue your facilitation, acknowledging each participant's response, and note the responses on the Note Taker's Template]

Thank you for your thoughtful answers. Now let's open things up a bit. Are there any further comments you would like to add in response to this question?

[Ensure that all voices are heard and that no participants dominate the discussion. If required, continue to use the prompts from the previous section to guide participants to clarify their responses]

[Wrap up with 2 minutes left in the session]

We are just about out of time for this portion of the discussion. We've heard of how well-being is currently promoted and supported, and areas in which it can improve. Let's move to the final portion of the discussion that will focus on knowing our impact.

Theme 3: Knowing Our Impact (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

The ministry has invested in building a foundation of supports in four key areas: equity and inclusion; healthy schools; mental health; and safe and accepting schools, all for the purpose of enhancing student well-being. We now have an opportunity to reflect on the work that has been done to date, to determine which strategies have been most effective, and talk about the outcomes that we want for all of our students.

Well-being cannot be assessed according to a single indicator. Some indicators will tell us about students' well-being in general, and others will speak specifically to the impact of the learning environment. By collecting quality information on our efforts, we have a better chance of identifying what is working well and what obstacles stand in the way of providing true equity of opportunity for our students. Let's go around the table, and start with your initial thoughts.

[Record feedback on Theme 3 in the Note Taker's Template]

- What would tell you that progress is being made in promoting and supporting student well-being?
- How can information that is currently collected by schools be used to promote and support well-being?
- What other information could be collected that could contribute to promoting and supporting student well-being?

Let's go around the table/room, and start with your initial thoughts:

[Continue your facilitation, acknowledging each participant's response, and note the responses on the Note Taker's Template]

Thank you again for your thoughtful answers. Any further comments you would like to add in response to this question?

[Continue to facilitate ensuring that all voices are heard]

[With 2 minutes left in the session] We are just about out of time for this discussion.

Wrap Up

Thank you so much for your ideas and for taking the time to attend this engagement session. With the help of your feedback, we hope to build a collective vision for student well-being in our community.