



Student Well-Being Engagement Kit

Well-Being in Our Schools, Strength in Our Society

Background

What is well-being?

- Well-being is complex. Developing the definition will take a comprehensive approach by considering well-being across four developmental domains: **cognitive**, **social**, **emotional** and **physical** with self and spirit at the center of these interconnected domains.
- Well-being is a positive sense of self, spirit and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs are being met.

Why is it important?

- Well-being is important because it helps children and students thrive, so that they can make positive and healthy choices to support learning and achievement both now and in the future.
- Every student in Ontario should feel a strong sense of well-being and belonging. The teaching and learning environment must be safe and inclusive to support their ability to be successful in learning and life.
- Well-being, or the lack of it, can affect a student's engagement and success in learning and life.

What does well-being mean in terms of students' growth and development?

- Well-being is comprised of four distinct domains of development: *Cognitive*, *Emotional*, *Social*, and *Physical*.
 - ❖ **Cognitive** relates to the development of abilities and skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and the ability to be flexible and innovative.
 - ❖ **Emotional** involves learning about experiencing emotions, and understanding how to recognize, manage, and cope with them. It can include emotional self-regulation, empathy, motivation, managing emotions, and risk-taking

- ❖ **Social** involves developing self-awareness, including the sense of belonging, collaboration, relationships with others, and communication skills. This can include identity, relationships, self-concepts, self-efficacy, self-esteem, spiritual identity, religious identity, and social group identity
- ❖ **Physical** relates to the development of the body, and is impacted by physical activity, sleep patterns, healthy eating, and healthy life choices

What conditions are needed to promote well-being?

- Well-being, in all its forms and domains, is supported through equity and respect for our diverse identities and strengths.
- An environment where all voices in the school community are valued and heard and where there are opportunities to work together leads to improved achievement and well-being of all students.

How does well-being fit within our current work?

- The education system provides an excellent window through which to address student well-being.
- Ontario's renewed vision for education, *Achieving Excellence* (2014) included the new goal of promoting well-being, highlighting the need for a broader definition of "student success".
- Over the past decade, there has been growing evidence of the importance of student well-being on overall student success.
- Student well-being is developed, promoted, and supported in schools through teaching, curriculum, and by working with parents and families.
- Schools are in a position to affect a range of outcomes for students beyond academic achievement. They are also in a position to partner with community organizations, who can have a positive impact on well-being.
- There are four key components at the foundation of Ontario's student well-being strategy:
 - ❖ Equity and Inclusive Education
 - ❖ Healthy Schools
 - ❖ Mental Health
 - ❖ Safe and Accepting Schools
- Each component has policies, programs, funding and resources in place to support it.

What next?

- We want to hear about how Ontario schools have been implementing the policies/ programs in well-being, what additional implementation supports are needed, and how boards can better align the work across these key areas in a manner that keeps the student's needs in the center.
- We want to hear about approaches and activities currently being used to promote and support student well-being.
- We are also interested in learning about how work is being aligned and how resources are being allocated to address the needs of all students.
- We want to hear from all Ontarians.