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.