

Measuring What Matters

Competencies and
conditions for success





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Measuring What Matters (MWM) is a 5-year initiative working towards re-defining what 'counts' for students to be successful in school and in life. The goal is to create a fundamental shift in the way we define success in education.

People for Education has worked with educators, policy makers, the public and scholars to build a set of school conditions and student competencies across the five domains of **creativity, citizenship, health, social-emotional learning, and quality learning environments**. These domains represent the broad, foundational skills and practices that are critical for students to be successful in society today.

Instead of expecting students to develop these skills as a by-product of a school system focused on literacy and numeracy, we propose to broaden the goals for education by explicitly naming and evaluating the system's success in building these core competencies.

People for Education is an independent organization working to support public education in Ontario's English, Catholic, and French schools.

Schools are central to the cultivation of future generations, and must meet the emerging needs of a changing world if public education is to reach its potential as an essential national value.

Canada needs:

- new generations with the skills to innovate, adapt, imagine, and continue to learn
- new thinking about how to address the growing gaps between rich and poor, and between indigenous and non-indigenous populations
- young people with the capacity and desire to be civically engaged
- a population that is healthier, both physically and mentally
- a society committed to sustainable development

All young people need:

- strong foundational skills that support perseverance, adaptability and self-awareness
- the capacity to communicate, collaborate, and imagine solutions to complex problems
- knowledge and habits that will allow them to take care of their physical and mental health
- a deep understanding of the roles and responsibilities of citizenship, and the capacity to engage as citizens
- curriculum and school-based programs that will prepare them for a range of possible futures

For more information about Measuring What Matters, go to www.peopleforeducation.ca



Measuring What Matters

Citizenship

The domain

Citizenship education includes the acquisition of knowledge of historical and political concepts and processes. It supports the development of students' understanding of social issues and of the impact of their behaviour and decisions on others. It develops their capacity to recognize and value different perspectives and their sense of agency to influence change in society.

Why it matters

A democratic and cohesive society relies on people understanding the impact of their behaviour and decisions on others, and having the capacity to play an informed role in the affairs of their society. Citizenship education supports students' capacity to be responsible, active citizens in their schools and communities. It allows them to become contributing members of a democratic society.

Citizenship competencies

Appreciation of diversity

- Students can articulate elements of their own cultural identity and worldview.
- Students understand the complex and fluid nature of their own and others' identities.
- Students understand how cultures and cultural values can be represented in traditions, institutions, and symbols.
- Students recognize diversity within particular cultural communities or groups.
- Students understand the role religion plays in shaping the worldviews and actions.

Awareness of power

- Students understand power relationships in everyday life, including within families, at school, and with friends.
- Students understand power relationships in society between and among individuals, groups, and institutions.
- Students understand how power is exercised through both formal and informal means.
- Students evaluate the use of power from multiple perspectives—the degrees to which it is fair, justified, and/or arbitrary.
- Students understand how to work with both formal and informal systems of power to make change.

Development of voice

- Students understand key concepts and ideas underlying important civic, social, environmental, and/or economic issues.
- Students understand the range of positions people hold on important civic, social, environmental and/or economic issues.
- Students understand how perspectives on civic, social, environmental and/or economic issues can change over time and contexts.
- Students can articulate a personal position with respect to important civic, social, environmental and/or economic issues.
- Students identify a range of techniques used in public discussion to make points or manipulate opinion.
- Students are able to use appropriate institutions, structures, and mechanisms to effect change on important civic, social, economic, and/or environmental issues.



Measuring What Matters

Creativity

The domain

Creativity is a process that involves generating novel ideas and products, using one's imagination, being inquisitive, and persisting when difficulties arise. The process includes collaborating with others and being able to evaluate creative products, ideas, and processes dispassionately. Creative competencies and skills are vital for problem solving and for developing ways of adapting knowledge to new contexts.

Why it matters

In a knowledge economy, and times of rapid change, we need people with the creative capacity to adapt knowledge to new contexts, generate new ideas, and use innovative approaches to problem-solving. Fostering creativity helps students develop resilience, resourcefulness, and confidence, and is positively linked to engagement, achievement, and innovation.

Creativity competencies

Imagination

- Students make connections across disciplines and between objects and ideas.
- Students use intuition.
- Students work with objects and ideas without an end goal in mind.
- Students generate a range of novel ideas in relation to personal knowledge and learning context.
- Students apply metaphorical thinking.

Inquisitiveness

- Students articulate potential problems to solve in relation to ambiguous or complex phenomena.
- Students seek new resources to answer emerging questions.
- Students explore initial ideas more deeply.
- Students challenge assumptions.
- Students integrate different sets of discipline knowledge or skills to solve problems.

Collaboration

- Students empathize with others through careful observation and open-ended questioning.
- Students share information and ideas.
- Students integrate ideas and feedback offered by others.
- Students ask for evaluative input from teachers and peers.
- Students seek assistance.

Discipline

- Students objectively assess the strengths and weaknesses of creative ideas, work or products.
- Students critically reflect on the outcomes of the work.
- Students refine and improve work.

Persistence

- Students explore ambiguous and complex phenomena.
- Students take paths or approaches different from their peers or teachers.
- Students defend solutions and break conventions.



Measuring What Matters

Health

The domain

Health education supports students in adopting healthy lifestyles from an early age, and provides them with the self-regulatory skills and competencies they need to make healthy decisions and engage in health promoting behaviours.

Why it matters

Teaching students the habits and skills that provide a foundation for health improves their chances for academic success. It leads to increased productivity, improved life expectancy, greater capacity to cope with life's challenges, and can reduce the risk of both chronic disease and mental illness.

Health competencies

Capacity for making healthy choices

General

- Students develop a sense of personal responsibility for their own health and the choices they make.
- Students develop strong relationships with caring others (peers, teachers, parents, and community members)

Eating and sleeping

- Students understand the importance of making healthy eating choices.
- Students understand the importance of impulse control and strategies that lead to them make healthy eating choices.
- Students learn to identify obstacles to making healthy eating choices and have problem-solving strategies to assist them in overcoming these obstacles.
- Students understand the importance of sleep, the factors that put their sleep at risk, and how to overcome these factors.
- Students develop an awareness of their sleep needs and how their bodies are influenced by their sleeping patterns.

Personal safety and appropriate risk-taking

- Students can assess the risks associated with the health choices they make.
- Students are able to identify social risks and develop strategies to resist peer-pressure and respond effectively to risky situations.
- Students have a strong sense of self-esteem and confidence to resist outside pressures to engage in risky behaviour.
- Students mitigate potential risks and reduce unnecessary risky behaviour through the help of strong relationships with caring others (peers, teachers, parents, and community members).

Physical activity

- Students have the movement and physical literacy skills needed to participate in and enjoy a range of activities.
- Students understand concepts such as body and spatial awareness, center of gravity, laws of motion and force.

- Students learn to self-reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement, set attainable and realistic goals, monitor and evaluate performance, and develop strategies to obtain goals and overcome obstacles.
- Students develop focus, concentration and perseverance skills and strategies.
- Students develop an appreciation for physical activities and personal fitness and understand the value of being physically active.
- Students learn to cooperate with others, include others in activities, and develop helping skills, responsibility and respect for others.

Healthy sexuality

- Students have a secure sexual identity and develop a healthy sense of self-esteem and self-worth in relation to their sexual identity.
- Students respect the sexual identities of others.
- Students understand the importance of intimate relationships that are caring, respectful and non-violent.
- Students understand the role of social media in sexual health and how to be respectful and responsible in that context.
- Students have the capacity to manage risks and make healthy decisions regarding their sexuality.

Understanding and management of mental illness

- Students understand mental health issues and the impact that stigmatization can have.
- Students can recognize emerging mental health issues in themselves and others.
- Students can identify their emotions and manage their emotions.
- Students are able and willing to seek help for mental health issues for themselves and others.
- Students are able to develop caring and supportive relationships with their peers, teachers, and family and community members.
- Students have productive coping, problem-solving and resilience skills to overcome stressful and challenging situations.

Mental health

- For a detailed set of competencies that support mental health, please see the Social-Emotional Learning competencies.



Measuring What Matters

Social-emotional learning

The domain

Social-emotional learning supports students in understanding and managing their emotions, developing positive relationships with others, and engaging with their community. Students can learn social-emotional competencies just as they learn formal academic skills—through regular interactions with peers, teachers, and school staff inside and outside of the classroom.

Why it matters

Strong social-emotional skills are critical for students' educational attainment, long-term well-being and prosperity, and their ability to contribute to society.

Social-emotional learning competencies

Self-awareness

- Students identify and describe their own emotions.
- Students understand why they feel the way they do.
- Students are honest with themselves and others.
- Students recognize what others are feeling and why.
- Students develop an accurate sense of their capacity to succeed in a variety of situations (i.e. persistence, motivation, confidence, resilience, limitations).
- Students understand their own needs and values.
- Students develop an accurate understanding of themselves, such as their learning styles, strengths, and areas that need improvement.

Self-management

- Students develop personalized learning strategies to master academic material.
- Students monitor and manage academic goals.
- Students develop strategies for setting short and long-term goals.
- Students develop adaptability and flexibility.
- Students develop persistence—they respond and adjust to perceived failure.
- Students respond constructively to internal and external factors that have an impact on their learning and emotion.
- Students develop self-regulation skills and strategies for their feelings, e.g. agitation, anger, elation or listlessness.
- Students manage interpersonal stress and emotions (how to verbalize and develop strategies to manage anxiety, anger, and depression).
- Students develop positive motivation, a sense of hope, optimism, and satisfaction.

Social awareness

- Students understand others' perspectives.
- Students recognize verbal and non-verbal emotional cues in themselves and in others.
- Students adapt to the mood of a group and respond constructively.

- Students empathize with others.
- Students assess risk of social danger and respond appropriately.
- Students understand diverse cultural contexts.
- Students appreciate diversity.
- Students demonstrate social responsibility.

Interpersonal relationships

- Students build and maintain trust in themselves and others.
- Students demonstrate empathy.
- Students demonstrate respect and recognize its importance.
- Students develop skills to recognize, understand, and address/resolve interpersonal conflict.
- Students develop collaborative skills.
- Students engage in cooperative learning, and work toward group goals.
- Students develop leadership skills.
- Students resist inappropriate/negative social pressures.
- Students develop constructive relationships with students and adults.
- Students engage in the school and community and at home.

Decision-making

- Students identify problems when making decisions and generate alternatives.
- Students develop and refine self-reflective and self-evaluative skills.
- Students make decisions based on moral, personal, and ethical standards.
- Students understand how responsible decisions can affect themselves and others, the school, and the community.
- Students understand the importance of equity and social justice.
- Students develop skills to negotiate fairly.



Measuring What Matters

Quality learning environments

Conditions within schools that support broad areas of student learning

The student competencies in each domain of Measuring What Matters (Creativity, Citizenship, Social-Emotional Learning, and Health) can be taught, supported and enhanced in a variety of ways. They can be addressed across a variety of subject areas, and through a range of school/community practices.

The physical and social environment of the school, its connections to the community, and the range of opportunities provided, are key to the development of the skills and competencies students need for long-term success. There are many potential interrelationships both between the settings identified below and the individual conditions listed within each. Work in one area or on one condition can have wide implications on many other areas.

Quality learning environments

Conditions in Classrooms

The student learning experience in classrooms involves a dynamic interrelationship between students, teacher and content. The following points articulate different parts of this interrelationship and emphasize conditions that elicit and support the four larger domain competency areas within MWM.

Classroom environment

- The classroom is welcoming, inclusive, psychologically safe and energetic: students want to be there.
- Student voice and experiences are integrated within learning and curriculum in classrooms.
- There is a natural oscillation between a buzz of activity and a working silence.
- Students characterize their work in class as both interesting and engaging.
- Students are primarily driven by intrinsic motivation.
- Failures are embraced as learning opportunities by both teachers and students.
- Expectations of students are high, but not unrealistic.
- Expectations of students are open, dynamic, and collaboratively shared.
- The teacher takes risks—mistakes are made visible to the students.
- Risk-taking is rewarded.

Learning and assessment

Learning experiences:

- are integrated with wider school and community experiences for students and adults.
- promote the development of empathy, peaceful conflict resolution, and responsible decision-making.
- are balanced and diverse—they include collaborative discussion, direct instruction, and individual and small group work.
- are balanced between pre-planned structure and improvisation in response to serendipitous moments.
- are designed to enhance social, emotional, ethical, and intellectual development through open classroom discussions.
- are balanced between direct instruction and student-initiated direction—students are encouraged to follow their personal interests within the broad framework of any given curriculum area.
- support peer relationships as a central part of ongoing work.
- provide opportunities for a variety of forms of expression such as oral, written, visual, musical, theatrical, and through demonstration, debate, and multimedia.

Activities:

- are culturally relevant and responsive.
- are problem-oriented.
- require exploration or imaginative ideas.
- allow time for students to be inquisitive.
- require persistence.
- are balanced between open problems - where there are many potential 'right' answers and closed problems in which specific information is required.
- support student meta-cognitive development.
- are balanced between direct instruction and student-initiated direction—students are encouraged to follow their personal interests within the broad framework of any given curriculum area.

Assessment:

- explicitly includes diverse forms of expression.
- is judicious, not everything is evaluated.
- targets specific relevant competencies within Citizenship, Creativity, Social-Emotional Learning and Health
- is continuous
- consists of both formal planned assessment and informal, spontaneous feedback, and adaptation in response to student expression or actions
- is drawn from a wide array of diverse student data e.g. work products, observations, and conversations documented in various ways
- consists of three types of assessment (of, as and for learning),
- is mostly conducted to support learning (i.e. formative assessment, or assessment for and as learning)
- provides ongoing opportunities for students to assess their strengths and limitations, and to discern which approach to learning is best in any given situation.

Conditions within the School

The operation of the school mirrors ideals of citizenship in democratic societies. Social relationships, characterized by trust, interdependence and empathy amongst all members, are centrally important to the school's overall focus. Imagination, experimentation and risk-taking are all part of a creative pedagogic approach for teachers and students. These ideas are exhibited in the following ways:

School Environment

- The school ethos promotes mutual respect and equality of opportunity.
- Active participation of students in all aspects of school life is integral to the operating social environment of the school.

- Student success in school includes capacity and development of citizenship, creativity, social emotional learning and health.
- Respect, responsibility, fairness, and empathy are integral to the social interaction occurring across the school.
- School hallways, libraries, cafeterias and school-yards are all recognized as learning environments.
- Staff-student and peer relations across the school are treated as learning opportunities
- Social relations out of classrooms are connected to learning within the classrooms.
- Teacher collaborative work relates to and corresponds with the daily workflow of teachers e.g. planning time, grading periods and parent meetings.
- Student input on school and classroom decisions and strategy is elicited and used.
- The school is an open learning space in which community members outside of the school with diverse interests and resources/expertise work with students and staff.
- School-based structures are in place to identify and provide support for students dealing with social, emotional, learning, or mental health problems/disorders.

School leadership

- prioritizes staff motivation and commitment, the school's instructional program, and developing teachers' capacities for leadership.
- is characterized by shared authority through team-based collaborative work with high levels of trust and interdependence.
- uses staff and student voice as an integral part of school-based decision-making.
- uses student governance and committee processes for school decision making, change, and policy design.

Professional learning for educators

- is embedded in ongoing professional work.
- informs school direction, vision and strategy.
- is integrated within educator teams' ongoing meetings.
- is self-directed, intrinsically motivated, and collaborative.
- is connected to student learning experiences through a variety of student data and information.
- addresses specific student learning needs in areas of citizenship, social-emotional learning, health and creativity.
- uses available expertise within the wider community.
- involves experimentation and risk taking.

Conditions beyond the School

The school and community build partnerships to enhance learning opportunities and wellbeing for students. Promoting a cross-cultural perspective contributes to the development of social awareness and informs decision-making and the development of meaningful school and community relationships. There are two overarching concepts articulated within this area of learning and school operation.

- The relationships that exist between a school and the community beyond the school
- The learning opportunities for students that are provided by community organizations or people who are not part of the immediate school membership.

Partnerships between school and community

- Clear and mutually beneficial agreements exist between schools and their community partners.
- Designated member(s) of staff have responsibility for coordinating, monitoring and reviewing learning through community involvement in and beyond the school.
- Educators and community members (including parents) are actively involved in partnerships.
- Schools work with external health services, community agencies, and/or community members to develop healthy, respectful relationships throughout the school and surrounding community.
- Students are aware of and can access school/community partnership programs and services that:
 - o provide treatment for mental health disorders.
 - o support their social and emotional development.
 - o de-stigmatize mental illness, prevent bullying/aggression, build resilience, and prevent substance use.

Learning experiences through school/community partnerships:

- are co-created with community members.
- foster student competence in creativity, citizenship, health and/or social-emotional learning.
- provide opportunities for students to participate in a variety of community organizations, political advocacy and formal politics.
- allow students to contribute to communities
- support the appreciation of diversity and respect for people from different cultures and contexts.
- are linked to curricula being taught in classrooms.
- involve mentorship of students during and beyond the scope of any given project.
- involve joint assessment of relevant domain competencies between educators and community members e.g., artists, health practitioners, grassroots community organizations, and parents.

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