# DRAFT COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS
## LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

For the past two years, People for Education has worked with educators, policy makers, the public and scholars to build a set of school conditions and student competencies which represent the broad, foundational skills and practices that are critical for students to be successful in society today.

We have conducted a wide consultation, elicited ideas at major education conferences and partnered with leading scholars. We are pleased to share the result of this work as a current working draft of the foundational skills/competencies and learning conditions in domains of **creativity**, **citizenship**, **social- emotional learning**, and **health**. It is important to note that while each domain has a level of discrete meaning, the individual competencies are interrelated.

This draft is being made available as a framework to stimulate discussion and reflection. Future versions of the competencies will be refined and adapted as additional research and field-testing informs our work.

In offering this current working draft, we are inviting educators and policy makers to apply this framework to their work. For educators, the competencies and the conditions that support them could serve to anchor the planning, teaching and assessment of units that they teach. For policy makers they could serve as guiding language through which an array of programming and policy could be anchored and understood.

We are also inviting feedback from the public.

The competencies and skills need to be tested and analyzed – some will be rejected, some will be refined, and users will discover where there are gaps. Upcoming field trials, consultations and workshops will inform the subsequent adaptations and revisions that we undertake.

Put succinctly, **we want to hear from you**.

# CREATIVITY

Fostering creativity helps students develop resilience, resourcefulness, and confidence, and is positively linked to engagement, achievement, and innovation.

Creative competencies and skills are vital for problem solving and for developing ways of adapting knowledge to new contexts.  These competencies and skills apply across the curriculum—from arts to science to math. They help to foster self-understanding and an appreciation of culture, and to build students' capacities to imagine, persist and synthesize.

Creativity involves generating novel ideas or objects, and evaluating their worth by allowing one's imagination to wander, by being inquisitive, persisting when difficulties arise, and by collaborating with others. Students need regular practice in classrooms and schools in order to build creative competencies and skills.

The competencies and skills that support creativity are interrelated and influence one another, for example, playfully exploring ideas, accepting uncertainty, engaging in metaphorical thinking, making novel connections, critically assessing outcomes, and defending solutions that break conventions.

## GENERATION OF IDEAS AND POSSIBILITIES

- Students gather information through all senses
- Students think flexibly
- Students make connections across disciplines and between objects and ideas
- Students rely on intuitive leaps
- Students take risks and work well in uncertain, ambiguous contexts
- Students think about and 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 articulate potential problems to solve within ambiguous or complex phenomena
- Students empathize with others through careful observation and open-ended questioning
- Students reflect on their own thinking process and on the origins of their ideas

## EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

- Students objectively assesses the strengths and weaknesses of creative ideas, work or products
- Students critically reflect on the outcomes of the work
- Students ask for evaluative input from teachers and peers
- Students ask for assistance in a thoughtful and respectful manner
- Students refine and improve work
- Students explore, observe, visualize and detect patterns in all subject discipline contexts

## GENERATION PLUS EVALUATION

- Students explore ambiguous and complex phenomena
- Students apply metaphorical thinking
- Students take different paths or approaches from their peers or teachers
- Students challenge assumptions and break conventions
- Students explore initial ideas more deeply, they practice and improve
- Students respond with curiosity
- Students seek new resources to answer emerging questions
- Students integrate ideas offered by someone giving feedback into new solutions
- Students integrate different sets of discipline knowledge or skills to solve problems
- Students share information and ideas, communicate with precision

# CITIZENSHIP

Citizens should play an active role in civic affairs. To do so, they must develop a core set of civic knowledge, skills, and values. Through citizenship education, students acquire knowledge of historical and political concepts and processes, and a nuanced understanding of social issues; develop skills to engage with the formal political system and civil society organizations; and establish the values and attitudes of democratic citizenship.

Citizenship education supports students' abilities to become contributing members of a democratic society—members who know how to affect change and why the process of affecting change is continually necessary within democracies.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic Engagement is concerned with student agency (the idea that citizens working individually and in groups can make a difference) and responsibility (citizens have an obligation to engage to make society better).

- Students address societal issues of importance through opportunities to participate in their formal political system, civil society organizations and grassroots/community organizations.
- Students understand how they can influence change(s) in society through participation.
- Students address issues of importance in their school through a formal student governance process that contributes to school policy and decision making.
- Students express beliefs about themselves as citizens within a State.
- Students iteratively and progressively develop opinions about key concepts of citizenship and each concept's fluidity in the following ways within *Civic Knowledge* below.

## CIVIC KNOWLEDGE

There are six key concepts in citizenship: *government by the consent of the governed, fundamental freedoms, diversity, rule of law, loyalty, and responsibility*.

Students need to learn, use and express these concepts as follows:

- Students understand what each concept means and how each is operationalized.
- Students understand the implications of each concept in current affairs in society.
- Students understand how each concept changes and is operationalized over time and across contexts.
- Students understand points of tension and disputes around each concept.
- Students can articulate a position on how each concept should or could be operationalized.

## CIVIC DISPOSITIONS/ATTITUDES

Civic dispositions are a set of personal attitudes, which enable individuals to be effective citizens. They cluster around areas of identity, responsibility, respect for diversity, and trust. Civic dispositions are well substantiated across the social emotional learning competencies (see Social-Emotional Learning Competencies)

## CIVIC SKILLS

Along with skills common in many areas of schooling—reading, writing, listening, speaking—civic skills are closely associated with creative competencies that support student capacity to imagine, persist, and critically reflect (see Creativity Competencies). While related to other domains, there are two skills specific to citizenship:

- Students synthesize; offer compromises; and create commonalities amongst and between diverse and/or conflicting ideas and points of view.
- Students distinguish between, assess, and effectively employ empirical and normative arguments distinguishing the distinct elements and claims of each.

# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social-emotional learning is critical to students' academic performance and lifelong learning. Over the past twenty years, evidence has made it clear that the classical view of the mind, in which reason and emotion are separate and independent, must be replaced by a holistic view in which social, emotional and cognitive processes are all bound together in a seamless web. Two fundamental principles have emerged:

- Social and emotional competencies are as important as more formal academic skills.
- 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.

Five core aspects of social-emotional functioning are thought to be critical for children's well-being and educational attainment: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, interpersonal relationships, and decision making.

## COMPETENCIES THAT SUPPORT SELF-AWARENESS

Students develop an accurate understanding of themselves.

- 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.

## COMPETENCIES THAT SUPPORT SELF-MANAGEMENT

Students develop meta-cognitive skills—skills for managing one's own learning and emotions.

- 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.

## COMPETENCIES THAT SUPPORT 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.

# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

**COMPETENCIES THAT SUPPORT INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Competence in interpersonal relationships involves students' ability to develop and maintain healthy relationships. These attributes are vital for students' long-term success.

- Students build and maintain trust in themselves and others.
- Students demonstrate empathy.
- Students recognize the importance of and demonstrate respect.
- 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.

**COMPETENCIES THAT SUPPORT DECISION MAKING**

Decision making refers to the ability to develop appropriate strategies to solve problems, whether academic, personal, or social.

- 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.

# HEALTH

Teaching children to adopt healthy lifestyles from an early age, and teaching them the habits and skills that provide a foundation for mental health improves their chances for academic success, and can reduce the risk of both chronic disease and mental illness.

Health Promoting Schools and Comprehensive School Health are currently the most widely used school health promotion frameworks. A Health Promoting School is defined (by the WHO) as "one that constantly strengthens its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning, and working." The whole school environment —including its individuals and their relationships, the physical and social environment and ethos, community connections and partnerships, and policies—are seen as important areas for action in Health Promoting Schools.

## COMPETENCIES THAT SUPPORT STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR FITNESS AND PLEASURE

- Students develop physical fitness, including:
  - Cardio-respiratory endurance.
  - Muscular strength.
  - Muscular endurance.
  - Flexibility.
- Students develop the movement skills needed to participate in a range of activities.
  - Students learn concepts such as body and spatial awareness, center of gravity, laws of motion and force.
  - Students practice movement strategies such as activity appreciation, tactical awareness and decision making in their performance to develop movement principles and concepts.

## COMPETENCIES THAT SUPPORT CAPACITY FOR STUDENTS FOR MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES

- Physical activity: students learn how to develop physical fitness and gain an understanding of the importance of regular physical activity and its relationship to developing and maintaining health-related fitness.
- Eating: students acquire knowledge and a sense of responsibility for healthy eating choices.
- Sleeping: students learn about the importance of sleep for health and learning, about factors that put their sleep at risk and about good sleep hygiene.
- Risks: students learn to assess the risks associated with the health choices they make.
- Students have a sense of personal responsibility for their own health.

## COMPETENCIES THAT SUPPORT STUDENT WELL-BEING IN RELATION TO SEXUALITY

- Students develop a secure 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 make good decisions regarding their sexuality.

## COMPETENCIES THAT SUPPORT STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGEMENT OF MENTAL ILLNESS

- Students are informed about mental health issues.
- Students recognize emerging mental health issues in themselves and others.
- Students are able and willing to seek help for mental health issues for themselves and others.
- Students feel safe and included at school.

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (*SEE PREVIOUS DOMAIN: SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING*)

# QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

**CONDITIONS WITHIN SCHOOLS THAT SUPPORT BROADER AREAS OF STUDENT LEARNING**

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

The learning conditions are presented in lists and broken into nested contexts or settings within the classroom, within the school, and beyond the school, but they are not meant to be treated sequentially or discretely. Rather, there is an interrelationship between the context or settings, and the individual descriptors within each context. MWM recognizes the social complexity in mapping out school practices. Work in one area or on one condition can and will have wide implications on many other areas.

## Conditions in Classrooms

The student learning experience in classrooms involves a dynamic interrelationship between students, teachers 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 recognized as knowledge and integrated within working operations of the classroom and the classroom curriculum.
- 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.
- Risk-taking is rewarded.
- Students are primarily driven by intrinsic motivation.
- Failures are embraced as opportunities for new learning by both teachers and students.
- Expectations for students are high, but not unrealistic.
- The teacher takes risks—mistakes are made visible to the students.

### LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Classroom activities:
  - are culturally relevant and responsive, and 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.
- Learning experiences in classrooms are integrated with wider school and community experiences for students and adults.

- Learning experiences promote the development of empathy, peaceful conflict resolution, and responsible decision making.
- Learning experiences are balanced and diverse—they include collaborative discussion, direct instruction, and individual and small group work.
- Learning experiences are balanced between pre-planned structure and improvisation in response to serendipitous moments.
- Open-ended discussions are designed to enhance social, emotional, ethical, and intellectual development.
- Classroom activities 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.
- Peer relationships are a central part of ongoing work in classrooms.
- Student learning is expressed through a variety of forms such as oral, written, visual, musical, theatrical, and through demonstration, debate, and multimedia works.
- Formal assessment explicitly includes diverse forms of expression.
- Student competencies in Citizenship, Creativity, SEL and Health are assessed within relevant subject areas and tasks. However, evaluation is judicious, not everything is evaluated.
- Students have opportunities to assess their strengths and limitations, and to discern which approach to learning is best in any given situation.

# QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

## 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 schools overall focus. Imagination, experimentation and risk-taking are all part of a creative pedagogic for teachers and students. These ideas are exhibited in the following ways:

- School leadership prioritizes staff motivation and commitment, the school's instructional program, and developing teachers' capacities for leadership.
- School leadership is characterized by shared authority through team-based collaborative work with high levels of trust and interdependence. Staff and student voice are part of school-based decision making.
- Professional learning for educators is embedded in ongoing professional work and:
  - informs school direction, vision and strategy.
  - is integrated within educator teams' ongoing meetings.
  - is self-directed and collaborative.
  - is connected to student learning experiences through a variety of student data and information.
  - addresses specific needs of Citizenship, SEL, Health, and Creativity.
  - uses available expertise within the wider community.
- Teachers' out of classroom collaborative work relates to and corresponds with the daily work flow of teachers, such as planning time, assessment periods and parent meetings.
- Student input on school and classroom decisions and strategy is elicited and used.

- The school builds student civic agency through active student governance and committee processes that influences decision-making, informs change, and creates school policy.
- 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.
- The school ethos promotes mutual respect and equality of opportunity and encourages the active participation of pupils in all aspects of school life.
- Social interaction in the school models effective social relationships, where students learn about and put into practice attributes such as respect, responsibility, fairness, and empathy.
- School hallways, libraries, cafeterias and schoolyards are all recognized as learning environments.
- Adult-student and peer relationships across the school are recognized as important informal learning moments that can be connected to relevant formal learning within the classrooms.
- School-based structures are in place to identify and provide support for students dealing with social, emotional, learning or mental health problems/disorders.

# QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

## Conditions beyond the School

The school and community build partnerships to enhance learning opportunities and well-being 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.

### RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

- Clear and mutually beneficial agreements exist between schools and their community partners.
- The school has designated member(s) of staff with responsibility for coordinating, monitoring and reviewing learning through community involvement in and beyond the school.
- Meaningful school–community partnerships have active involvement of both educators and community members (including parents).
- Schools work with external health services or community agencies to access treatment for students with mental health disorders.
- Curricula being taught in classrooms are linked to school–community joint learning projects.

### LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS PROVIDED BY THE WIDER COMMUNITY

- Meaningful, enriched learning relationships are cultivated with community members and organizations that co-create conditions that foster creativity, citizenship, health and social-emotional learning
- Student civic engagement is supported through student participation in a variety of community organizations, political advocacy and formal politics.
- Students are actively involved in contributing to communities and applying an understanding of diversity while respecting others across different contexts.
- Community members (including parents) mentor students during and beyond the scope of any given project.
- Monitoring and reviewing of domain competencies in relation to student learning and school practices takes place and involves relevant wider community membership, e.g., artists, health practitioners, grassroots community organizations, and parents.
- Students are aware of, and can access, programs and services available to them in their school and community to support their social and emotional development.
- There is a focused effort on developing strategies for healthy and respectful relationships throughout the school and surrounding community.
- Programs that de-stigmatize mental illness, prevent bullying/aggression, build resilience, and prevent substance use are implemented.
  - Programs are evidence-based and evaluated after implementation.
  - Programs involve the whole school community.