

Draft Framework for the Right to Quality Education

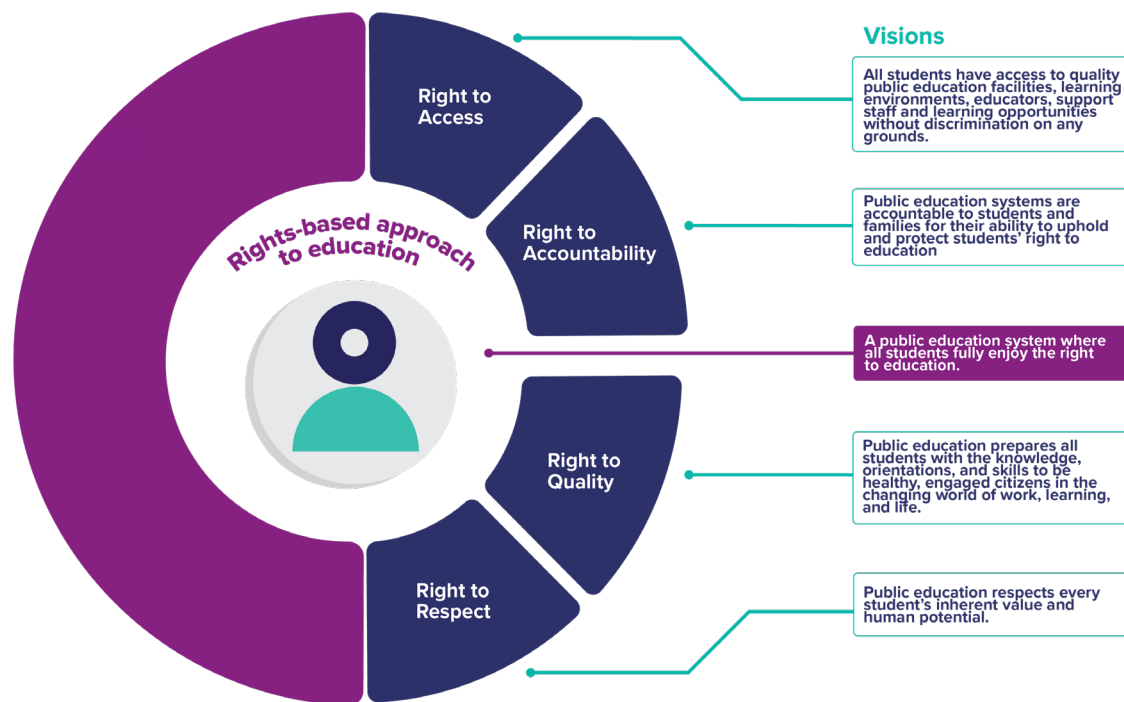
What is the Right to Education Framework?

For over 20 years, People for Education has been tracking policy and funding changes in Ontario's publicly funded schools. Now, in partnership with the Maytree Foundation, People for Education is working with key stakeholders to articulate what a quality education consists of in Canada and how to ensure all students can fully enjoy their right to education.

The goal of the Right to Education Framework is to provide a tool to track Canada's progress in achieving the right to a quality education for all students in publicly funded education. The framework is centred in a rights-based approach to education that acknowledges students are rights-holders and adults are duty-bearers within educational institutions. In this work, there is an inextricable link between a quality education and a curriculum that teaches human rights, children's rights and treaty rights.

Creating a framework that articulates the right to a quality education will help ensure that Canadian education systems create engaged citizens, promote and prioritize student well-being, and prepare students for long-term success, no matter the path they choose. This framework addresses education from early childhood education through kindergarten to grade 12.

The framework is a teaching and advocacy tool for students, educators and families.



RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO EDUCATION

Vision: A public education system where all students fully enjoy the right to education.

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| Goals | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> This is the core of the Right to Education Framework. It commits to a system that is rights-based and upholds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; ● Other international legal instruments (including Treaties) that guarantee the right to education ● Existing Canadian legislation that connects to the right to education (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Indigenous Institutes Act Ontario Education Act, Ontario Human Rights Code) The framework, its development, and use are guided by the 7 Principles that inform a rights-based approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Universality and inalienability ● Indivisibility ● Interdependence and interrelatedness ● Equality and non-discrimination ● Participation and inclusion ● Empowerment ● Accountability and respect for the rule of law |
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RIGHT TO ACCESS

Vision: All students have access to quality public education facilities, learning environments, educators, support staff, and learning opportunities without discrimination on any grounds.

Goals	1. Education institutions and programs are physically and economically accessible to everyone, without disproportionate and disparate outcomes.
	2. Resources are adequately and equitably distributed for all education institutions receiving public funds.
	3. Children have access to early childhood education that ensures they arrive at school ready to learn.
	4. Students can attend comparable education institutions and programs within reasonable distance of their home.
	5. Students living in Canada without legal immigration status have access to publicly funded education.
	6. Students have access to broad learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom.
	7. Students have access to arts and music programs, trained arts and music educators, and proper equipment and facilities.
	8. Students have access to sports, recreation and wellness programs, trained educators, and proper equipment and facilities.
	9. Students have access to outdoor spaces such as schoolyards and parks with various health-promoting features.
	10. Students have access to learning opportunities that reflect and value their lived experiences.
	11. Students have access to staff and resources to support their mental and physical health needs.
	12. Students have access to learning environments free from police officers.
	13. Students have access to well-maintained transportation to and from school.
	14. Students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions have access to full, safe, and equitable participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities.
	15. Students have regularly scheduled access to guidance counsellors, social workers, and mental health workers.
	16. Students have access to internet and necessary equipment, software, and support to participate in digital learning opportunities.
	17. Students have access to cooperative education experiences that offer appropriate credits for completion.

RIGHT TO ACCOUNTABILITY

Vision: Public education systems are accountable to students and families for their ability to uphold and protect students' right to education.

Goals	1. Clear mechanisms exist to bring forward complaints when rights are violated.
	2. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 62 is fulfilled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.
	3. There are clear and respectful interventions that students, families, staff and communities can access when their rights are violated.
	4. Policy and programs exist to work against the persistent connection between demographic factors and student success.
	5. School records are maintained and data is collected in a way that respects privacy and confidentiality.
	6. Identity-based data is collected, analyzed, and used to recognize persistent barriers to achievement and well-being for historically oppressed communities.
	7. Data collection recognizes and upholds young people's rights to privacy and access to/management of information about them.
	8. Policies and programs are developed, sustained, and monitored to close any gaps identified by identity-based data collection.
	9. Data is open, comparable, and longitudinal so that longer-term outcomes and impacts can be measured.
	10. Clearly identified human resources are in place for students, parents, and communities to contact at the school, school board, and government level when rights are violated.
	11. System advocates, such as an ombudsperson, support students and families in accessing advocacy related to their right to education and support students and families to navigate the education system.

RIGHT TO QUALITY

Vision: Public education prepares all students with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to be healthy, engaged citizens in the changing world of work, learning, and life.

Goals	1. Children's rights, human rights, and treaty rights are taught.
	2. Learning facilities are safe, well-maintained, and clean.
	3. Students are taught literacy, numeracy, and skills for life.
	4. Students are taught transferable skills such as learning to learn, thinking creatively and critically, collaboration, communicating effectively, and developing a sense of self and society.
	5. Students are taught by educators who have subject matter expertise.
	6. Students are taught by educators with pedagogical training and ongoing professional development.
	7. Assessment of learning is formative and provides opportunities to learn and improve with feedback.
	8. Student growth is supported through flexible pathways that do not limit students' options for career or post-secondary progression.
	9. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 62 and 64 are fulfilled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education. 64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.
	10. Education programs are designed to yield the most opportunities for student progression to a range of post-secondary options.
	11. School board leadership and educators reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.
	12. Students, families, teachers, and guidance counsellors are provided with the information necessary to make informed decisions about students' pathways.

RIGHT TO RESPECT

Vision: Public education respects every student's inherent value and human potential.

Goals	1. Students are valued as knowledge-bearers and included in decision-making processes that respect their rights to information, participation, and safety.
	2. School board policies and procedures are developed in accordance with human rights standards. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.
	3. Disciplinary processes prioritize students remaining in school and are rooted in restorative practices that promote healthy relationships between students and others.
	4. Police officers in all educational settings are a last resort and deprioritized as a response to student discipline.
	5. Students learn in safe environments free of all forms of bullying and violence, including gender-based, racial, sexual, class-based, faith-based, and psychological bullying and violence.
	6. Curriculum and pedagogy reflects and respects the diversity of lived realities and ways of knowing for students, parents, and communities.
	7. Indigenous elders are involved in the development of learning opportunities for students related to Indigenous education and Indigenous worldviews.
	8. Students are addressed using their pronouns.
	9. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 57 is fulfilled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
	10. The Truth and Reconciliation's Commission Call to Action 1, iii, is fulfilled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.
	11. School boards create and sustain programs and policies that work against the effects of anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, and racism and discrimination in all its forms on student achievement and well-being.

References

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Acknowledgments

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