

**Engagement Guide  
for the  
Development  
of an  
Accessibility Standard  
for Education**

May 2017  
Ministry of Education

# Engagement guide for the development of an accessibility standard for education

---

## How to use this guide

Engagement is an important step in creating an accessibility standard for education. We want to hear your views.

## How you can get involved

Engagement will run from May to July 2017. The feedback we receive will be used to help design an accessibility standard for education. You can provide your feedback in several ways:

- Complete the online survey: English: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EducationSurveyEN>; French: <https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/SondageAccessibilite>
- Email your comments to [aoda.input@ontario.ca](mailto:aoda.input@ontario.ca)
- Host your own discussion group using this Engagement Guide

## The engagement guide

The guide provides you with a framework to start your own conversation on how to develop an accessibility standard for education.

We have identified five potential themes for discussion:

1. Accessibility Awareness and Training
  - Ensuring all members of the school community have differentiated training to provide an accessible and inclusive educational experience
2. Awareness of Accessibility Accommodations – Policies, Processes, and Programs/Supports
  - Ensuring parents, students, and instructors have access to information about programs
3. Information, Communication, and Inclusive Decision-Making
  - Ensuring people with lived experience have a voice during planning processes
4. Transition Planning
  - Supporting children entering school from child care and planning for entry into post-secondary education or employment
5. Inclusive and Accessible Learning Spaces
  - Ensuring that K-12 schools, colleges and universities include accessibility features throughout the built environment.

Thank you for sharing your ideas and opinions on the design of an accessibility standard for education. Your participation is a key part of the engagement process. We

are always looking for creative, innovative and evidence-based solutions to help us do a better job in providing services to the people who need them.

Your input is most welcome and appreciated. For more information about the engagement process, please contact us by email at [aoda.input@ontario.ca](mailto:aoda.input@ontario.ca).

## Glossary

- “Accessibility”: in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the purpose of the Act being to... “achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.”
- “Accommodation”: refers to the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s [Guidelines on Accessible Education](#), and [Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate](#) at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)
- “Disability”: as defined in the AODA means:
  - a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
  - b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
  - c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
  - d) a mental disorder, or
  - e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; (“handicap”)
- “Instructor”: anyone directly interacting with students, including but not limited to teacher, professor, Principal, Vice-Principal, Early Childhood Educator (ECE), Teacher’s Assistant (TA), Education Assistant (EA), behaviour expert, Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), social worker, administrative staff, etc.
- “Parent”: also includes any person acting as a legal guardian for a student
- “School”: any publicly-funded Ontario school (French, English, Public, Catholic)
- “University/College”: any postsecondary institution operating in Ontario receiving operating grants from the Government of Ontario

## Engagement Toolkit

The Ontario government is currently engaging Ontarians on its development of an accessibility standard for education. Engagement will be held from May to July 2017.

You can make a difference by participating and getting involved.

To help you host your own discussion and gather feedback from members of your community, the Ministry of Education developed a guide and toolkit with templates and materials for organizing and promoting your event, as well as collecting and submitting the results.

The toolkit includes:

- Sample agenda
- Sample invitation
- Discussion Notes Template
- Sample Social Media Promotion

After your discussion, we encourage you to send the results to [aoda.input@ontario.ca](mailto:aoda.input@ontario.ca). Feel free to send us photos and important quotes from participants. Your input will be shared with the Honourable Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education, and will be used to help shape an accessibility standard for education.

Other ways you can participate include:

- filling out the survey:
  - English: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EducationSurveyEN>
  - French: <https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/SondageAccessibilite>
- talking about how you're contributing to the discussion on Twitter and Instagram, and encouraging others to get involved and participate.

## Privacy Statement:

Ontario is committed to respecting your privacy and protecting your personal information. The handling of all personal information by Government of Ontario organizations is governed by the [\*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act\*](#). Please review our [Privacy Statement](#) for more information. By participating in this engagement, you are consenting to, and acknowledging that you have read, understood, and agree to the Privacy Statement.

# Sample Agenda

---

Community Discussion on an Accessibility Standard for Education  
Day, Month, Year  
Start time – End time  
Meeting location  
City

1. Welcome and introductory remarks
2. Participant introductions
3. Discussion begins

## **Theme #1 – Accessibility Awareness and Training**

Questions:

- What could your school, college or university do to improve their awareness and consideration of the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities?
- What resources or policies have you seen as most effective to support awareness of accessibility needs in your school, college or university?

## **Theme #2 – Awareness of Accessibility Accommodations – Policies, Processes, and Programs/Supports**

Questions:

- What challenges do students with disabilities face when accessing supports, programs, or services in their school, college or university?
- In your experience, what resources, tools, or policies are most effective to promote better awareness of available supports and facilitate appropriate accommodations?

## **Theme #3 – Information, Communication, and Inclusive Decision-Making**

Questions:

- What barriers do students with disabilities or their parents face in participating in decisions that affect accessibility in their schools, colleges or universities?

- In your experience, what resources, tools, or policies help to promote early engagement by persons with disabilities (or their representatives) in educational decisions and planning?

## **Theme #4 – Transition Planning**

### Questions:

- What challenges do students with disabilities face in transitioning across educational institutions or when completing programs that bridge partner institutions?
- What challenges do students with disabilities face when planning for employment, for post-secondary education or training, or for community living?
- In your experience, as a student, parent, or professional, what resources, tools, or policies have been effective to support smooth transitions?

## **Theme #5 – Inclusive and Accessible Learning Spaces**

### Questions:

- What challenges do students, instructors, staff and the public with disabilities face in navigating their educational built environment?
- In your experience, what resources, tools, or design practices can best support improved accessibility in existing, often older, buildings?
- What other elements should be considered to enhance the physical accessibility of K-12 schools, colleges and universities?

## **Other Questions**

- As a student or parent, what other accessibility barriers have you experienced in pursuing your or your child's education, and how could they be addressed through a new accessibility standard for education?
- As a professional in the education sector, what other barriers have you experienced in providing an accessible, inclusive education, and how could they be addressed through a new accessibility standard for education?

4. Closing remarks/Discussion concludes
5. End

# Sample Invitation

---

**Subject line:** You're invited to a community discussion on developing an accessibility standard for education.

Ontario is committed to supporting the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and its goal of an accessible Ontario by 2025.

On December 5, 2016, Premier Wynne made a public commitment to develop an accessibility standard for education.

It is important that we address barriers in education that prevent students from reaching their full potential.

Do you want to help design an accessibility standard for education?

You are invited to attend a community discussion. The input from this event will be shared with the Honourable Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education, and will be used to help shape an accessibility standard for education.

We need your ideas and feedback to help make a difference. Get involved and share your voice.

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Place:**

Please confirm your attendance by (day), (month) (year), by email (email address) or phone at (phone number).

If you need accommodation support in order to participate in this engagement, please contact the organizer.

An agenda and discussion questions will follow upon confirmation.

# Discussion Notes Template

---

## Accessibility Standard for Education

Day, Month, Year  
Start time – End time  
Location  
City

### Participants

1. (Name), Title, Organization (if applicable)
2. (Name)
3. (Name)
4. Etc.

### Key Themes

- What are the main themes that were discussed during the meeting?

### Direction

- Provide summaries of the discussion points rather than a word-for-word account.
- Do not identify comments by contributors (i.e. names or organizations) – instead, summarize the feedback from the group as a whole
- When drafting the summary, use simple and neutral language.
- Make sure participants are aware that by participating they are consenting to, and acknowledging that they have read, understood and agree to the [Privacy Notice Statement](#).

### Theme #1 – Accessibility Awareness and Training

Questions:

- What could your school, college or university do to improve their awareness and consideration of the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities?
- What resources or policies have you seen as most effective to support awareness of accessibility needs in your school, college or university?

### Theme #2 – Awareness of Accessibility Accommodations – Policies, Processes, and Programs/Supports

Questions:

- What challenges do students with disabilities face when accessing supports, programs, or services in their school, college or university?
- In your experience, what resources, tools, or policies are most effective to promote better awareness of available supports and facilitate appropriate accommodations?

### **Theme #3 – Information, Communication, and Inclusive Decision-Making**

#### Questions:

- What barriers do students with disabilities or their parents face to participating in decisions that affect accessibility in their schools, colleges or universities?
- In your experience, what resources, tools, or policies help to promote early engagement by persons with disabilities (or their representatives) in educational decisions and planning?

### **Theme #4 – Transition Planning**

#### Questions:

- What challenges do students with disabilities face in transitioning across educational institutions or when completing programs that bridge partner institutions?
- What challenges do students with disabilities face when planning for employment, for post-secondary education or training, or for community living?
- In your experience, as a student, parent, or professional, what resources, tools, or policies have been effective to support smooth transitions?

### **Theme #5 – Inclusive and Accessible Learning Spaces**

#### Questions:

- What challenges do students, instructors, staff and the public with disabilities face in navigating their educational built environment?
- In your experience, what resources, tools, or design practices can best support improved accessibility in existing, often older, buildings?
- What other elements should be considered to enhance the physical accessibility of K-12 schools, colleges and universities?

### **Other Questions**

- As a student or parent, what other accessibility barriers have you experienced in pursuing your or your child's education, and how could they be addressed through a new accessibility standard for education?
- As a professional in the education sector, what other barriers have you experienced in providing an accessible, inclusive education, and how could they be addressed through a new accessibility standard for education?

### **Notes taken by:**

(Name), (Phone number), (Email)

NOTE: After your discussion, we encourage you to send the results to [aoda.input@ontario.ca](mailto:aoda.input@ontario.ca). Feel free to also send us photos and important quotes you heard. Your input will be shared with the Honourable Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education, and the Honourable Tracy MacCharles, Minister Responsible for Accessibility. Your input will also be shared with a Standards Development Committee to help shape an accessibility standard for education.

# Sample Social Media Promotion

---

## Accessibility Standard for Education

### Sample 1:

- Tweet: Participate in the development of an accessibility standard for education by hosting your own roundtable. Engagement Toolkit available.
- Link to this engagement toolkit: xxx

### Sample 2:

- Tweet: Want to help improve #Accessibility in Ontario? Take this survey!
- Link to the survey:
  - English: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EducationSurveyEN>
  - French: <https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/SondageAccessibilite>