



## A NEW WAY OF THINKING ABOUT SKILLS

### WHY DO WE NEED NEW MEASURES OF SUCCESS?

Up to now, success in our education system has been measured - for the most part - by scores in literacy and numeracy. But true educational success is about much more than the 3 R's.

Young people today 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

### WHAT IS THE GOAL OF MEASURING WHAT MATTERS?

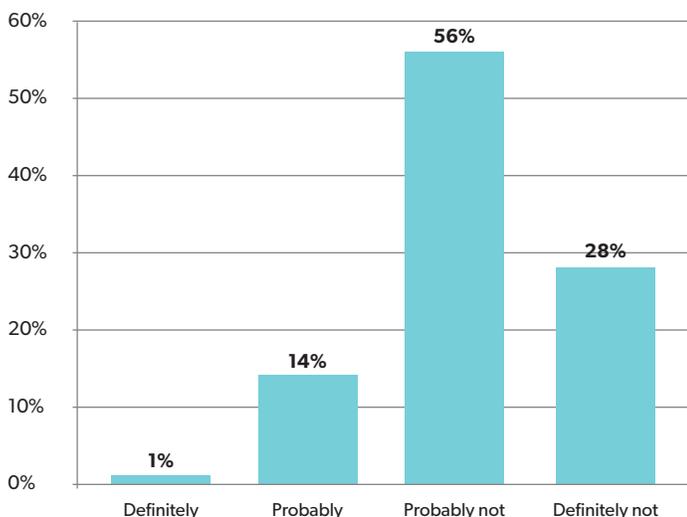
Together, we're going to develop a broader set of goals and measures of success for schools that include indicators for the range of skills that graduates - and our society - really need. The measures - developed with the help of experts and extensive on-the-ground consultation - will be both publicly understandable and educationally useful.

### DOES THE PUBLIC WANT BROADER MEASURES?

Nearly 5000 people have participated in *Measuring What Matters* surveys, workshops, focus groups and webinars. The survey results show:

- 44% of respondents would probably or definitely not assume that if a school has good literacy and numeracy scores it is doing a good job overall.
- 84% think the general public does not understand how schools contribute to students' success in domains like social emotional skills, creativity, health and citizenship.

### In your opinion, does the general public have a good understanding of how schools contribute to students' success in areas like health, creativity, social-emotional skills and citizenship?



### ISN'T MEASURING LITERACY AND NUMERACY ENOUGH?

Stuart Shanker - a renowned expert on social-emotional learning - says there has been a revolution in educational thinking in the last decade, but the goals and measures of success that we set for our schools have not kept up.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, "It is important that the next generation possess a broad range of skills that supports their ability to think, learn, communicate, collaborate, and innovate." Literacy and numeracy skills are only one part of a complete education.

### WHAT ARE THE NEW AREAS TO BE MEASURED?

After looking at research from around the world, People for Education is recommending that we add creativity and innovation, physical and mental health, social-emotional skills, citizenship, and quality learning environments to our goals for schools, and that we measure progress in these areas.

Each of these domains overlaps; each has an impact on student's long-term success, and each is connected to the broad skills students will need to be productive, engaged, healthy citizens.

**SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH** programs not only improve academic and health outcomes; they reduce the risk of chronic disease and mental illness.

Students with strong **CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION** skills learn more effectively in all academic disciplines and subjects. They have vital problem-solving skills, the capacity to think critically, and a greater ability to deal with situations that may have multiple solutions.

**CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION** equips students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be able to take a full and active role in their society.

**STRONG SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS** can be learned. They contribute to both academic and long-term success as well as fewer problems at school, in life and at work. The importance of these skills is widely recognized by employers and business as well as educators, and neuroscientists.

The overall **QUALITY OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** has an impact on all of the domains and on students' equitable chances for success. The learning environment influences students' opportunities to use the educational system as a foundation for further education.

## WHO IS WORKING ON THIS?

Measuring What Matters has many partners.

We are working with leading scholars from universities across Canada; Ontario's Ministries of Education, Health, and Children and Youth Services, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) and the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), the Conference Board of Canada, Ontario's Principals' councils, the Alberta Teachers' Association, and other education stakeholders, as well as the broader public.

We are also a member of the Learning Metrics Task Force, an international initiative led by UNESCO and the Brookings Institute to build consensus about appropriate quality measures for schools.

## WHEN WILL THE MEASURES BE READY?

There will be a number of steps and a great deal of consultation before any measures are developed. We'll review Ontario curriculum to see where the domains fit; collect stories from schools about work they're already doing in these areas; propose standards and consult with the public about them; set up pilot projects in schools and then begin to test measurement instruments.

I am thrilled to learn about this initiative. While I believe, whole-heartedly, that literacy and numeracy are of great importance, we have neglected the other areas that make a person and a society whole and full.

— SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER, ONTARIO

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## ARE THERE ANY DOWNSIDES TO NEW GOALS AND MEASURES?

Many participants underlined the importance of measurements that are focused on schools and the education system - not just students' scores.

While participants agreed that we should be measuring *outcomes* in broader areas, they cautioned that we must also measure *inputs*, i.e. what are the opportunities students have to learn, to access programs, to participate etc.

We have also received warnings of possible dangers including adding to teacher and principal overload, feeding an unhealthy process of comparing schools, or building expectations without resources.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Our academic experts are now developing sets of skills, competencies and opportunities for each domain, and identifying where those items are found in Ontario curriculum and policy and where there are gaps; the measurement committee is exploring a range of measurement examples. Public consultations will continue.

For more information, go to [www.peopleforeducation.ca/mwm](http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/mwm)