

# Student Voice Initiative

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## The Question:

“How might we invite students to co-create environments that promote student engagement?”

## The Answer:

Invite students to join the conversation about what engages them by:

1. Learning about Student Voice and the Student Voice Initiative
2. EncouragingwA92a4(ude)6ap 7/6stw 4 560.52 Tm (Thnd thMth)agitden Advisory Council (MSAC)
3. Encouraging students to apply SpeakUpProjects
4. Learning about the 9 Student Voice Indicators that emerged from Regional Student Forums
5. Ordering SpeakUpn a Box

## 1. LEARN ABOUT STUDENT VOICE AND THE STUDENT VOICE INITIATIVE

Student Voice describes the many ways in which youth are encouraged to participate in school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers (Fielding, 2001, Levin, 2000).

The key goals of the Student Voice Initiative are to:

- re-engage students and close the gap in achievement for students who are not experiencing success, by learning more about how they learn and what helps them learn;
- ensure that all students feel a sense of belonging in their classrooms and in the school and are able to participate in decisions impacting on their educational experience;
- involve students meaningfully in articulating what would help to strengthen their engagement in their learning environments, in which they are required to

“Decades of calls for educational reform have not succeeded in making schools places where all young people want to and are able to learn. It is time to invite pupils to join the conversations about how we might accomplish that.” (Ben Levin, 2000)

### 3. ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO APPLY FOR SPEAKUP PROJECT GRANTS

Over 4000 student-led SpeakUp projects in Grades 7 to 12, in over 900 schools, have received grants since 2008.

Examples include:

1. The Ideas Exchange: Student Education - Student Action, a city-wide conference in an alternative education setting;
2. Saving OurSEL: Teen health and wellness fair;

### 5. ORDER SPEAKUP IN A BOX

Students stated that they want to host SpeakUp forums in their own schools. In response, the ministry created SpeakUp in a Box which contains everything required to run a student-led forum for 30 participants. The box includes facilitator tip sheets, a step-by-step forum guide, forum supplies, and an envelope in which to submit to the ministry the big ideas generated in the forum. To order SpeakUp in a Box go to [www.ontario.ca/speakup](http://www.ontario.ca/speakup)

“Students say they want opportunities to be involved to contribute and to have self-directed learning. They say that the truest form of engagement is self-directed and led. They want creativity, integrated technology, effective student governments and effective student representation. They want a voice to communicate with their teachers constructively, in the interests of improvement.” (Andrew Pawluch, Student, 2008)