SpeakUp Project Proposal Toolkit for Students

This toolkit was developed to help you – the students – design a *SpeakUp* Project that will address the ideas and challenges of students in your school. You can make a difference, have your voices heard and take action. You are the experts in student experience and your ideas can make your school, community and Ontario's education system even better. The following pages will provide you with more details and a wide variety of techniques, tools and approaches to help your team develop a great project that will make a difference in your school and community.

Prepare for Action

Required Activities:

Assemble your *SpeakUp* Project Team:

- Form a group of at least three students and ensure that your team reflects the many voices of your school's population.

- Find an Adult Facilitator to be part of your team.

- As a team, develop a list of ideas or challenges that you may want to address with a *SpeakUp* Project. Be sure to reference the Areas of Focus from the application [landing page].

Suggested Activities:

- Review *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario.*

- Review your school and your school board's "improvement plans", School Climate Survey results and any other available information.

Develop Your Idea

Required Activities:

- As a team, [brainstorm] and develop ideas, group them by common idea or theme, and select one that your team is most interested in.

- [Build in details] around your selected idea.

- [Seek feedback] from others outside your team and [refine your idea].

- If your team has developed more than one idea, use a democratic process like [dotmocracy] to choose your top idea.

Suggested Activities:

- Use categories like 'Why?', 'What?', 'When?', 'Where?', and 'How?' to guide your team's thinking. There is a handy one-page [Project Planning Template] to help with this process.

Seek Approvals

Required Activities:

- Present your "top" ideas to your principal for feedback and review.

- The Lead Student must sign up and create an account complete the online *SpeakUp* Project Proposal with the *SpeakUp* Project Team.

- Your principal must review and recommend your project proposal using the online application system.

Suggested Activities:

- The Lead Student should follow up with the Adult Facilitator and principal after submitting the *SpeakUp* Project Proposal to ensure that he or she has received it.

Take Action

Required Activities:

- Implement your idea.

- Observe and reflect on your project's goals and outcomes while it is underway and after it has finished.

- Complete the Post-*SpeakUp* Project Reflection which will be available soon on the [landing page] and on the Ministry of Education website.

Helpful hint: If your *SpeakUp* Project Team has many students, consider forming smaller groups that each develop an idea for consideration by the whole team. Each smaller group can brainstorm, outline details of their favourite idea and seek feedback from another group within the *SpeakUp* Project Team or from outside it. Smaller groups can refine their ideas and then present their proposal to all members of the *SpeakUp* Project Team. Team members can use [dotmocracy], or another democratic process, to select the top idea to submit as their *SpeakUp* Project.

SPEAKUP

SpeakUp Project Proposal Toolkit for Students

Prepare for Action

Develop Your Project Team

Decide whether your team will be a particular class, group or club that will work together to develop your project idea. Your team should have at least three students. An Adult Facilitator is required for all *SpeakUp* Project Teams, unless the team is made up of a whole class.

Ensure that your Project Team Represents Your School's Population

Whether you are working as a class, group or club, it's important that your *SpeakUp* Project Team reflects your school's student population. For example, if your group consists only of ten grade eight girls, how will you ensure that the ideas you generate represent the challenges faced by other genders? Consider the different students in your school community. If a particular student segment or population is not represented within your group, discuss how the voice of that particular student group can be heard.

Determining Your School's Ideas and/or Challenges

Review available information

In cooperation with your Adult Facilitator, determine what documents you might want to review to help list the ideas/challenges for your school. For instance, your school's "School Improvement Plan" might identify an idea/challenge for improved student outcomes (i.e., better grades) or the School Climate Survey results might identify that cyberbullying is a problem. Consider these topics to help develop your project ideas.

Prepare a list of potential areas of need

Explore every idea/challenge that you can think of or that comes with evidence. Remember that as students, you experience school every day, and as such, you have what is called "observational evidence" — things you have noticed that are challenges. This type of evidence could be critical as you are determining your project idea. Consider school and students' daily experiences through a non-judgmental lens. This process is not about blame, but rather identifying ideas/challenges that if addressed could improve your school.

> **To determine your school's ideas and challenges consult:**
>
> - [Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario](#)
> - Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement
> - School Improvement Plan for Student Achievement
> - School Climate Survey Results

SpeakUp Project Proposal Toolkit for Students

Review and revise your list of project ideas

It is important that you consider all members of your school community as you review and revise the list of ideas/challenges. Ask yourselves questions like:

- Will pursuing this cause any one person or group of people in our school community discomfort or upset?
- Is there a group of students, in particular, that this idea could impact? If yes, how will we continue to consider their ideas/challenges moving forward?
- As a project team, what are the actions we could take to help address the challenges, or are the necessary actions beyond our control?
- Is this something we would need to engage with other school community members (e.g., parents, teachers, community members, peers)?

Your project ideas must relate to the "Areas of Focus" identified on the landing page of the online application form and in this document's Appendix. When you submit your *SpeakUp* Project Proposal, you must choose one area that aligns with your project's goals.

One of the "Areas of Focus" is "Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario". When evaluating your ideas to see if they align with this area, consider the goals of this vision: Achieving Excellence, Ensuring Equity, Promoting Well-being and Enhancing Public Confidence.

After you have considered each of the project ideas as a group and in partnership with your Adult Facilitator remove any:

- "Areas of Focus" that do not align with your project ideas
- Project ideas that do not relate to an "Area of Focus"

After the review, you will have a list of project ideas categorized by "Areas of Focus". This final list should be approved by your Adult Facilitator before you move to the next step: "Develop Your Idea".

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Develop Your Idea

It's time to review the list of ideas/challenges that the project team developed during the "Prepare for Action" phase.

Each project team can now complete the activities suggested below[1] to explore and come up with the most innovative ideas to help to address the project idea.

Brainstorming (20-40 minutes)

Brainstorming is the process by which you will generate multiple, wild and big ideas to help work through your project idea. Remember to:

- go for as many ideas as possible
- move quickly
- don't judge and idea no matter how "out there" it might seem
- don't limit your thinking to what you consider to be possible
- build on each other's ideas
- make your ideas as 'big' as possible (wild and outside the box is good at this point in the process!)

After you have lots of ideas, group them by a common theme or thought.

From these groups, select one idea that your team agrees is the most interesting.

You can get more support for your brainstorming session in the Appendix.

Check your idea with your Adult Facilitator before you move to the "Build Detail" activity.

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[1] *These activities (Brainstorm, Detail, Feedback & Iterate) were adapted from: Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship Toolkit, Specialist High Skills Major (Draft), November 2014, Queen's Printer for Ontario*

SpeakUp Project Proposal Toolkit for Students

Build Detail, Seek Feedback and Refine Your Idea (40 minutes or more)

Build Detail

Make your project idea concrete by adding as many details as possible so other student groups and/or your principal can provide feedback. Answer questions like, "Why?", "What?", "When?", "Where?" and "How?" to think about the details of your actions. You may want to use a graphic organizer to help you organize your thoughts into a plan. If you are not sure what organizer to use, ask your Adult Facilitator for suggestions. Or use this handy one-page idea organizer to help with this process. See more ideas for adding detail to your project idea in the Appendix.

Seek Feedback

Feedback will help improve your overall idea and the action steps you have planned. Find another group that has worked through the brainstorming and detail building activities and partner up. If only one group completed the brainstorming and detail activities, find someone else (maybe another staff member or school club) to provide feedback. See the Appendix for more on this stage.

Refine Your Idea

Think about all of the feedback that you received from the other group. Once you have carefully thought about how you will use this feedback, write down the things you will change. Make a new chart or one-pager for your project idea. Remember to be as clear as possible so that other students will understand your idea without having anyone explain it to them. Find more about this activity in the Appendix.

Narrow Your Ideas from Many to a Few (15 minutes)

Now it is time to choose the ideas that you will take forward to the electronic submission process. Which ideas will you present to your principal for review?

There are many ways to narrow down from many project ideas to the few that you will present. Remember, you have worked collaboratively to develop these ideas as a team and you will want to choose the best possible project ideas to propose to your principal.

Here are some ways to narrow things down: anonymous voting, debates and dotmocracy.

Dotmocracy Instructions

The dotmocracy process allows *SpeakUp* Project Team members to vote for their favorite ideas, using only three stickers. The project ideas with the highest number of stickers should be presented to the principal for feedback and approval.

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SpeakUp Project Proposal Toolkit for Students

1. Your Adult Facilitator should help your team determine how many project ideas should be presented to the principal. Give each student who participated in the *SpeakUp* process three coloured stickers.
2. Post all of the new charts or one-pagers around the room. (Put the "good copies" on display.)
3. Each student should read all of the ideas and decide which ideas they like the best.
4. Each students votes for their "fave(s)"
   a. a student can place all of their stickers on one idea or they can put their stickers on different ideas
   b. a student can only vote for their own idea with only one of their stickers.
5. Once everyone has placed their stickers, add up the number of votes each idea received. Which ideas will move forward?

Notes:

- *SpeakUp* Project Proposals are awarded based on the quality of the proposal and a clear demonstration of how the project will connect to the "Area of Focus" that the *SpeakUp* Project Team selected. Submitting a proposal does not guarantee that a grant will be awarded.
- In 2015-16, a maximum of two $1,000 *SpeakUp* Project Proposals or one $2,500 *SpeakUp* Project Proposal will be funded per school.

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Seek Approvals

Meet With Your Principal

Once your *SpeakUp* Project Team has voted on its top ideas, you can present these ideas to your principal for feedback and approval.

As you schedule an appointment with your principal, make sure that you have:

- made the purpose for the appointment clear; and
- provided the amount of time you will need to present your ideas.

During the meeting with your principal, ask him or her to provide feedback and to select the project ideas that will represent your school for *SpeakUp* funding.

If your principal provided feedback and suggestions along with their support for your idea, be sure to make a record and incorporate that feedback into your final *SpeakUp* Project Proposal.

Create an Account on FluidReview®

FluidReview® is an online application management system. The Ministry of Education is using FluidReview® to allow students to submit *SpeakUp* Project Proposals online. The system also supports the ministry's evaluation process and ongoing communication with applicants. It will also be used to administer follow-up reports.

The Lead Student on your *SpeakUp* Project Team **does** need to create an account. Only your Lead Student should create an account on FluidReview®. Create a Lead Student account.

Your project team's Adult Facilitator **does NOT** need to create an account or recommend your *SpeakUp* Project Proposal in FluidReview®. However, your Adult Facilitator should review your proposal before it is submitted to your principal for review and recommendation.

- The Adult Facilitator's contact details will be collected when the online proposal is completed. The Lead Student, Adult Facilitator and principal will receive status update emails from the ministry via FluidReview®.
- If the Adult Facilitator (specifically a school staff member) must lead a SpeakUp Project to help support a team that requires extra assistance or targets disengaged students, the Adult Facilitator **does** need to create an account. Create an Adult Facilitator account.

SpeakUp Project Proposal Toolkit for Students

Your principal **does NOT** need to create an account to review and recommend your *SpeakUp* Project Proposal before it is sent to the ministry for evaluation. Your principal will be required to enter in a password (of their choosing) in a link sent to them directly from FluidReview® to gain access to the student proposals. With this password they will be able to access all the proposals submitted to them. The principal will also receive status update emails from the ministry via FluidReview®.

Submit Your Project Proposal

Once your project idea has the support of your principal, consider making a video. This is a great way for your project team to talk about your project idea and show how it will make a change to your school community or your target audience. You can upload the video when you make your online submission. Remember to get written consent from everyone who is in your video.

Detail Your Budget

Your *SpeakUp* Project team needs to develop a detailed budget for your project. This will help the evaluators understand how you would spend the *SpeakUp* Project grant and is a mandatory part of the Project Proposal. Your goal is to develop a budget that clearly shows how your *SpeakUp* Project will have an impact in the "Area of Focus" your team selected.

If you used the one-page idea organizer during the "Build Detail" step in developing your idea, refer to "What we will need" under the "What?" section. This will help guide your thinking.

Consider the following budget expense categories for how to spend the grant money:

- administration costs
- capital items (furniture, equipment, technology etc.)
- certifications/training
- consumables (food, materials, supplies, printing, etc.)
- guest speakers
- permits
- supply teacher coverage
- transportation
- other

SpeakUp Project Proposal Toolkit for Students

Note: If your team is applying for the grant of up to $2,500, think about planning your budget in two parts:

1. Include the expenses that you would have if you were approved for the $1,000 grant
2. Include the additional expenses (up to $1,500) needed if approved for the $2,500 grant.

If your project is not selected for a $2,500 grant, planning your budget in two parts will allow your project to be considered for a $1,000 grant.

Submit your SpeakUp Project Proposal Online

Login to the FluidReview® online application system and enter you project proposal!

Your principal must approve your project using the online application system. It is a good idea for your Lead Student to follow up with your principal after submitting the *SpeakUp* Project Proposal to ensure that they have received notification of your submission.

Your principal will review your *SpeakUp* Project Proposal and may share feedback with you so you can update your proposal for their recommendation. Your principal can then recommend/submit your proposal in FluidReview® to the ministry for evaluation.

An incomplete *SpeakUp* Project Proposal cannot be submitted and will not be considered for funding.

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SpeakUp Project Proposal Toolkit for Students

Implement your idea

Observe and reflect on your project's goals and outcomes as you implement your project, and after it has finished.

Complete the online "Post-Project Reflection" in FluidReview®. A copy of this document will be available on the FluidReview® landing page and on the Ministry of Education website.

Consider documenting your project using photographs and video and sharing these with the Ministry of Education via Facebook at SpeakUp Ontario. Remember that you must have written consent from everyone you film or photograph before you share any images or video on social media.

SpeakUp graphics and icons are available for download from the Ministry of Education website.

If you have questions as you implement and evaluate your project, talk to you Adult Facilitator. You can also email the Student Voice Team at the Ministry of Education at studentvoice@ontario.ca.

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Appendix ➡

Appendix of Activities* to Help Students Develop Ideas

* These activities were adapted from: <u>Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship Toolkit, Specialist High Skills Major (Draft)</u>, November 2014, Queen's Printer for Ontario

Brainstorming

A good brainstorming session creates lots of different ideas. By the end of this activity, your *SpeakUp* Project Team will have developed dozens of ideas and sorted them by theme or common thoughts. If your *SpeakUp* Project Team is large, form a few groups of three to five students with each group working separately to develop ideas. Each group will select one idea to take forward – so a large *SpeakUp* Project Team will take more than one idea forward to "Build Detail" stage – one from each group.

Once your *SpeakUp* Project Team (or each sub-group of students) has generated lots of ideas and categorized them, your team (or each sub-group of students) selects one idea that is the most interesting.

Step 1: Ask Your Question

Based on the area of idea or challenge that your group picked during the "Prepare for Action" stage, write a question to guide your brainstorming by filling in the blanks in the sentence starter below:

How might we help our school meet the need for _____ when it comes to _____?

Write your question at the centre of the chart paper that your Adult Facilitator provided to your group.

Example questions:

How might we help our school meet the need for all students to be more engaged with our community when it comes to developing students' empathy and active citizenship?

How might we help our school meet the need for Grade 8 students to be more confident when it comes to going to high school?

Step 2: Imagine Solutions/Answers

Imagine solutions to your question: first individually, and then as a team. Write each idea on its own <u>separate</u> sticky note. You will do two rounds of brainstorming; each will be five to seven minutes long:

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- Individual (everyone brainstorms by themselves in silence)
- Group (everyone brainstorms together challenging each other to think "outside of the box" and to come up with as many ideas, regardless of how wild, silly, or impossible they might seem)

Between rounds you will share your thoughts so that you have the opportunity to be inspired by the ideas of other students in your group.

Step 3: Create Connections

Work together and identify sticky note ideas that have similar or connected thoughts. The grouped thoughts that you create now form the beginnings of separate solutions. This step is important, so take your time!

Collect all similar sticky notes together in a pile.

On a different coloured sticky note, label each pile with a number and a sentence or phrase that summarizes the ideas that the grouped sticky notes represent. For example, "visits to retirement homes" or "community clean-up"

Step 4: Arrange Your Ideas

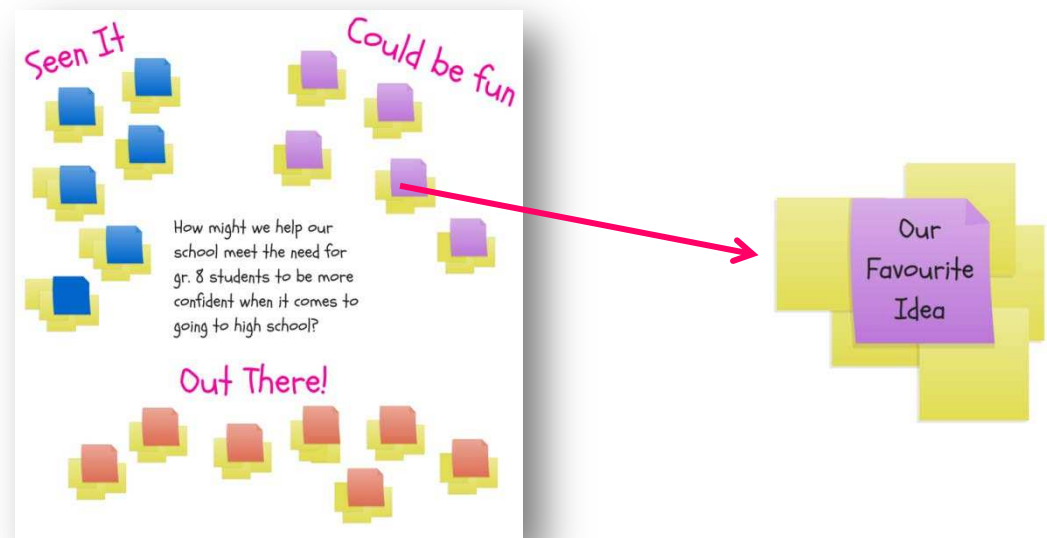Arrange your ideas on the chart paper with your question in the middle.

Use the headings "Seen it", "Could be fun" and "Out There" as shown here:

Step 5: Pick Your Idea

Pick one idea that your *SpeakUp* Project Team (or sub-group) would most want to see put into "action."

This idea could come from *any one* of the groups on your chart paper ("Seen It", "Could Be Fun" or "Out There").

*Remember to check in with your Adult Facilitator before you move your idea forward to the "Build Detail" activity.

Seen It   Could be fun

How might we help our school meet the need for gr. 8 students to be more confident when it comes to going to high school?

Out There!

Our Favourite Idea

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SpeakUp Project Proposal Toolkit for Students

Build Detail

Brainstorming is only the starting point – now it's time to add lots of detail to your project idea!

Divide two new pieces of chart paper into sections as shown here (one for rough and one for good).

Complete each section of your chart by providing the following details:

Why?   In this section on your chart paper, write the project idea and the question.

Who?   *Section 1*: Who will lead the project?

Section 2: Whose help will be needed?

Section 3: Who will be impacted by the project?

What?   *Section 1*: Describe your idea

In point form, provide as much information about what you want to do. Try to be as specific as possible. Remember, the people you present your idea to will not have been part of your brainstorming and discussion, so you need to give them as much information as possible.

Section 2: Sketch your idea

- A picture is worth a thousand words. What image will add to your written description?
- Fill the whole section. Make your image as big as possible!
- Don't worry about being perfect!

How?   Think about the steps you and others will need to take in order to put your idea into action. Arrange the steps in the order that you would do them in. Then write each step as a separate bullet point.

When?   For each step that you wrote in your "How?" section, decide when it would need to be done. Your Adult Facilitator might be able to suggest when in the school year would be the best time to start and finish.

Where?   Depending on your project, some of your proposed "action steps" may need to take place at some other place (i.e., not at your school or in the school yard). Use this section to indicate places that you might need to visit during the course of your project. Beside each place, write out why your have included it.

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SpeakUp Project Proposal Toolkit for Students

Seek Feedback

Feedback from others will help improve your overall idea as well as the action steps you have planned.

Find another group within your team that has worked through the "**Brainstorm**" and "**Build Detail**" activities and partner up!

If your *SpeakUp* Project Team only has one group of students, find someone else (maybe another staff member or school club) to provide feedback.

Your *SpeakUp* Project Team (or sub-group) should complete the following steps:

1. Tell the other group the story of your idea. Remember to use your sketch to support their understanding.
2. Give each person in the other group a chance to ask any questions that they have.
3. Make sure that someone from your group records all of the questions that were asked.
4. Answer each question. If you do not have an answer, say "We're not sure, but we'll think about that".
5. Ask the other group for more specific feedback, use the following questions (someone in your group should record their answers):
   - What do you like and why?
   - What would you change and why?
   - What suggestions do you have to make our idea better?

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Refine Your Idea

Using the second chart paper that you sectioned out during the "**Build Detail**" activity, make a good copy of your idea.

This is the copy of your idea that will be voted on; so make it good!

Think about all of the feedback that you received from the other group. Ask yourselves the following questions:

- What did the questions they asked tell us? What was unclear?
- How can we highlight the things they liked about our idea?
- What changes can we make to our idea to include their ideas and suggestions?

Once you have carefully thought about how you will use the feedback of the other group, write down the things you will change on the "rough draft" chart paper. In this way, you will know exactly what you will put in your "good copy" chart paper.

Complete each section of your "good copy" chart paper. Remember to be as clear as possible so that other students will understand your idea without having anyone explain it to them.

Your chart paper will stand on its own during the "dotmocracy" process.

You won't be standing beside it to speak to your idea!

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