



ONTARIO PUBLIC  
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ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates

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## JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON THE FUTURE OF LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Six months ago we released "**What if?**", our discussion paper on the use of technology in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. Since then, there has been great interest from both the media and those involved in education - professional groups, colleges, advocacy organizations, the private sector, and individual students, teachers, and parents. There is clear support for taking action to harness the potential of technologies to engage our students and help them learn.

**It is now time to take the next steps. And for that we'll need your help.**

**Throughout the many comments we've received, one theme was mentioned most often - people working to make this change feel disconnected and isolated in their efforts. While they are making progress on one piece of this big puzzle, they don't know what is happening elsewhere.**

We have identified seven distinct, but inter-connected, layers, or areas, of work (see the attached "inventory of interest" form). Every one of these layers needs to be addressed before learning technologies can be harnessed for learning on a large scale. We have proposed to the Ministry of Education that committees be established to work on each of these layers. To provide structure to this work, we have asked Ontario's Deputy Minister of Education to set up a broadly-based steering committee that would provide overall co-ordination so as to realize the level of integration and connectedness that is necessary for the success of such an initiative.

Getting ready to use these technologies for learning will need a range of expertise far beyond that which is available in any single sector. It is more than revising curriculum, more than having reliable broadband access, more than having standard student devices, more than setting a policy environment that supports learning technologies. To align the way our students learn with the way our students live, we will have to call on a very broad range of disciplines.

We ask that you look at the seven layers we have described and tell us which relate to the core work of your organization. We ask that you take a couple of minutes to complete the attached "Inventory of Interest". This will let us know how you can help in unleashing the full potential of technology to help our children learn. Your responses will help us build a "Can do" approach in discussions with the Ontario Ministry of Education as we move forward on this initiative.

We look forward to continuing the conversation with you and to receiving your input.

In the interest of students,

Colleen Schenk  
President

# Getting Ready for Learning Technologies

The seven layers of work needed so that we are ready for wide-spread use of learning technologies in our schools (the 7 C's)

Harnessing the power of Learning Technologies in our schools will be a complex task involving many areas of expertise. We have divided these areas into seven inter-connected layers in order to make the work ahead of us manageable.

## 1. Culture:

Re-defining how students and teachers relate to each other in our schools. Classroom management, teaching practices, and assessment methods will be affected by the new technologies. This layer will also deal with how the new learning technologies will change the school-family relationship and will make schools more accountable.

## 2. Capacity:

Ways to support our teachers as they become fully fluent in using these new technologies with their students. This layer will address the type of pre-service and professional learning opportunities needed to effectively use new learning technologies in promoting student engagement and success.

## 3. Curriculum:

The curriculum, and the courseware, content, and continuous assessment tools needed to implement technology-embedded learning. The goal will be to harness the potential of "anytime/anywhere" access to instruction, information, classmates, and teachers. We will need to ensure that any changes that are made will preserve the social, emotional, and physical lessons that are critically important to the healthy development of our students.

## 4. Computing devices:

Technical standards for student learning devices so that they connect seamlessly to certified networks and display the courseware and content as designed.

## 5. Connectivity:

Developing a robust and reliable network that will support learning in schools and at students' homes. This could consist of commercial networks and/or networks dedicated for educational use.

## 6. Construction:

The changes that will be needed in the built environment to support learning as it moves away from the traditional delivery model and towards the new model of anywhere/anytime learning.

## 7. Coordination:

To properly support the effective use of learning technologies we will need changes to some of the regulatory and funding frameworks that now are in place.

For more information on the future of Learning Technologies in our schools, go to <http://www.opsba.org/files/WhatIf.pdf> and please complete our brief Interest Inventory.