



# Additional Qualification Course Guideline Safe and Accepting Schools

Schedule C – Teachers' Qualifications Regulation

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Cette publication est également disponible en français sous le titre de  
*Écoles sécuritaires et accueillantes.*

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Preface</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
Accreditation – Program of Additional Qualification	3
Overview: Additional Qualification Course Guideline Design	4
Additional Qualification Course Guideline Foundations	5
<b>Safe and Accepting Schools</b>	<b>6</b>
Additional Qualification – Schedule C (Single-Session)	6
Additional Qualification Course Requirements	6
Ontario’s Learning Context	7
Professional Learning	8
First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Histories, Cultures, Perspectives and Knowledge Systems in Education	9
Anti-Oppression Foundation	10
Learner-Centred Pedagogy	11
Teaching, Assessing and Evaluating	13
Resources	15

## Preface

Placing each student's interests and well-being first is at the core of teaching in Ontario.

The Ontario College of Teachers (the College) is the self-regulating body for the teaching profession in Ontario and is responsible for:

- establishing and enforcing professional standards and ethical standards applicable to members of the College
- providing for the ongoing education of members of the College
- accrediting Additional Qualification (AQ) courses.

The College supports teaching excellence by preparing educators to work in varied and diverse educational contexts and geographical settings:

- English language public school
- French language public school
- English language Catholic school
- French language Catholic school
- First Nations school
- Provincial and Demonstration school
- Private school
- Independent school
- Urban setting
- Rural setting
- Remote setting

Additional Qualification (AQ) course guidelines are designed following extensive consultation and feedback from course providers, course writers and members of the teaching profession.

AQ course guidelines serve as the framework for providers and instructors to develop courses.

In this document, all references to candidates are to educators enrolled in the AQ course. References to learners indicate those enrolled in school programs.

## Introduction

Additional Qualifications (AQs) for educators are identified in O. Reg. 176/10: *Teachers' Qualifications Regulation*. This regulation includes courses that lead to AQs, the Principal's Development Qualification, the Principal's Qualifications, the Primary Division, the Junior Division, the Intermediate Division, the Senior Division, the Supervisory Officer's Development Qualification and the Supervisory Officer's Qualifications. A session of a course leading to an AQ shall consist of a minimum of 125 hours as approved by the Registrar. Successful completion of the course is recorded on the candidate's Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

This AQ course guideline provides a framework upon which to develop courses that meet accreditation requirements established in O. Reg. 347/02: *Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs*.

### Accreditation – Program of Additional Qualification

Accreditation requirements for AQ courses are articulated in O. Reg. 347/02: *Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs*, s. 24.

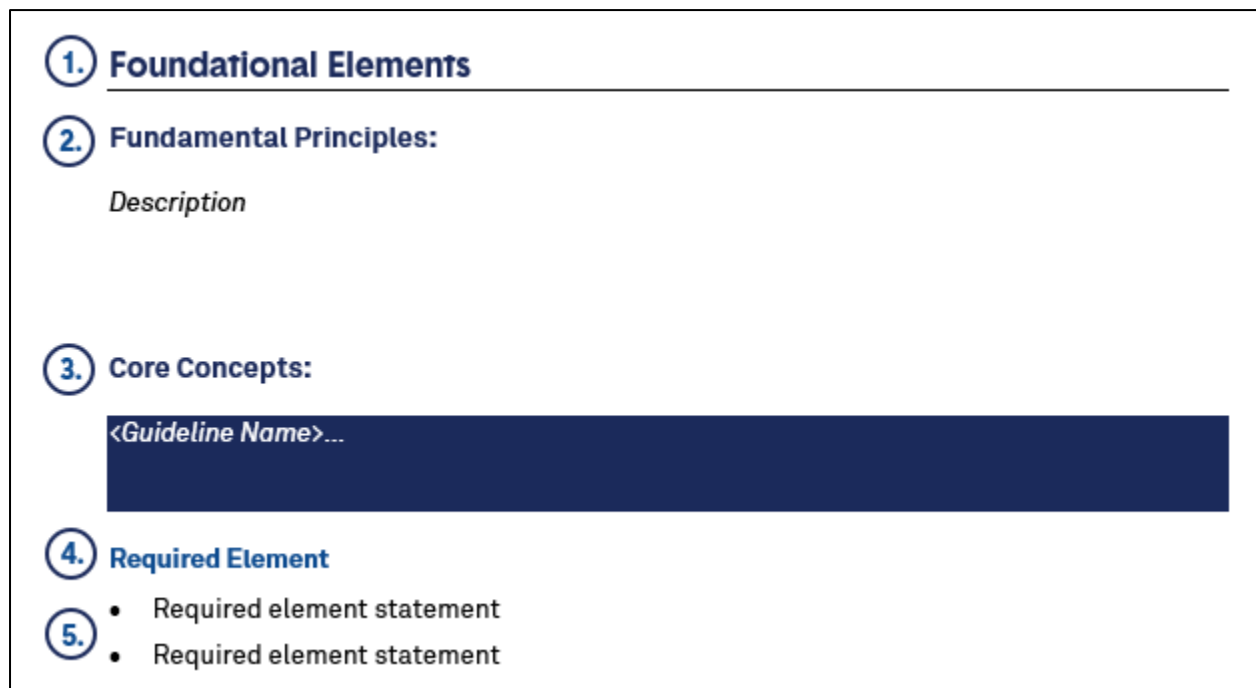
*A program of additional qualification may be granted accreditation under this Regulation if the following requirements are satisfied:*

1. The program content and expected achievement of persons enrolled in the program match the skills and knowledge reflected in the College's "Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession" and the "Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession" and in the program guidelines issued by the College.
2. The program satisfies the requirements of the teachers' qualifications regulation for entry of an additional qualification on the general certificate of qualification and registration of a person who successfully completes the program.
3. The program curriculum is current, references the Ontario curriculum, relevant legislation and government policies and represents a wide knowledge base in the program's area of study.
4. The course content of the program makes appropriate provision for the application of theory in practice.
5. The program's format and structure are appropriate for the course content of the program.
  - 5.1 The program consists of a minimum of 125 hours of work acceptable to the Registrar.
6. There is clear identification of the goals of the program, with a formal testing or assessment mechanism to determine the level of successful completion of the program.
7. The majority of the educators teaching the program have Ontario teaching experience relevant to the program.
8. The provider maintains adequate internal controls to preserve the integrity of student records relating to the program.
9. The provider is committed to continuous improvement and quality assurance of the program and, if the program is an existing program, has implemented measures demonstrating that commitment.  
O. Reg. 347/02, s. 24; 2009, c. 33, Sched. 13, s. 3 (2); O. Reg. 182/10, s. 8.

## Overview: Additional Qualification Course Guideline Design

The following section of AQ course guidelines are organized using the structure and content described below (Figure 1):

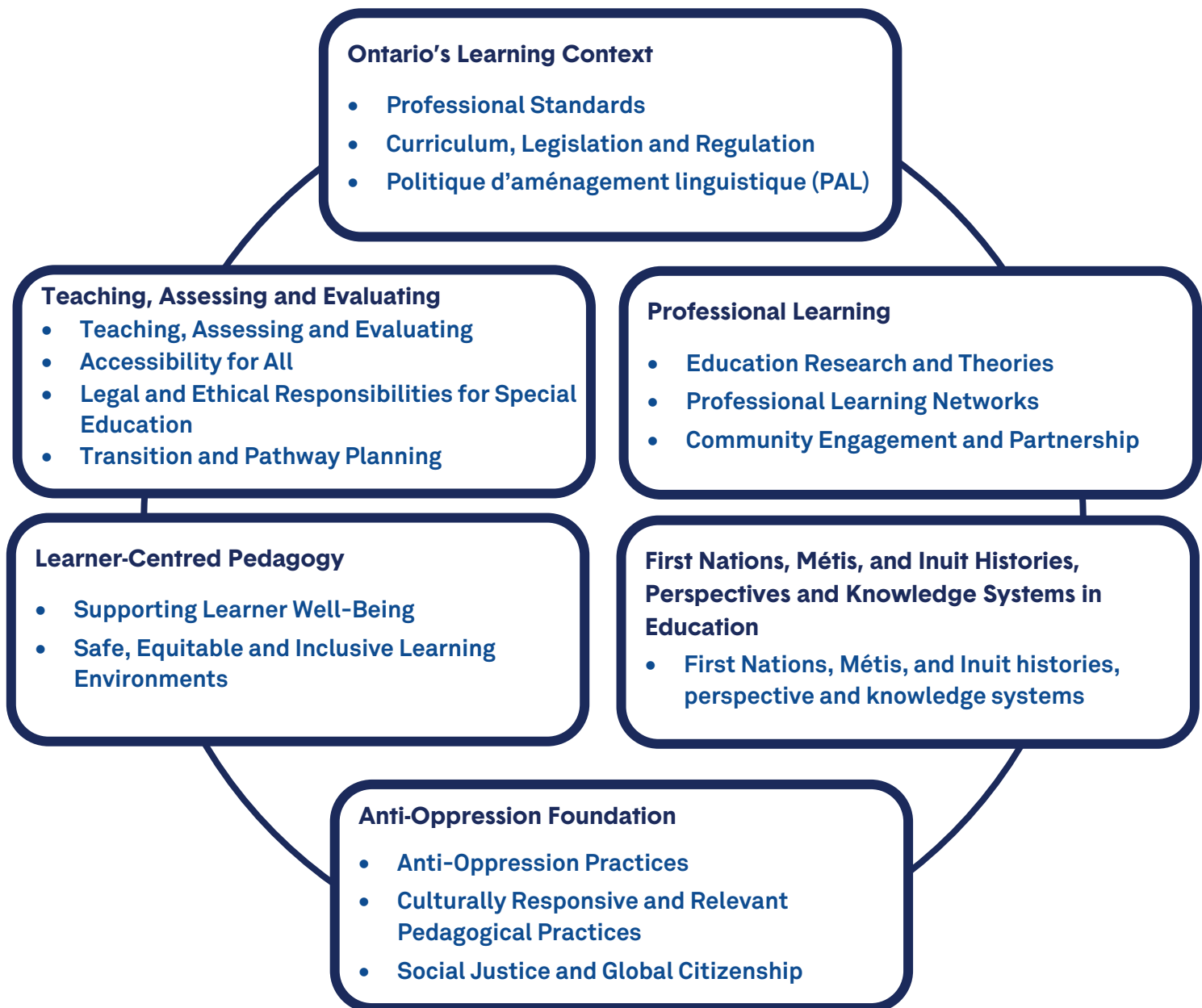
1. **Foundational elements** – six overarching distinct but interconnected elements grounding AQ course guidelines
2. **Fundamental principles** – accreditation requirements that are infused throughout the content of the AQ course and serve to inform providers and instructors of the conceptual framework from which to design AQ courses
3. **Core concepts** – candidates’ professional experience and learning needs in relation to the required elements of the AQ course
4. **Required elements** – subject and/or division specific knowledge, skills, practices and values that AQ course providers must infuse throughout the content of the AQ course
5. **Required element statements** – description of the professional knowledge, skills, practices and values related to the required element.



## Additional Qualification Course Guideline Foundations

AQ course guidelines are grounded in **six foundational elements**, which are distinct but interconnected.

There are 15 required elements in English-language AQ course guidelines and 16 required elements in French-language AQ course guidelines:



# Safe and Accepting Schools

## Additional Qualification – Schedule C (Single-Session)

This schedule C course deepens educators' knowledge and skills in the design and delivery of *Safe and Accepting Schools*.

## Additional Qualification Course Requirements

The AQ course *Safe and Accepting Schools* enables candidates to advance their professional practice through focussed learning in the following areas:

- Curriculum Knowledge
- Pedagogical Strategies
- The Learning Environment.

This AQ course is designed and delivered using adult learning instructional practices.

The AQ Course *Safe and Accepting Schools* reflects **adult learning theories and processes** that foster critical reflection, dialogue and inquiry. Instructors provide candidates with professional learning experiences related to teaching, learning and assessment of learners.

The purpose of this AQ is to support educators in the development of knowledge, skills and practices related to creating safe and accepting schools. This course enables educators to challenge oppressive practices and take action toward building inclusive environments for learning. Grounded in an understanding of legislation, policies and procedures, educators will explore their role as duty bearers to uphold the human rights of all.

## Ontario's Learning Context

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### Fundamental Principles:

Education in Ontario is complex and dynamic with learning communities that reflect the province's diversity. As the teaching profession continually evolves to meet the ever-changing needs of learners, educators are called upon to follow foundational principles that inform instructional practice.

Professional standards, the Ontario curriculum, and related legislation and regulation, including the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the *Education Act* and *Aménagement Linguistique Policy* (for French-Language schools) serve as the foundation for equitable, inclusive and accessible education.

Through ongoing professional learning, educators deepen their understanding of these principles, thereby advancing their professional practice to support each student's learning and well-being.

### Core Concepts:

*Safe and Accepting Schools* develops and applies candidates' subject-specific professional practice, knowledge and skills through explicit instruction, reflections, guiding questions or resources in the following required elements:

#### Professional Standards

- significance of the Ethical Standards, Standards of Practice and Professional Advisories as theoretical foundations within the AQ Course *Safe and Accepting Schools*
- ethical professional identity, knowledge, leadership, advocacy and collective practices to inform program planning.

#### Ontario curriculum and related Legislation and Regulation

- current Ontario curriculum, policies, frameworks, strategies and resources related to *Safe and Accepting Schools* committed to eliminating barriers to learning by responding to learners' lived experiences
- relevant legislation and policies at the municipal, provincial, federal and international levels that support human rights and privacy for all (for example, *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, *Canadian Human Rights Act*, *Ontario Human Rights Code*, *Anti-Racism Act*, 2017, S.O. 2017, c. 15 and *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*)
- candidates' legal obligations and ethical responsibilities according to current provincial legislation, and district policies and practices related to safe and accepting schools.

## Professional Learning

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### Fundamental Principles:

Professional learning is an integral part of the teaching profession and is essential for fostering continuous growth and improving outcomes for Ontario learners.

Throughout their career, educators continue to engage in ongoing professional learning informed by educational research and theories, including sessions offered by school boards or community partners, professional reading and AQ courses.

AQ courses serve as a key tool for enhancing professional practice by preparing educators for specific roles within the educational community. As part of their professional learning, educators are called upon to participate and lead in Professional Learning Networks and Community Engagement and Partnership opportunities that foster knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation to respond to diverse learner needs and create inclusive learning environments.

### Core Concepts:

*Safe and Accepting Schools* develops and applies candidates' subject-specific professional practice, knowledge and skills through explicit instruction, reflections, guiding questions or resources in the following required elements:

### Educational Research and Theories

- current research and contributions representative of diverse voices and cultures associated with professional practices, policies and pedagogies related to *Safe and Accepting Schools*
- research and theories that reflects emerging issues and society's diverse changing nature and influence on learning and well-being (for example, trauma-informed pedagogical practices and mental health resources)
- theoretical foundation for the design, assessment and implementation of programs and practices in support of learning
- theoretical frameworks associated with safe and accepting schools, including the fundamental principles underpinning human rights
- application of theories of development and identity formation that support learner well-being, efficacy and agency
- learning theories to inform the development of learners' profiles and identities, including interrelationship between neurodiversity and mental health
- implementation of trauma-informed pedagogy to create safe and accepting learning conditions.

### Professional Learning Networks

- professional learning communities that promote critical pedagogy, collective efficacy and open discourse (for example, addressing microaggressions)
- research and leadership to advance professional practice through ongoing collaborative inquiry, dialogue and innovation
- collaborative networks and partnerships that are culturally relevant and responsive (for example, implementing school violence prevention programs grounded in anti-racism).

### Community Engagement and Partnerships

- culturally responsive strategies to engage with learners, families, caregivers, guardians, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Knowledge Guardians, agencies and the school community including:
  - processes and practices to foster communication and collaboration to support learning
  - partnerships that value shared decision-making, confidentiality, advocacy and leadership
  - empowerment to navigate the education system and support learning and well-being
- strategies to build community partnerships that promote reciprocal learning experiences
- strategies to connect with community partners, agencies and social groups within the school and surrounding community to support a safe and caring environment.

## First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Histories, Cultures, Perspectives and Knowledge Systems in Education

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### Fundamental Principles:

Ontario's educators are responsible to uphold the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* and align their professional practice with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). They engage in authentic reconciliatory action by learning from and valuing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, perspectives and knowledge systems, in teaching and learning. Educators, as treaty partners, acknowledge that learning about, and upholding treaty responsibilities will guide them on the reconciliation journey.

### Core Concepts:

*Safe and Accepting Schools* develops and applies candidates' subject-specific professional practice, knowledge and skills through explicit instruction, reflections, guiding questions or resources in the following required elements:

## First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Histories, Perspectives and Knowledge Systems

- meaningful inclusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, perspectives and knowledge systems in teaching and learning processes
- knowledge of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (TRC)
- awareness of *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP).

## Anti-Oppression Foundation

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### Fundamental Principles:

An anti-oppression foundation acknowledges that systemic manifestations of power and privilege have led to multiple forms of oppression, injustices, inequities and inequalities. It is an approach that ensures equity and human rights are foundational to all AQ courses and programs.

Educators have a shared ethical and professional responsibility to identify and challenge individual and systemic barriers, including the impact of biases and assumptions related to power and privilege. Ongoing teacher education must recognize and address historical contexts that have contributed to various forms of oppression.

Through culturally responsive and relevant pedagogical practices, educators provide learning opportunities that respect diversity, foster learner well-being, and promote social justice and global citizenship.

### Core Concepts:

*Safe and Accepting Schools* develops and applies candidates' subject-specific professional practice, knowledge and skills through explicit instruction, reflections, guiding questions or resources in the following required elements:

### Anti-Oppression Practices

- theories and pedagogies about multiple forms of oppression applied to the design, assessment and implementation of programs and practices
- addressing individual and systemic biases, discrimination and barriers as well as manifestations of power and privilege to create safe and accepting spaces that respond to the intersectionality of learners' identities and forms of oppression
- addressing disproportionate representation of learners from equity seeking groups within specialized programs
- opportunities to explore concepts of rights holders and duty bearers to inform program design and practice grounded in human rights
- opportunities to unpack the historical roots of othering and its implications for creating safe and accepting school environments
- critical analysis of impacts of data interpretation and application on decision-making in schools and communities (for example, examining progressive discipline policies and addressing the interplay of race and trauma).

## Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogical Practices

- strategies to enhance bias awareness that promotes culturally inclusive practices that reflect understanding of learners' identities and intersectionalities (for example, decolonizing practices)
- strategies for exploring the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation
- implementation of culturally responsive processes, practices and resources informed by learner voice and classroom data that fosters engagement and well-being.

## Social Justice and Global Citizenship

- processes and practices that foster learners' voice and choice, respect diversity and promote social and ecological justice
- strategies for consensus-building, participatory democracy and empowerment within schools and the community
- processes that engage learners as active global citizens in supporting environmental and economic sustainability
- strategies to effect change informed by learner, staff and community data
- opportunities for learner leadership that advocates for change within the school and community.

## Learner-Centred Pedagogy

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### Fundamental Principles:

Learner-centred pedagogy prioritizes learner engagement, well-being and success. Educators support student learning and well-being by encouraging learner voice, choice, and collaboration with families, caregivers, guardians, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Knowledge Guardians and community partners.

Educators create safe, equitable, and inclusive learning environments that value diverse identities, experiences, and learning needs to ensure that all learners are empowered to reach their learning goals.

### Core Concepts:

*Safe and Accepting Schools* develops and applies candidates' subject-specific professional practice, knowledge and skills through explicit instruction, reflections, guiding questions or resources in the following required elements:

## Supporting Learner Well-Being

- policies, processes and practices to support learners' cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual and physical development
- bias awareness that informs practices to respond to the strengths, identities, needs and interests of each learner
- programs that respond to learners' lived experiences, linguistic abilities, mental health and well-being
- practices to understand learner's curiosities and experiences to empower them to reach their learning goals
- opportunities to model anti-oppressive facilitation strategies through collaborative learning
- strategies to create learning spaces that are informed by learners' lived experiences and foster respect for all identities
- application of culturally responsive frameworks to develop identity-affirming and empowering learning environments
- awareness of digital tools and processes available for learners to access wellness supports within the school and community (for example, online reporting tools).

## Safe, Equitable and Inclusive Learning Environments

- policies and processes to create and maintain inclusive, identity-affirming learning environments that:
  - respect diversity
  - encourage critical thinking
  - foster learner agency and perspectives
- strategies to foster inclusive learning environments (for example, responding to and countering micro and macro aggressions)
- understanding of roles and responsibilities in promoting and maintaining a positive school climate
- safe experiences in natural spaces to promote learner well-being
- practices that support safe and healthy learning environments for learners as well as families, caregivers, guardians, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Knowledge Guardians
- ethical use of technology in support of learners' safety, privacy and well-being (for example, implications of artificial intelligence)
- strategies that promote partnerships with parents and caregivers to build a shared understanding of the development and implementation of learner plans
- examination of the policies and practices related to third party presence in schools and the implications for learner's safety and well-being.

## Teaching, Assessing and Evaluating

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### Fundamental Principles:

Educators believe that each student can learn. Through evidence-based teaching and learning practices that are learner-centred, educators provide programs and services that offer equitable, inclusive and accessible opportunities for all. Educators use instructional strategies and assessment practices that respect the identities of each learner and support their cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual and physical development.

Accessibility, inclusion and equity are fundamental to everyday practice for teaching and learning. Informed by the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, *Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Education Act*, educators advocate for each learner to access and benefit from services and resources within the education system, understanding the unique needs presented by geographical and socioeconomic contexts.

As educators are responsible for instruction, assessment and evaluation of all learners, they provide accommodations, modifications, or alternative programming outlined in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), which must be developed by an interdisciplinary team to reflect the learner's strengths, needs, and abilities, according to Reg. 181/98.

Each learner has their own unique profile and goals. As such, educators design opportunities that support their transition, education, and life and career planning.

### Core Concepts:

*Safe and Accepting Schools* develops and applies candidates' subject-specific professional practice, knowledge and skills through explicit instruction, reflections, guiding questions or resources in the following required elements:

### Teaching, Assessing and Evaluating

- program design and implementation aligned with the Ontario curriculum that foster transferable skills to support lifelong learning (for example, critical thinking, collaboration and innovation)
- instructional strategies and approaches (for example, differentiated instruction, universal learning design, experiential learning, outdoor learning and inquiry-based learning)
- assessment and evaluation processes and practices to:
  - provide feedback to learners and adjust instruction (assessment *for* learning)
  - develop learners' capacity to be independent, autonomous learners (assessment *as* learning)
  - make informed professional judgments about the quality of learning (assessment *of* learning)
- integration of information and communication technology, including accessibility features, to enhance teaching and learning

- strategies to develop critical media literacy skills that inform meaningful analysis of and response to online content
- triangulation of assessment data, including observations, conversations and products, to create safe and accepting learning environments
- strategies to build learner capacity, agency and advocacy to foster safe and caring spaces.

### **Accessibility for All**

- ethical responsibilities related to the Ontario Human Rights Code and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act S.O., 2005
- adaptive strategies, such as assistive technologies, accessible content and inclusive design to facilitate learning and foster inclusion
- strategies to address ableism that exists in processes and practices
- practices to empower learners and families to advocate for resources and services that support their learning.

### **Legal and Ethical Responsibilities related to Special Education**

- legal and ethical responsibilities related to learner's Individual Education Plan (IEP), safety plan, and transition plan
- programs, strategies and services that support the learner in achieving individual goals outlined in their respective plans
- interdisciplinary teams to support learning, advocacy and transitions
- strategies to disrupt systemic barriers and build the capacity of families to navigate special education processes, fostering informed consent.

### **Transition and Pathway Planning**

#### **Transition Planning**

- processes and practices to support all transitions from elementary to secondary and secondary to post-secondary, including college, apprenticeship, university, workplace and community living
- policies, programs and learning opportunities that value each pathway equally and equitably
- asset-based approaches that support the mental health and well-being of learners as they navigate the complexities of pathways
- identity-affirming supports for learners and their caregivers to access diverse pathways (for example, graduation coaches).

#### **Education, Life and Career Planning**

- curriculum design to relate classroom learning to learners' career and life planning
- exploration of a variety of entry points to all career pathways (for example, continuous intake co-op and dual credit programs).

## Resources

Resources to support the development of the AQ Course *Safe and Accepting Schools* can be found on the [College](#) website and the [Ontario Ministry of Education](#) website.



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