



Windsor Essex Compassionate Community Coalition *School Engagement Strategy*

What is WECCC : (see <http://compassionatecarecommunity.com>)

The Windsor Essex Compassionate Community Coalition (WECCC) purpose is to encourage citizens to offer kindness toward each other to help people in this county to live better, thrive, and prosper, at all stages of their life journey. The belief is that promoting neighbourly acts of kindness can help our needy neighbours reduce their reliance on formal systems such as hospitals and social service agencies while strengthening the quality of our neighbourhoods. We have challenged ourselves to step up and stand out to become Canada's most compassionate community. WECCC is a coalition of more than 300 champions and 100+ agencies and associations from education, health care, social services, municipal, cultural, faith, business, non-profit, volunteer and informal sectors.

Strategic Objective:

Schools are a key partner in the Windsor-Essex Compassionate Community movement. We want to make it easy for schools to:

- Make compassion part of the experience of every learner in the county;
- Offer community-based mentorship and learning placements to youth leaders;
- Support inter-generational exchanges that normalize aging and end-of-life;
- Explore alignment of school-based community programs to support the compassionate community;
- Be part of a movement to create a culture of giving across the county.

School-aged youth can improve their communities as family members, neighbours, and as trained volunteers (and by doing so, improve their own health, learning and careers). Eventually the model can be used for all youth with lifelong challenges themselves, or whose families require extra support from their community to increase their potential for success. Our aim is to hardwire kindness and build capacity and opportunity for compassion within the next generation of human service, community, business, political and technology leaders. Youth who feel connected to and fulfilled in their community are more likely to develop an emotional investment in lifelong volunteerism and civic leadership.

School Engagement Process:

The WECCC school strategy is crafted to propose roles and activities that can be undertaken by school administrators, teachers and students in support of the WECCC movement. Support for the initial pilot will occur in Leamington in the fall of 2016 and a more comprehensive rollout across Windsor-Essex Schools will occur in the fall of 2017.

To achieve school board support, engagement and participation; a series of six advisory committee meetings have been coordinated with leadership representatives from the four school boards in the Windsor-Essex region, community leaders involved with student programs, WECCC program leadership and facilitated by members of Leadership Windsor-Essex. The school engagement process steps are described below:

1. Initiate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Confirm board participation and assigned representatives •High level review of current school community engagements
2. Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Understand and formalize engagement process for each school board •Survey teachers and students to assess interest and opportunities
3. Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Review inventory of activities and interest •Identify common themes and successful techniques to promote compassion
4. Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Brainstorm WECCC school implementation approaches •Prepare recommendations
5. Recommend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Formalize recommendation into a formal engagement strategy
6. Endorse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Wrap up and present final strategy
7. Sustain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Meet once or twice a year to refine strategy

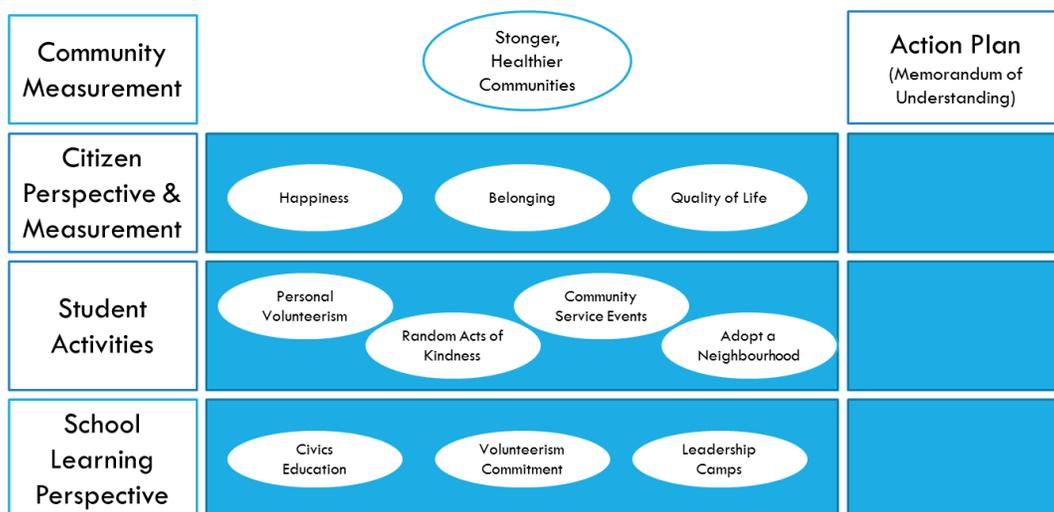
School Engagement Model:

Compassionate community engagement can be woven into the mission and the culture of our school systems

School Board Administrators	School Principals and Teachers	Students
Integrate into School Board mission	Set local school objectives	Engage in local community
Set curriculum objectives	Integrate into lesson planning	Contribute through school projects
Track contributions	Track contributions	Track contribution

To best support the value of the WECCC engagement with participants, it is helpful to consider the value and measurement that WECCC hopes to bring to the school community and to its participants. The strategy map below help to illustrate how compassionate learning opportunities help support and promote compassionate student activities and ultimately positively influence life quality measurement for the participant and for the community. This strategy’s objective will be for every participant to define an Individual Action Plan toward WECCC, led by example via each school board’s Action Plan referred to as the Memo of Understanding which will detail how school boards and participating school would like to contribute as a participant in the community.

WECCC SCHOOL STRATEGY MAP



Teaching and Learning Opportunities:

It is recognized that all school boards involved are actively engaged in formal and informal community based activities with support at the highest levels within the school boards. It was also agreed that there is much to gain through an association with WECCC in creating synergies and branding schools as compassionate leaders.

School representatives also expressed an interest to leverage and incorporate WECCC learning materials into key civics and social sciences courses and to promote WECCC philosophies throughout the learner’s education. The hope is that the student will go on to contribute as a compassionate member of society well beyond their post-secondary education.

The WECCC program team has therefore agreed to build a web-based curriculum toolkit for use by teachers leveraging the model of United Way’s “Think Global Act Local” student training program. <https://www.weareunited.com/servlet/eAndar.article/91/Think-Global-Act-Local>

Additional learning recommendations will be to promote the participation in extra-curricular school based activities where the student can put their learning experiences to practice in the community. These community experiences may in turn be recognized toward the 40 volunteer hour contribution mandated by the province as a requirement for the secondary school graduation.

Student Activities:

Schools and students should assess the value their contributions can make to the quality of life of their local communities. Here is a menu of possible roles students can engage in. Note that engagement activities should not be limited to this list. Through meetings with school representatives to prepare the strategy, many additional community involvement activities were discussed and documented and will be maintained for reference with the WECCC program team.

- Organize classrooms or whole schools as a “Compassionate Community Neighbourhood” – possibly via a community-wide Volunteer Community Social Media Marketplace. For example, within secure, self-defined “neighbourhood” social marketplace, people are being encouraged to both “offer” and “request” the help they need. Students who participate might both request help (for example, help with homework), as well as respond to the requests posted by others.
- Nearby high schools might consider “Adopting a Neighbourhood” (from list of mobilized buildings and neighbourhoods who are joining the community pilot) and encourage high school youth to help older residents in these buildings to:
 - Teach neighbourhood residents to use computers (cyber-seniors) including the new neighbourhood and personal care social network tools – using new Open Badge training curriculum being developed in partnership with Hackforge
 - Offer practical help to needy patients and families in their neighbourhoods and get community service hours – possibly as part of a Volunteer Community Social Media Marketplace. For example, people needing care and those in neighbourhoods are being encouraged to “request” the help they need within a community social marketplace (for example, help walking their dogs or yard work). Students who respond to the requests might get credit such as volunteer hours.
 - Music and art mentorship (personal music)
 - In-class or after school intergenerational activities
 - “Living History” exchanges
 - Invite seniors to help in after schools programs – for example, cooking classes – seniors from different cultures to showcase traditional cooking
- Organize or participate in a “Random Acts of Kindness Community Challenge”
 - Solicit local high schools who are willing to participate in this project with one or more of their classes
 - Through social media and focus groups, provide an opportunity for youth to be engaged in discussing, documenting and implementing ideas about how citizens can advance compassionate aging and end of life care through their individual efforts at home or school and to track the ripple effects of these small acts
 - Provide students with leadership and mentorship opportunities to advance compassion within their communities and as they prepare to enter the labour market in their chosen fields
- Participate in leadership camps and community-oriented programs
- Initiate of “Day of Compassion” to align efforts across schools and school boards and invite the media to bring awareness to the WECCC movement and student and youth involvement.