



# WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

## Tip Sheet for Program Delivery

Navigating and obtaining approval and access to deliver programming in schools can pose specific challenges for prevention and intervention programs. PREVNet's Community of Practice to Address Youth Dating Violence members have shared their expertise and experiences in this resource to assist in the process of partnering with schools. These tips are important to consider *before* contacting school divisions and seeking approval to deliver a program. These considerations are also intended to foster engagement and strengthen relationships between program staff and school staff throughout the course of your program's delivery.



### 1) Who are the key decision makers at the school district level in your area?

Each school district may have a different organizational structure, which may or may not be hierarchical in nature with respect to decision-making. For example, in hierarchical districts, decisions regarding programming may have to come from a Superintendent. Spend some time reviewing administrative structure in the district(s) you are planning to approach, to know if you should start at the school or district level.

If you need to start at the district level, see if there is a person assigned to external programs or a superintendent for safe schools or student wellbeing – these are likely the people you will need to talk with.



### 2) What are the educational policies and legislation that align with the program's goals?

Being able to demonstrate how the content and intended outcomes of your program is relevant to educational policy in both your province/territory as well as the specific district(s) you are approaching helps make a more compelling case for your program's adoption in schools. Familiarize yourself with what is mandated for inclusion and equity in the district(s) you want to work with, and/or how your program can support required learning outcomes around healthy relationships or safe schools. Also review strategic plans for the district(s) you want to work with, and try to align your pitch with the district's current goals.

These policies and plans vary by province/territory and district, so it is important to do this work for each district you want to approach.



### 3) Does your program map onto existing classroom/school curriculum?

If your program is classroom-based, programs whose content aligns with required curriculum makes for easier, more feasible implementation. Do the work to map out how your program meets curriculum requirements for that province/territory. This is likely to make your program more appealing to administrators and educators.



### 4) What are the program benefits to highlight?

Programs that are evidence-informed should result in positive outcomes if implemented well. It is important to use evaluation evidence as part of your pitch to district(s). It is even better if this evidence aligns with the specific goals of the district that you identified in Step 2. Consider providing a sheet that reviews potential benefits of your program to that specific district. This should be based on best-available research evidence, practice evidence, and lived experience, and not any one source alone.



### 5) How can I support and sustain relationships once the program is approved for delivery?

Find a “champion” or an engaged key contact who supports the goals of your program. Because of the high staff turn-over rate in schools, the more champions the better!

At the school or classroom level, work to minimize any burden on staff. For example, choose timing of delivery in full consultation with school partner(s). Review school calendars to map out your implementation schedule, and communicate this planned schedule to your partner(s) for feedback.

Communicate at appropriate and strategic times and intervals. Be respectful of educators’ workload and schedule. Identify convenient times to have brief telephone chats, or send emails during planning times, when they will most likely be able to respond easily. Talk with them about what is the best way to communicate.

Provide any additional program information in formats that are succinct and useful for educators, e.g. key takeaways, infographics.

Be appreciative – while this may seem obvious, schools and educators are extremely busy and often overwhelmed, and kindness goes a long way to building lasting partnerships!