



Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research

## Call for Proposals

To Identify a Knowledge Network Host(s) and Establish a Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network

Education Research and Evaluation Strategy Branch

### Application Guide

April 2017

## Table of Contents

Section A: Introduction .....	4
Purpose.....	4
About thematic knowledge networks.....	4
Submitting a Proposal.....	5
Who can apply? .....	5
Section B: Background and Context.....	7
Achieving Excellence .....	7
Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.....	8
What is knowledge mobilization? .....	10
Section C: Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research (KNAER) .....	12
KNAER Phase 1 .....	12
KNAER Phase 2 .....	13
What is a thematic knowledge network? .....	14
What is a thematic knowledge Network Host? .....	14
What are the communities of practice? .....	14
Guiding questions .....	16
Priority outcomes .....	16
Role of the Network Host(s) for the Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network.....	19
Section E: Submitting a Proposal.....	21
Key Components of the Proposal .....	21
Overview of Proposed Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network .....	21
Partnerships and Collaboration.....	21
Organizational Capacity - Network Host(s) .....	22
Knowledge Mobilization Plan .....	22
Evaluation Approach.....	22
Budget .....	23
Section F: Assessment of Proposals.....	24

Section G: Funding and Accountability..... 26

- Grant size..... 26
- Accountability..... 26
- Use of fund dollars ..... 27
- Scope..... 27
- Eligible costs ..... 27
- Ineligible costs ..... 28
- How will the contract and transfer payment work?..... 28

Appendix A: Glossary of Key Terms..... 29

# Section A: Introduction

## Purpose

Thank you for your interest in the call for proposals to identify a Network Host(s) and establish a knowledge network for promoting equity and inclusive education. The Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network will: bring together diverse partner organizations to mobilize evidence from educational research and professional practice connected to diversity and equity; facilitate the use of evidence-based practices for instruction to support improved educational achievement for racialized and marginalized students; and contribute to Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy in partnership with educators, researchers and stakeholders across Ontario. The Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network Host(s) will be the lead organizations responsible for coordinating the collaborative activities of the network partners and communities of practice to be established through the network.

The purpose of this Application Guide is to provide interested parties with the information they need to apply to be the Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network Host(s). This includes background information about *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education*; **Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy**; the Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research (KNAER); the eligibility requirements for the hosts; and the funding and proposal criteria. The Ministry of Education's Education Research and Evaluation Strategy Branch invites interested organizations to read this guide carefully and to submit an application aligned with the instructions.

## About thematic knowledge networks

The ministry is supporting the establishment of up to four different research-to-practice thematic knowledge networks to support the identification, sharing, adaptation and implementation of evidence-informed educational practices aligned with the goals of the Ministry of Education's renewed vision, *Achieving Excellence*. These thematic knowledge networks will focus on ministry priority topics and will receive multi-year funding for their own work and the work of related communities of practice.

The purpose of the thematic knowledge networks will be to build system capacity for knowledge mobilization and research use, and facilitate the implementation of evidence-informed education practices to enhance professional practice and students' learning, equity and well-being.

The central function of the Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network is to engage those working in the space of equity and inclusive education to identify and mobilize knowledge and research evidence to reduce systemic barriers and biases within and across education systems and broader school communities.

## Submitting a Proposal

Application submission closes on **June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017**. Please submit your completed application form no later than 11:59 pm on **June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017** to the Education Research & Evaluation Strategy Branch at [cro.office@ontario.ca](mailto:cro.office@ontario.ca). Late applications will not be assessed.

Network Host(s) will be informed of successful proposals, in writing, in the spring of 2017, and given approval for funding subject to the project agreement. Projects may begin receiving funding as soon as summer 2017. Kindly read the guidelines carefully before completing the application form.

Any questions about the application process can be directed to [CRO.office@ontario.ca](mailto:CRO.office@ontario.ca).

## Who can apply?

Cross-sectoral partnerships involving universities, school boards and/or community-based organizations with provincial reach, are invited to apply. The Network Host(s) should submit a single proposal that demonstrates knowledge and experience of implementing evidence-based practices in equity and inclusive education. The ministry invites proposals from organizations with strength in applying participatory collaborative approaches to knowledge mobilization. The Network Host must be a legal entity and demonstrate the capacity to fulfill the financial and reporting requirements of the network.

Thematic knowledge networks should include a variety of partner organizations representing researchers, educators, community-based professionals, students and families. Examples of potential Network Host(s) and partner organizations include:

- Institutes, associations and/or foundations
- Universities and colleges
- Non-profit organizations
- Research organizations
- Subject-relevant provincial organizations
- Teacher associations
- School boards
- Professional organizations (involving e.g., directors, supervisory officers, and principals)

- Managing Information for Student Achievement Professional Network Centres
- Licensed child care providers and early years professionals/organizations

When identifying partner organizations, Network Host(s) should establish a thematic knowledge network that is reflective of the geographic and regional diversities of Ontario, including but not limited to northern locations and francophone communities.

Building on the Ministry of Education's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, the Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network Host(s) will coordinate the uptake of evidence-based learning, teaching and cross-sector leadership practices with demonstrated evidence of impact. Further information about the Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network Host(s) role is provided in Section D.

## Section B: Background and Context

### Achieving Excellence

Since 2005, the ministry has had the following priorities: high levels of student achievement, reduced gaps in student achievement, and increased public confidence in publicly funded education. In 2014, the ministry released [\*Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education\*](#) with the following renewed goals for education:

**Achieving Excellence:** Children and students of all ages will achieve high levels of academic performance, acquire valuable skills and demonstrate good citizenship. Educators will be supported in learning continuously and will be recognized as among the best in the world.

**Ensuring Equity:** All children and students will be inspired to reach their full potential, with access to rich learning experiences that begin at birth and continue into adulthood.

**Promoting Well-Being:** All children and students will develop enhanced mental and physical health, a positive sense of self and belonging, and the skills to make positive choices.

**Enhancing Public Confidence:** Ontarians will continue to have confidence in a publicly funded education system that helps develop new generations of confident, capable and caring citizens.

These four goals are interconnected – success in one contributes to success in the others. Progress in the Ontario education sector over the last 10 years demonstrates that when educators, students, parents, guardians, and many other partners, focus on a small number of clearly defined goals, those goals can be achieved.

The ministry has examined how evidence, inquiry, data, research and evaluation have been used over the past decade, identifying where the education sector is seeing progress and impact, as well as the challenges it faces.

The ministry's renewed Research and Evaluation Strategy, like the renewed vision, builds on past success. The renewed Research and Evaluation Strategy includes the following components:

- **leading**, valuing and championing a strategic program of research, evaluation and quality evidence to support provincial education goals;

- **applying** research and evaluation in a culture of inquiry to support evidence-based policy and program decisions and practices;
- **building** individual, organizational and system **capacity** to share, access, and understand data, research and evaluation;
- **fostering** collaboration through **networking and partnerships** among government staff, researchers, educators and students across Ontario, to mobilize knowledge and address priority research and evaluation needs;
- **mobilizing** quality evidence and well-validated bodies of **knowledge** to support excellence in policy, program and practice; and
- **contributing** to the provincial, national, and international body of research knowledge about educational policies, programs, and practices.

Ministry responsibility for the KNAER rests with the Education Research and Evaluation Strategy Branch (ERESB) of the French-Language, Aboriginal Learning and Research Division.

## Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy

Publicly funded education is a cornerstone of our democratic society. Ontarians share a belief in the need to help students learn and to prepare them for their role in society as engaged, productive and responsible citizens. Yet, some groups of students, including recent immigrants, children from visible minority groups, children from low-income families, Indigenous students, boys and students with special education needs, among others, may be at risk of lower achievement.

An equitable and inclusive education system is fundamental to achieving high levels of student achievement. It is recognized internationally as critical to delivering a high-quality education for all learners (UNESCO, 2008). Equitable, inclusive education is also central to creating a cohesive society and a strong economy that will secure Ontario's future prosperity.

Launched in 2009, Ontario's award-winning Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy aims to help the education community identify and address discriminatory biases and systemic barriers in order to support the achievement and well-being of all students. The strategy builds on successful ministry, school board, and school policies and practices.



To achieve equity and inclusive education in Ontario schools, we have identified the following three goals:

**1. Shared and committed leadership** by the ministry, boards and schools will play a critical role in eliminating discrimination through the identification and removal of bias and systemic barriers.

**2. Equity and inclusive education policies and practices** will support positive learning environments so that all students can feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning; supported by the teachers and staff from whom they are learning; and welcomed in the environment in which they are learning.

**3. Accountability and transparency** will be demonstrated through clear measures of improved student outcomes and communication to the public about our progress towards achieving equity for all students.

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy calls for:

- each school to create and support a positive safe school climate that fosters and promotes equity, inclusive education and diversity;
- each school board to develop and implement an equity and inclusive education policy and a religious accommodation guideline for the board and its schools;
- Equity and Inclusive Education (EIE) Implementation Networks to share effective practices, resources and promote and participate in collaborative learning opportunities;
- education and community partners to support school and board efforts by providing resources and professional learning opportunities; and
- the ministry to provide direction, support and guidance.

Parent engagement is an essential component of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy. Study after study has shown that student achievement improves when parents play an active role in their children's learning, and that good schools become even better schools when parents are involved. *Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools* (2010) formally recognizes and supports a vision of parents as both valued partners and active participants in their children's education.

We envision an equity and inclusive education system in Ontario in which:

- all students, parents and other members of the school community are welcomed and respected; and
- every student is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning.

To achieve an equitable and inclusive school climate, school boards and schools will strive to ensure that all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted. We want all staff and students to value diversity and to demonstrate respect for others and a commitment to establishing a just, caring society.

For further information, please click on the link below.

Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/inclusiveguide.pdf>

Education Act and Bill 13

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/acceptSafe.html>

[http://ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills\\_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2549](http://ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2549)

## What is knowledge mobilization?

The term “knowledge mobilization” (or “KMb”) refers to the many strategies, activities, and processes through which evidence can be used to influence policy and practice. In the education system, evidence can include well-validated bodies of knowledge resulting from empirical inquiry, practitioner knowledge and evidence-based practices to improve educational experiences and outcomes for learners.

The ministry sees building system-wide capacity for knowledge mobilization and evidence use as key to the successful implementation of *Achieving Excellence* and Equity and Inclusive Education. While a wide range of KmB activities can be employed, key strategies may include:

### Developing and expanding networks to share and apply knowledge

- providing *regular opportunities* for researchers, practitioners, policy makers and/or other stakeholders *to connect and interact, exchange knowledge, collaborate, share learning and skills, and co-create knowledge*. This includes opportunities for face-to-face interaction, which can aid in building trust between diverse groups, as well as opportunities to connect virtually through social media, online professional chat rooms, and/or other virtual means;

## Building capacity for mobilizing knowledge and use of evidence

- providing *ongoing training and capacity building* that supports stakeholders in finding, assessing, and using the best available evidence in practice, sharing knowledge and skills, receiving feedback, learning and co-creating knowledge with others;
- ensuring *leaders at every level of the system are actively engaged in, modeling, and championing knowledge mobilization practices*, including finding, evaluating, using and sharing high quality evidence, creating opportunities for knowledge exchange and co-learning, and encouraging and supporting others in applying these practices;

## Engaging in and sustaining interactive activities for knowledge co-creation and sharing

- providing opportunities for open lectures, conferences, seminars, academic workshops, symposia, and exhibitions where the aim of these activities is to disseminate research to practitioners and users and co-develop evidence-informed resources that are used by educators to support their classroom practices.

## Producing, drawing on and utilizing actionable resources to share and apply knowledge

- creating, sharing, or building from existing evidence-informed *actionable resources*, such as teaching materials, toolkits, checklists, implementation and practice guidelines, and other resources that make it easy for practitioners to integrate evidence-informed practices into their daily routines.

# Section C: Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research (KNAER)

## KNAER Phase 1

The KNAER was established in 2010 through a tri-partite agreement among the University of Toronto, Western University and the Ontario Ministry of Education to build, advance, and apply robust evidence of effective practices through promoting research use, synthesizing state-of-the-art knowledge from existing bodies of evidence, and facilitating networks of policy makers, educators, and researchers, working collaboratively, to apply research to practice.

The KNAER has created a wide range of knowledge products, increased capacity for knowledge mobilization, and extended partnerships and networks across the province.

From 2010-2014, the KNAER funded 44 projects involving more than 150 partner organizations with the following key successes:

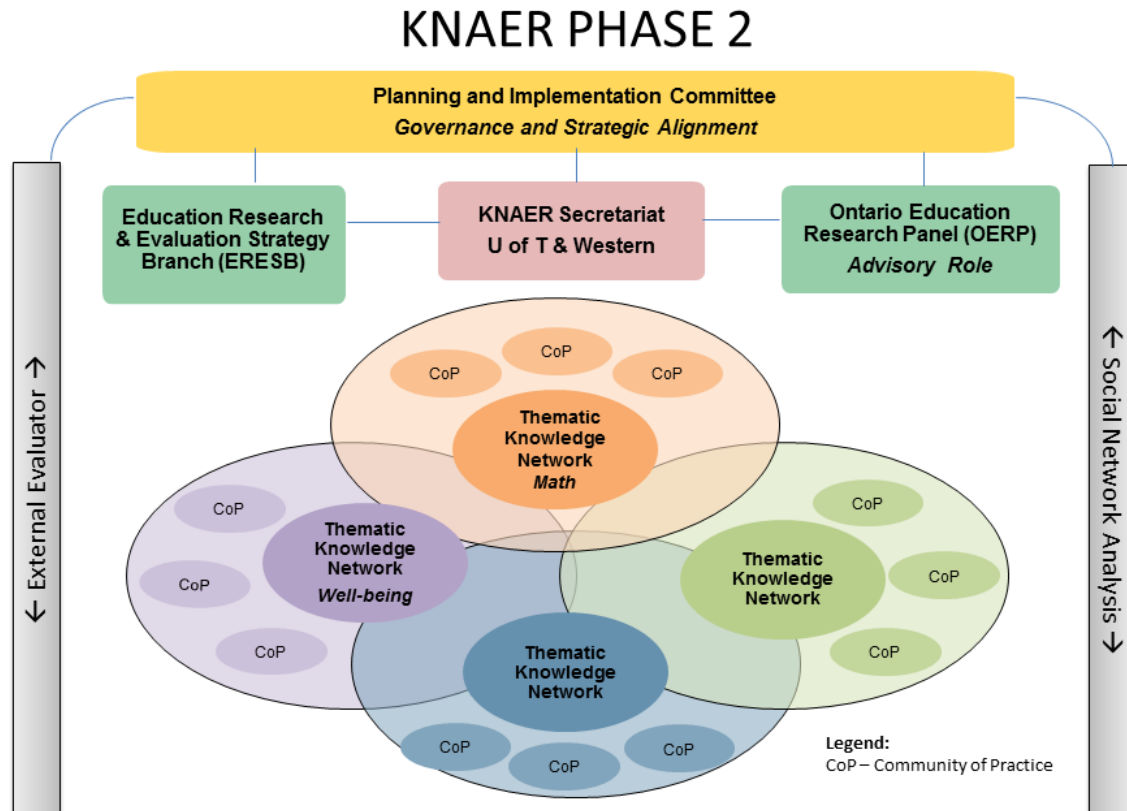
- **Enhanced collaboration and relationship building** in the sector through partnerships and networking (140 different partners of varying types involved in 44 projects, 26 of which created new partnerships);
- **Network creation and expansion**, including growing awareness of the type of plan and preparation needed to grow and expand networks;
- **Increased awareness** of the concept of knowledge mobilization and increased capacity through targeted funding and individualized project support, as well as changing mindsets around professional learning; and
- **Creation and dissemination of knowledge products** with more than 1,000 outputs (i.e., a product or activity created by a project), an online toolkit, social media campaign, and events.

In 2014, an analysis of the utility of KNAER along with a review of knowledge mobilization literature, interviews with KMB experts, and strategic planning sessions with Ontario educators and researchers, led to the development of recommendations for a renewed KNAER. A key recommendation was that the KNAER continue to build on its successes and identified challenges, while evolving towards a systems approach to knowledge mobilization.

For further information about the KNAER, visit the KNAER website by [clicking here](#).

## KNAER Phase 2

From 2015-2020, the KNAER is building on its previous successes and learning by supporting thematic knowledge networks that employ a systems approach to KMB to enhance knowledge mobilization on clear and specific priority themes.



The graphic above provides a visual representation of the KNAER thematic knowledge network model. The first two of four Network Host(s) have been identified and are in the process of establishing the knowledge networks for mathematics and promoting well-being. The third thematic network will focus on equity in education.

The ministry will be leading a developmental evaluation and a social network analysis of the KNAER. Lessons learned will support new learnings and innovation that emerge as part of the ongoing work of the networks with considerations for sustainability.

The university partners form the KNAER Secretariat, which will support and connect thematic knowledge networks and communities of practice, provide and champion

knowledge mobilization and knowledge network expertise, and build capacity for knowledge mobilization and brokering research-practice connections.

The KNAER Secretariat will provide knowledge mobilization expertise, training, tools, and resources to assist networks in developing knowledge mobilization plans and using effective knowledge mobilization strategies that support knowledge mobilization, sharing, co-creation, and evidence use.

## What is a thematic knowledge network?

Each of the KNAER thematic knowledge networks (as depicted in the graphic above) will bring together multiple partners to form a provincial network and local communities of practice. Working collaboratively, the networks will support evidence-informed practices connected to the goals of *Achieving Excellence*. Connections between and among the networks will be encouraged in order to maximize the outcomes related to the KNAER objectives: mobilization, collaboration, interaction, and sharing of research and practices across networks and communities of practice, to improve the achievement and well-being of Ontario students and early learners. Thematic knowledge network partner organizations may exist at the provincial or regional level.

## What is a thematic knowledge Network Host?

The thematic knowledge Network Host(s) are the organizations that will partner to lead the thematic knowledge network, broker connections and facilitate planning, collaboration, coordination and interaction among network partners, receive and disburse network funding, and facilitate the establishment of the network's communities of practice.

As the network lead(s), the host organization(s) will demonstrate the organizational and leadership capacities required to support large-scale knowledge mobilization efforts.

## What are the communities of practice?

Communities of practice are groups of individuals who collaborate on shared interests to co-create and support evidence use to inform educational practice connected to the thematic knowledge network goals.

Communities of practice will operate at local, regional or cross-regional levels to address specific problems of practice related to the priorities of the larger thematic knowledge network. For example, the communities of practice may:

- engage in inquiry, adaptation and use of evidence-informed practices to benefit professional practices and students' engagement, learning, achievement and well-being;

- bring together educators, researchers, intermediaries and others, on a shared priority, to inform co-construction, co-learning, and use of evidence to inform educational practices connected to the larger network's priority goal;
- demonstrate a range of KMB strategies, such as developing and sharing actionable tools and resources linked to the network theme, developing lesson plans and teaching material, toolkits, checklists, implementation and practice guidelines, and other resources that make it easy for practitioners to integrate evidence informed practices into their daily routines;
- partner and collaborate with the ministry, KNAER Planning and Implementation Committee (PIC) and KNAER Secretariat to mobilize knowledge
- provide a space for ongoing significant and appropriate interaction, knowledge exchange, co-learning partnering and collaboration for the co-creation of knowledge; and
- self-assess, monitor and report on progress outcomes and impact, and use self-assessment and monitoring for future planning.

Each thematic knowledge network will establish a small number of communities of practice to address priority questions.

## Section D: Roles and Activities of a Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network

This call for proposals is a call to action to education and research leaders to address systemic, persistent inequities in school achievement among racialized and marginalized children and youth. The Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network is an opportunity for those working in the space of equity and inclusive education to engage in on-going learning, collective thinking and purposeful action to identify and reduce systemic biases within and across school communities. The Equity Knowledge Network will comprise a group of organizations committed to advancing equitable outcomes for racialized and marginalized students; and promoting a shared understanding of the differentiated supports that all children and youth need to thrive and prosper in Canadian society.

### Guiding questions

In alignment with *Achieving Excellence* and the Phase 2 KNAER objectives, there are three overall guiding questions to inform the work of the knowledge network:

1. What are some of the evidence-based, research-informed, promising practices and ways of ensuring equitable outcomes for students and addressing systemic barriers to achievement for racialized and marginalized students?
2. How can the unique perspectives of community and sector-specific knowledge and expertise be co-developed and leveraged across the province?
3. How can leaders across the education sector best be supported to work in collaboration to expand effective practices and improve outcomes for racialized and marginalized students in schools and school boards?

The communities of practice may develop sub-questions specific to the needs of their communities and contexts aligned with the three overarching questions.

### Priority outcomes

Aligned with the intended outcomes of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, the following **priority outcomes** could be addressed through a Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network.

- Identification and mobilization of effective evidence-based supports to improve learning conditions for racialized and marginalized students;



- Identification and reduction of the systemic barriers and biases that contribute to inequitable outcomes and low student achievement;
- Increased educator capacity to understand the lived experiences of racialized and marginalized students and use this knowledge to create environments that promote student leadership and voice;
- Enhanced partnerships among sector leaders to ensure equitable and inclusive practices maximize student learning in environments where students feel safe, respected and included;
- Increased cross-sector leadership capacity to grow an equity focused practice; build equity consciousness; and develop an equity lens;
- Increased collaboration, partnership and networking between and among the ministry, community-based organizations (e.g., parent, or student led), thematic knowledge networks and associated communities of practice and;
- Learning environments that promote attitudes, beliefs, practices and policies that create optimal learning conditions for racialized and marginalized students.

## Activities of the Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network

Sample activities of a Learning and Leading for Equity Network may include, but are not limited to:

- mobilizing evidence addressing systemic barriers to student achievement for refugee and immigrant students;
- identifying barriers and mobilizing effective post-secondary access strategies for students by creating multiple pathways for student learning, engagement and experiential learning;
- mobilizing tools and resources to support the implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy;

- identifying and mobilizing professional practices that acknowledge and leverage the lived experiences of marginalized and vulnerable children and youth to support their learning;
- leveraging the work of Inclusive Design to support educators in creating flexible and responsive learning environments;
- building capacity and understanding at district school boards on how to use identity-based data to inform targeted supports and resources;
- building capacity across networks to identify, share and use evidence in practice to address complex issues related to student's language, culture and identity;
- building professional knowledge and capacity focused on supporting students who self-identify as LGBTQ;
- providing regular opportunities for practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders to engage in, and with, evidence to promote equity strategies in schools and school boards;
- creating evidence-based, culturally relevant and actionable resources to support and inform leadership and teaching practices;
- mobilizing best practices in student, parent and community engagement that honour and champion student voice and identity; and
- identifying and mobilizing equitable and inclusive practices when working with family support programs, child care, and other early childhood inquiry-based programs.

Network Host(s) should describe their organizational capacity to engage in these types of activities and ability to leverage networks and provincial connections in support of an Equity Knowledge Network. Recent experience shows that the strongest applicants are those who demonstrate a robust capacity to partner with research institutions, schools districts and community based organizations to deepen understanding of school reform and education practice related to equity and diversity in education.

# Role of the Network Host(s) for the Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network

The Network Host(s) for the Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network will establish and/or develop a network of organizations and individuals connected to the thematic priority area(s) of teaching and learning related to equity and student achievement. The responsibilities of the Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network Host(s) will be to:

- mobilize evidence and evidence-based practices that address achievement and opportunity gaps impacting racialized and marginalized students, including, but not limited to, Islamic, black, immigrant and refugee students;
- establish and/or develop a network of organizations and individuals focused on improving contextual supports and equitable outcomes for racialized and marginalized students;
- build leadership capacity across the education sector to engage in issues of equity and discrimination impacting student learning across all levels of the education system;
- provide expert leadership on quality knowledge and evidence related to the equity and diversity in education;
- partner and collaborate with the ministry, Planning and Implementation Committee (PIC), and KNAER Secretariat to mobilize knowledge within and across the Learning and Leading for Equity Network and the wider Ontario education system;
- manage the day-to-day operations of the network including receiving multi-year funding on behalf of the network;
- lead and facilitate a shared vision, implementation plan, outreach efforts and participation in the network;
- mobilize research (including producing tools and resources) to support implementation of scalable evidence-based practices across the education and related sectors;

- lead the establishment and operation of communities of practice;
- coordinate, collaborate and build capacity within, and across, communities of practice; and
- coordinate self-assessment, monitoring and impact evaluation.



# Section E: Submitting a Proposal

## Key Components of the Proposal

The proposals for identifying Knowledge Network Host(s) and establishing the Learning and Leading for Equity knowledge network will be reviewed based on the criteria outlined in Section G of this Call for Proposals. Proposals will be submitted by the Network Host(s) on behalf of the knowledge network partners. Network Host(s) should review the following key components for the proposal and ensure their application addresses the requirements outlined below.

## Overview of Proposed Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network

The proposal should include a brief overview [max 500 words] of the proposed Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network, including a clear vision, priority outcomes, partnerships, key strategies and activities, and description of themes for communities of practice.

## Partnerships and Collaboration

Network Host(s) must establish a network comprised of new and/or existing partners with expertise and experience in diversity, equity and inclusive education, research and knowledge mobilization. The partnerships that will form the network should also be reflective of the geographic and regional diversities of the province.

The role of the Network Host(s) is to partner and collaborate with the ministry, KNAER PIC and KNAER Secretariat to mobilize knowledge within and across the equity and inclusive education network and the wider Ontario education system.

Proposals should include:

- The names of organizations who are collaborating in the role of Network Host(s) of the Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network
- The names of key organizations and individuals that will partner to form the Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network
- The expertise and experience of the partners in equity and inclusive education
- The specific benefits of the partners involved and the value they will bring to the network
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the network partners

- Letters of support from partner organizations

## Organizational Capacity - Network Host(s)

Network Host(s) should demonstrate their organizational capacity to lead a knowledge network focused on equity. The Network Host(s) should demonstrate their organizational capacity to lead and coordinate the activities of the network that includes:

- a description of the Network Host(s) demonstrated expertise and experience in equitable and inclusive education; and
- a description of prior experience in establishing and maintaining networks with multiple partners and/or establishing or leading Communities of Practice to improve teaching and learning.

## Knowledge Mobilization Plan

Network Host(s) are required to submit a high-level, multi-year knowledge mobilization plan that reflects potential knowledge mobilization activities as described on pages 10-11 of this Call for Proposals.

The plan should include:

- priority outcomes in the short, medium and long-term;
- key strategies and activities of the network;
- overall project timelines, major activities, with clearly articulated outputs;
- priority themes for communities of practice; and
- identification of individuals and/or participating organizations responsible for major tasks.

Upon approval, the Network Host(s) will work with the KNAER Secretariat to develop a more extensive and detailed knowledge mobilization plan. The Secretariat will provide expertise on knowledge mobilization and help develop the knowledge network's knowledge mobilization capacity.

## Evaluation Approach

Network Host(s) are required to describe their proposed evaluation approach for a Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network. The evaluation approach should provide valuable information about how the network operates, and how the network activities are impacting learning conditions that foster equitable outcomes for all students.

## Budget

Network Host(s) are required to submit a multi-year budget that includes expected expenditures for network activities along with a budget narrative. Please see the section on eligible expenses (Section G) for more information.

Network Host(s) are encouraged to combine funding sources in support of their network. The proposed budget should fully disclose continued or anticipated cash or in-kind contributions from lead or participating organizations, and any relevant funding sources for ongoing or existing programs that are being leveraged as part of the network proposal.

## Section F: Assessment of Proposals

	Criteria	Weight
Network Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly articulates the vision and priority outcomes that focus on systematic barriers, biases, assumptions within schools and classrooms</li> <li>Vision and focus reflect ministry priorities in equity and inclusive education</li> <li>Rationale for why the partnership between the Network Host(s) is ideal for leading a knowledge network focused on equity and inclusive education</li> <li>Key strategies and activities that are relevant, achievable and aligned with established KMb practices</li> <li>Description of themes for the communities of practice (either confirmed or tentative)</li> </ul>	10%
Partnerships & Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Range, scope and span of established/proposed partnerships</li> <li>Network partners identified;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes partners that reflect the geographic and regional diversities of the province</li> <li>Includes various types of partners and communities of practice (e.g. universities, school boards, non-profit organizations etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Provides detail of partner expertise in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusive education, research, knowledge mobilization</li> <li>Demonstrates commitment and engagement of network partners</li> <li>Makes explicit commitment to partner and collaborate with ministry/ KNAER PIC and KNAER Secretariat</li> <li>Demonstrates experience, expertise and/or capacity of network partners to undertake the proposed partnership and achieve desired results in a timely manner</li> <li>Provides evidence of existing networks and collaborations among partners</li> <li>Provides strategies for building and maintaining networks</li> <li>Experience in outreach to diverse and/or marginalized communities.</li> </ul>	30%



	Criteria	Weight
Organizational Capacity	<p>Organizational Capacity of Network Host(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides evidence of expertise in equity, inclusive education, research and/or knowledge mobilization</li> <li>• Demonstrates capacity to lead, manage and coordinate an education knowledge network focused on equity and inclusive education and communities of practice</li> <li>• Demonstrates capacity for outreach to diverse and/or marginalized communities</li> <li>• Demonstrates existing capacity to achieve the intended outcomes of the network including the communities of practice</li> <li>• Demonstrates capacity to manage government funding and fulfill financial and reporting requirements</li> </ul>	20%
Knowledge Mobilization Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates how network activities will support Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy</li> <li>• Demonstrates how key strategies and activities are linked to child and student needs, or evidence-based approaches ensuring equitable outcomes for all children</li> <li>• Priority themes for communities of practice are identified and are relevant to the network's priority outcomes</li> <li>• Target audiences are identified</li> <li>• Network leads for major activities are identified</li> <li>• Overall timelines, outputs and activities clearly identified</li> </ul>	20%
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly articulates an evaluation approach, including identification of expertise within the network to support the evaluation</li> <li>• Clearly articulates within evaluation approach the expected collective impact of network activities</li> <li>• Clearly articulates activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes of networks and communities of practice</li> </ul>	10%
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies multi-year budget and deliverables</li> <li>• Demonstrates the extent to which the budget is reasonable in relation to the goals, design and potential impact of the partnerships</li> <li>• Demonstrates feasibility and alignment of proposed expenditures</li> <li>• Clearly identifies all in-kind contributions</li> </ul>	10%

Please submit your completed application form no later than 11:59 pm on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017, to the Education Research & Evaluation Strategy Branch at [cro.office@ontario.ca](mailto:cro.office@ontario.ca). Late applications will not be assessed.

## Section G: Funding and Accountability

### Grant size

The Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network will be funded at approximately \$325,000 per fiscal year for an estimated total of **\$975,000 over three years**. A minimum of \$100,000 from this amount must be allocated for funding the activities of the communities of practice.

### Accountability

Funding will be provided to the Network Host under a funding agreement between the host and ERESB. The Network Host will be responsible for managing and executing the project under the funding agreement with ERESB. The funding agreement will set out the terms and conditions governing the payment of the grant, and may include:

- project budget;
- project management;
- communication strategies for monitoring and reporting requirements, including annual/semi-annual progress reporting, audits and financial reports;
- milestones and performance measures;
- mode and schedule of payment; and
- contract termination and corrective action.

The successful Network Host will:

- be accountable to ERESB for all monies and project components, and will be considered to be the final decision-making authority among partners for the project under the funding agreement;
- manage their operational plan to meet financial and accountability reporting requirements and deliverables, as identified in the funding agreement;
- be responsible for receiving, administering, and allocating funds to any partner organizations in accordance with the requirements of their agreements;
- be responsible for measuring results and reporting on their performance as required by their funding agreement; and
- be required to submit regular reports that will be used to assess the progress of implementation, as well as comply with financial and auditing requirements, as required by the funding agreement.

ERESB will review all reporting and monitoring to ensure compliance with the funding agreement and its terms and conditions.

It is anticipated that funding will be allocated in installments according to a specific payment schedule and program phases. The payment of funding installments will be dependent on the host meeting all program and reporting requirements under the funding agreement with ERESB.

## Use of fund dollars

The use of funds and eligible costs will be governed by a transfer payment agreement. The following information is provided to assist organizations in preparing their applications.

## Scope

In scope:

- Creation of a provincial research-to-practice thematic knowledge network with associated communities of practice in equity and inclusive education in the Early Years to Grade 12

Out of scope:

- No primary research will be funded through this agreement

## Eligible costs

Costs that are reasonable and necessary for the successful operation of the knowledge network and implementation of a knowledge mobilization plan are admissible. These costs need to be supported by acceptable documentation.

The ministry anticipates that it may fund activities and outputs such as the following:

- costs directly related to organizing professional learning opportunities (e.g., travel and meeting costs, release time etc.);
- costs associated with creating, sharing or building from existing evidence informed actionable resources, i.e., tools that enable practitioners to integrate evidence-informed practices into their daily routines (e.g., teaching materials and resources, toolkits, implementation and practice guidelines);
- costs associated with organizing activities and creating products that highlight the work of the knowledge network and expand the network's reach into the community, and which include, but are not limited to, information sessions and multimedia products;

- costs related to events and activities that are designed to disseminate research to practitioners and users (e.g., open lectures, conferences and seminars, academic workshops, symposia and exhibitions, social media); and
- administrative expenses including net new or incremental network activities that result in time-limited expenses not already accounted for through other sources of funding. Administrative costs will be capped to a maximum of 10% per fiscal year and must be supported with acceptable documentation.

## Ineligible costs

Costs and expenses that do not directly support the network's activities are not eligible for funding and should not be included as part of the network budget. Examples of ineligible costs include the following:

- interest expenses incurred on operating loans;
- professional organization fees paid on behalf of staff for membership in professional organizations;
- property tax expenses;
- fundraising expenses;
- capital loans;
- mortgage financing;
- reserve funds capital costs (this includes expenses amortized for longer than the grant duration, including the construction of new facilities);
- profit making activities;
- budget deficits;
- legal challenges, costs and settlements;
- public relations and fundraising costs;
- donations; and,
- costs covered by other government funding

## How will the contract and transfer payment work?

The Learning and Leading for Equity Knowledge Network Host(s) and associated communities of practice will be governed through transfer payment agreements with the Ministry of Education that will define network theme, timelines, deliverables, and a network multi-year budget.

The successful Network Hosts must comply with the ministry's accounting and procurement practices and submit interim and final reports. The ministry will provide the report forms and templates.

## Appendix A: Glossary of Key Terms

Sharing a common language and understanding of the terms used in all documentation, will support clarity in communicating goals and expectations across networks. Below are a number of terms currently used in CFPs and in guidelines within the KNAER network.

**“Communities of practice”** (or “CoPs”) are groups of individuals who collaborate on shared interests to co-create and support evidence use to inform educational practice connected to the network goals.

**“ERESB”** is the Education Research and Evaluation Strategy Branch (ERESB). The ERESB leads the Research and Evaluation Strategy for the ministry. Ministry responsibility for the KNAER lies with the ERESB.

**“Evidence-based”** means policy-making that is grounded in extensive research – where the problem and options are defined against thorough research and analysis; policy options are evaluated against specific measurable criteria; information is collected and evidence is explicitly considered; and knowledge gaps are proactively identified and addressed.

**“Fiscal year”** means the period running from April 1 in one calendar year to, and including, March 31 in the next calendar year.

**“In-kind contribution”** means non-monetary resources that organizations provide to support the project. In-kind contributions could be in the form of cash-equivalent goods or services, which, if not donated, would have to be purchased with project funds.

**“KNAER”** is the Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research

**“KNAER Secretariat”** is comprised of the university partners: the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto and Western University. The KNAER Secretariat provides the connective ‘glue’ for knowledge mobilization between and among KNAER activities and partners.

**“Knowledge brokering”** may occur through the creation, translation, sharing, and understanding of research-based evidence.

**“Knowledge mobilization”** (or “KMb”) refers to the many strategies, activities, and processes through which evidence can be used to influence policy and practice. In the education system, evidence can include well-validated bodies of knowledge resulting

from empirical inquiry, practitioner knowledge and evidence-based practices to improve educational experiences and outcomes for learners.

**“Network Host”** the network host organization will lead the thematic network with organizational, fiscal and management responsibilities

**“Ministry”** refers to the Ministry of Education within this document.

**“Ontario Education Research Panel”** (or “OERP”) acts as an advisory body to the KNAER. Members include, but are not limited to, Ontario educators, relevant researchers/experts on areas connected to KNAER’s purpose, and ministry staff.

**“Ontario Institute for Studies in Education”** (or OISE) at the University of Toronto is a university partner that forms the KNAER Secretariat as part of a tri-partite agreement with Western University and the ministry.

**“Western University”** (or “Western”) is a university partner that forms the KNAER Secretariat as part of a tri-partite agreement with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and the ministry.

**“Planning and Implementation Committee”** (or “PIC”) is comprised of the senior ministry leadership, the Education Research and Evaluation Strategy Branch, and the KNAER Secretariat. The PIC provides governance and oversight of the KNAER.

### **How to apply**

Please submit your completed application form no later than 11:59 pm on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017 to the Education Research & Evaluation Strategy Branch at [cro.office@ontario.ca](mailto:cro.office@ontario.ca). Late applications will not be assessed.

Kindly read the guidelines carefully before completing the application form.

#### ***If you have a question, please contact us!***

Any questions about the application process can be directed to [cro.office@ontario.ca](mailto:cro.office@ontario.ca).

#### **Want to learn more about the KNAER?**

[Click here](#) to go to the KNAER website.

