

Municipal Rep Day – Pilot Project Overview

CIVIX has partnered with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to pilot an edition of the *Rep Day* program with municipal elected officials.

Organized by [CIVIX](#), *Rep Day* is a civic education initiative that connects elected representatives with students for a discussion about the political process and current issues. Rep Day aims to help students develop a better understanding of, and sense of trust in, the people and institutions within our democracy. CIVIX has organized Rep Day at the federal order of government since 2013.

With many municipalities throughout the province experiencing issues like low youth voter turnout and engagement, a program such as Rep Day provides a great opportunity to foster engagement between youth and their elected representatives, and allows opportunity for positive discussion. Ideally, participating youth will depart each Rep Day meeting with their local elected representative with more knowledge about the importance and relevance of municipal government, and elected representatives will take away the priorities and concerns of their youngest constituents.

The deliverables for the pilot project are as follows:

- CIVIX and AMO will coordinate 12-16 Rep Day meetings with council members in eight selected municipalities (Ottawa, Hamilton, Kingston, Guelph, Innisfil, Parry Sound, Timmins and Sault Ste Marie) to take place by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.
- CIVIX has created a *Conversation Guide* to share with participating elected representatives on the relevance of municipal government, and the ways in which municipal government addresses important issues in the community.
- CIVIX has developed a variety of municipal-level resources (3-4 lesson plans) to support students' learning about municipal government and issues in their community
- CIVIX has developed a framework to structure each Rep Day meeting, with icebreaker activities to support active listening, reflection and inclusive dialogue.
- CIVIX and AMO will provide communication and logistical support to local elected representatives and schools leading up to each meeting.
- CIVIX will evaluate the pilot program and analyze and assess its impact, as well as gathering feedback from participating elected representatives and schools.

Participating schools receive a variety of learning resources, including lesson plans and activities to support learning about municipal government and the role of municipal elected representatives. Students learn about government, elections, and informed citizenship. They also research their local municipality and create action plans for community needs they have identified. To prepare for the meeting, students reflect on their interests and issues facing their community to generate questions for their local elected representative. After the visit, students are encouraged to maintain dialogue through a follow-up letter, giving them a chance to reflect on the discussion.

As part of the pilot program, CIVIX will evaluate the impact of this initiative through teacher and student surveys. If elected officials are available and interested, in addition to a survey we would like to attempt a more rigorous evaluation in collaboration with the Canadian Municipal Barometer. This would simply require two visits to the same group, where the class is divided into two. Half of the group will meet with the elected official first, and the other half will have the opportunity to meet with their elected official shortly thereafter.

The goal of splitting the class into two is to give us a randomized control sample. This will allow us to ensure that our sample is unbiased. More importantly, it will allow us to make the case that any positive change can be attributed to the Rep Day program and the meeting with the elected official rather than to other external factors.