

# Managing Noise in the Classroom by Building RAMPS

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## Good acoustics – a sound investment

The major goal of classroom education is to transmit and transact knowledge, share experiences and exchange ideas, thus assisting students to become independent thinkers. For many students, typical classroom levels of noise create barriers in achieving this goal. Poor acoustics may negatively affect listening, learning and psychosocial behaviour. Those at risk include students who are deaf and hard of hearing, learning disabled, developmentally disabled and those for whom English is a second language. Investment in good acoustics has a sound economic foundation. The benefits include improved access to curriculum for all students and reduced vocal strain for teachers, resulting in less absenteeism.

## Current legislation

Under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001, broader public sector organizations, such as public transportation organizations, school boards, hospitals, and colleges and universities, are required to prepare and publish annual accessibility plans. Information about this obligation is available at [www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/](http://www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/).

## Noise, reverberation and distance – Challenges to listening in the classroom

Research clearly indicates that most classrooms are too noisy. In addition, reverberation, or sound reflection, tends to smear speech signals, making it difficult to perceive them clearly. Optimal speaker-listener distances and a signal to noise ratio of at least +15 dB, recommended for children with hearing loss, are rarely achieved (Classroom Acoustics, a resource for creating learning environments with desirable listening conditions, ASA).