



YORK CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE



Supporting Parent Engagement for Student Achievement

January 2012

Dear Catholic School Council Chairs:

I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the York Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (YCPIC), to send you greetings and an update, for you to share with your Catholic School Council.

This past fall, I attended the "People for Education Conference", where our new Minister of Education Laurel Broten made her first public address as Minister. She expressed how honoured and excited she was to begin her new role and that the Ministry is presently "looking for better ways to support our kids and parent engagement."

Minister Broten expressed how important parent engagement is to the success of all students and that of our education "*system needs parents to be more involved.*" To help encourage parent involvement, the Ministry will be looking at "*modern ways to hear and communicate with parents*" and would also like "...both teachers and parents to see *the benefits of a real and reciprocal partnership.*" Minister Broten concluded by saying that she is "*looking forward to working with all of the partners in education.*"

The Ministry of Education web-site, www.edu.gov.on.ca has a link for parents. I would encourage you to visit the site and to view the various types of information and resources, which are available. I have attached a copy of the info sheet entitled Parents in Partnership. A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools. This sheet gives a very good synopsis of what the Parent Engagement Policy means and who will benefit from parent engagement. The YCPIC's hope is that you will share this information, about parent engagement with your CSC's, so they can then share it with all the parents in your school community.

The YCPIC and the Ministry of Education would like to encourage all CSC's to include parent involvement as a major focus for the upcoming year. Many CSC's have already set up a subcommittee and the hope is that all CSC's will.

A reminder that the YCPIC, in partnership with the Board, has decided not to hold a one day CSC Conference. It was felt that holding Regional Parent Involvement Sessions, at a school in your local area, would prove to be more accessible. The YCPIC and the Board are in the process of organizing and booking the dates for your upcoming sessions. As soon as all plans are finalized, the information will be sent out to all CSC's and principals. The YCPIC is looking forward to meeting with all the CSC's and school staff, to work together to enhance parent involvement at the YCDSB!

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to attend a YCPIC meeting. YCPIC meetings are public meetings. Our upcoming meeting dates are Wednesday, February 1st and Wednesday, May 23rd at 7 p.m. at the CEC (Board Office), located at 320 Bloomington Road West in Aurora. Hope to see you there!

If you have any suggestions, questions or concerns about parent involvement, please send them to: ycpic@rogers.com.

On behalf of the YCPIC, I would like to wish you and your families a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Yours in Catholic Education,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paula Bandi".

Paula Bandi, Chair-York Catholic Parent Involvement Committee

Attachment

Parents in Partnership



A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools

Parents are vital partners in education. They influence their children's attitudes about learning, and support learning at home. They are a vital link between home and school. And when they become involved in the life of the school, they make our schools better places to learn, grow and thrive. Ontario's new parent engagement policy recognizes that student achievement and success increase when parents are welcomed and respected as partners, and given the support they need to contribute at home and at school.

How does the policy define parent engagement?

Ontario's parent engagement policy recognizes many different forms of parent engagement, and that each is an important contributor to student and school success. Within the policy, parent engagement includes:

- Providing a positive learning environment at home, actively working with children to support what they are learning in school, and making learning an important part of the day
- Having productive conversations with teachers so that there is clear communication between the school and the home
- Becoming involved in school activities and volunteering to help with school events, trips and other activities
- Participating in School Councils at the school level and Parent Involvement Committees at the school board level, to provide perspective.

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In Ontario's education system, all partners acknowledge the positive impact of parent engagement on student achievement. Students are supported and inspired to learn in a culture of high expectations in which parents:

- are welcomed, respected and valued by the school community as partners in their children's learning and development;
- have opportunities to be involved, and also a full range of choices about how to be involved, in the educational community to support student success;
- are engaged through ongoing communication and dialogue with other educational partners to support a positive learning environment at home and at school;
- are supported with the information and tools necessary to participate in school life.

How will the policy support and increase parent engagement?

The parent engagement policy identifies four key success strategies designed to support parents as partners so that they have the opportunity, skills and tools to work together with education partners and contribute fully to the success of Ontario's students and education system.

Strategy 1:

School Climate - Foster and sustain a positive, welcoming school climate in which all parent perspectives are encouraged, valued and heard.

Strategy 2:

Eliminating Barriers - Identify and remove barriers to parent engagement that may prevent some parents from fully participating in their children's learning and to reflect the diversity of our students and communities.

Strategy 3:

Supports for Parents - Provide parents with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to support student learning at home and at school.

Strategy 4:

Parent Outreach – Review and expand communication and outreach strategies such as local workshops, presentations, tools and resources, to share information and strategies related to supporting learning at home and parent engagement in schools.

How will the goals of the policy be reached?

The policy identifies specific actions to be undertaken at the provincial, regional and local levels by the Ministry of Education, Schools and District School Boards.

How do students and parents benefit from parent engagement?

Research on parent engagement tells us that there is a direct connection between parent engagement and:

- Improved academic achievement
- More positive attitudes about school
- More success with homework
- Higher rates of high school graduation
- More consistent school attendance
- Fewer behaviour problems
- A brighter future for students at school and later in life.

How do teachers benefit?

Teachers who actively partner with parents enjoy better parent relationships, and a wide range of benefits:

- Parents are more supportive because they understand what is happening in the classroom
- Parents help to ensure homework and assignments are done
- Parents share the responsibility for student success and work with the teacher
- Parents have a more positive view of teachers and the school
- Student attendance and classroom behaviour improve
- Student achievement improves
- Teachers have a stronger connection with parents, feel supported by parents and have higher job satisfaction.

How do schools benefit?

Schools are connected to the communities around them. Together, parents, community members and schools can create a powerful support network to provide children and youth with the services they need, develop innovative school-community programs, and enrich the life of the school. As a result:

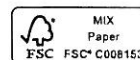
- Families and community organizations more fully support the school
- Whole-school and individual student achievement often improve
- Schools are connected to businesses, agencies and services in the community
- Schools gain greater recognition for their achievements and their valued role as an important part of community life.

How does the education system benefit?

The Ministry of Education, District School Boards and schools benefit not only from the important work parents do to help their children succeed in school, but also by ensuring that parent perspectives are heard and considered in developing policies and programs at the provincial, regional and local levels.

We all benefit

Together, we are building possibilities for our children and transforming these possibilities into a reality.



To learn more: visit www.ontario.ca/EDUParents

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