

Ministry of Education

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation

Édifice Mowat
Queens Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Kit Rankin
Director
Field Services Branch

Marie-France LeFort
Manager
Parent Engagement Office

DATE: October 19, 2006

SUBJECT: *Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants for Schools: Application Process for School Councils to Reach out to Parents who may Experience Challenges in Getting Involved in their Child's Education*

In their literature review about the influence of families on student achievement, Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp (2002) found that when “schools, families and communities work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more”.

As first announced in the Ontario Parent Involvement Policy released in December 2005, \$1M is being allocated through a new grant program to support school council-led initiatives to enhance the participation of parents who face challenges in getting involved in their child's education. These challenges may include recent settlement to Canada, level of language proficiency in English/French, socio-economic difficulties, physical challenges, or difficulty in getting transportation to the school.

This memorandum provides important information on this new Parent Involvement Grant Program:

A. Read, Share, and Inform:

The Ministry will be sending Grant Proposal Kits to each school and school board. We ask that Directors of Education share this memo and the attached Grant Proposal Kit with their Supervisory Officers and/or the staff person who has responsibility for school councils at the board level. School board staff are encouraged to read through the Grant Proposal Kit and talk about the program with principals, school councils and with the board's parent involvement committee, and to support those school councils who wish to submit a project proposal.

The *Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant* for schools provides a unique opportunity for school councils to facilitate greater contact between the school, parents and the community. Even though this grant program was developed first and foremost for school councils, applying alone or in partnership with other parents or groups in the community, it is also possible for school boards to encourage a school or family of schools to complete a proposal.

Extra care was taken, with advice from parents, to develop a simple form, in recognition of the time available to school council volunteers and to limit the administrative burden on school principals and school boards. **The full application form, reporting template and instructions for completion are attached to this memo and are also available as a web based document at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/>**

B. Important Dates:

1) November 21, 2006: final date for the school council to submit a project proposal to the Parent Engagement Office and to the school board.

School councils will have until **November 21, 2006** to submit a project proposal. In addition to sending a proposal to the Parent Engagement Office (PEO), a signed copy of the proposal is to be sent to the school board, in care of the Director of Education. This allows the board to review all school council proposals, if they wish to do so, to ensure the projects are consistent with school board policies and strategies related to parent involvement. Boards who wish to take this opportunity to review project submissions with the board's parent involvement committee are also encouraged to do so.

2) December 5, 2006, and December 12, 2006.

After a formal application review process at the Parent Engagement Office is complete, the office will contact school boards by **December 5, 2006**. School boards will be asked to confirm that projects, considered eligible by the Parent Engagement Office, are consistent with board policies and strategies for parent involvement.

Important: Please note that specific school projects not supported by the school board will not be funded. Where the Parent Engagement Office has not heard back from the school board by **December 12, 2006**, it will presume that all eligible projects are to be funded and will proceed with drafting contracts to the school board for this purpose.

3) Week of December 18-22

After receiving notification from school boards, the Parent Engagement Office will prepare the contracts for the transfer of funds. Boards will return the signed contracts to the Parent Engagement Office and the money for approved projects will be transferred. School boards are asked to facilitate the distribution of grant money to school councils and to make the funds easily accessible; this mechanism may mirror the process for distributing the \$500.00 parent involvement allocation to school councils.

C. For More Information on PRO Grants for Schools:

If you have questions or need assistance during the grant application period, you may contact Jerry Sundercock, School Council Grant Coordinator:

by phone: 1-800-265-4221, Extension 224 or

by email: jerry.sundercock@ontario.ca

After December 12, 2006, questions may be addressed to the Parent Engagement Office:

By phone: 1-800-387-5514

By email: parent.participation@ontario.ca

D. Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants for Regional/Provincial Projects

A second grant program will make funds available for regional and provincial projects aimed at enhancing parent involvement. Parent organizations are encouraged to apply. Ontario school boards and school authorities, non-profit organizations, volunteer-sector associations, and Ontario post-secondary institutions can also apply in partnership with parents. Grant application kits are also available as a web based document at

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/>

We thank you for your continued support and collaboration in the implementation of this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Kit Rankin
Director,
Field Services Branch



Marie-France LeFort
Manager,
Parent Engagement Office

c. Regional Managers, Ministry of Education