

**Ministry of Education**

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Dear PIC Chairs and Co-Chairs,

I am pleased to invite two members of your Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) to attend the second annual PIC Symposium to be held in Toronto on the evening of Friday, April 8 and all day on Saturday, April 9, 2011. Building on the success of last year's symposium, there will be a variety of workshops and sessions on topics of interest to PICs, and opportunities to discuss challenges and to share good ideas with each other and ministry staff. You will be contacted with more details in the near future.

We are all aware of the important role of parent engagement in fostering improved student achievement and well-being. Last September, our government released *Parents in Partnership: a Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools*. Hard copies of the policy are being distributed, and should be delivered to each PIC shortly. Additional copies are available through Publications Ontario at [www.publications.serviceontario.ca/ecom](http://www.publications.serviceontario.ca/ecom).

We also filed amendments to Ontario Regulation 612, School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees. A draft handbook to support implementing the regulation will be shared soon, and your input will help shape the final product. The policy and regulation support the government's commitment to improve student achievement and well-being, close the gap in student achievement and build public confidence in publicly funded education.

We will continue to send you information about ministry initiatives to support your committee's work, such as *Promoting a Positive School Climate: A Resource for Schools* that was recently distributed to PICs. The ministry developed this resource to help schools create and maintain a positive climate. Its practical ideas will help schools working with their safe schools teams to address challenges. The resource complements what is already being done, and brings together ideas from various initiatives, including character development, equity and inclusive education, student voice, and safe and healthy schools. You can access the resource online at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/climate.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/climate.html).

The ministry's Parent Engagement Office continues to work with our education partners on resources to support learning and student achievement across the province. A tool kit for parents, designed to support their important role of contributing to improved student achievement for their children, has been developed. A resource binder is part of the tool kit, and contains a sample survey for boards and schools to use for gauging parents' satisfaction about parent engagement. The material is based on evidence and experience, drawing upon broad consultation with PICs, parents and board personnel from across the province. The tool kit will be distributed shortly to school boards and authorities in hard copy, as well as on memory stick, and each PIC will be sent a copy.

In your role of supporting parent engagement in our children's education, we encourage you to inform parents about the Canada Learning Bond program. To help encourage early savings for postsecondary education, this federal government program provides \$500 plus an additional \$100 per year up to the age of 15. To be eligible, a parent must be in receipt of the National Child Benefit Supplement as part of the Canada Child Tax Benefit, and their child must be born after December 31, 2003. Additional information can be found on the Government of Canada website at [www.canlearn.ca/eng/saving/clb/index.shtml](http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/saving/clb/index.shtml).

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to helping engage parents in our children's learning, and to share effective practice. With your support, advice and enthusiasm, I know that the second annual PIC Symposium will be a valuable opportunity for all of us as, together, we foster parent engagement.

I look forward to our April meeting and our continued collaboration to achieve excellence in education in Ontario.



Leona Dombrowsky  
Minister of Education

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