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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education, District School Boards
Supervisory Officers/Secretary Treasurers, School Authorities
Director, Provincial Schools Branch

FROM: Barry Pervin, Assistant Deputy Minister
Instruction and Leadership Development Division

DATE: September 3, 2010

SUBJECT: Ontario's new Parent Engagement Policy and Regulation 330/10:
School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees

I am pleased to inform you that today the ministry released *Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools*. In addition, Regulation 612 *School Councils* has been amended by the addition of provisions for Parent Involvement Committees (PICs). The new Regulation 330/10: *School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees* was filed on September 1, 2010. An electronic copy of the policy is appended for your convenience, and the policy can also be found on the ministry website at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/index.html>. The regulation can be found on the e-Laws website at http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2010/elaws_src_regs_r10330_e.htm.

The policy and the regulation complement one another, and support the government's commitment to improve student achievement and well-being, to close the gap in student achievement, and to build public confidence in publicly funded education.

Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools formally recognizes and supports a vision of parents as both valued partners and active participants in their children's education. The *Parent Engagement Policy*:

- recognizes, encourages and supports many forms of parent engagement
- recognizes and supports the important role parents have contributing to their children's learning at home and at school
- identifies strategies to remove barriers to parent involvement (e.g. communications and language)
- supports parents in acquiring the skills and knowledge they need to be engaged and involved in their child's learning
- provides a parent voice at the local level (e.g. PICs and school councils as well as individual parents talking to teachers and principals).

The policy provides the vision of parent involvement, sets out four strategies to support parent engagement, and includes an action plan for schools, boards and the ministry. The policy also showcases some of the many exemplary practices across the province.

Regulatory requirements relating to Parent Involvement Committees, including the requirement that each board establish a PIC and provisions about their composition and functions, have been made under the authority of the *Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act (2009)*.

The purpose of PICs is to support, encourage and enhance parent involvement at the board level to support improved student achievement and well-being. The PIC achieves its purpose by providing information and advice to the board on effective parent engagement strategies and practices, communicating with and supporting school councils and undertaking activities to help parents support their children's learning at home and at school.

There are provisions in the regulation to allow all PICs (new and existing) time for a smooth transition:

- New PICs (those not yet established): boards will be required to establish PICs by January 31, 2011 and be in compliance with all remaining provisions in the proposed regulation by November 15, 2011.
- Existing PICs: will be required to be in compliance by November 15, 2011.

The policy and the regulation reflect a supportive approach that recognizes the complexity and differences among school boards and their communities. We recognize that there is already effective work underway in schools and boards to engage parents in support of their children's learning. The policy and regulation promote consistency across school boards and provide guidance, while allowing flexibility to address local needs.

A practical handbook for PIC members is in development. Our consultations on the policy and regulation have provided us with many suggestions on information to include in a PIC guide. The guide will be a practical, helpful and user-friendly handbook for PIC members. We hope to have the guide ready for use for the next school year in draft form, and will invite the feedback of users to inform the development of the final product.

Your support for these two important initiatives is acknowledged and appreciated. We look forward to working with you as together we strive to fulfil the vision of parent engagement to enhance student achievement and well-being in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Barry Pervin

- c. Executive Assistants to Directors of Education
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