

Ministry of Education

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Telephone 416 325-2600
Facsimile 416 325-2608

Ministère de l'Éducation

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Téléphone 416 325-2600
Télécopieur 416 325-2608



September 3, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

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 newly amended 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 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 in 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 the composition and functions of PICs, have been made under 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 in support of improved student achievement and well-being. PICs are formal structures and important advisory bodies to the board. The PIC is a parent-led committee; the chair/co-chair(s) are parents and the majority of members are parents. To provide a direct link to the director and the board, the director and a trustee are also members of the PIC. PICs decide whether to include other members, such as principals, teachers, support staff and community members to suit local needs.

While school councils are school-based advisory structures, PICs focus on matters that affect more than one school. The PIC provides information and advice to the board on effective parent engagement strategies and practices. PICs also communicate with and support school councils, and undertake activities to help parents support their children's learning at home and at school. From time to time in the coming year, I will send further information to PICs about ministry initiatives. As stipulated in the regulation, from time to time, the ministry may solicit the advice of PICs on matters that relate to student achievement and well-being.

Our government's approach to publicly funded education continues to be one of respect, collaboration and consultation with our education partners. In the development of both the policy and the regulation, extensive consultation took place. The policy and the regulation reflect a supportive approach that recognizes the complexity and differences among school boards and their communities. They will promote consistency across school boards and provide guidance, while allowing flexibility to address local needs.

The policy and regulation are important to supporting your work and enhancing parent engagement in support of children's learning at home and at school. We recognize that there is already effective work underway in schools and boards to engage parents in support of their children's learning. These initiatives further the government's commitment to parent engagement at all levels in support of student achievement and well-being.

I am pleased to be moving forward with these important initiatives, and look forward to working with you as together we strive to encourage and enhance parent involvement in support of improved student achievement and well-being.

Sincerely,



Leona Dombrowsky
Minister of Education

Enclosure

- c: ACÉPO - Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario
- AFOCSC - Association Franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques
- OCSTA - Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
- OPSBA - Ontario Public School Boards' Association
- Directors of Education
- Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)
- Regional Office Managers