



# SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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## WELCOME TO YOUR FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

This month we look at the ongoing challenge of engaging parents to participate in school councils and with their children's education. We hope that you will find the tips helpful.

Please take some time to visit our website and the additional resources and blogs on parent engagement and school council operations at [www.parentsengagedineducation.ca](http://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca)

Next month, we will be discussing successful tips to run a School spring Fair.

*Theresa Pastores*

*Executive Director,  
Parents Engaged in Education*



# 10 REASONS *To Get Involved* AT SCHOOL

1

## **VOLUNTEERING MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE.**

Research consistently shows that kids whose parents are involved in their schools do better.

2

## **VOLUNTEERING OFFERS TANGIBLE WAYS TO BE PART OF THINGS.**

Sometimes we might mean well, but our busy lives get in the way of committing. Joining a parent group will provide concrete ways to get involved, whether at events, in the classroom, or on a committee.

3

## **IT FEELS GREAT TO PARTICIPATE!**

Your child spends a lot of time at school, and it's great to share some of her school-related experiences with her.

4

## **YOU'LL GET TO KNOW OTHER PARENTS.**

It's powerful to create a circle of adult friends around a school, and having a shared interest is a good place to start. What's more, it can help foster connections between families in your community.

5

**YOUR HELP IS ALWAYS NEEDED.**

Whether it's helping run the next big event or providing support in the classroom, there are always ways to pitch in.

6

**IT'S A MANAGEABLE COMMITMENT.**

Volunteering can seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be. Spend an hour at a bingo night or talent show, and your efforts will be appreciated. And remember, it's always OK to say no when you're busy.

7

**IT'S FUN!**

Even simple events like pizza nights and family reading nights can spice up your week.

8

**YOU CAN TAILOR VOLUNTEERING TO PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS.**

Within a parent group or school community there are many ways to contribute, some of which are sure to complement your strengths, interests, or professional skills.

9

**HAVE A GREAT IDEA?**

Volunteering gives you opportunities to get your ideas out there.

10

**VOLUNTEERING PROVIDES ANOTHER WAY TO GET TO KNOW SCHOOL AND SUPPORT STAFF**

To better understand their needs and ideas.

*[www.ptotoday.com](http://www.ptotoday.com)*

# RECRUITING

## *Parent Volunteers*

### AN ONGOING PROCESS

To keep a school council thriving year after year it is important to continue to recruit parents throughout the year, not simply before school council elections.

**There are many opportunities to engage parents which happen regularly at every school, these include:**

#### **KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION**

This is a great time to get new, and often enthusiastic, parents and introduce them to the value of parent engagement both at home and at school.

Having a school council information table for the registration or introduction to kindergarten evenings where members can talk about the work the councils does at the school. It also gives council members a chance to explore the interests and skills of these new community members to identify how they can play a role in assisting the council in achieving their goals.

#### **CURRICULUM NIGHT / PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEWS**

These evenings tend to bring out the greatest number of parents. It is an excellent opportunity to present on the value of parent involvement at home and at school. It is also the best time to have a school council presence promoting the role of the council and the goals that they hope to accomplish during the school year.

#### **GRADE 8 OPEN HOUSE**

Having a strong school council representation at open house is the perfect time to encourage parents, especially those who have been involved at the elementary level, to continue the important work of being a member of the school council in secondary school. It is important that they get the message that their involvement has never been more important to their children.

## TIPS FOR CONTINUING RECRUITMENT OF PARENT VOLUNTEERS

1. Throughout the year there may be new students transferring into the school and it would be helpful if the school council had a welcome package for the family. Part of this package could be parent resources in the area, information about school council meetings and contact information of the parent leaders of the council.  
Perhaps make part of the next school council agenda a welcome meeting for new parents to the school which helps make the new family feel part of the community as well as an opportunity to introduce the work of the council.
  2. Use social media to post pictures of fun events hosted by the school council as well as agendas for upcoming meetings.
  3. Recognize an outstanding volunteer for the work that they do in the school. Not only is this a positive thing for the volunteer, but it shows others that the council does appreciate the work of parents and the role they play at the school.
  4. Offer child minding at events and at council meetings. This will allow more parents to attend without having to arrange babysitting for their children.
  5. Talk, talk, talk about the work and positive experience of partnering with the school administrator to improve the educational experience for students in the school.  
Don't wait for a school event to speak to parents about being part of the council, talk to parents you meet in the playground, bus stops or other community activities everyday.
  6. Set up a car pool for council members to assist those who do not drive get to meetings or events.
  7. Establish a "bring a friend" challenge every couple of meetings. This can be very effective if you have a draw for a gift card for those who bring a friend to a meeting. It adds a bit of fun to the challenge and can double the size of your council over the course of the year.
  8. Make meetings more fun by introducing an icebreaker activity at the start of each meeting. There are many online resources that provide downloadable activities.
  9. Now that you are halfway through the school year and parents have attended an event or two, it is a good time to survey parents and ask if and how they can help out at upcoming events. For instance, parents may see that it is easy to give an hour or two and register families for an event or sell raffle tickets etc. and volunteer to do this at the next event.
  10. Make every meeting valuable to those in attendance by having a topic that is relevant to the school community i.e. traffic in drop off area, school bus safety, school learning plan etc.
  11. Ask parents to provide their contact information at events and ask if a member could call them and remind them about an upcoming meeting. Set up a phone tree with council members each taking responsibility for calling a few parents and inviting them to the next meeting.
- These are just a few ideas and you will have others that are relevant to your school community, but, it's a start.

*Happy Recruiting!*

# Planning Parent Engagement

A Guidebook for Parents and Schools



**GREAT RESOURCE FOR SCHOOL COUNCILS AND  
PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEES**

**LINK: [HTTP://WWW.ONTARIODIRECTORS.CA/PARENT\\_ENGAGEMENT.HTML](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html)**

# ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO

## Learn how the Ontario College of Teachers safeguards students

Our parent brochure is available in English and French as well as Arabic, Chinese, Ojibway, Tagalog, and Tamil languages!

Download our brochure today at [oct-oeo.ca/parent-brochure](http://oct-oeo.ca/parent-brochure)



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[www.cathydandy.ca](http://www.cathydandy.ca)

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### Make a Difference

You can make a difference in your child's future. The **Talk With Our Kids About Money** program uses fun activities to engage kids in discussions about money matters that are relevant to their lives. Free resources to help - organized by the age of your child.

A PROGRAM OF

**CFEE** CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR ECONOMIC EDUCATION  
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SUPPORTED BY



Resources are available at **no cost** via the website go to: [talkwithourkidsaboutmoney.com](http://talkwithourkidsaboutmoney.com)

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ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT  
AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO

BECOME A PEIE  
AMBASSADOR

AND BE A PART OF YOUR CHILD'S  
SCHOOL COMMUNITY



**Parents**  
ENGAGED IN EDUCATION  
*Ambassador*

*A P.E.I.E. Ambassador will...*

Promote the mission of the organization.

Share the organization's resources with their school community.

Work to engage other parents with their children and their school.

Be their child's biggest  
CHEERLEADER in school!

*For more information, visit*  
[ParentsEngagedInEducation.ca](http://ParentsEngagedInEducation.ca)

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Parents Engaged in Education is a not-for-profit organization formed by experienced school council members to provide resources and skill building opportunities for parent leaders across the province.

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