



SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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topic of the month

Summer's HERE!!



The school year is already drawing to an end and it seems every year time goes faster and faster.

Parents Engaged in Education have had a busy and successful year. We have enjoyed meeting so many involved parents at our events and knowing that people are finding our newsletters and brochure series a valuable resource is very gratifying for our team of volunteers.

This month's issue is brief as we know that many school councils do not meet in June because parents are busy with end of the year school activities.

We do want to take a moment to cover the topic of wrapping up the school year for school councils and to offer a great article from Roy Fernandes with some learning suggestions for parents and students to share over the summer.

We hope that every student, parent, teacher and administrator enjoy a safe and fun summer break.

School Councils

WRAPPING UP THE YEAR

The end of the school year can be one of the busiest times for the members of school councils with year end community events, graduations and succession planning for next year's council.

This is an excellent time to recruit new parents for next year when the community can see the results of the hard work of the council. Whether you have worked to raise funds to improve the educational experience of students at the school, hosted a parent learning/engagement event or planned a fun fair/BBQ for the community – you have made a difference for all students. Sometimes, it is the silent work that is done by the council through partnering and supporting the school administrators that is the most important work that a council does in a year. Be sure to communicate this work to parents as well. Unless they attend meetings regularly they are likely unaware of this important responsibility of school council members.

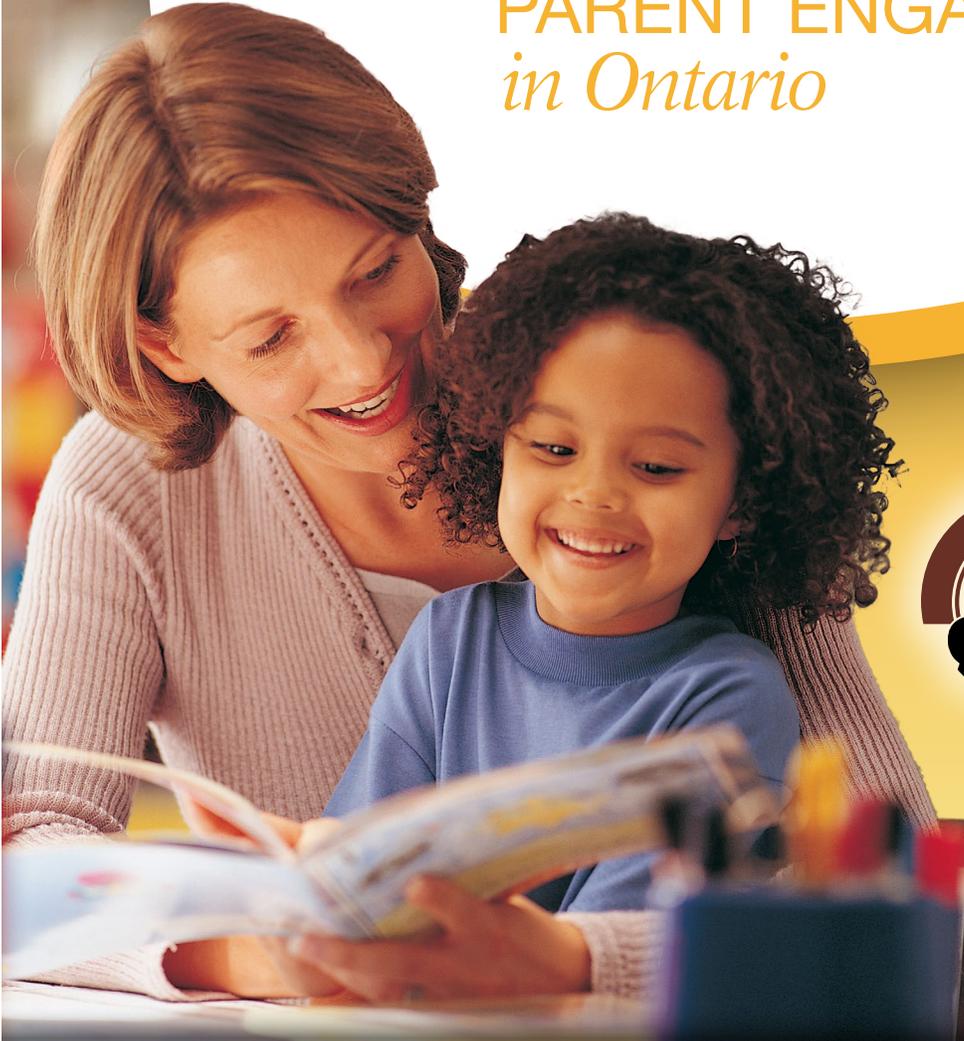
Take some time to go over the plan you made at the beginning of the year to revisit your goals and determine those which were accomplished and those that require further work next year. If your council did not create a specific plan for the year it is still a great time to look at all that was done and perhaps make some notes on what still can be done. This is the start of planning for the next school year.

Regulation 612 requires every school council to provide an annual report of it's activities along with a financial statement.

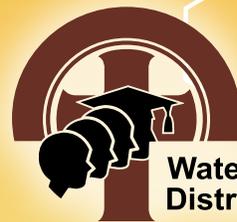
This report can be the most valuable tool in engaging new parents to run for election for a position on the school council in the next school year. This is an opportunity for members to be proud of all the work that they have done. It is also an opportunity to outline the goals of the council which could be accomplished next year with the increased participation of parents on the council.

Consider areas where a parent with a specific skill or talent could have contributed to a project or provided valuable input to a council discussion. Point out these areas in your annual report. Perhaps a parent with these skills will read the annual report and consider taking part in the council in the upcoming school year.

The report may identify a challenge with communicating with parents to let them know about matters the council will discuss at upcoming meetings or events that will assist parents in engaging with their children to increase their academic achievement. A suggestion that parents provide the council with permission to email them directly will lay the groundwork for requesting this information in the new school year. Parents need to know the reason behind a request and giving them information about why the lack of contact information creates a challenge for the council may make more parents more comfortable with the request.



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ELECTION *Planning*

Last month our focus was on the Election Procedures for school councils. In that article we suggested that the election committee be formed in May, but, definitely before the end of the school year. It is a good time to establish, in consultation with the Principal, the date of the Annual General Meeting which must take place within 30 days of the start of a new school year.

School council members can use the summer, at baseball games, local playgrounds, pools etc. to talk to parents who, are part of the school community to try and get them involved next year.

WHAT DOES PARENT ENGAGEMENT LOOK LIKE IN THE SUMMER?

Often parents breathe a sigh of relief in the summer because the stress, for themselves and their child, of getting that homework or project done is off their shoulders. While this is true, now is the time for parents to play the role of the educator once again in their child's life.

REMEMBER THAT A PARENT IS THE FIRST AND MOST CONSISTENT EDUCATOR IN THEIR CHILD'S LIVES.

Engagement looks different in the summer. Learning as a family in the summer can be great fun. Every adventure and every activity can be turned into a learning experience by asking questions and inspiring your child to find new things a challenge.

The article included in this newsletter by Principal Roy Fernandes contains some great suggestions for engaged learning over the summer.

A Summer filled with

FUN LEARNING

Written by: Roy Fernandes, Principal

Two glorious months of summer holidays lay ahead, but of course as parents, we may face the dreaded b word..."I'm bored!" Now my philosophical answer to my children if I hear that phrase is "no boring days, just boring people." Or better yet a line way back when from Big Comfy couch when my kids were young enough to watch that show "MYOF Make your own fun." As I continue on this tangent, I do understand that for some, make your own fun might include making the world's biggest chocolate sundae and eating it in one sitting, or seeing how hard you can throw a ball in the house without breaking the tv, so with that in mind a few other ideas on how to engage your kids during the summer holidays

1

Get to the public library and get there a lot – There’s nothing quite like going to the library and finding books on topics that interest you. Of course the key is going to be that as soon as you get home, find time to read together or even read in the library itself. Remember that all new learning starts with information and the way you interact with that information.

2

Give your children new experiences – new experiences can be as simple as riding the public transit with them – it’s free!; wandering through the Path system downtown; taking a hike in a forest; or sitting in a park and listening to the sounds around you.

3

If you can bribe, threaten or cajole your children into it, get them to keep a weekly journal on something amazing that happened in the past week – it could be directly related to the ideas in #2

4

Find ways to work Math into your day to day conversations – be it the budget for grocery shopping this week; a challenge on planning a fun family day trip for a set budget (\$20 including peanut butter sandwiches for those without allergies (!), and a free ttc trip to a downtown park followed by a single scoop ice cream cone); a trip to what for me would be painful beyond painful - the shopping mall – but again it can be turned into a budget lesson or even percent and discount for older children.

5

Take a look at the many opportunities for summer time learning that are out there – addity.com; tcdsb.org; tvo kids are just a few sources to consider.

The above list shouldn’t be a check list but rather suggestions to help demonstrate your own life long learning to your children. When children see that we’re interested in learning, it piques their interest as well.

Most of all, be sure to spend time enjoying the nice weather with your children, getting active with them and having fun. Holistic education means that academic work is important and needed, but so too is the need to just allow our kids to be kids.

Happy Summer

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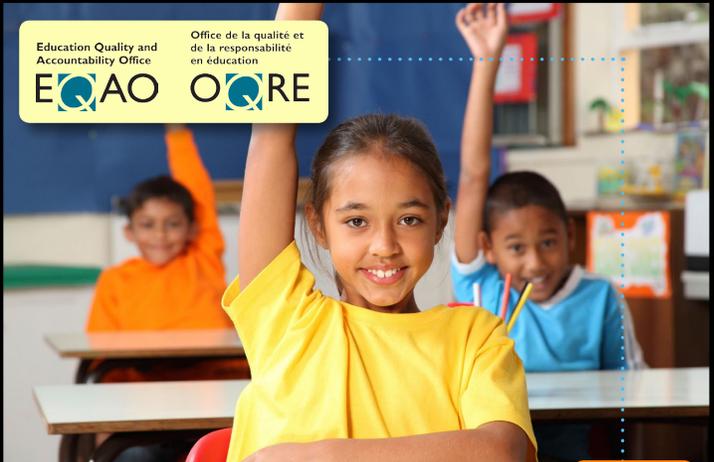
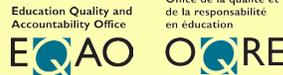
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Parents Engaged in Education is a not-for-profit organization formed by experienced school council members to provide resources and skill building opportunities for parent leaders across the province.

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