

March

INSIDE
this issue

Paul Davis - Virtual
Learning FYI 02

Zoom Tips for Your
School Council Meeting 03

Hosting a Successful
School Fair/Carnival 07

Time to Engage 10

Family Involvement V.S.
Family Engagement 12

2022

ParentsEngagedInEducation.ca

PARENTS ENGAGED IN EDUCATION



SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 66

March break is over and we are finally headed into spring. This is a great time to get out and get active, get kids outside in the fresh air and see some of their stress disappear.

Spring is also the time for planning fairs and end of school celebrations. We more normal times coming our way (hopefully), this may be the year our kids get to have a more celebratory graduation events.

We know that besides some learning losses, our kids have suffered a great deal of mental health issues. Taking time to enjoy music, be creative and get out to exercise will help every child take some stress off their shoulders.

Next month's issue will feature tips for planning Spring Fairs and succession planning for school councils who will welcome new members next year and may have changes in their executives as some parents move to the next level or a new school with their child.

Parents Engaged in Education wishes all parents the time to celebrate the successes their children achieve this year and remember that their spirits are more important than the grades they get in school.

Take good care,

Theresa Pastore,
Founder and Executive Director,
Parents Engaged in Education

The following post from Paul Davis is important for all kids and parents to provide online safety while their kids are virtual learning.

PAUL DAVIS

SOCIAL MEDIA
& ONLINE SAFETY



VIRTUAL LEARNING FYI

- + **Wake-up & Dress For School:** Set a routine as if you are going to school. Don't open your eyes and log-on, you are not ready to learn. Be in the mindset of school.
- + **Feed Your Brain:** Get food in your body
- + **Power-walk for 5min!** Either around your home or outside, and get fresh air into your lungs and oxygen to your brain
- + **Respect Your Teachers/Classmates:** Always be ready or logged-in 5min before your lesson (camera/mic off).
- + **Camera Settings:** If possible on Google Meet, MS Teams or Zoom, blur your background, or use a virtual background.
- + **Take Screen Breaks:** When finished with a lesson, walk away and exercise, get fresh air, phone a friend.
- + **Hydrate:** Drink water throughout the day. Buy a tumbler with a straw and spill-proof lid
- + **Technology Fails:** Internet connections go down, computers freeze, "classroom" accounts have technical interruptions - Don't Panic! Your teachers will understand.
- + **One Hour Before Bed:** Turn off all screens and wind down before closing your eyes. Read, do a puzzle, write a journal, spend quality time with family. (Parents - you too!)

FINALLY:

Be patient with
your teacher /
school and remote
learning.

There will be
technical issues.
Everyone is
learning together.

Paul Davis • facebook.com/pauldavistips • twitter.com/pauldavisSNS



ZOOM TIPS FOR YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

By Parents Engaged In Education

CHANCES ARE YOU HAVE BEEN USING ZOOM FOR YOUR ONLINE SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETINGS OR EVEN TO MEET WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS DURING THIS PANDEMIC. WHETHER YOU ARE NEW TO VIDEOCONFERENCING OR HAVE BEEN DOING IT FOR MONTHS NOW, THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR MAKING YOUR VIRTUAL MEETINGS SMOOTHER AND MORE ENJOYABLE.

If you haven't done a virtual meeting yet via Zoom, it is always a good idea to test it out with a friend in order to get comfortable with setting up a meeting and running it.

When you first go live, take your time and allow a few minutes for people to join you. People sometimes need a few moments to tune in. I know I always forget to click on the connect to computer audio button. I always try to play some background music when starting my meeting to remove some of the awkwardness.

At the start of the meeting, introduce yourself and let viewers know they can post questions in the comments or chat. You might say something like, "Feel free to ask your questions, and we'll get to them at the end."

SET A CO-HOST OR MODERATOR

Setting a co-host and/or moderator will allow someone else to help you manage the meeting, including screen sharing and pausing for chat comments and questions.

REMEMBER TO BE CONVERSATIONAL AND RELAXED

To the best of your ability, behave as you would at a normal school council meeting. You don't want to sound stiff or scripted. People will respond better to your natural self.

INTERACT WITH ATTENDEES

At different times throughout the meeting, reintroduce yourself and welcome people who have just joined you.

BREAK THE ICE

Just as at in-person meetings, starting your meeting with a tongue-in-cheek or funny question can help

get the conversation flowing. For ideas on virtual icebreakers visit our 5 Virtual Ice Breakers for Parent Council Meetings blog.

DURING YOUR Q&A SESSION

Remember to repeat questions to your audience and don't forget to mention who the question came from.

ASK EVERYONE TO MUTE THEMSELVES

To cut down on background noise. Also, remember to set microphones to mute as a default when setting up your meeting.

SECURITY CONCERNS

Make sure your meeting is password-protected so only invited participants can get in.

DON'T WORRY IF SOMETHING UNEXPECTED HAPPENS

If one of your kids walks in (there's a lot of that happening these days), just roll with it. Remember that you're broadcasting to other parents; they'll understand! Chances are the same thing will happen to them.

BUMP UP YOUR FRIENDLINESS A NOTCH

To compensate for not being there in person because people are remote.

HELP THEM PARTICIPATE BY SUGGESTING THAT THEY TURN OFF THEIR CAMERAS

If they want to, some parents attending the meeting might not want to be on camera. That's OK!

The following are some keyboard shortcuts that allow you to navigate the Zoom settings without having to use your mouse.



zoom

ZOOM SHORTCUTS FOR WINDOWS

Ctrl+Alt+Shift:

Move focus to Zoom's meeting controls

PageUp:

View previous 25 video stream in gallery view

PageDown:

View next 25 video stream in gallery view

Alt+F1:

Switch to active speaker view in video meeting

Alt+F2:

Switch to gallery video view in video meeting

Alt+V:

Start/stop video

Alt+A:

Mute/unmute audio

Alt+M:

Mute/unmute audio for everyone except host

Note: For the meeting host only

Alt+S:

Launch share screen window and stop screen share

Note: Will only work when meeting control toolbar has focus

Alt+Shift+S:

Start/stop new screen share

Note: Will only work when meeting control toolbar has focus

Alt+Y:

Raise/lower hand

ZOOM SHORTCUTS FOR MAC

Command(⌘)+Shift+A:

Mute/unmute audio

Command(⌘)+Control+M:

Mute audio for everyone except the host

Note: For the meeting host only

Command(⌘)+Control+U:

Unmute audio for everyone except host

Note: For the meeting host only

Command(⌘)+Shift+V:

Start/stop video

Command(⌘)+Shift+S:

Start/stop screen share

Ctrl+P:

View previous 25 participants in gallery view

Ctrl+N:

View next 25 participants in gallery view

Option+Y:

Raise hand/lower hand

Command(⌘)+Shift+F:

Enter or exit full screen

Ctrl+Option+Command+H:

Show/hide meeting controls



PARENTS ENGAGED
IN EDUCATION



FAMILY SERVICE CENTRE

FEATURING
CANADA'S FIRST
EDUCATION BANK



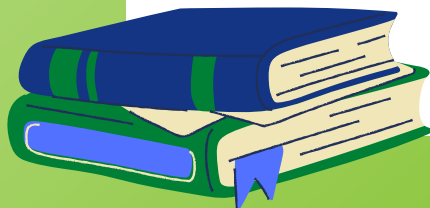
*A diverse, inclusive
and safe space for
ALL*

THE FAMILY SERVICE CENTRE IS LOCATED AT
857 MILNER AVE. UNIT 104, SCARBOROUGH, ON M1B 5N6

Our Hours of Operation Are:

Monday, Tuesday & Saturday 10am - 3pm
Wednesday & Thursday 12:30pm - 7pm
Friday & Sunday Closed

**DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS, FAMILIES MUST MAKE
AN APPOINTMENT TO COME INTO THE FAMILY SERVICE
CENTRE/EDUCATION BANK BY CALLING: 416-546-1467**



www.educationbank.ca



HOSTING A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL FAIR/CARNIVAL

By Theresa Pastore

One of the most popular school events can be the spring fun fair/carnival. It brings the community together in a spirit of fun. In my experience, this can be the most positive event of the year as well as the most challenging with a lot of details and logistics to work out. To make it successful and not too much work for one person, it is beneficial at the beginning of the school year to establish the “school fun fair/carnival committee”. This gives the committee lots of time to plan and a better chance for a successful event.

Before taking the necessary steps to execute the steps to a successful event, it is important to determine as a council what the goals are (i.e., Is it to raise funds or simply have a community event?).

Understanding the goal will help you make decisions regarding costs, ticket prices, food costs etc. If you want to raise money, you may want to charge a little more for tickets or add a

small levy to the cost of the food being served.

The key factor in having a successful event is to understand how many people you expect to attend (if this is an annual event, use the past few years as a guideline to how many you estimate attending this year). Using these numbers and the established price of a ticket, you can now estimate how much money you can spend on games, inflatables and food. You may choose to sell individual tickets or wristbands for all activities depending on the amount of funds you wish to raise and how much the community will spend that will give everyone a good time and feel positive about the event.

PLANNING STEPS AND TIPS

LOCATION AND TIMING

Most school fun fair/carnivals are able to be hosted on the school property which saves the

cost of paying for a location. If not, you may be able to get a permit for a city park or church property, however this usually comes at a cost. The other important factor of hosting the event offsite is the likelihood of having to provide additional insurance which also comes at a cost.

When you choose a date for the event always be sure to have a “rain date” alternative which you communicate with the community when promoting the event. This will help parents plan for both days if a change is required.

It is also beneficial to be aware of the local sports schedule that may make it impossible for parents to attend. A quick survey of the school community offering alternative dates can assist in choosing a date that will allow the majority of the school community to attend.

EVENT DAY VOLUNTEERS

Before committing to hosting a fun fair/carnival make sure that you have enough volunteers to set up games, sell tickets, sell food, supervise other activities like raffles, supervise inflatables etc. It is disappointing to spend months planning an event and find out that you only have 5 people willing to volunteer for jobs that need 20 people. Not only does this make it difficult for the volunteers, but often unsafe for the children attending.

Having volunteer t-shirts made up in a single colour so attendees will know who they can go to for assistance if needed will help keep things organized. Alternatively, consider

asking all volunteers to wear a single bright colour which will also help identify them for the community.

Don't get surprised, get parent and student volunteers committed early.

GAMES AND PRIZES

There are a lot of companies who rent carnival style games for this type of event. However, to save money, it is fun and worthwhile to get parent volunteers to

make games. Simple games like fish pond, football throw, bean bag tic tac toe, balloon darts, hula hoop contest are easy for parents to create themselves. Consider having a contest, with students as judges, for the best homemade game and encourage all parents to participate alone or in a team.

Setting up a scavenger hunt inside the school can be a fun activity for students and is an opportunity for parents (especially those new to the school) to see the whole school.

One of the popular money making games is the “pie in the face” game with the Principal or a favourite teacher as the target. When the weather is nice, substitute the pie for a water balloon.

Old fashion games like the “three legged race” or the “potato sack race” are still crowd pleasers and are a great way for parents and students participating together as a team.

Prizes can be bought at a low cost by buying a bag of small items at a wholesale party supply store. It may be fun to involve the students by having them make

**SETTING UP A
SCAVENGER
HUNT INSIDE THE
SCHOOL CAN BE A
FUN ACTIVITY FOR
STUDENTS AND IS AN
OPPORTUNITY FOR
PARENTS (ESPECIALLY
THOSE NEW TO THE
SCHOOL) TO SEE THE
WHOLE SCHOOL.**

paper “medals” for the first, second and third place winners for race games and paper bookmarks for games like the fish pond, tic tac toe etc.

The more involvement the school community has in preparing for the event, the more likely they will encourage their families to attend.

ACTIVITIES

Inflatable rides and games are popular fun fair/carnival activities, but can cost a lot of money. Consider approaching a local business to sponsor a ride or game and have the students create a banner thanking them for their contribution which can be posted at the inflatable.

To bring some music and colour to the event, the local secondary school may volunteer to have their marching band or cheerleaders perform at the fun fair/carnival. In some communities a local radio station may agree to broadcast from the event and provide the music.

Hosting a silent auction is a great way to raise additional funds that only requires those interested in the prizes to contribute. By establishing the fun fair/carnival committee early in the year, it gives time to approach local businesses to contribute a prize. Gift certificates from theatres, restaurants, grocery stores etc. make great prizes and often something families can use for everyday activities. You may even get the city’s sports teams to donate things like signed game balls, posters etc. that can raise a good amount of money.

Face painting is another popular activity for children. It may be possible to engage a local “clown” who can set up to do face painting and balloon animals. If you find it difficult to find someone to do this, think about approaching the local party supply

store because they probably know people in the area who come in for “clown” supplies.

MONEY MANAGEMENT

Thought should be given to how money will be managed at this type of event. You might consider setting up an online payment system and selling event bracelets which gets people admittance and ride/game play for the day. This eliminates having to have change on hand and counting of cash. This system can also be set up so people purchase a bracelet that includes all activities including a meal (like a hamburger and drink per band).

If you chose to operate on a cash basis you need to create a system that requires the least number of people to handle the money. You could have a ticket booth where people buy tickets for games, rides and food. This eliminates the need to have every ride or game operator collecting, giving change and counting money.

If you do have a ticket booth, arrange for an hourly count and remove the cash from the booth to a school safe if possible. Keeping a record each hour of the amount of money collected will help with the final balancing of the books at the end of the event. Two people should be assigned to count money every time it is removed from the ticket booth in order to keep the process transparent to the community.

SAFETY FIRST

The goal of a fun fair/carnival is for the children to have fun. Even though there will be plenty of adults present, you may consider having a Red Cross representative in an official capacity to oversee in the case of an emergency. This can usually be arranged through your local Red Cross organization. This also makes the community feel safer.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER IS TO HAVE FUN
PLANNING, EXECUTING AND PARTICIPATING IN YOUR SCHOOL EVENT!**



By Theresa Pastore

Parent involvement goes much further than simply academics. It opens the door to having regular conversations about their feelings, their teachers, friends, challenges they have. Being involved let's your child know that you are interested and committed to their life at school.

EQAO

The recent provincial report released by EQAO shows that the level of parent engagement continues to be low. In particular, it clearly shows that parents involving themselves with their child on a computer to be extremely low at 11 – 16%. This compares to educators using computers to teach language and math at 74 – 91%. Clearly parents are not keeping up with the way children are learning in school.

This report also shows that only 34% of parents in grade 3 (children aged 8-9) read with their child regularly. This drops to 22% in grade six (children aged 11-12).

In a province where students are clearly struggling to bring their math scores in line with the provincial average, only 24% of parents work with their child on math regularly. This drops to 21% in grade six.

The statistics also show that only 50% of parents actually talk about school with their child on a regular basis.

CLEARLY, THERE IS A LOT MORE WORK TO BE DONE.

It is obvious from these statistics that the strategies needed to engage parents must change because the numbers are not improving.

When Parents Engaged in Education speak with school boards, many indicate that they rely on their Parent Involvement Committee or a specific parent organization. School boards are reluctant to embrace new organizations or to try new methods to engage parents.

Parents Engaged in Education are looking at new ways to engage parents by working with organizations that can bring new ways of learning to the forefront. We will be using Facebook Live and offering workshops that focus on technology as well as mental health supports. We are in the process of developing a free mobile game app. This app is designed to engage parents in the Ontario curriculum from grades 1-12.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

For years and years, when you research the benefits of parent engagement all the data says exactly the same thing:

- Parent involvement results in increased achievement
- Better attendance
- Better social skills
- More confidence
- Higher graduation rates
- Students that are more likely to go on to post-secondary education

What the research doesn't tell us is why this is true. All of us involved in parent engagement in Ontario have a responsibility to do more. We need to start an "education series". This series would explain why each of these reasons are true. Not just list the reasons a parent should be involved in their child's education.

As parents, we have become complacent in believing that these points should be enough for a parent to say, "I better become more involved in my child's education".

We need to stop thinking of grandiose events, trying to attract hundreds of people and instead work to get back to the grassroots of engaging one parent at a time. School Boards, Administrators and Educators need to put parent engagement on the top of their list of priorities. They need to be the supply chain for materials and notices of information, events etc. This will provide an easy flow to parents to get started early. We need teachers to ask parents if there are any barriers that prevent them from being fully engaged with their child and their school. Then work with the Principal, School Board and Parent Involvement Committees to assist in removing these barriers for the parent.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health issues are increasing for our children right from the early grades through high school. If parents are not connecting with their child about

school, children will start isolating their stress. They may not open conversation about their confidence level, peers or bullying issues. While clearly Parents Engaged in Education are not "experts" in mental health, we recognize that there is a huge gap for children when their parents are not involved in their education journey.

Parent involvement needs to be on the top of every School Learning Improvement Plan (SLIP). The greatest effect on academic achievement is the involvement of parents. Along with the strategies teachers will use to implement the curriculum each year, there should be a strategy for involving parents in each child's learning. Classrooms are challenged in many ways. These include the number of students in the class, behaviour and learning issues of individual students. Parent engagement and involvement should be welcomed so that they can help support the learning of their child. School Learning Improvement Plans always plan for an increase in academic achievement and should also include a measure on increasing parent engagement.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT WEEK

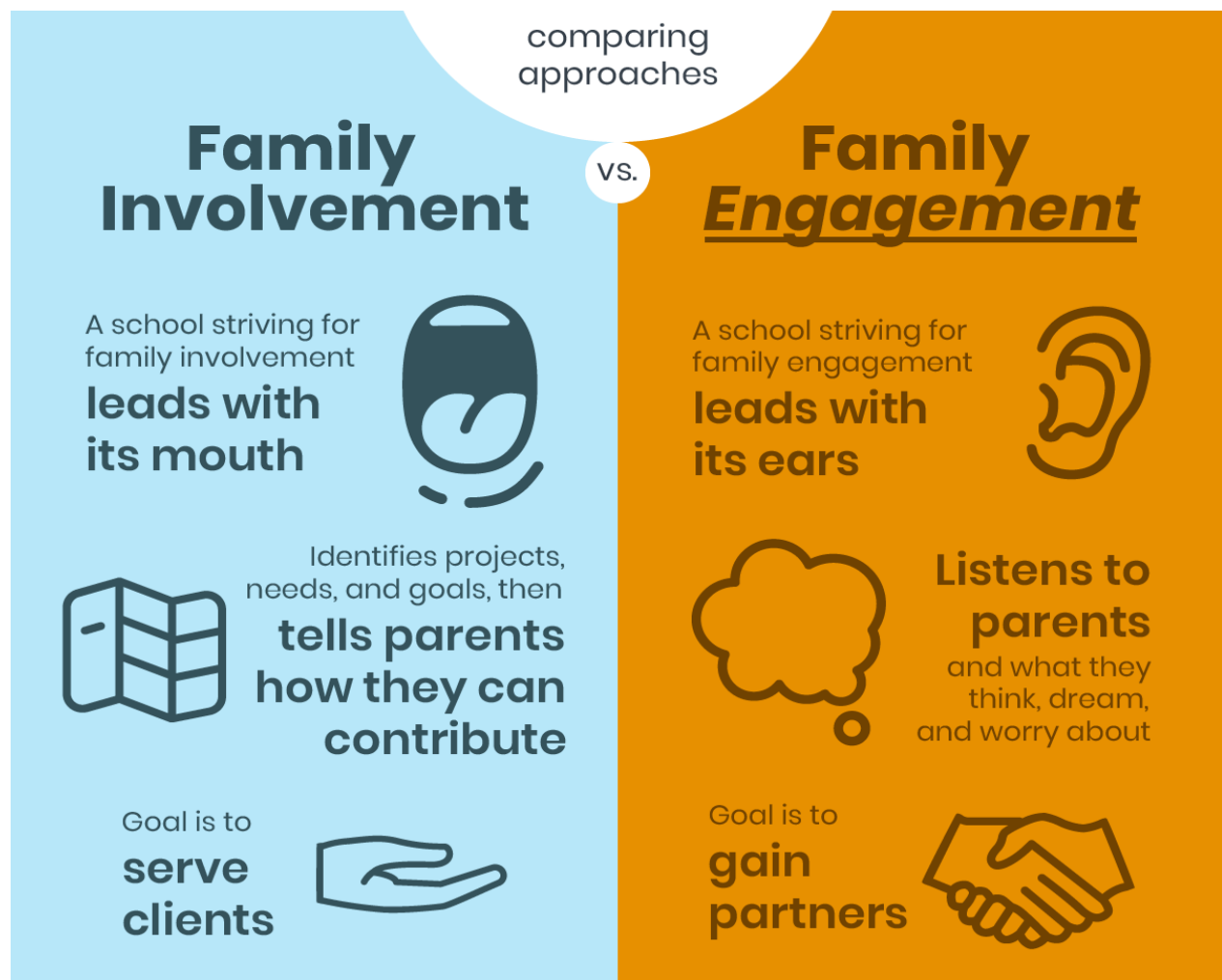
We have appealed to the Ministry of Education to recognize the important role of parents in the education circle by establishing a "Parent Engagement Week" in Ontario. By creating this recognition of the vital role of parents, it gives organizations involved in parent engagement a specific period to educate parents on the need to become involved in their children's education and school. After two years, we haven't received a reply on this suggestion. We will continue to pursue this objective with the Ministry. We stand firmly behind the belief that in a system where we celebrate every other single role in school, we owe it to parents to recognize them as well.

As a parent who is vested in their child's education, and after reading this blog, if you agree with the importance of establishing a "Parent Engagement Week", we ask that you write or email minister.edu@ontario.ca the Ontario Minister of Education to voice your support.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT V.S. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

I often get asked what the difference is between Family Involvement and Family Engagement. This image provides a simple overview and I think that COVID has taught us about the importance of Family Engagement. We need to prepare a support parents to support their children at home should another crisis require them to shift online. Now might be the time to form learning pods with kids in the neighbourhood or school where they can support each other and maybe work together should learning shift online once again.

I hope that school councils will turn their focus on increasing Family Engagement as the priority and Family Involvement at levels to which families are able to support their school.



Learn more and start engaging at
kidsburgh.org/topic/parents-as-allies



source: Ferlazzo, L., & Hammond, L.A. (2009). Building parent engagement in schools. ABC-CLO.

Do you know a teacher candidate who will have a positive impact on students?

The College's scholarship program provides financial assistance to teacher candidates who demonstrate outstanding academic achievement and readiness for a future in the classroom.

Applications for 2022 scholarships are open now.

Learn [more](#).



Ontario
College of
Teachers

Ontario's Teaching Regulator



ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT
AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO

ONTARIO ENGLISH
Catholic
Teachers
ASSOCIATION

**We're all
in this *together*.**



**Stay strong,
stay safe.**



Unity is our strength.
Education workers,
students, parents,
and families will
get through this
together.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO



THANK YOU

To educators and parents for everything you are doing at home
We stand with you as your partners in learning

nelson.com/learningonline **NELSON**



**TEACHERS
SUPPORTING
STUDENTS**

tsu The Toronto Secondary Unit
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association



Parents

ENGAGED IN EDUCATION

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.

www.parentsengagedineducation.ca
info@parentsengagedineducation.ca
647-408-2091

Follow us on twitter  @parentengagcons