



SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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topic of the month

Giving THANKS

October is the month of giving thanks. At Parents Engaged in Education, we have a lot to be thankful for this year. Most important is the feedback we have received that our resources and events have helped school councils and parents engage with students in our schools across Ontario.

This month's newsletter will provide some helpful tips for school councils to start the school year off with some easy team building strategies, including a parent engagement word search and a school council bingo, which help members get to know each other. These will be posted on our website under "Resources" so that school councils can download them for reproduction.

This issue also features valuable articles on bullying strategies for families.

Parents Engaged in Education are happy to announce some important partnerships this month, which will allow us to provide even more resources for parents.

Parents Demonstrate LEADERSHIP SKILLS For Students!

By: Theresa Pastore, Executive Director Parents Engaged in Education

The beginning of the school year will usually have the highest number of parent volunteers involved in the school and in the school council. There is a spirit of optimism and commitment by parents who understand the value of their efforts and the fact that it makes for a better educational experience for all students in the school.

As members of the school council you demonstrate to your child, and other students in the school, leadership skills that will be of value to them in their educational and career paths.

The first meeting of the school council will likely attract the most parents. The challenge is keeping these parents interested enough to keep coming back. Keeping meetings positive and of value to those in attendance will help to bring people back.

The second most important thing that will keep members attending meetings is to keep the atmosphere positive.

It is sad to see when a really committed and valued member of the council decides not to come back because of the negative or personal comments made to or about them. In over 20 years of being involved in school council work, I have seen really good councils be reduced to infighting and conflict.

In my own experience, I was lucky to be able to play a full and active role as a volunteer in my children's school. I appreciated that not all parents were in the situation to do this, but was grateful for the time that they spent at council meetings providing a valuable voice at the table. I was grateful when they took a day off work to help run the Halloween

dance because it was fun for every student in the school.

Conflict developed, one year, when other members felt that as a very active parent, I had more say or my kids got special treatment. This was very troubling for me as I felt, as the school council chair; I had welcomed and treated every member with respect. I learned a valuable lesson from one parent, who seemed to disagree with everything I suggested we do, when she told me "you have really good ideas and I can see you are willing to do the work, but, I don't want to do the work and I feel guilty when you do it". I could see other members nodding their heads as she spoke. This was very interesting to me and let me see how the problems had developed. Once the matter was opened, we worked on the issue as a group and after time we were able to

come to a positive working relationship. At the end of the day, we agreed that we were all there for the same purpose, the students, all of the students.

I have been involved in situations where there can be a divide in the group if more than one person runs for the Chair position. Rather than pulling together as a team following a valid vote to elect this position, one or two members will become focused on assessing the job that parent is doing in a negative manner. As volunteers, all there for the purpose of the students, we have to understand that everyone is learning, doing their best and rather than criticizing, extending an offer to help will serve the council well.

We must remember that our children see us volunteering for the school council, and representing other parents in a leadership role at the school. We always want to demonstrate to them the qualities of a good leader and set the example for them to become our future leaders. It is our responsibility to teach them that effective leaders should:

Be respectful of every member of the team

Give every person an equal voice at the table

Recognize and thank people for their work

Respect the confidentiality of the meeting

Take on challenges with a positive attitude

Celebrate successes as a team

My motto, based on my years of involvement is:

*“It’s not about the power,
it’s about the partnership!”*
Key to successful school councils
– T. Pastore –



Parents
ENGAGED IN EDUCATION

and

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BOOKS

**ARE PROUD TO
ANNOUNCE THEIR
PARTNERSHIP TO
SUPPORT PARENTS
TO ENGAGE IN
THE EDUCATION
AND IMPROVE THE
LITERACY SKILLS OF
THEIR CHILDREN.**

*Watch for exciting
events and resources
coming soon!!*

Set The EXPECTATION

By: Theresa Pastore, Executive Director Parents Engaged in Education

To avoid challenges for school council chairs to control the attitude of meetings, consider setting the expectation for conduct at the first meeting. When I was a school council chair I printed this Code of Ethics from the Ministry Guide for School Councils, as a poster and invited every member of the council to sign it. We posted it in our regular meeting space so if meetings got off track, any member could simply point to the poster and remind the speaker to adhere to their commitment to operate in a spirit of respect.

CODE OF ETHICS (SCHOOL COUNCILS)

A MEMBER SHALL...

1. Consider the best interests of all students.
2. Be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.
3. Act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the school board, and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
3. Become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
4. Maintain the highest standards of integrity.
5. Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
6. Treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
7. Encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
8. Acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
9. Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
10. Not disclose confidential information.
11. Limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
12. Use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
13. Promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
14. Declare any conflict of interest.
15. Not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.

Source: Adapted from the bylaws of the Port Arthur Collegiate Institute School Council, Lakehead Board of Education, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

5 MINUTE surveys

Please see the links below and take a moment to contribute to a new perspective on parent engagement in 2016. These surveys are completely anonymous.

<http://bit.ly/PEIEParents>
<http://bit.ly/PEIEPrincipals>
<http://bit.ly/PEIESuperintendents>
<http://bit.ly/DIROFED>
<http://bit.ly/PEIETeachers>
<http://bit.ly/PEIECouncils>
<http://bit.ly/PEIESTudent>

BINGO icebreaker

Bingo Caller's Card

I went to school here(give us history)	I drive a minivan	I came from another country(please tell us about it)	I have been on a school council before	I like country music
My favourite subject is math	I have supervised on a field trip	I understand Reg.612	I have a preschooler	We have gone to a movie in the last month
I like planning school events	My kids take the bus	Free Square	I like to work on a computer	I will ask a friend to come to a meeting
Halloween is my favourite occasion	I am at my first meeting	I do not drink coffee	I have never seen frozen	I would like to learn a new language
I have a family tradition to share	I would like to share something about my country	I like to dance	Winter is my favourite season	I secretly like a kids show

myfreebingocards.com

School Council Icebreaker Bingo provided by: Parents Engaged in Education

I went to school here(give us history)	I drive a minivan	I came from another country(please tell us about it)	I have been on a school council before	I like country music
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FREE
this
month

DOWNLOAD TWO
FREE BROCHURES
FROM OUR WEBSITE.

ParentsEngagedInEducation.ca





Parents
ENGAGED IN EDUCATION

and



**THE TORONTO
ARGONAUTS**

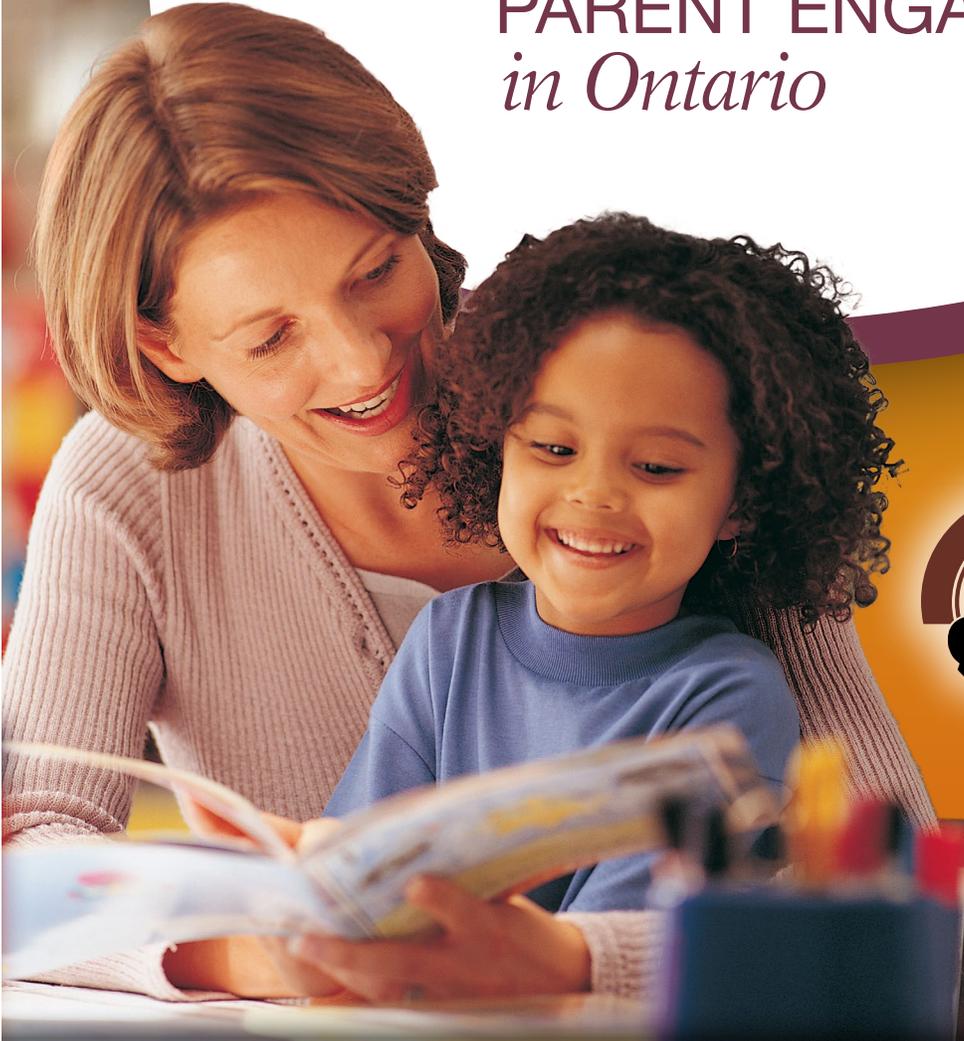
ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE
THEIR PARTNERSHIP TO
SUPPORT PARENTS TO
ENGAGE IN THE EDUCATION
AND THE PHYSICAL /
MENTAL HEALTH OF THEIR
CHILDREN.

*Watch for exciting
events and resources
coming soon!!*

**WORD
search**

X F I
A Q K N Q
O F F C E
N L O R J
J U K X G F E P C J Q
U S O E L T X Q A H K S V T M
R P E T X Y G K S V C L R C N
Y S A O N G S U H E Y G A P U Q A
C X Y W E C R S D C N S L S Q
E V G U M Z E A O B B Z E
T Q E C N E E
P U E K B V B R Q L Q
B A E F G Z A E I A L X Q
A T Q W Z W K I A E T S M
I G S X J O S N H B L S N
D A K S T L H C F S T
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E C N A D N E T T A G V W G A
I P Q T N E D I F N O C F I M
W O Y G R A D U A T I O N
Y R A D N O C E S T S O P
D A D C T C U S M H Z V I
B P L D N V C U K W U M G
U F O F E K I I B Z M E I
V N D D A H Y N T W C
U V R U X A S R K H G
A D F T S R K W P S S
K S S E D C M N Q

- Increased Student ACHIEVEMENT
- Better ATTENDANCE
- More CONFIDENT Learners
- Higher GRADUATION rates
- INCREASED Student Achievement
- More confident LEARNERS
- Students more likely to attend POST SECONDARY
- Better SOCIAL SKILLS
- Increased STUDENT Achievement



SCHOOL BOARDS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT *in Ontario*



Waterloo Catholic
District School Board

Wellington
Catholic
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



IF YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTED ON THIS PAGE,
PLEASE CONTACT PARENTENGAGEMENTGROUP@GMAIL.COM

What Parents NEED TO KNOW

Bullying Is Not A Normal Part Of Growing Up

Bullying affects the majority of Canadian children, at least once, throughout their childhood. For some kids, bullying is a daily reality. Bullying is about power and the abuse of power – and abuse is not a normal part of childhood. The effects of bullying are immediate and long-lasting, putting our children at risk for a number of physical, social and mental health problems. As parents, these risks should not be acceptable. Adult intervention stops bullying - it is our responsibility.

RISKS FOR CHILDREN WHO BULLY

Children who bully are learning to use power and aggression to control and victimize other children. If their behaviour is not addressed they risk growing up not knowing the difference between right and wrong. They risk high rates of delinquency, substance abuse, academic problems and a future of crime. Children who bully risk a lifetime of difficult relationships with others, including being bullied themselves.

RISKS FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE BEING BULLIED

Children who are being bullied feel increasingly powerless and become trapped in relationships in which they are being abused. If the imbalance of power is not addressed, these children will experience social anxiety, loneliness and a sense of hopelessness. They will suffer from headaches, stomach aches and low self esteem. They will want to avoid school, risking their academic performance and increasing their isolation. Children who are being bullied are at higher risk of depression and are more likely to contemplate, attempt or commit suicide.

THE PARENT'S ROLE

Parents are responsible for creating positive environments that promote children's ability to create and maintain healthy relationships. By helping children develop the essential social skills to navigate peer conflicts and by minimizing opportunities for negative peer interactions, parents can help adjust the imbalance of power inherent in bullying relationships.

Bullying can take on many different forms as children progress from early childhood to adolescence. During this time, your child could rotate between any of three characters: the one being bullied, the one bullying and the one watching it all happen. Regardless of what role your child plays, bullying has long-term negative consequences and must be challenged.

Source: PREVNet www.prevnet.ca



Elementary School CHILDREN

What is Elementary School Bullying?



As children move through elementary school, their peer relationships take on greater influence and they begin to congregate in areas where adults may not always be present (in the bathroom), or where they can be easily hidden from view (in the playground). The physical bullying that was common in the preschool years may turn more into social bullying and exclusion, which is harder for adults to see and often, harder for kids to talk about.

Bullying behaviour may include: name-calling, pushing, giggling or making faces when another child talks, excluding a child from a game, ignoring a child, tattling to get a child in trouble, using a child's name as an insult, making a point not to sit or line up near a certain child, or writing negative messages on the internet.

DID YOU KNOW?

According to one of the world's leading researchers on bullying, 60% of boys who bully others in elementary school had criminal records by age 24.

PROTECTION STARTS WITH ADULT INTERVENTION

Does your child seem unusually anxious? Is your child worried about going to school, or complain regularly of headaches and stomachaches? Does your child have problems with aggression or appear to lack empathy? Does your child have friends who are aggressive?

SIGNS YOUR CHILD MAY BE BEING BULLIED, OR MAY BE BULLYING OTHERS

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO HELP

Bullying is a serious issue for today's youth and one that requires adult intervention. While parents cannot protect their children from every danger that life may present, there are a number of things they can do to foster the proper skills needed to create and maintain healthy relationships and stop the violence of bullying.

STOP, LISTEN AND STAND UP!

One of the single most effective things a child can do to stop the violence of bullying is to tell an adult. Kids may not feel comfortable talking to you about being bullied. They could be embarrassed or scared that telling someone will make the problem worse. It takes a lot of courage for a bullied child to come forward. Be sure to give your child your full attention and ask for details about the bullying: How often does it happen? How long has it been going on? In how many places does it occur and how has it affected you? Stand up for your child - report the bullying to other adults in your child's life (teachers, coaches) and work together to give your child the support he/she needs to develop healthy relationships.

Read more about the questions you can ask when talking to your child's teachers or school administration.

TEACH YOUR CHILD TO BE ASSERTIVE – NOT AGGRESSIVE

Research shows that using aggression to deal with aggression usually makes the problem worse. Teach your

child how to stand up for him/herself by rehearsing phrases and words such as, "STOP!" until they sound confident. Reassure them that walking away and reporting a bullying incident is the best thing to do.

CHANGE THE DYNAMICS

Parents need to be aware of the dynamics in children's peer groups. It is extremely important that parents provide an environment that promotes positive friendships and reduces negative interactions; parents need to ensure all children are included and that bullying behaviour does not flourish. Consider enrolling your child in various activities in and out of school so they can experience many different friendships. Make connections with other parents so that children's peer interactions can be monitored.

BUILD ON CHILDREN'S STRENGTHS

Children who are bullied often have low self-esteem. Find activities they enjoy so they can start to feel good about themselves. For children who bully, provide opportunities for them to use their natural leadership skills in a positive way (e.g., teaching siblings and younger children a new sport or skill).

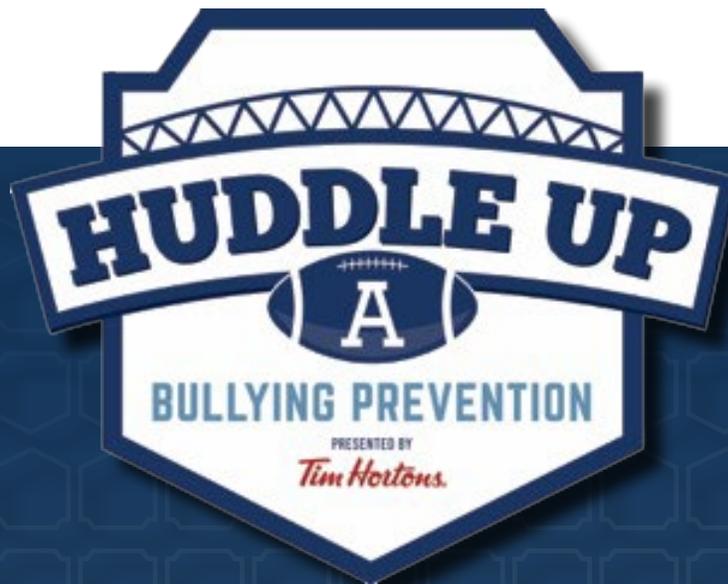
PRAISE (AND PRACTICE!) INCLUSIVE AND RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR

Parents set the tone for family relationships and children learn relationship skills by watching their parents' behaviour. Practice tolerance and model the use of positive power by respecting and supporting others. Encourage positive relationships among children by praising respectful and inclusive behaviour whenever you see it. Try and focus on the positives of your child, even when they need correcting.

Use Consequences That Teach and Encourage Empathy

Parents must set guidelines, limits, and consequences for unacceptable aggressive behaviour – whether it's at home, on a sports team or at school. Consequences should teach children that bullying behaviour is wrong and should show children how to use their power in a positive, rather than destructive way.

Source: PREVNet www.prevnet.ca



HUDDLE UP BULLYING PREVENTION RALLY

**NATHAN PHILLIPS SQUARE
NOVEMBER 23 2016
12:00 - 1:30 PM**

CELEBRITIES, ATHLETES AND EXPERTS WILL BE SHARING MESSAGES OF BULLYING PREVENTION AND RECITING A PLEDGE OF ACCEPTANCE AND THE NEED TO EMBRACE EACH OTHERS UNIQUENESS.

SCHOOLS BRING YOUR STUDENTS AND PARENTS TO THIS IMPORTANT EVENT!!



THE TORONTO ARGONAUTS





Parents

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Ambassadors



BECOME A PEIE AMBASSADOR AND BE A PART OF YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL COMMUNITY

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 CHEERLEADER in school!

Every P.E.I.E. will receive a certificate in recognition of their commitment to the organization.

Follow us on:  Parents Engaged in Education  @parentengagcons

Parents Engaged in Education's mission is to promote and engage parents in their children's education to increase their academic achievement and provide resources and skill building opportunities for parents/guardians and school council members to support children's education in Ontario.

www.ParentsEngagedInEducation.ca

ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO

Let's Be Social.

 Follow us on Twitter @oct_oeeo

Learn about College events, conferences and reports.
Keep up-to-date with timely College news.
Engage us in conversation.



Setting the Standard
for Great Teaching



Being here can lead to amazing things.



In 2050, the first spoken language in the
WORLD will be **FRENCH**
Can you help your child with French homework?
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Have a problem
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parentengagementgroup@gmail.com
647-408-2091

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.

Follow us on twitter  @parentengagcons