



SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2018 • VOLUME 30

WELCOME BACK PARENTS

The end of summer and start of school seems to have come very quickly this year. Perhaps it is because of the beautiful weather we enjoyed most of the summer. I hope that each of you had an opportunity to take a break with your family and enjoy some “play” time.

The beginning of the school year is always a little stressful for our kids, as they adjust to new teachers, new expectations or possibly new schools. As parents they need us to send them off each day with the reassurance that they will settle in and have a great year.

For parent leaders in schools across Ontario, September is a busy month of elections, organizing, possibly working with a new Principal and welcoming new parents to their community.

This month we are launching our “Month by Month School Council Topics” calendar. Each month we

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will provide suggested topics for discussion or plans that might be considered going forward. Included with these topics are links to the resources that will assist you in operating effectively, including sample templates for various letters or other tools.

In this issue, we welcome back Paul Davis with his “Safety Tips” which are invaluable to parents in supporting their child on social media or while using apps etc.

We are also excited to be partnering with Microsoft this year and there will be a blog article in most newsletters this year as well that will help parents engage with their child on various tech platforms.

WELCOME BACK and I hope that you enjoy this “back to school” issue.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me directly at:

Theresa.pastore@parentsengagedineducation.ca

Theresa Pastore,
Executive Director

Theresa Pastore

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SEPTEMBER SCHOOL COUNCIL TOPICS

September is the month that School Council elections typically take place. There are some schools who will wait until the last minute, which can be early October since Regulation 612 requires elections to take place within 30 days of the start of the school year.

Rather than just simply holding council elections, existing councils in collaboration with the Principal might consider holding an Annual General Meeting (sample agenda attached) featuring a speaker that is relevant to the school community. It is an excellent opportunity to attract more parents and present the work the council accomplished last year and the goals for the upcoming year. Letting parents know what role they can play in making a difference in the school community may encourage new people to run for election to the school council.

THE ELECTION PROCEDURES OUTLINED IN REGULATION 612 REQUIRES;

“The principal of a school, shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, on behalf of the school council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.”

C.REG.612/00 S. 4(6)



PAUL'S *safety corner*

DOWNLOADING APPS

Your child (or you) have a smartphone or tablet. What's one of the first things we do went getting one? Start to download Apps to it! It could be a game, social media, utility, productivity tool or any one of millions of Apps. Before you download ANY App - READ THE PERMISSIONS! Apps ask for access to various things on your device. It could be access to your camera, wifi, contacts, call logs, phone numbers, etc. That makes most people who are in the security space very nervous. If you are not comfortable with what an App wants access to - Do Not Download It! Classic example. I once downloaded a Flashlight App (on my test device, not my personal). Think about this. All a flashlight App needs access to is, your flashlight - period. But this App wanted access to: My wifi connection, my pictures, my camera and my contacts. It's called Data Mining. Your device is worth a lot of money to companies who funnel data. I know you care about your privacy, so one small step to taking it seriously starts when you download Apps!

HAPPY BACK TO SCHOOL

Paul Davis
facebook.com/pauldavistips
www.socialnetworkingsafety.net

This being the case, it is easier if the outgoing council establishes a date for elections prior to the closing of their business for the current year. The letter could be drafted and ready to go at the beginning of the new school year (see sample attached). Having said that, it is often beneficial to wait a few weeks into the new school year so that you have the opportunity to engage new parents to join the council.

Attaching information about the role of the school council and nomination forms to the notice sent out by the Principal will also assist in increasing interest for parents who may not be aware of the work of the council.

School Councils may wish to consider using PEIE's School Council brochure which can be downloaded free of charge at: <https://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca/media/docs/resources/school-councils-in-ontario.pdf>

Following the school council elections it is helpful to hold the first Inaugural Meeting of the council in order to elect the Executive Committee (Chair, Vice Chair or Co-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary). Before electing these roles provide all members information about the roles and responsibilities of each position. To assist PEIE has developed several resources which may make this process easier. **Below is a list of links that provide relevant information:**

SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIRS BROCHURE

<https://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca/media/docs/resources/building-strong-school-councils.pdf>

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR

<https://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca/parent-council/what-roles-and-responsibilities-make-up-a-good-school-council-chair>

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SCHOOL COUNCIL TREASURER

<https://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca/parent-council/what-roles-and-responsibilities-make-up-a-good-school-council-treasurer>

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SCHOOL COUNCIL SECRETARY

<https://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca/parent-council/what-roles-and-responsibilities-make-up-a-good-school-council-secretary>

The inaugural meeting would be the best time to establish school council meeting dates for the entire school year. This will allow the council chair or the Principal to communicate these dates to the school community.

To assist the secretary in taking minutes, we have developed a brochure on the topic.

<https://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca/media/docs/resources/maintaining-school-meetings.pdf>

The October meeting is when the school council really begins operating at most schools. See our October meeting topics and resources coming soon!!



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SAMPLE PRINCIPAL LETTER FOR AGM - ELECTIONS

Date

SCHOOL LOGO

To all Parents and Guardians,

RE: Annual General Meeting (School Council Elections) – September XX, 2018.

School Gym starting at 6:30pm

It is my pleasure to welcome you and your family to (School Name).

One of the most important meetings at the beginning of the school year is the Annual General Meeting for the school community. This year we will feature a speaker from our Kindergarten program who will present on “The value of play based learning”.

In addition, to the speaker we will have the pleasure of a report from the Chair of last year’s school council on their work and some of the items that continue to be of interest to parents in the new school year.

The school council is largely a parent council (with the Principal, teacher and one non-teacher rep) which gives us the opportunity to work together to improve the educational experience of all students in our school.

I highly encourage every parent/guardian to become a member of the school council because there is so much fulfillment that comes from working with other parents in making a difference for all students. At (school name) we enjoy a great working relationship that has resulting in some exciting opportunities for our students and the whole school community.

To become a member, please complete the attached School Council Nomination form and have your child drop it off at the office. At the Annual General Meeting we will be holding elections for voting members and hope you will join us.

Want to know a little more about School Councils, you can go to: <https://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca/media/docs/resources/school-councils-in-ontario.pdf>

Please find the Annual General Meeting Agenda attached.

I look forward to seeing you on September XX, 2018, however, in the meantime please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME



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Mentor of the Week – Perin Lal

June 14, 2018 | Global Mentor, Involving Parents, Mentor of the Week, MOTW

INVOLVING PARENTS IN LEARNING MINECRAFT

I entered a room full of upset parents to meet them regarding a Minecraft class I was teaching. “Kids can kill each other” shouts one parent. “This game promotes violence, aggression and makes kids bullies” said another. “Games have no place in school; we don’t allow video games at home,” said the third parent. You get the picture. I stood there irritable & amused. Irritable that they did not trust me, and amused that their predetermined ideas about education prevented them from recognizing Minecraft’s magnality.

I knew there were no words to calm the angry mob. The Principal stood in the back corner of the room giving me “the look”. I had convinced her about

the value of the Minecraft curriculum, and in the next few minutes, I had to do the same for parents. I decided to invite the parents to experience the game, hoping they could decide for themselves if it was good, bad or ugly.

“Everything you described about the game is true,” I told the parents once they settle into their seats at

their computers. I told them there are a few obvious reasons kids enjoy the game, number one being there are No Rules and number two the kids get to build things, destroy things, and blow things up. I discussed that

there is open plundering and stealing for items and that murder is also allowed. I heard a huge “gasp” of disbelief followed by mutterings under

“Games have no place in school; we don’t allow video games at home,” said the third parent.

the breath of my audience. “Let’s play the game I exclaimed!” and I spawned the enraged mob into the farmland we have been working on during class.

We spend the first few minutes learning to walk, jump and fly in the game. We took a stroll around the farmhouse, the vegetable fields, and the cattle corrals. Parents started seeing their kids names on signposts. “There’s Kayra’s farmhouse and Stacey’s Corral,” they said. Slowly my group of parents stopped following me and wandered off to find their own child’s farmhouse or field.

I showed them how to open their child’s portfolios, and now there was silence. Each one was reading what their child had written, solved, explored, created or changed. Some had solved a math word problem and some had written a poem. My students built a field based on the area of square feet we needed. My students changed

floorplans to better fit the needs of our class. We redesign our secret meeting place when we learned about the Redstone block (gives power torches, rail etc.) It was project-based learning at it best. There was teamwork and comradeship among my

students. We were learning Math, English, and Science and we were playing the whole time while doing it.

I saw the stiffness and anger leave the bodies of the parents. They were jumping, flying, building and exploring the Minecraft world. They were asking me questions about crafting and survival. They were all impressed with their child’s work. There was a change in the room’s energy, the mob had turned jubilant. I was relieved! We continue to build, explore and craft until the meeting ended. Before they left, I made sure

to kill them all! It would not be fair for them not to experience it. They all left for home educated about the game, our learning in class and convinced that Minecraft Education Edition has a place in class.

They were jumping, flying, building and exploring the Minecraft world.



Perin Lal is a 2018 Minecraft Global Mentor and currently works for COMPUTERWISEKIDS in Woodland Hills, Los Angeles in the United States. She works with public, private and charter schools to deliver computer skills training using state-of-the-art techniques.

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TEDx Speaker - 2015

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