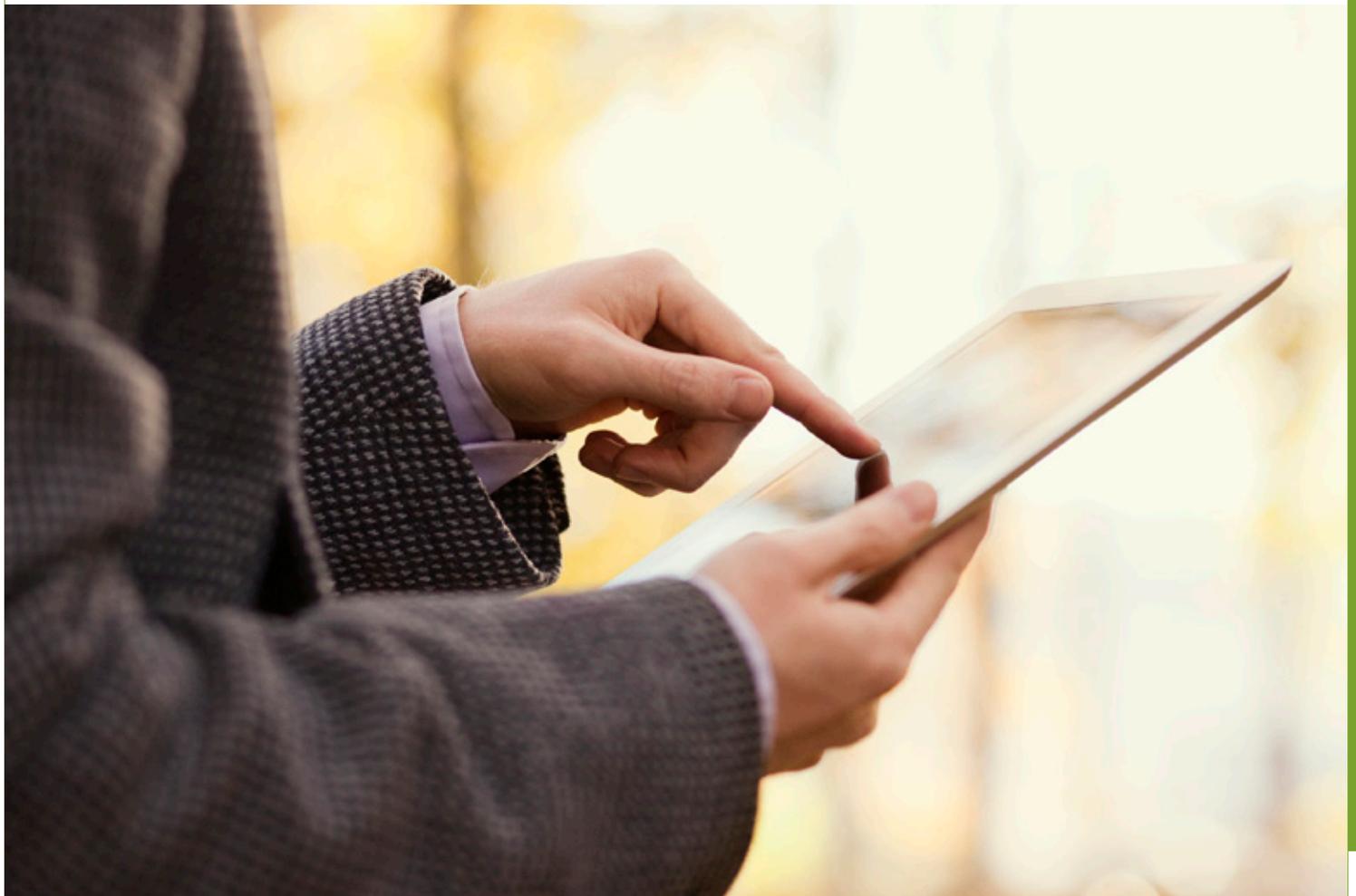


# RE-THINKING SCHOOL COUNCILS

People for Education's Annual Report  
on Ontario's School Councils 2013



THE ANNUAL  
REPORT ON  
ONTARIO'S  
SCHOOL  
COUNCILS  
2013

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## DATA FROM THE SURVEY

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# CONTENTS

Introduction	1
School Council Roles, Activities, and Structure	2
Communication	4
Parent and Community Engagement	7
Connections between school councils and their boards	9
School Council Funding and Fundraising	10
Surveys	12
Endnotes	20

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Every year, parents and principals in schools across Ontario take the time to complete our surveys and share their stories with us. And every year, many volunteer researchers help us put the data we collect from schools into a context that helps us write our reports.

Special thanks to the members of the People for Education Network, representing parent and community organizations across Ontario, for their ongoing support for this project.

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# INTRODUCTION

*Every year we have the same small group of parents doing all the work.*

PTA member, 1959

*It's difficult for the council to get parents to volunteer for anything. It's always the same parents that are involved.*

School Council Chair, Toronto District School Board, 2013

Some things never change. It seems that parent organizations have been facing similar challenges since they came into being.

Every year, People for Education surveys Ontario's school councils to gather information about their work, the communication tools they use, their relationship with school and board staff, and school council funding and fundraising. This year, more than 900 school councils participated in the research, and there were responses from every school board in the province.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the school council survey. When we look at the data collected over the past five years, what stands out is the remarkable consistency in many of the findings. School councils appear to have defined a clear role for themselves—communication with the broader parent community—even though that role is not explicitly mentioned in Regulation 612,<sup>4</sup> the regulation governing school councils.

The results also show that school councils continue to struggle with the same challenges year over year. Once again this year, the most frequent comments were about getting more parents involved, particularly at the high school level. Several mentioned that school council participation is decreasing, and for the first time, there were comments from principals saying that they were filling out the survey because there was no active school council. Also for the first time this year, we had many comments that the chair is new to the position and is struggling to learn the ropes.

School councils were mandated in Ontario in 2000. Since that time, schools, boards, and the ministry have come to rely on them to communicate and connect with the parent community, and as advisors and supporters of their local school and public education. But the councils themselves consistently raise concerns about their capacity to do all the work expected of them. They cite too few parents doing too much work, inexperienced chairs having to re-invent councils year after year because of a lack of succession planning, and a disconnect between what they perceive as their most important role and what they actually spend the most time on.

**Q** This year's report raises some fundamental questions about school councils, their mandates and their roles:

- Why do school councils keep coming back to the same issues and concerns?
- Is it time to look at a change in direction for school councils?
- Should the province's regulations governing school councils—particularly the defined role of school councils—be reviewed?
- How can we ensure that school councils are functioning effectively and are comfortable and confident in their role within the education system?

These questions, and all of the questions posed in this report, are intended to engender an important discussion about school councils in Ontario.

# SCHOOL COUNCIL ROLES, ACTIVITIES, AND STRUCTURE

*We used to spend most of our time in Council arranging fundraising. We've shifted our focus to trying to get the parents of our school connected and providing opportunities for them to work together as neighbours.*

Elementary School, Toronto DSB

## COMMUNICATION STILL IDENTIFIED AS MOST IMPORTANT ROLE

Provincial school council regulations state that, “the purpose of the school council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.”<sup>2</sup>

School councils themselves have a different view of their role. Every year, when asked what their most important role is, school councils tell us it is ‘to enhance communication between the school and parents.’

This year, 47% of school councils ranked communication as their most important role, and 80% of councils ranked it within their top three roles. By comparison, only 13% of councils ranked “improving student achievement” as most important (the same percentage that ranked ‘fundraising’ as the most important role) and only 6% ranked ‘enhancing the accountability of the education system to parents’ as most important.

Councils state that communication is their most important role, but when asked about how they divide their time, 37% say that they spend the most time on fundraising, while less than a third indicate that they spend the most time on communication with parents. Only 5% said that they spend the most time on improving student achievement, and just 2% mentioned enhancing the accountability of the school system to parents.

**Q** Since communication is consistently acknowledged as one of school councils’ most important roles, is it time to revise the provincial school council regulations to reflect the reality for school councils on the ground?

## HELP! I'M A SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR!

For the first time this year, several school council chairs included comments about the difficulty of being new to the position and feeling unprepared for the role.

A number of respondents said things like, “this is my first year on the school council and my first year with a child in elementary school.”<sup>3</sup> Many said they feel overwhelmed by the expectations.

*This is all so new to me as chair with my first child just beginning JK, but there wasn't anyone else willing to take the position, so I just kind of jumped in without knowing what it entailed. I am still not sure exactly how to get a handle on it all. I have the “School Council” document from the ministry, but it is so huge and cumbersome that every time I sit down to read it, I am overwhelmed.*

*Elementary School, Upper Grand DSB*

## TRAINING HELPS

Several council members noted how much they appreciated training and support offered either by the board or by other school councils, and they spoke of the importance of connecting with other school councils to share their knowledge and experience. A council chair in the Durham board said “This year was my first year as co-chair and attending the regional School Council Chair meetings was extremely helpful!” In the York board, a council chair at a high school commented “School councils must receive more opportunity in the future to network with one another and share their successes and challenges.”

**Q** How can we ensure that the parents who volunteer for the school council have the opportunity to develop the skills they need to fulfill their role?

## **"IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME 10 PARENTS"**

Every year, the most frequently raised concern among school councils is the lack of parent participation at council meetings. While school councils report attendance ranging from 1-35 parents, the average number of parents has remained consistent at 10 parents per meeting. School councils hold an average of eight meetings a year.

**We have made our council meetings much more informal and this seems less intimidating to those who come. Many parents are unable to attend meetings and we update them on happenings through emails and monthly newsletters. While our email list is growing, it does seem that it is usually the same few parents who contribute with ideas and/or time.**

*Elementary School, Near North DSB*

Given the evidence that the average number of people attending school council meetings rarely changes, it is possible that there is little councils can do to increase attendance. Research also makes clear that while school councils have a positive impact on the "community" of the school, it is what parents do at home that has the greatest impact on student success.<sup>4</sup> More clarity about the important role councils can play in supporting parent involvement at home may lead to less time and energy spent on changing council participation rates, and more focus on ensuring that all parents have access to the information they need.

**I think this can be said for most councils, including ours: there needs to be some more clear ideas on how parent councils can enhance the accountability of the education system to parents, how councils can improve student achievement, and how they can affect the School Improvement Plan.**

*Elementary School, Greater Essex County School Board*

**This is the first year we have focused on the School Improvement Plan, in conjunction with a new principal.**

*Elementary School, Waterloo Catholic Board*

**We discuss every year how we cut back on the time spent fundraising. We are in midst of discussions as to how next year's council could spend less time on the money end of things.**

*Elementary School, Halton DSB*

**We are striving this year to engage parents more with their children at home and at school, ie. reading a book every night with their child.**

*Elementary School, Thames Valley DSB*

**What Council spends the most time on is shifting in our school, from an emphasis on fundraising for co-curricular support, to engaging parents and finding ways to keep our community informed about school issues.**

*Elementary School, Toronto DSB*

# COMMUNICATION

*We are slowly changing the culture of our school to one of frequent, open communication between school, parents, and teachers.*

Elementary School, Thames Valley DSB

## LET'S TALK! HOW SCHOOL COUNCILS CONNECT WITH PARENTS

School councils continue to explore a range of ways to enhance communication between the school and parents, and comment about the importance of “supporting multiple communication methods (ie. print, electronic, phone) as parents have expressed a wide range of communications preferences.”<sup>5</sup> The survey results show:

- 58% of respondents report having a school council website;
- 59% report a school council newsletter; and
- 63% communicate with parents by email, slightly up from 60% last year.

**Our school council has a Gmail account, shared Google calendar, website, Facebook page, Twitter handle, YouTube channel, and a monthly newsletter (sent electronically and hard copy goes home with 900+ students). Communication has been one of our strong points. Now that we have a solid foundation, it is easier to build capacity and improve parent engagement.**

*Elementary School, Toronto DSB*

This year, there has been a substantial increase in the use of social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook, with 18% of school councils using social media to communicate, up from 12% last year.

However, school councils continue to face challenges in accessing parents electronically. Only 16% of school councils who communicate by email said that the school provides parents' email addresses to them, and only 8% have all parents on their email list.

**Q** As the popularity of electronic communication and social media continues to grow, how should school and board communications policies and practices be updated to ensure that parents have access to the information in a format that meets their needs?

## HOW SCHOOL COUNCILS HELP TEACHERS COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS

This year, 30% of school councils reported that they help teachers communicate with parents. Research shows that overall student achievement in a school improves when communication builds trust between teachers, students and parents.<sup>6</sup> And when teachers, parents and others at the school work collaboratively, schools have improved attendance, better student engagement, and more positive relationships between parents and teachers, and between teachers and students.<sup>7</sup>

**Our principal and vice principal have put a tremendous effort into opening the lines of communication with parents this year. This has in turn, increased trust, and increased the number of volunteers returning to the school.**

*Elementary School, Rainbow DSB*

When schools communicate directly and seek information from parents about what they want and need for their child's success, school-family connections are strengthened. And when teachers suggest a specific activity for parents to do with their children at home, levels of parent involvement increase.<sup>8</sup>

Among participating school councils, the most commonly cited methods of supporting teacher communication were newsletters, bulletin boards and signage, and the use of electronic methods, including email, websites, blogs, and social media. Many school councils also commented that they help teachers connect with parents by hosting events that bring them together, such as barbecues, welcome events, and arts nights.

### **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL COUNCIL AND TEACHING STAFF**

School councils were asked about how they communicate council initiatives to school staff. Among the 74% of councils reporting that their initiatives are communicated to staff, the most common method cited was via the principal at staff meetings. While many councils said that the staff representative on council is responsible for communicating back to the rest of the staff, several commented that because of the labour situation this year, staff were not attending meetings, so it fell to the principal to act as the staff representative.

**There is a parent engagement committee that is working to enhance communication between teachers and parents. We are trying to have a parent rep for each class.**

*Elementary School, Waterloo Region DSB*

### **WHAT'S YOUR OPINION? HOW SCHOOL COUNCILS SOLICIT PARENT INPUT**

Effective communication is a two-way street—information not only needs to go out from the school to the community, the community needs an opportunity to provide feedback and input on matters under discussion.

**This year we asked for parent feedback regarding communication from the school. We attached a brief survey to the newsletter and asked if parents read the newsletter every month; whether they would prefer communication via email; whether they would like translation of the newsletter into a different language; and for any other comments or suggestions.**

*Secondary School, Ottawa Catholic DSB*

This year, 82% of school councils reported that they asked for parent input on school council initiatives. In the comments, the most frequently cited topic to seek input on is fundraising and how to spend funds. Councils also ask for input on events and programs they offer, school and board policies (eg. Split grades, staffing models, principal profiles, boundary changes and ARCs), uniforms and dress codes, lunch programs and school safety/climate.

## WHO NOTIFIES COUNCILS OF EDUCATION POLICY CHANGES?

In today's education system, there is a policy for just about everything—from Safe Arrival to homework to fundraising. Since many of these policies have an impact on parents, school councils play an important role in informing the broader parent community about changes in policy.

We asked school councils about who notifies them of changes in education policy:

- 81% of school councils report that their principal always or often notifies them of policy changes.
- 52% report that the school board always or often notifies them of policy changes.

- 24% report that they are notified of policy changes by the ministry.
- 38% report that they are notified of policy change by their school board's Parent Involvement Committee (PIC).

**Q** The chain of communication from the Ministry through to parents is long and complex. How can we ensure that important information gets to the people who need it?

Last year, our school council was instrumental in helping parents communicate with teachers by having all teacher email addresses and extensions on the school website.

*Secondary School, Grand Erie DSB*

It's been a difficult year for communication between parents and teachers. Unfortunately, with the labour issue as it's been, communication lines we have taken years to build have started to break down.

*Elementary School, Hamilton Wentworth DSB*

We have a Community/Parent Engagement officer whose mandate is to bridge the gap between teachers and parents with respect to communication. Teachers will use her as a resource to help communicate important messages.

*Elementary School, Peel DSB*

# PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*We host a student/teacher/parent BBQ and volleyball game each spring to help parents mingle and get to know our teachers. This year we are inviting grade 8 graduating students and their parents from the public, Catholic and French schools, to increase awareness early.*

Secondary School, Superior-Greenstone DSB

School councils continue to recognize the important role they play in reaching beyond the school walls to engage not only parents, but the broader community, in the life and activities of their local school.

## CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

*This month we invited Toronto Public Health to conduct a two-day workshop on food safety and nutrition. The first day will focus on kitchen and food safety. On the second day we will be preparing a meal in the school and will be selling it to the teachers at lunchtime for a new fundraising initiative called "Tiffins 4 Teachers". We are pretty excited and hope it works out!*

*Elementary School, Toronto DSB*

Schools cannot do everything on their own. They need the support of others in the community to ensure that all students have access to the support they need to be successful. On the survey, school councils were asked if they conduct outreach to organizations outside the school or participate in shared events. While 35% of school councils report that they do not work with any community partners, among those school councils that do:

- 37% report partnerships with public health;
- 22% report working with municipal recreation programs;
- 7% work with settlement programs;
- 13% work with the library; and
- 21% report working with mental health organizations.

In the Near North board, one school council commented that they are proud of their close work with their district health unit on a Healthy Tools for Schools program. A school council in the Niagara board arranged to have the manager of a local YMCA come into the school to teach a Zumba class.<sup>9</sup>

Other community partnerships listed by school councils include non-profit and service organizations, local businesses, First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations, and religious organizations.

**Q** What is the role of school councils in building community partnerships? What supports do councils need to improve their ability to outreach and encourage more partnerships in the community?

## SCHOOL-TO-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

This year, there was a noticeable increase in the number of school councils commenting that they partner with other neighbourhood schools. Several schools reported twinning with low-income schools in their community to share fundraised money; some mentioned sharing other resources (eg. tables for events), and many schools said that they work together to bring in guest speakers and programs for parents.

*It's only when we meet chairs from other schools that we find there's so much we share and that we can use other council's solutions to address the same issues. We'd love there to be more opportunity for meetings of all school executives!*

*Elementary School, Toronto District School Board*

## ACTIVITIES TO INVOLVE PARENTS IN SCHOOL LIFE

For the past two years, we have asked school councils if they planned activities to engage parents in the life of the school. This year, 81% of participating councils indicated that they organize these types of activities. Among the activities mentioned, the most frequent is hosting community and family events such as dances, movie nights, and barbecues. School councils also mentioned organizing workshops and guest speakers, arranging orientation programs and parent ambassadors to support new parents, and having school council members and information available at school-organized events such as concerts and parent-teacher interviews.

## COUNCIL ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE COUNCIL DIVERSITY

We organized events to help parents get info about Aboriginal culture. Students are getting this in class; however, in an effort to address some of the racism that exists in our community we wanted to target parents.

*Elementary School, Lakehead DSB*

One of the ongoing challenges for school councils is to ensure that the membership of the school council is reflective of the diversity of parents in the school.<sup>40</sup> This year, only 29% of school councils reported that they organize activities

Every year we organize a day where parents volunteer to “teach” a skill. Junior and intermediate students can choose two workshops, run by parents (with staff supervision). Workshops are a wide range, such as cake decorating, ultimate frisbee, dog training, belly dancing, etc.

*Elementary School, Grand Erie DSB*

We invited our ESL parents for a walk-about through our school so they could familiarize themselves with the school and its procedures. Interpreters attended so that these parents could have their questions answered in their native language. We also put educational information booklets together for the parents in their native language.

*Secondary School, Greater Essex County DSB*

All parent reps were given a budget of \$100 to organize a social event for their class to encourage parents and students to get to know each other or reconnect at the beginning of the year. Many families participated and have continued communication within their child’s class.

*Elementary School, Toronto DSB*

to increase the diversity of council members. Councils reported using information tables and presentations at school functions, programs for newcomer parents, direct outreach to First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, multilingual information and interpreters, and incentives (food, prizes) to increase council diversity. One council mentioned working directly with the ESL teacher to connect better with newcomer families. Other strategies included personal, face-to-face invitations and ‘bring a friend to council’ events.

**Q** School councils continue to struggle to improve the diversity of their membership. Are there more effective ways to engage traditionally marginalized parents? Is it important that the council reflect the diversity of the school population? Does it have an impact on the decisions made by the council?

# CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL COUNCILS AND THEIR BOARDS

*We find it challenging to communicate with the school board. We're unsure who you are supposed to talk to and who is in the role.*

*Elementary School, Board Name withheld*

## TAKING IT UP A LEVEL: WHAT ISSUES DO COUNCILS BRING TO THE SCHOOL BOARD?

According to the school council regulations, school councils may make recommendations to their school board on any matter.<sup>11</sup> And, just like the principal, the board must consider any recommendations.

This year, 44% of councils reported raising issues at the school board. The most commonly cited issues brought to the board relate to school closings, boundary changes, and the reconfiguration of grades included in schools (eg. moving to K-12 schools). Other topics mentioned include school building and grounds (most often parking, busing, and traffic safety). Based on the number of concerns raised about traffic safety and parking around the school, this may be an area where councils, schools, and boards can be more proactive in encouraging active school transportation.

When asked about communication with their local trustee, 55% of councils indicated that there is two-way communication between the trustee and their group.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEES

In 2005, the Ministry released a new Parent Involvement Policy<sup>12</sup> that included a requirement that all boards have a board-level Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) in place by January 2011. Under Section 27(1) of Regulation 612,<sup>13</sup> PICs have four main responsibilities:

- to develop effective communication strategies that the board and director can use in communicating with parents and advise on the use of these strategies;
- to communicate information from the Ministry to school councils and parents;
- to work with the board's director to determine how funding for parent engagement initiatives will be allocated; and
- to work with school councils to share effective parent engagement practices and support initiatives that help build knowledge and skills that will help PICs and school councils in their work.

We asked school councils if they are aware of their board's Parent Involvement Committee. Just over 80% of respondents know about their PIC. Among those councils:

- 85% report receiving information from their PIC; and
- 68% report that there is a mechanism for providing input to the PIC.

While the awareness level of PICs is relatively high, only 50% of councils reported knowing how parents get to be on the PIC. Several methods were identified:

- 52% report that PIC representatives are selected by board staff or the director.
- 12% report that PIC members are elected/selected by each school council.

Among the 35% of councils who report other methods of choosing PIC members, the most commonly cited was "just show up" or "volunteer". Other methods include:

- Elected at regional/ward meetings.
- Elected by current PIC members.
- All school council chairs are automatically members.
- Lottery.

**Q** What activities can PICs engage in to support their school councils? How can we ensure that PIC members are representative of the broader school community?

# SCHOOL COUNCIL FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING

*We are located in an area where there are a lot of farms. So our PRO Grant is for an evening with healthy foods and local chefs cooking easy meals to show parents this technique.*

Elementary School, Wellington Catholic DSB

School councils have access to several funding sources to support their work. The Ministry provides \$500 in annual funding per school council, and councils can apply for Parents Reaching Out grants. School councils can also apply for grants from community organizations, foundations, and businesses; and the vast majority engage in some kind of fundraising within the school.

## \$500 MINISTRY GRANT

Each year, the Ministry of Education allocates \$500 per school council to school boards. The majority of councils use this funding to support parent engagement events such as welcome nights and guest speakers. The money is also used to cover councils' administration expenses, information brochures, parent library resources, and welcome packages for parents. Many school councils report that they use the funding to support student activities (awards, graduation, teacher appreciation gifts), rather than parent engagement.

*Most of the \$500 is spent on our monthly "Coffee House," which is held at the school regularly for families that are new to the neighbourhood, as well as families that are new to Canada.*

*Elementary School, Thames Valley DSB*

Every year, a surprising number of school councils report that they are unaware of this funding. Others mention that the principal or board uses the funding to pay for other things.

## PARENTS REACHING OUT GRANTS

School councils can apply to the Ministry of Education for Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants of up to \$1000 to support their parent engagement efforts.

*We are applying for funding to support a parent-only field trip.*

*Elementary School, Greater Essex County DSB*

Since 2009, the percentage of school councils reporting that they have applied for a PRO grant has ranged from 49%–54%. This year has seen the highest application rate so far, at 54% of school councils. School councils are seeking funding for a range of programs and resources, including:

- communications/printing/translation/signage;
- speakers/workshops/family programs (eg. Literacy Night);
- parent orientation/involvement programs (eg. Take Your Parents to School);
- social events;
- parent library/resources/handbook; and
- kits for home use (eg. math kits).

*We find the process of applying for these funds very time consuming, and in recent years have decided that the effort required does not warrant a parent volunteer's time.*

*Elementary School, Toronto Catholic DSB*

## OTHER GRANTS:

Only 14% of school councils reported applying for grants from outside organizations such as foundations (eg. Evergreen), businesses/banks, community groups, and municipalities. Almost 40% of the grants were for school yard greening, play structures, and other improvements to the school property. Grants for arts enrichment and breakfast/food programs were the next most common. Councils also applied for grants to support after-school programs, literacy initiatives, and skill-building programs (eg. First Aid).

## FUNDRAISING

The vast majority of school councils participate in some kind of fundraising. Based on our survey results, it is also the most time-consuming activity for many school councils. This year, 81% of school councils reported engaging in fundraising activities.

Councils reported that they spent the most money on:

- Computers—24%;
- Playground—13%;
- School renovations, additions or general upgrades—13%;
- Field Trips—12%; and
- Arts—10%.

**Since our school is not so affluent, when teachers or clubs request funds we ask that they propose a “partnership.” The applicant would then generate and initiate an activity and School Council would help facilitate the activity/event (bake treats, sell goods, etc.)**

***Elementary School, Durham DSB***

Several councils commented that they are not permitted to fundraise for things like building upgrades and capital projects, even though this type of fundraising (with some limitations) is allowed under the new provincial fundraising guideline.<sup>14</sup>

**Our board is underfunded and we are forced to do lots of fundraising to compensate for the underfunding.**

***Elementary School, Peel DSB***

Many school councils commented about the impact of Bill 115 and the labour dispute on this year’s fundraising activity. One council chair said, “It was decided that asking parents for money to support the school would not be well received when the teachers are not fully participating in school events themselves.” Other councils indicated that they were unable to spend their money this year because it would normally go toward programs and activities that have been cancelled due to the job action.

Almost 35% of school councils reported that they have a fundraising policy. These policies include:

- clauses to ensure that funds are distributed evenly across grades/programs/students;
- limits on the number of fundraising events/activities;
- restrictions on the type of fundraisers (eg. no candy/chocolate sales, no door-to-door canvassing);
- restrictions on what funds can be spent on (eg. no textbooks);
- timelines for spending raised funds (eg. must be spent in the year raised);
- requirements that parents be informed what the money will be used for before participating in fundraising activity;
- rules about incentives and prizes (eg. no individual prizes); and
- rules to ensure fundraising events are inclusive of all families, including low-income families.

Many councils commented that they follow their board’s and/or the Ministry guidelines for fundraising.

**Q School councils spend a great deal of their time on fundraising activities, even though it is not explicitly recognized as one of their roles in the school council regulations. Should school councils be engaged in this activity, and if so, how can they ensure a balance between fundraising and their other roles and responsibilities?**

# SURVEYS

# PEOPLE FOR EDUCATION

2012-2013

## School Council Survey

**People for Education** is an independent organization working to support public education in Ontario's English, French, and Catholic schools.

With the help of school councils across the province, we use annual surveys to keep track of things like parent involvement and the work of school councils and parent organizations. We publish the results of findings from our School Council survey in our *Report on Ontario's School Councils*. The report is available on the People for Education website.

**This survey is to be filled out by members of the School Council.** Please submit only **one** survey per school.

Please complete the survey online at [www.peopleforeducation.ca](http://www.peopleforeducation.ca) . Click on *Research>>>School Survey*.

**Please submit the survey by March 28, 2013.**

If you cannot complete the survey online, mail or fax the survey to:  
**People for Education, 641 Bloor St W, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1L1**  
**fax:** 416-536-0100  
**web site:** [www.peopleforeducation.ca](http://www.peopleforeducation.ca)

**Individual school responses will remain confidential.**

**Only overall results will be published.**

District School Board:
School:
Includes grades:
City:
School Phone:
School Email:
Contact Person:
Contact phone/email:

### 1. SCHOOL COUNCIL

School Councils have many important roles. Of the following list, which ones would you rank as the top three?

**CHOOSE ONLY THE TOP THREE.**

(1 = most important, 2 = second most important, 3 = third most important)

- A holding school community events \_\_\_\_\_
- B enhancing communication between the school and parents \_\_\_\_\_
- C fundraising for the school \_\_\_\_\_
- D enhancing accountability of the education system to parents \_\_\_\_\_
- E supporting Healthy School initiatives \_\_\_\_\_
- F promoting school safety \_\_\_\_\_
- G improving student achievement \_\_\_\_\_
- H working on the School Improvement Plan \_\_\_\_\_

Of the **above** roles (**A-H**), which does the School Council spend the most time on? (Circle just **ONE**)

**A          B          C          D          E          F          G          H**

Any comments? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. COMMUNICATION

- A)** Do you have a school council website? (either stand alone or part of the school website)  yes  no  
 Do you have a school council newsletter? (either stand alone or part of the school newsletter)  yes  no  
 Do you communicate with parents by email?  yes  no  
 If yes, how many families are on the list?  all  most  some  
 Does your school provide parents' email addresses to the school council?  yes  no  
 Does your school council use social media? (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)  yes  no  
 Does your school council do anything to help teachers communicate with parents?  yes  no

**If yes**, what do you do? \_\_\_\_\_

- B)** Do you ask parents for input or feedback?  yes  no  
 What are you most likely to ask parents for input or feedback about? (e.g. uniforms, staffing, fundraising)

What do you find is the most effective way to get feedback or input from parents? \_\_\_\_\_

- C)** Are you notified of education policy changes by:

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Never</b>
The principal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Ministry of Education?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 3. PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Does your school council do outreach to, or participate in shared events with, any of the following:  public health  
 municipal recreation programs  settlement programs  public library  mental health  
 none  other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

Does your school council organize activities to increase the participation of parents in school life?  yes  no  
**If yes**, please tell us about them. \_\_\_\_\_

Does your school council organize activities to increase the diversity of the council membership?  yes  no  
**If yes**, please tell us about them. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETINGS

How many school council meetings do you have in a school year? \_\_\_\_\_  
 On average, how many people attend a school council meeting? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who sets the agenda?  Chair/Executive  Principal  both  other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Are school council members invited to any staff meetings?  yes  no  
 Are school council initiatives conveyed to the teaching staff?  yes  no  don't know  
 If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. SCHOOL BOARD - SCHOOL COUNCIL CONNECTIONS

Does your school council ever raise issues at the Board level? (e.g. with the Director, Trustee, Superintendent)  
 yes  no  
 If yes, what were they? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is there two-way communication between the school council and the trustee?  yes  no

#### 6. PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEES

Are you aware of your school board's Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)?  yes  no  
 If yes: Does your school council receive information from the PIC?  yes  no  
 Is there a mechanism for giving input to the PIC?  yes  no  
 Do you know how the parents get to be on the PIC?  yes  no  
 If yes, how?  elected/selected by school council  selected by board staff or director  
 other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

#### 7. FUNDING

A) The Ministry of Education allocates to school boards \$500 per year for each school council.  
 This year, what will the school council spend most of that money on? \_\_\_\_\_  
 B) Did your school council apply for a Parents Reaching Out Grant (PRO) this year?  yes  no  
 If yes, what did you apply for? \_\_\_\_\_  
 C) Did your school council apply for any other grants? (e.g. Evergreen, Ontario Arts Council)  yes  no  
 If yes, what did you apply for? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Did the grant require your school council contribute matching funds?  yes  no

#### 8. FUNDRAISING

A) Does your school council fundraise?  yes  no  
 If yes, where will you spend the most money this year?  
**CHOOSE ONLY THE TOP THREE.**  
 (1= most money, 2 = second most money, 3 = third most money)  

Textbooks	_____	Music/musical instruments	_____
Arts	_____	Field trips	_____
Computers and/or software	_____	Major trips	_____
Sports	_____	Charity	_____
Library	_____	Graduation, awards	_____
Classroom supplies	_____	Playground	_____
(e.g. subject materials, teaching aids)	_____	Other	_____

Any comments? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Does your school council fundraise for school renovations, additions or general upgrades to school? (roof, furnace, paint, furniture, etc.)  yes  no  
 C) Does your school council have a fundraising policy?  yes  no  
 If yes, what does it include? \_\_\_\_\_



# PEOPLE FOR EDUCATION

## Sondage auprès des conseils d'école 2012-2013

People for Education est un organisme indépendant qui appuie l'éducation publique des écoles de langue française, anglaise et catholiques de l'Ontario.

Grâce à l'aide des conseils d'école de toute la province, nos sondages annuels nous permettent de suivre des domaines tels que la participation des parents et le travail des conseils d'école et des organisations de parents. Nous publions les constatations de notre sondage auprès des conseils d'écoles dans notre **rapport sur les conseils d'école ontariens** (en anglais seulement), consultable dans le site Web de People for Education.

**Ce sondage doit être rempli par les membres du conseil d'école.** Veuillez ne remplir qu'un seul sondage par école.

**Veuillez remplir le sondage en ligne à [www.peopleforeducation.ca](http://www.peopleforeducation.ca). Cliquez sur *Research>>>School Survey*.**

**Veuillez remplir ce sondage d'ici le 28 mars 2013.**

Si vous ne pouvez pas remplir ce sondage en ligne, prière de l'adresser par la poste ou par télécopieur à :  
**People for Education, 641, rue Bloor O., Toronto (Ontario) M6G 1L1**  
**Télécopieur : 416-536-0100**  
**Site Web : [www.peopleforeducation.ca](http://www.peopleforeducation.ca)**

**Les réponses de chaque école seront confidentielles.**

**Les constatations générales seront les seules à être publiées.**

Conseil scolaire de district :
École :
Années d'études :
Ville :
Téléphone de l'école :
Courriel de l'école :
Personne-ressource :
Personne-ressource téléphone/courriel :

## 1. CONSEIL D'ÉCOLE

Les conseils d'école remplissent de nombreux rôles importants. Parmi ceux qui suivent, lesquels sont les trois premiers par ordre d'importance, selon vous?

**NE CHOISISSEZ QUE LES TROIS PREMIERS PAR ORDRE D'IMPORTANCE.**

(1 = le plus important, 2 = le deuxième par ordre d'importance, 3 = le troisième par ordre d'importance)

- A) Animer des activités pour la communauté scolaire \_\_\_\_\_
- B) Améliorer la communication entre l'école et les parents \_\_\_\_\_
- C) Financer l'école \_\_\_\_\_
- D) Améliorer la responsabilité du système éducatif pour les parents \_\_\_\_\_
- E) Appuyer les initiatives des écoles saines \_\_\_\_\_
- F) Promouvoir la sécurité à l'école \_\_\_\_\_
- G) Améliorer la réussite des élèves \_\_\_\_\_
- H) Travailler au plan d'amélioration de l'école \_\_\_\_\_

Parmi les rôles **ci-dessus (A-H)**, auquel le conseil d'école consacre-t-il le plus de temps? (*N'en encerclez qu'UN SEUL.*)

**A      B      C      D      E      F      G      H**

## 2. COMMUNICATION

A) Votre conseil d'école a-t-il un site Web? (soit un site personnel, soit une section du site Web de l'école)

oui  non

Votre conseil d'école a-t-il un bulletin d'information? (soit un bulletin personnel, soit une section du bulletin de l'école)

oui  non

Communiquez-vous avec les parents par courriel?  oui  non

**Si oui**, combien de familles sont-elles dans cette liste?  toutes  la plupart  quelques-unes

Votre école communique-t-elle les adresses de courriel des parents au conseil d'école?  oui  non

Votre conseil d'école utilise-t-il les médias sociaux? (p. ex., Facebook, Twitter)  oui  non

Votre conseil d'école aide-t-il les enseignants à communiquer avec les parents?  oui  non

**Si oui**, comment? \_\_\_\_\_

B) Consultez-vous les parents ou sollicitez-vous leur rétroaction?  oui  non

À quel sujet êtes-vous le plus susceptible de consulter les parents ou de solliciter leur rétroaction? (p. ex., uniformes, dotation en personnel, financement) \_\_\_\_\_

Quelle est pour vous la méthode la plus efficace pour obtenir la rétroaction des parents ou pour les consulter? \_\_\_\_\_

C) Qui vous informe des modifications des politiques éducatives?

	Toujours	Souvent	Parfois	Jamais
La direction de l'école?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le conseil scolaire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le ministère de l'Éducation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le comité de participation des parents (CPP)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 3. MOBILISATION DES PARENTS ET DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ

Votre conseil d'école communique-t-il ou participe-t-il à des activités communes avec:  la santé publique

les programmes récréatifs municipaux  les programmes d'établissement

la bibliothèque publique  la santé mentale  aucun de ces programmes

autre (prière d'en dresser la liste) \_\_\_\_\_

Votre conseil d'école organise-t-il des activités pour augmenter la participation des parents à la vie de l'école?

oui  non

**Si oui**, veuillez nous les décrire. \_\_\_\_\_

Votre conseil d'école organise-t-il des activités pour augmenter la diversité des membres du conseil?  oui  non

**Si oui**, veuillez nous les décrire. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. RÉUNIONS DU CONSEIL D'ÉCOLE

Combien de fois le conseil d'école se réunit-il par année scolaire? \_\_\_\_\_

En moyenne, combien de personnes assistent à une réunion du conseil d'école? \_\_\_\_\_

Qui fixe l'ordre du jour?  Président/bureau  Direction de l'école  tous les deux  autre : \_\_\_\_\_

Invite-t-on les membres du conseil d'école à certaines réunions du personnel?  oui  non

Présente-t-on les initiatives du conseil d'école au personnel enseignant?  oui  non  ne sais pas

**Si oui**, comment? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. RELATIONS CONSEIL SCOLAIRE-CONSEIL D'ÉCOLE

Votre conseil d'école soulève-t-il parfois des questions au niveau du conseil scolaire? (p. ex., avec le directeur/la directrice, le conseiller/la conseillère scolaire, le surintendant/la surintendante)  oui  non

**Si oui**, lesquelles? \_\_\_\_\_

Existe-t-il un dialogue entre le conseil d'école et le conseiller/la conseillère scolaire?  oui  non

#### 6. COMITÉS DE PARTICIPATION DES PARENTS

Connaissez-vous le comité de participation des parents (CPP) de votre conseil scolaire?  oui  non

**Si oui** :

Votre conseil d'école reçoit-il de l'information du CPP?  oui  non

Existe-t-il un mécanisme de communication des idées du conseil d'école au CPP?  oui  non

Savez-vous comment les parents deviennent membres du CPP?  oui  non

**Si oui**, comment?  élus/sélectionnés par le conseil d'école  sélectionnés par le personnel ou le directeur du conseil scolaire  autre (*veuillez expliquer*) \_\_\_\_\_

#### 7. FINANCEMENT

**A)** Le ministère de l'Éducation alloue aux conseils scolaires 500 dollars par an pour chaque conseil d'école.

Cette année, à quoi votre conseil d'école a-t-il consacré la majorité de cette somme? \_\_\_\_\_

**B)** Votre conseil d'école a-t-il sollicité cette année une Subvention pour la participation et l'engagement des parents (PEP)?  oui  non

**Si oui**, pour quel projet avez-vous sollicité cette subvention? \_\_\_\_\_

**C)** Votre conseil d'école a-t-il sollicité d'autres subventions? (p. ex. Evergreen, Conseil des arts de l'Ontario)

oui  non

**Si oui**, laquelle avez-vous sollicitée? \_\_\_\_\_

Cette subvention exigeait-elle de votre conseil d'école une contribution financière équivalente?  oui  non

#### 8. ACTIVITÉS DE FINANCEMENT

**A)** Votre conseil d'école collecte-t-il des fonds?  oui  non

**Si oui**, pour quelles activités dépenserez-vous le plus d'argent cette année?

**NE CHOISISSEZ QUE LES TROIS PREMIÈRES.**

(1= activité la plus coûteuse, 2 = deuxième activité la plus coûteuse, 3 = troisième activité la plus coûteuse)

manuels \_\_\_\_\_

musique/instruments musicaux \_\_\_\_\_

arts \_\_\_\_\_

excursions \_\_\_\_\_

ordinateurs et/ou logiciels \_\_\_\_\_

excursions importantes \_\_\_\_\_

sports \_\_\_\_\_

bienfaisance \_\_\_\_\_

bibliothèque \_\_\_\_\_

cérémonie des finissants, prix \_\_\_\_\_

fournitures scolaires \_\_\_\_\_ (p. ex., documents

aire de jeu \_\_\_\_\_

pédagogiques, aides auditives)

autre \_\_\_\_\_

Des commentaires? \_\_\_\_\_

Votre conseil d'école collecte-t-il des fonds pour les rénovations, ou l'agrandissement de l'école ou pour sa modernisation générale (toit, chaudière, peinture, meubles, etc.)  oui  non

**B)** Votre conseil d'école a-t-il une politique en matière d'activités de financement?  oui  non

**Si oui**, laquelle? \_\_\_\_\_



# ENDNOTES

- 1 Regulation 612, s. 2, *School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees*, Retrieved from [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws\\_regs\\_000612\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_000612_e.htm)
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Elementary School, Toronto DSB
- 4 People for Education. *Doing What Matters Most: How parents can help their children succeed at school*. Toronto. <http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/People-for-Education-Doing-What-Matters-Most-how-parents-can-help-their-children-succeed-at-school-20111.pdf>
- 5 JK-12 School, Bluewater DSB
- 6 Bryk, A., & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*. New York: Russell Sage.
- 7 Harris, A., & Goodall, J. (2007). *Engaging parents in raising achievement: Do parents know they matter?* London: Department of Children, Schools and Families.
- 8 Epstein, J. L. (1991). Effects on student achievement of teachers' practices of parental involvement. *Advances in reading/language research*, 10, 261-276; Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research*, 67(1), 3-42; Anderson, K. J., & Minke, K. M. (2007). Parent involvement in education: Toward an understanding of parents' decision-making. *Journal of Educational Research*, 100(5), 313-323; Reed, R. P., Joens, K. P., Walker, J. M., & Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. (2000). Parents' motivations for involvement in children's education: Testing a theoretical model. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.
- 9 Elementary School, DSB Niagara
- 10 See eg. Mapp, K. L. & Hong, S. (2010). Debunking the myth of the hard to reach parent. In S. L. Christenson & A. L. Reschly, (Eds.) *Handbook of school-family partnerships* (pp. 345-361) NY: Routledge; Corter, C., Harris, P., & Pelletier, J. (1998). Parent participation in elementary schools: The role of school councils in development and diversity. Toronto: OISE.
- 11 Regulation 612, s. 20. See note 1.
- 12 Government of Ontario, *Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools*, [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/PE\\_Policy2010.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/PE_Policy2010.pdf)
- 13 Regulation 612, s. 27(1). See note 1.
- 14 Ministry of Education, *Fundraising Guideline*, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/Fund2012Guideline.pdf>