

Parents in Partnership



A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools

Parents are vital partners in education. They influence their children's attitudes about learning, and support learning at home. They are a vital link between home and school. And when they become involved in the life of the school, they make our schools better places to learn, grow and thrive. Ontario's new parent engagement policy recognizes that student achievement and success increase when parents are welcomed and respected as partners, and given the support they need to contribute at home and at school.

How does the policy define parent engagement?

Ontario's parent engagement policy recognizes many different forms of parent engagement, and that each is an important contributor to student and school success. Within the policy, parent engagement includes:

- Providing a positive learning environment at home, actively working with children to support what they are learning in school, and making learning an important part of the day
- Having productive conversations with teachers so that there is clear communication between the school and the home
- Becoming involved in school activities and volunteering to help with school events, trips and other activities
- Participating in School Councils at the school level and Parent Involvement Committees at the school board level, to provide perspective.

VISION

In Ontario's education system, all partners acknowledge the positive impact of parent engagement on student achievement. Students are supported and inspired to learn in a culture of high expectations in which parents:

- are welcomed, respected and valued by the school community as partners in their children's learning and development;
- have opportunities to be involved, and also a full range of choices about how to be involved, in the educational community to support student success;
- are engaged through ongoing communication and dialogue with other educational partners to support a positive learning environment at home and at school;
- are supported with the information and tools necessary to participate in school life.

How will the policy support and increase parent engagement?

The parent engagement policy identifies four key success strategies designed to support parents as partners so that they have the opportunity, skills and tools to work together with education partners and contribute fully to the success of Ontario's students and education system.

Strategy 1:

School Climate - Foster and sustain a positive, welcoming school climate in which all parent perspectives are encouraged, valued and heard.

Strategy 2:

Eliminating Barriers - Identify and remove barriers to parent engagement that may prevent some parents from fully participating in their children's learning and to reflect the diversity of our students and communities.

Strategy 3:

Supports for Parents - Provide parents with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to support student learning at home and at school.

Strategy 4:

Parent Outreach – Review and expand communication and outreach strategies such as local workshops, presentations, tools and resources, to share information and strategies related to supporting learning at home and parent engagement in schools.

How will the goals of the policy be reached?

The policy identifies specific actions to be undertaken at the provincial, regional and local levels by the Ministry of Education, Schools and District School Boards.

How do students and parents benefit from parent engagement?

Research on parent engagement tells us that there is a direct connection between parent engagement and:

- Improved academic achievement
- More positive attitudes about school
- More success with homework
- Higher rates of high school graduation
- More consistent school attendance
- Fewer behaviour problems
- A brighter future for students at school and later in life.

How do teachers benefit?

Teachers who actively partner with parents enjoy better parent relationships, and a wide range of benefits:

- Parents are more supportive because they understand what is happening in the classroom
- Parents help to ensure homework and assignments are done
- Parents share the responsibility for student success and work with the teacher
- Parents have a more positive view of teachers and the school
- Student attendance and classroom behaviour improve
- Student achievement improves
- Teachers have a stronger connection with parents, feel supported by parents and have higher job satisfaction.

How do schools benefit?

Schools are connected to the communities around them. Together, parents, community members and schools can create a powerful support network to provide children and youth with the services they need, develop innovative school-community programs, and enrich the life of the school. As a result:

- Families and community organizations more fully support the school
- Whole-school and individual student achievement often improve
- Schools are connected to businesses, agencies and services in the community
- Schools gain greater recognition for their achievements and their valued role as an important part of community life.

How does the education system benefit?

The Ministry of Education, District School Boards and schools benefit not only from the important work parents do to help their children succeed in school, but also by ensuring that parent perspectives are heard and considered in developing policies and programs at the provincial, regional and local levels.

We all benefit

Together, we are building possibilities for our children and transforming these possibilities into a reality.



To learn more: visit www.ontario.ca/EDUparents

© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2010 ISBN 978-1-4435-4017-9 (Print) 978-1-4435-4018-6 (PDF) 978-1-4435-4019-3 (Txt)