MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary Treasurers of School Authorities

FROM: Kit Rankin
Director
Field Services Branch

DATE: September 7, 2007

SUBJECT Provincial Parent Board and Parent Engagement

As you may recall, the Ministry of Education identified the creation of a Provincial Parent Board, Parent Involvement Committee at the board-level and a Parent Engagement Office as critical vehicles to implement Ontario’s Parent Involvement Policy. This policy highlighted the importance of parents playing a vital role in the development and education of their children and in the success of our schools. Helping all students achieve their potential requires collaboration among education partners at all levels.

I am pleased to inform you that the Provincial Parent Board (PPB) has now been established representing Ontario’s diverse population, geographic regions, four publicly funded education systems, rural and urban areas, and elementary and secondary schools. Please access the ministry’s website for information on the Provincial Parent Board and a list of board members: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/ppb/index.html

The Provincial Parent Board will play a vital role in enhancing parent involvement in Ontario’s schools and guiding province-wide efforts to mobilize and support parent involvement. Its mandate is to provide advice to the minister on the development of effective parent engagement programs and supports at the provincial, board and local levels. As well, it is responsible for monitoring the state of parent engagement in the school system, the progress of program implementation at all levels and the effectiveness of parent engagement initiatives. Board members will be attending three to six meetings in Toronto during this school calendar year.

Starting in 2005-06 your board received funding for the establishment of a Parent Involvement Committee (PIC). This year’s funding is outlined in section 6 of the Memorandum 2007: B6 entitled “Education Programs Other Funding for 2007-08 Reporting Entity Project Funding” dated June 1st, 2007. The PIC should be a direct link to yourself and trustees, to provide you with parent advice and to support parent engagement in your board. The PIC is a key vehicle in enhancing parent involvement in support of student achievement at the board level.
Through the Parent Engagement Office (PEO), the Ministry of Education has a number of other initiatives to support parent engagement across the province. Specifically, this year’s Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grant process has been announced and an online application is now available. PRO grants are provided to select applicants who develop projects, events or training in support of parent engagement. Not all projects can be funded, so interested applicants are invited to apply to one of the following:

- **PRO School Council Grants** – Open to school councils working alone or in partnership with another school/school council, parent group, or community organization. Information is available online at: [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/schools.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/schools.html)

- **PRO Regional/Provincial Grant** – Open to parent organizations, school boards, post-secondary or other non-profit organizations working in partnership with parent organizations. Proposed projects must fall under at least one of the following headings: ‘Parents as Partners;’ ‘Welcoming School Board and School Environments for Parents;” or ‘Parent Training and Skill-Building.’ Information is available online at: [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/regional.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/regional.html)

All PRO grant applications for the 2007-08 funding period will be completed and submitted online, beginning September 5, 2007, with an October 19, 2007, deadline. The maximum amount for the PRO School Council Grant is $1,000. The maximum possible amount for the PRO Regional Provincial Grant is $30,000. Detailed requirements and answers to questions are available online at: [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reaching.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reaching.html)

The Ministry of Education website is an excellent resource for parents to find out about the PRO grants as well as providing additional information on being engaged parents such as on-line parent resources and tips to help school councils engage parents. The parents section of the website can be accessed at: [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents).

The PEO will also be planning regional symposia for board teams as a professional development opportunity to build capacity in parent engagement specifically to help in creating schools that are warm and welcoming to parents.

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce our new Manager of the Parent Engagement Office, Sharon Stuckless. We are pleased to have Sharon join the Parent Engagement Team which includes: Wanda Percival (Education Officer), Christine Beachey (Executive Coordinator), Hélène Grégoire (Senior Policy Advisor-Bilingual), Regina Moore (Administrative Officer) and Josiane Ng (Administrative Assistant-Bilingual). I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of Gerry Townsend who has so ably led the PEO initiatives since January 2007. Gerry will continue to support the initiatives of the ministry as regional manager of the Toronto Area Regional Office.
Please inform the members of your Parent Involvement Committee and School Councils of these exciting initiatives. We look forward to continuing to work with you on parent engagement initiatives and appreciate your board’s commitment to making schools welcoming for parents.

Sincerely,

Kit Rankin
Director
Field Services Branch