February 22, 2016

Dear Parent Involvement Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs,

Re: New for 2016 – Minister’s Regional and French-language Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Symposia

I am pleased to extend an invitation to parent members of each Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) to attend this year’s symposia.

We have heard your suggestions, and I am pleased to announce that we have changed the format to allow more parents the opportunity to participate and to better respond to local needs. To that end, this year we are hosting six regional symposia across Ontario and one French-language PIC symposium to be held in Ottawa.

Each symposium will be held on a Saturday in April or May. More information, including the date and location for your symposium, will be sent to you shortly.

As parents, you already know that when you are involved in your children’s education, the entire school community benefits. Attending a PIC symposium is a great way for parents to network and share ideas to support parent engagement.

These symposia will provide the opportunity for dedicated parents like you to identify barriers and create local solutions to enhance parent engagement in your community and support student achievement and well-being. This format will also allow more parents in your district school board to attend the local symposium and provide you with meaningful opportunities to network and collaborate with parents in your community.

Each PIC symposium will have a local focus. Building on your interests and needs, there will be engaging sessions, speakers and new tools and resources to support parent engagement.

You will have the opportunity to learn about effective practices and be inspired by other parents. You can also share practical materials, tips and strategies that will support your ongoing efforts to enhance parent engagement in your district school board and community.

Every year the PIC symposium is a tremendous success and is greatly valued by parents across the province. We hope that this new format will be even more exciting and of value to you.
I should also note that it has been a busy year. And I would like to take this opportunity to share some highlights that impact and support student achievement and well-being.

- For the tenth year in a row, the highly successful Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants were given out. We awarded 2,141 school council and 116 regional/provincial grants. Applications are now being accepted for the 2016-17 school year.

- Every district school board has designated a Mental Health Leader to improve supports for mental health as part of our ongoing commitment to the health and well-being of all children and students.

- Ontario’s provincial high school graduation rate increased again to 84 per cent. And 72 per cent of our Grades 3 and 6 students are achieving a ‘B’ grade in reading, writing and math.

Thank you for your continued commitment and support of parent engagement in your district school board and community. I hope you will be able to attend the PIC symposium in your region.

Sincerely,

Liz Sandals
Minister

c: Directors of Education

Regional Office Leads