

# **Parent Involvement**

## **Report to the Minister of Education**

**Interim Parent Involvement  
Advisory Board  
July 2006**

# **Report of the Interim Parent Involvement Advisory Board**

- A. Letter to the Minister of Education
- B. Advice for a Process to choose Members of a New Provincial Board
- C. Advice for the Establishment of a Grant Program for School-based Initiatives to reach Parents who may Find Involvement More Challenging
- D. Grant Proposal Kit – Parent Involvement Funds
- E. Advice for the Establishment of a Regional/Provincial Grant Program

**Interim Parent Involvement  
Advisory Board**

c/o Parent Engagement Office  
Field Services Branch

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**Conseil consultatif provisoire de la  
participation des parents**

a/s Bureau de la participation des parents  
Direction des services régionaux

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June 28, 2006

The Honourable Sandra Pupatello  
Minister of Education  
22nd Floor, Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to submit to you the report from the Interim Parent Involvement Advisory Board (IPIAB). This report is the result of four months of work during which members had the opportunity to further the work undertaken in the winter of 2005 for the Parent Voice in Education Project (PVEP).

Once again, members drew on their experience and on the richness of the information gathered during the PVEP consultations to provide thoughtful advice on matters related to the implementation of the Ontario Parent Involvement Policy, as identified by former Minister Kennedy, namely:

- a process through which parents may be selected to serve on the Parent Involvement Advisory Board; and
- criteria for evaluating requests for funding to support Parent Involvement initiatives.

Our report comprises three advice documents containing recommendations for your review and consideration. The first document addresses the matter of choosing members for the new Provincial Parent Board. The remaining two documents offer recommendations for the establishment of a grant program for school-based initiatives aimed at reaching out to parents who face barriers to involvement, and a grant program that is both regional and provincial in scope in support of enhanced parent involvement.

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Throughout our meetings, we have remained focused on the principles that have guided us since 2004, among which are:

- a belief in a strong and independent parental voice at the provincial level;
- recognition for the need to empower the parent voice at the local level in order to increase parent involvement; and
- the need to support the school system in welcoming parents.

We believe our recommendations should be implemented as early as possible during the summer of 2006, in order that schools and the education system as a whole may benefit from the proposed measures.

We would also recommend that a group of parents should continue to work as a transition team, as summarized in the following motion, carried at our June 9/10, 2006, meeting:

*Whereas the mandate of the IPIAB is fulfilled in June, 2006 with the completion of recommendations for the role of selection of members for the Parent Involvement Advisory Board and;*

*Whereas there may be a gap between the end of the mandate of the IPIAB and the establishment of the permanent PIAB and;*

*Whereas there is currently a sense of momentum among parents, school councils, regional councils etc. around the new role for parents in Ontario schools and;*

*Whereas the members of the IPIAB have an “institutional memory” about what informed their various recommendations and whereas a continuity of intent and purpose may improve the effectiveness of the process of creating the permanent PIAB and create a smooth transition from IPIAB to PIAB.*

*Be it resolved that the IPIAB recommends that the Minister appoint a transition team consisting of some or all of the members of the IPIAB to:*

- *Oversee the establishment of a nomination process;*
- *Form the initial selection committee;*
- *Establish the process for reviewing grant applications.*

**Carried**

We would like to extend our thanks to you and to the former Minister of Education for your confidence. We also wish to thank the staff of the Parent Engagement Office and their collaborators for their diligence and enthusiasm throughout this process.

We look forward to the implementation of these recommendations.

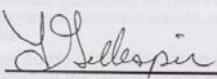


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Gabrielle Blais  
Chair  
Interim Parent Involvement Advisory Board

Enclosure

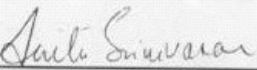
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Steise Caswell



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Tammy Gillespie

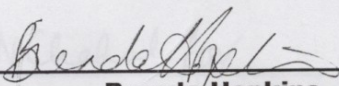
Tammy Gillespie  
Marathon



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Anita Srinivasan


Anita Srinivasan  
Mississauga



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Brenda Hopkins


Brenda Hopkins  
Salford



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Alimamy Bangura

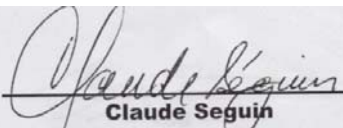
Alimamy Bangura  
Toronto



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Annie Kidder

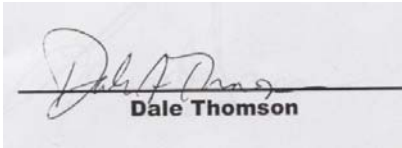
Annie Kidder  
Toronto



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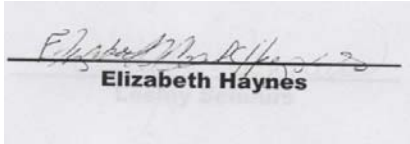
Claude Seguin

Claude Seguin  
Gloucester



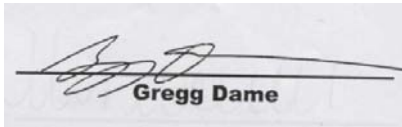
**Dale Thomson**

Dale Thomson  
Echo Bay



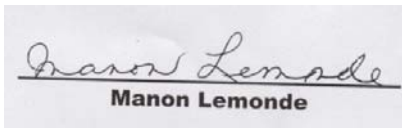
**Elizabeth Haynes**

Elizabeth Haynes  
Windsor



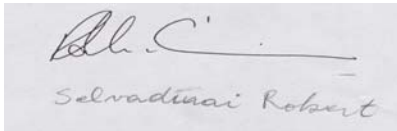
**Gregg Dame**

Gregg Dame  
Port Colborne



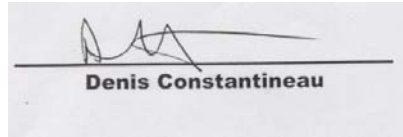
**Manon Lemonde**

Manon Lemonde  
Oshawa



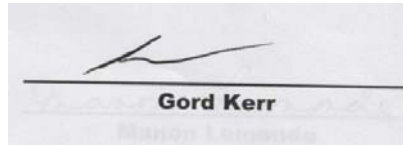
**Selvadurai Robert**

Robert Selvadurai  
Toronto



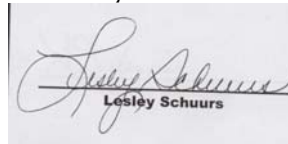
**Denis Constantineau**

Denis Constantineau  
Sudbury



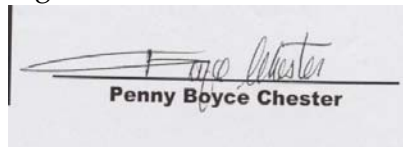
**Gord Kerr**

Gord Kerr  
Gormley



**Lesley Schuurs**

Lesley Schuurs  
Ingersoll



**Penny Boyce Chester**

Penny Boyce Chester  
Toronto

# **ADVICE for a Process to Choose Members of a New Provincial Parent Board**

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**June 2006**

**Interim Parent Involvement Advisory Board**

## Purpose of This Paper

In December, 2005, the former Minister of Education, Gerard Kennedy, asked members of the Parent Voice in Education Project (PVEP) to serve on an interim basis to provide advice and recommendations on the implementation of the Ontario Parent Involvement Policy.

Matters to be addressed in the Terms of Reference included the process by which parents may be chosen to serve on the Parent Involvement Advisory Board. This paper presents our thoughts on key issues to be considered in devising such a process, two proposed options, and our recommendation.

We recommend that a **selection** mechanism, rather than election, be used to choose members for the Board. This was not the view of many Advisory Board members when we began this work. But, having considered the key issues, we believe that it is the only practicable and desirable approach.

## What We Did

We reviewed the PVEP report (March 31, 2005) and the ministry policy paper, "Ontario Parent Involvement Policy" (December 1, 2005), we discussed possible models in several meetings, and we looked at how jurisdiction-wide parent groups chose their members in a number of other jurisdictions.

## Key Issues

It was clear to us from the beginning that the **role** of the new Board would affect both how appointments are made and who is appointed to it. Therefore, we spent considerable time reflecting on the new Board's role and mandate. As well, the wish that the Board's membership be **representative**, expressed in both the PVEP report and the ministry policy paper, raised several issues for discussion.

### **Role**

In both the PVEP report and the ministry policy paper, two major roles are described: **facilitating** and **monitoring**.

The Board is to **facilitate** ways of involving parents more fully in the education of their children. The PVEP recommends, for example, that the Board "facilitate the development and implementation of the provincial Parental Involvement Policy", and "advise on a range of communications and outreach strategies" to all parents. The ministry paper further states that the Board will "guide provincial efforts to mobilize parents".



Both the PVEP and the ministry want the Board to **monitor** the state of parent involvement across the province. The ministry policy paper proposes developing a performance measure by which the Board will evaluate ministry responsiveness in several areas:

- consultation of parents on relevant policy;
- support for parent engagement;
- information transparency;
- communication responsiveness; and
- Boards' combined parent engagement.

This is proposed as part of a package of interrelated accountability measures at board and school levels: school board responsiveness, to be evaluated by a board's Parent Involvement Committee, and school responsiveness, to be evaluated by individual school councils.

We believe that:

- the Board should **provide advice** on parent involvement **only** and not education policy in general; and
- the Board should **facilitate** implementation of the parent involvement policy and **monitor** its implementation activities (such as the administration of grant programs) within a framework of continuous improvement — by, for example, setting goals and standards for programs and activities, and then by reviewing and reporting on their outcomes.

#### *Members' Skills*

The issue of what skills are needed by Board members follows from the roles outlined above. We believe that:

- members should be strong communicators;
- members should have experience working with a wide range of school and community groups;
- members should be able to look beyond the horizon of their own particular school or community or special interest; and
- members should be comfortable with reviewing assessments of program achievements.

Appropriate professional development and training for members should be made available, as required, to help members fulfil their mandate.

### *Provincial Parent Associations*

We reassert the value of the role provincial parent associations continue to play at many ministry partnership tables and in working groups. The associations also help shape education policy through a range of activities — research, consultation, outreach, community development, training, and communications — that go beyond the specific mandates of ministry-sponsored committees and working groups.

The mechanisms for choosing Board members described in this paper do not provide for reserving seats for the provincial parent associations (as was the case with the Ontario Parent Council). This best supports the objectives stated in the ministry policy for broad parent representation. Maintaining clarity about the Board's role relative to parent involvement, as described above, and about the roles played by the provincial associations in representing parents' views on education matters helps ensure that the parent voice at the provincial level remains inclusive and effective.

### ***Representativeness***

The ministry policy paper is clear that the Board should be “selected by parents”. It also notes that “the new parent vehicles will ultimately need to be accountable to parents through democratic processes”.

The PVEP is explicit about inclusiveness, indicating that:

- there should be a mix of different kinds of experience (some with School Council experience, for example, others with broad community involvement);
- parents should come from the four publicly supported education systems;
- the diverse nature of Ontario's population should be reflected in the make-up of the Board; and
- ways should be found to attract parents from communities that may not have been involved in similar province-wide activity.

The idea of representativeness thus raises two main questions:

- How can the Board adequately represent Ontario parents?
- How can it guarantee broad inclusiveness?

With these questions in mind, we considered three methods of choosing Board members, including democratic election, ministerial appointment, and parents selecting parents.

### *Democratic Election*

This would create the semblance of representativeness and therefore credibility to the Board. However, the reality is that an elected Board would be democratic and representative in appearance only. This Board could never be large enough to be truly representative of all parents. The infrastructure required to support an election process would be cumbersome, costly, and potentially ineffective. School councils (whose members might be the electorate for the Board) may not be representative of all parents, and ensuring diversity and inclusiveness would be difficult.

### *Ministerial Appointment*

This could be done quickly, it would be less costly, and there would be greater clarity about who would be on the Board. However, this process may be perceived as lacking credibility and could give the appearance that appointments were the result of patronage. It is also not an option raised in the ministry policy paper. For these reasons we did not consider this to be a viable alternative.

### *Parents Selecting Parents*

This process would require nomination by application, an ability to screen candidates, and the ratification of selections by parents. Pros include the fact that applicants would likely be invested in the system, that representativeness for diversity and inclusiveness could be assured, that many forms of parent involvement would be represented, and that the needed skill sets could be provided. However, the process might not be seen as being representative enough.

It was clear from this analysis that the third method, parents selecting parents, could best answer the two questions raised above.

## **Other Jurisdictions**

To help illuminate these issues, a number of jurisdiction-wide parent groups in other jurisdictions were surveyed. (See Appendix A for the results of the survey.)

Most jurisdictions that have a role for parents in local school governance also have jurisdiction-wide organizations to represent these parents' interests. Sometimes these large-scale organizations are recognized, formally or informally, by their government; sometimes they are partly funded by their government. Most offer various supports to local parent councillors: training courses, publications, guides, liaison services, and advice.

However, in all these jurisdictions choosing members is relatively easy since applicants or nominees come predominantly from lower-level parent organizations.

Therefore, given the specific challenges in setting up the Ontario board — its role and make-up — none of the jurisdiction-wide organizations we identified could serve as models, given the specific challenges in setting up the Ontario Board.

## **Proposal**

We present two options for choosing members of the Provincial Parent Board. They are based on the PVEP report, the ministry policy paper, and our own reflection and discussion.

We believe that a **selection** mechanism, rather than an **election** mechanism, is the preferred option.

As context, principles for choosing members are set out, and assumptions are made regarding the number of members of the Board, their term of office, and eligibility.

### ***Principles***

- Parents choose members.
- Parents represent parents.
- Members have demonstrated experience in working with parents, schools, and school councils or community organizations in their communities or regions.
- Parents come from broadly diverse communities.
- Parents come from the four Ontario publicly funded education systems (English public, French public, English Catholic, and French Catholic), from rural and urban areas, and from elementary and secondary levels.
- Means are provided so that members who represent geographically distant areas, or who otherwise need special support to participate, may have that support.
- The process of getting members onto the Board is open and accountable.
- The ministry provides administrative and advisory support to facilitate the choosing of Board members.

### ***Assumptions***

#### *Number of Members*

The Board will have twenty members. Parents come from the ministry's six regions, three from each. Two further members — Members at Large — will be appointed to the Board as described in the options to ensure further alignment with the principles and the diverse character of the Board.

### *Term of Office*

Members will normally serve for three years. Terms will be staggered.

Thus, for the first Board, half the members will serve for eighteen months only, the rest for three years. At the end of eighteen months, ten member positions (including one of the Members-at-Large) will become available, to be filled with ten new members who will serve a three-year term. The remaining ten members will finish their full three-year term and, following the third year, their positions will become available.

Should a vacancy occur mid-term, a replacement could be chosen from the list of applicants for a particular region.

### *Eligibility*

Any parent of a child enrolled in an Ontario publicly funded school is eligible, if the child attends the school for at least 50 per cent of the parent's term on the Board.

### *Chair*

The Chair and Vice-Chair will be chosen by the Board. The Board will decide on their terms of office. The Chair will vote on issues only to break a tie.

### *Nomination Committee*

To constitute the first Board, an Interim Nomination Committee will be formed to facilitate the process of choosing members. It will consist of four members of the Interim Parent Involvement Advisory Board, in addition to a representative of the Parent Engagement Office.

For future Boards, a Nomination Committee will be formed to examine all nominations or applications. It will consist of seven members of the Board (one for each region), plus a representative of the Parent Engagement Office. It will serve for one membership acquisition process. (Members who wish to re-apply to be on the Board may not be on the Nomination Committee).

## **Options**

Two options were considered. In the first, individuals apply locally and are selected by region. In the second, locally nominated individuals are elected by region.

### *Selection Option*

- **Local Application:** Parents apply for membership on the Board. Applications, including three letters of reference from school councils, school council umbrella groups, or other community organizations, are sent to ministry regional offices. Regional office staff review appropriate criminal background checks and validate references. A final list of applicants is sent to the Nomination Committee. (Existing members who have applied for an additional term would be excluded from the approval process).
- **Regional Selection:** The Nomination Committee considers applications and selects parents according to the Principles (listed above).
- **Members-at-Large:** The Nomination Committee selects two additional members, in keeping with the Principles.
- **Provincial Validation:** The Nomination Committee presents its recommendations to the full Board for approval

### *Election Option*

- **Local Nomination:** Parents are nominated (or nominate themselves). Nominations, including three letters of reference from school councils, school council umbrella groups, or other community organizations, are sent to ministry regional offices. Regional office staff perform appropriate criminal background checks and validate references. A final list of candidates is approved by the Nomination Committee. (Existing members who have applied for an additional term would be excluded from the approval process).
- **Regional Election:** Voters are bona fide members of a region's school councils. They elect three individuals to represent their region on the Board. Elections are managed by ministry regional offices.
- **Provincial Validation:** The Nomination Committee confirms the results of the election.
- **Members-at-Large:** The Nomination Committee selects two additional members from among the nominees.

## Pros and Cons

We present pros and cons for each option for consideration.

Selection Option	Election Option
<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents select parents.</li><li>• Diversity and inclusiveness are assured.</li><li>• The process is efficient — relatively easy to manage, not very time-consuming, and not very costly (there would be no need to create ballots, mailing lists, or a voting process).</li></ul>	<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This option gives the appearance of being representative and democratic.</li><li>• School councils offer a pool of both nominees and voters</li></ul>
<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Because members are selected, not elected, the Board’s credibility could suffer.</li></ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are too few positions on the Board for Ontario parents to be genuinely represented.</li><li>• Parents not serving on school councils may be excluded from the election process.</li><li>• The process would be cumbersome, time-consuming, and costly.</li><li>• There is no guarantee of diversity.</li><li>• The election process cannot be aligned with the school year or with school council election timelines.</li></ul>

## Recommended Option

We recommend that the **selection** option be adopted.

As noted earlier, all of us came to these meetings with open minds, many with the view that elections were the best way to choose members for the Board. However, it became clear that elections would be cumbersome and impractical and, most important, could never represent all Ontario parents. Therefore, our choice was clear.

## ***Other Considerations***

### *Communication*

Extensive and sustained communication will be required from the outset so that potential members are informed of opportunities to serve and of the process for submitting application papers. To be considered are the use of local and provincial media, websites, and “school bags”. Staff support would be required for this process.

### *Timelines*

In order to facilitate a high rate of parent participation, timelines proposed to implement the selection process must take into account the school year schedule, especially as it pertains to school council elections.



**PARENT ORGANIZATIONS:  
STRUCTURES AND MEMBERSHIP SELECTION IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS**

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**February 2006**

**Interim Parent Involvement Advisory Board**

## British Columbia

Body's Name and Purpose (Policy/Legislation)	Member Selection	Comments
<p><b>BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advances the public school education and well-being of BC children, and promotes parent advisory participation at the school, district, and provincial levels</li> <li>acknowledged by the BC Ministry of Education as the parent voice in BC education</li> <li>responds collectively to government consultations prepares news bulletins and discussion papers provides training and other resources to Parent Advisory Councils (PACs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BCCPAC is governed by a volunteer board elected annually by the membership</li> <li>members are representatives of local PACs or district PACs (DPACs)</li> <li>district associates are elected or appointed by District PACs to be the communications link with BCCPAC</li> <li>individual parents of children in BC schools may be associate (non-voting) members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>candidates for the board must be nominated by their member PAC (not by an individual or by a DPAC)</li> <li>they must agree to a description of duties of the board, describe their involvement with K-12 education, explain why they want to be on the board, discuss BCCPAC's role in BC education, and describe important issues they see BCCPAC facing</li> <li>a full-time staff manages BCCPAC, assisted by contract workers and volunteers</li> <li>funding comes from various sources such as the ministry, membership fees, sales of resources, project funding</li> </ul>
<p><b>School Planning Council (SPC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develops, monitors, and reviews annual school plans for student achievement in consultation with the school community</li> <li>plans are connected to district accountability contracts, Aboriginal enhancement agreements, and ministry district review processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>school principal</li> <li>one teacher elected by secret ballot from the school staff</li> <li>3 parents elected by secret ballot from the school PAC</li> <li>one student from Gr. 10, 11, or 12, appointed by the principal after consultation with students</li> </ul>	<p>from <i>A Survey of School Planning Councils in British Columbia, 2004</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>79% of SPCs were chaired by principals, 17% by PAC members</li> <li>significant challenge: finding and keeping parent members</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parents' Advisory Council (PAC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advises school's principal and staff on any matter relating to the school other than matters assigned to the SPC</li> <li>assists the SPC at its request</li> <li>works with principal to promote communication among school, parent community, SPC</li> <li>elects parent representatives to SPC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all parents and guardians of children in a school area are automatically voting members</li> <li>principal or vice-principal and a teacher may attend PAC meetings</li> <li>some secondary PACs may have a student representative</li> </ul>	

## Manitoba

Body's Name and Purpose (Policy/Legislation)	Member Selection	Comments
<p><b>Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consults with the Minister (3 or 4 times a year) and ministry on issues brought to its attention (MAPC is represented on several ministry committees, attends ministry workshops, etc.)</li> <li>supports, promotes, and enhances meaningful parent involvement and participation in their advisory role at the school, division, and provincial levels</li> <li>promotes parental understanding and awareness of educational issues</li> <li>liaises with other provincial organizations representing students, teachers, parents, school support staff, administration, principals, trustees, the ministry, and the broader community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regular members are Advisory Councils for School Leadership (ASCLs), official school parent groups, Home and School Associations, and other institutions, associations, or individuals</li> <li>honorary members (not affiliated with MAPC) are nominated by regular members</li> <li>life members are individuals whose service to MAPC warrants recognition</li> <li>individual members are parents whose children attend a school that does not have a parent group, or whose parent group does not belong to MAPC</li> <li>associate members are any association who feels that membership would benefit their organization</li> <li>community members are people without children in the school system who indicate that they will represent parents' views</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on the MAPC Board of Directors (which consists of 7–20 members, elected annually at the general meeting), 3/4 must be nominated by the regular members</li> <li>about 70% of funding for MAPC comes from the government (on a current operating budget of almost \$100,000)</li> <li>funding assistance is also given to MAPC for special projects</li> </ul>
<p><b>Advisory Councils for School Leadership (ACSL)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ACSL <b>may</b>: advise on school policies, activities, organization, fund-raising, the process of hiring and assigning principals and the school's annual budget; participate in developing an annual school plan and in ministry or board school reviews</li> <li>The ACSL <b>shall</b>: communicate with parents and community members, and be accountable to the school and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>each ACSL must number at least 7</li> <li>parents are to be 2/3 of this</li> <li>community members are to be 1/3</li> <li>teachers and staff of the school or division who are also parents or community members may be no more than 1/3</li> <li>if the school is a secondary school, with a student council, the president or another student selected by the council is a community member of the ACSL</li> <li>the principal and one teacher representative are ex-officio non-voting members</li> </ul>	<p>In <i>Supporting Inclusive Schools: School Planning and Reporting: A Framework for Developing and Implementing Annual School Plans and Reports</i> (2004) suggestions are given for inviting parent participation from ACSLs, parent councils, and Home and School Associations.</p>

## New Brunswick

Body's Name and Purpose (Policy/Legislation)	Member Selection	Comments
<p><b><i>District Education Council (DEC)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEC's develop broad policies and procedures that are consistent with provincial policies and procedures for the operation of the district's schools</li> <li>• the day-to-day running of the district's schools is the responsibility of the district superintendent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are 11–13 members, depending on the number of sub-districts in the district</li> <li>• elections are by sub-district or ward</li> <li>• candidates are nominated by 10 or more persons in the district</li> <li>• elections are every 4 years, on the same day as municipal elections</li> <li>• voters are citizens (not just parents)</li> <li>• school personnel and employees of the Department of Education are not eligible to be elected or appointed to a DEC</li> <li>• the Minister may appoint an additional councillor, in prescribed districts, who is a member of the Mi'kmaq or Maliseet first nation and who resides in the district</li> </ul>	<p>DECs are part of the governance structure for education in New Brunswick; they are not affinity or voluntary organizations</p>
<p><b><i>Parent School Support Committee (PSSC)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advises the principal concerning establishing, implementing, and monitoring the school improvement plan</li> <li>• participates in the selection of the principal and vice-principal</li> <li>• provides input for performance evaluations of principal and vice-principal</li> <li>• advises the principal in the development of school policies</li> <li>• reviews the results of the school performance report</li> <li>• communicates with the District Education Council on matters relating to PSSC duties</li> <li>• submits annually to the superintendent a list of parents from which the superintendent appoints a parent to be a member of a school appeals committee</li> </ul>	<p>A PSSC has 6–12 members, a majority of whom are parents members are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parents of children attending the school, or parent representatives, elected by parents of the school or appointed by parent members of the PSSC</li> <li>• a teacher, elected by the teachers in the school</li> <li>• a student (secondary school) elected by students</li> <li>• a student/parent from a Home &amp; School Association</li> <li>• one or two community members (who are not school employees), appointed by parent members of the PSSC</li> <li>• the principal (not a member but must participate in PSSC meetings)</li> </ul>	

## Australia (National)

Body's Name and Purpose (Policy/Legislation)	Member Selection	Comments
<p><b><i>Australian Council of State School Organizations (ACSSO)</i></b>  ACSSO was formed to develop national parent organization policies in education and represent these policies and its affiliates' interests at the national level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conducts, commissions, and publishes research on education issues</li> <li>• leads and facilitates public discussion to establish strategic priorities for education</li> <li>• provides an interactive information service to governments, schools, and their communities</li> <li>• ensures that community needs are reflected in education decision-making processes</li> <li>• develops and manages a range of initiatives to improve the effective involvement of parents and families in student learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACSSO's governing body is the Annual Conference to which each state and territory sends four voting delegates</li> <li>• each Conference elects an Executive which represents each of the affiliate member organizations</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACSSO, with the Australian Parents Council and the Australian government, have established this to encourage sustainable, effective partnerships between all members of the school community</li> <li>• a discussion draft of the framework was released in 2004</li> <li>• funding was provided (in 2005) for projects in 61 schools (41 government schools 20 nongovernment = independent and Roman Catholic) to document effective partnership strategies and assess their effects</li> <li>• the working budget is provided by the affiliation fees of member bodies, and a government Grant-in Aid</li> </ul>

## Australia (New South Wales)

Body's Name and Purpose (Policy/Legislation)	Member Selection	Comments
<p><b><i>Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of New South Wales (FPCANSW)</i></b>  Facilitates community involvement in education and provides services to members, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public liability insurance</li> <li>• advice about local problems, parents' and students' rights, legal matters</li> <li>• publications</li> <li>• lobbying the Department of Education and Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• members are properly constituted affiliates, i.e., associations or district councils which have chosen to join FPCANSW</li> <li>• FPCANSW has an Executive Council of 8 members (including 2 rural and 2 urban vice-presidents)</li> <li>• councillors are elected to represent affiliates within each of 10 regions the Council is elected by and from the annual conference</li> <li>• each region is represented by 2 councillors for each 50 government schools each affiliate can send 3 delegates to the annual conference</li> </ul>	
<p><b><i>School and Community Partnerships</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• most schools have Parents and Citizens' Associations (PCAs) which support school activities, fund raising, etc.</li> <li>• some schools have school councils which include parent and community members and set school policies and goals based on the needs of the local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school council members are parents, teachers, community representatives, and the principal</li> <li>• parents and community reps must be the majority</li> </ul>	

## Australia (Victoria)

Body's Name and Purpose (Policy/Legislation)	Member Selection	Comments
<p><b>Victorian Council of School Organizations (VICCSO)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides advice and support to state school councils</li> <li>has ongoing consultation with the education department (meetings with the Minister, membership on consultative committees, and formal submissions)</li> <li>produces issue papers and conducts research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>membership is open to all school councils, other parent associations, and individuals</li> <li>the VICSSO State Committee (which directs the Executive Committee) consists of the 5 Executive Committee members, regional members elected at annual regional conferences (2 per region), up to 5 additional people who may be appointed</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Parents Victoria (PV)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>represents parents of students in Victoria schools, primarily members of parent clubs</li> <li>provides advice and support to parent clubs and parents wishing to establish parent clubs</li> <li>produces occasional issue papers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>members are any parent club at a Victorian government school, and individuals who are parents at schools without a parent club</li> </ul>	
<p><b>School Councils (SCs)</b> SCs are legal entities with specific powers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to set the broad direction of the school within the guidelines of the department</li> <li>to develop a school plan that sets out goals and targets for the next 4 years and strategies for achieving them</li> <li>to prepare an annual school report</li> <li>to arrange for the supply of goods and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>membership is open to parents of children at the school</li> <li>individuals may be appointed</li> <li>the principal is a member, as Executive Officer</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Parent Clubs (PCs)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide opportunities for parents to discuss educational issues and have input into school decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>membership is open to parents of children attending the school, or other interested parties</li> </ul>	

## New Zealand

Body's Name and Purpose (Policy/Legislation)	Member Selection	Comments
<p><b><i>New Zealand School Trustees' Association (NZSTA)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes representation to central government and agencies on behalf of boards of trustees (BTs)</li> <li>• provides expert personnel and industrial relations advice to BTs</li> <li>• provides helpdesk facilities on all aspects of trusteeship</li> <li>• provides training for BTs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• membership is open to all BTs</li> <li>• the National Council consists of a president, regional representatives (elected every 2 years by postal ballot, from persons nominated by regions), 4 Maori representatives (2 from North Island, 2 from South Island) elected by Maori trustees, up to 2 persons co-opted by the Council, Te Koru Puawai (Maori trustee organization) representatives, any other representatives approved by the Council</li> </ul>	
<p><b><i>Board of Trustees</i></b></p> <p>All New Zealand state and state-integrated schools have a BT. The BT is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• governance</li> <li>• ensuring national education priorities are being addressed</li> <li>• setting strategic directions in consultation with parents, staff, and students</li> <li>• evaluating information on student achievement outcomes</li> <li>• ensuring the school provides a safe environment and quality education</li> <li>• control of the management of personnel, property, finance, and administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• boards are made up of elected parent representatives, staff, principal, and student representatives, and they can co-opt or appoint members</li> <li>• the standard make-up of a board is: 5 elected parents, the principal, 1 staff representative, 1 student (in schools with Year 9 students), co-opted trustees, and up to 4 proprietors' representatives</li> <li>• parent representatives are elected every 3 years, though there are provisions for mid-term elections</li> <li>• staff representatives are elected every 3 years</li> <li>• students are elected every year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• under certain circumstances, boards can alter the number of parent members</li> <li>• the membership of a board can be changed to better reflect the community it serves</li> <li>• boards of 2 or more schools can combine to govern those schools.</li> </ul>



## Scotland

Body's Name and Purpose (Policy/Legislation)	Member Selection	Comments
<p><b>Scottish School Board Association (SSBA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>represents the interests of all school boards (SBs)</li> <li>is run by an executive board consisting of one representative from each education authority (EA), of which there are 33</li> <li>there is one full-time staff member with part-time staff as required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>members are either individuals or groups representing the EAs</li> <li>currently (2003) it represents 1,953 SBs</li> <li>SSBA is self-financing, through membership fees.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>aim is to encourage full cooperation between home, school, EA, and government</li> <li>provides advice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>members may be parents, other home-school associations, individuals</li> <li>there are currently (2004) 1200 members</li> <li>SPTC too is self-financing, through membership fees.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>School Board</b></p> <p>SBs (= Ontario School Councils) have formal duties, powers, and rights, but it is up to SBs to decide how active they want to be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>approves the Head's spending on books and equipment allocated by the education authority (EA — Ontario: school board)</li> <li>can manage the use of the school building after school hours, but has to follow EA guidelines</li> <li>can fix dates for occasional holidays after consultation with EA</li> <li>help re appointment of Head and Deputy</li> <li>should promote relations between school, parents, and community</li> <li>must report to parents at least once a year on their activities</li> <li>must be consulted in preparation of School Development Plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>members are elected or under certain circumstances, co-opted (appointed by the SB)</li> <li>they serve for 4 years</li> <li>the size of a SB ranges from 7 to 13, depending on the size of the school</li> <li>parent members are elected they must have a child at the school at the time of election they are always a majority</li> <li>staff members are elected by the school staff and may be teachers, classroom assistants, or the school nurse</li> <li>co-opted members are chosen by the SB they must not be parents or teaching staff at the school, but may be other members of the school staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parent Council (PC)</b></p> <p>In 2005, the Scottish Executive consulted on a draft bill to replace SBs with PCs, the aim being that parents should decide on the size and composition of PCs and that their powers would be in some cases expanded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>powers over spending on books, holidays, control of school premises outside hours are scrapped</li> <li>heads must attend PC meetings</li> <li>PCs will be more involved in Head selection</li> <li>school plans will be detailed and informative</li> <li>PCs can be more involved in policy changes re curriculum, discipline, rules, uniforms.</li> </ul>

**ADVICE for the Establishment of a Grant Program for  
School-based Initiatives to Reach Parents who may  
Find Involvement More Challenging**

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**June 2006**

**Interim Parent Involvement Advisory Board**

## **Introduction**

As members of the Interim Parent Advisory Board our mandate, as determined by former Minister Kennedy, is to provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of Education on the implementation of Ontario's Parent Involvement Policy. Part of our work has involved discussing funding programs to support parent involvement initiatives, including the grant program to fund school-based initiatives designed to reach parents who may find involvement more challenging. We are pleased to provide you with our advice for this program, in addition to a sample Grant Proposal Kit.

Our advice arises from our discussions over the course of five meetings since March, 2006, and is also informed by what we heard from parents during the Parent Voice in Education Project provincial consultations in early 2005.

We have discussed the types of projects that could be funded, how parent groups will apply for the funds, criteria for assessing proposals and project results, and what to include in an application kit. We considered current academic research in parent involvement, grant programs in other jurisdictions and policy areas, and our own knowledge and experience of parents and parent groups.

In our discussions we identified a number of challenges and opportunities that we anticipate, and ask you to take into consideration.

### ***Timing of Grant Allocations***

We feel it is very important that school councils be able to access the funds as soon as possible in the school year (i.e., in early September) in order to accommodate the timing of school council elections, and to enable councils to use the funds to support parent involvement efficiently during the school year. Further, we recommend that the Ministry of Education send a memo to school councils as soon as possible in September to describe the grant program and the criteria for projects.

### ***Deadlines for Proposal Submissions***

We suggest that for 2006-2007, there be two deadlines for proposal submissions in the 2006/2007 school year. We believe two opportunities to submit proposals will encourage a greater number of projects as parent and community groups learn more about the grant opportunity and develop their capacity to design projects and proposals.

We also recommend that a cap not be imposed on the number of projects that may be proposed, or the amount of funding awarded to school councils for the first year. We hope this will encourage school councils and their partners to develop creative projects that generate interest in the grant program. However, we recommend that groups submitting more than one proposal prioritize their submissions in the case that not all projects can be funded.

### ***Capacity-Building***

We believe this grant program will provide a unique capacity-building opportunity for many parents as they develop proposals and design, implement, and assess parent involvement programs. Many questions will undoubtedly arise, and parents may need assistance as they go through this process, especially in the first year of the program.

To meet these anticipated needs, realize the capacity-building potential for parents, and help ensure the success of the grant program, we believe there must be Ministry staff support to inform parents of the available grants, assist with proposal development, and respond to parent concerns.

### ***Funding Transfers from School Boards to Schools***

Where money is held at the school board level, we believe that the Minister should provide direction to school boards on the creation of accounts at the school level to enable the transfer of grant money to school councils through school boards.

### ***Equity***

We ask that equity be a consideration when funding projects. We believe there needs to be a mechanism built into the allocation process to ensure that all regions are funded equitably.

## **Grant Proposal Kit – Parent Involvement Funds**

## **Grant Proposal Kit - Parent Involvement Funds**

Parent involvement in the support of student learning and success includes a range of activities from good parenting, helping with homework, serving on school councils and school board or provincial committees, communicating and meeting with teachers, and volunteering in the classroom or on school trips (*Ontario Parent Involvement Policy, December 1, 2005*).

The Ministry of Education makes grants available to school councils, through school boards, to support school-based initiatives which enhance the participation of parents who face barriers to involvement for reasons such as language, recent immigration, financial hardship, physical challenges, newness to the system, geography, and school size.

School councils are encouraged to seek opportunities to develop proposals in partnership with other groups active in the school and in the community. School councils are responsible for project budgets, and successful completion of projects, and they are accountable to school boards for disbursement of the funds received.

The Ministry recognizes that schools within and across Ontario have diverse needs. Strategies to enhance parent involvement will vary from school to school and sometimes even within a single school. It is hoped that the funds provided by the Ministry will help meet these needs.

### **Section A: Project Guidelines**

1. Objective
2. Who can apply for funding?
3. What types of projects may be funded?
4. Steps to follow when applying for funding
5. What project costs may be ineligible?
6. How will grants be awarded?

### **Section B: Your Project Proposal**

1. Applicant Information
2. Project Information
3. Budget Information

### **Section C: Terms and Conditions**

### **Section D: Reporting Template**

## Section A: Project Guidelines

### 1. Objective:

- To enhance the participation of all parents who face barriers to involvement in their children's education for reasons such as settlement to Canada, level of language proficiency in English/French, socio-economic issues, physical challenges, transportation, geography or school size.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive; there may be other barriers. You may describe these barriers in your application.

### 2. Who can apply for funding?

- School councils may apply alone or in partnership with parents and community groups.
- School councils may also apply jointly with other school councils in the same school board.

Keep in mind:

- When working in partnership with other groups, school councils are responsible for project budgets and successful completion of projects.
- All proposals must be approved by the school council. A text of the approval motion must be attached to the proposal.
- School councils must verify and abide by their by-laws, guidelines and policies and those of their school board to determine appropriate partnerships.

### 3. What types of projects may be funded?

- School councils and their partners are encouraged to be creative and inclusive in their projects. Some project ideas are listed in Appendix A.

### 4. Steps to follow when applying for funding:

1. Consider inviting community and parent groups to a meeting to discuss the funding opportunity and develop project ideas.
2. Choose and design project(s). Ensure each project complies with the regulations, by-laws, policies, and guidelines of your school board and school council (Note: the school principal can provide information in this area).

3. At a school council meeting, pass a motion approving each proposal.
4. Attach the approval motion to your proposal.
5. List proposals in order of priority if submitting more than one (that is, if not all proposals can be funded, which one would be the one you would choose to be funded first? Second? Third?).

For each proposal:

1. Fill out the proposal and proposed budget form (5 pages).
2. Ensure the Terms and Conditions are signed by someone with signing authority (such as a school council chair or co-applicant organization's chair).
3. Submit the proposal, budget, approval motion and the Terms and Conditions no later than (DATE) to:

Parent Engagement Office  
Ministry of Education  
XXXXXX

4. Provide a copy of the proposal and signed Terms and Conditions to your school board, care of the Supervisory Officer responsible for school councils. The purpose of this copy is to inform the board of your proposal.
5. Contact us if you need help:

Name / phone / email

5. What project costs may be ineligible?

- Funds cannot be used for staff salaries or to purchase goods for which the Ministry of Education currently provides funding (for example, textbooks). School councils are encouraged to consult their by-laws, guidelines and policies and those of their school board to determine appropriate expenses.

6. How will grants be awarded?

- The grants will be awarded through a provincial committee review process. There is no maximum amount that may be allocated to individual proposals. Grant amounts will be determined based on funds available, number of grant application and equity of distribution.

If your school council submits more than one project proposal, please number the proposals in order of priority. The proposal you choose as your first choice will be considered before your second choice, etc.



**Section B: Your Project Proposal**

**Deadline for submission is XXXX**

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

NAME OF SCHOOL	
NAME OF SCHOOL BOARD	
NAME OF SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR	
NAME OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL	
ADDRESS	
POSTAL CODE	TELEPHONE
E-MAIL	

**PARTNERS (OPTIONAL)**

Please provide the following information for each of your partner groups if you have any.

ORGANIZATION	
CONTACT PERSON	
ADDRESS	
POSTAL CODE	TELEPHONE

ORGANIZATION	
CONTACT PERSON	
ADDRESS	
POSTAL CODE	TELEPHONE

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

Please fill-in the information below. You may attach a separate piece of paper if you need it.

A. NAME OF PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

B. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF YOUR PROJECT? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT?

Please describe who this project will benefit and how they will benefit.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

D. THIS PROJECT WILL ENABLE THE SCHOOL TO:

(Check as many as apply and write a sentence to explain your choice)

Help parents support their childrens' learning.

\_\_\_\_\_

Contribute to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for parents.

\_\_\_\_\_

Bring in more parents from diverse communities.

\_\_\_\_\_

Improve communication with parents.

\_\_\_\_\_

Other

\_\_\_\_\_

E. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO MEET YOUR GOAL?

Please describe **what** you will do, **when** you will do it, and **who** will do it.

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F. HOW WILL YOU KNOW IF YOU MEET YOUR GOAL?

Please describe how you will measure the success of your project.

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G. WITH WHOM DID YOU CONSULT ABOUT THE GRANT PROGRAM?

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H. HOW MANY PROJECTS IS YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL PROPOSING? \_\_\_\_\_

IF YOU ARE SUBMITTING **MORE THAN ONE PROPOSAL**, PLEASE  
GIVE **THIS PROPOSAL** A NUMBER BASED ON PRIORITY OF  
FUNDING: \_\_\_\_\_

(Write 1 if it is your first choice, 2 if it is your second choice, etc.)

## BUDGET INFORMATION

Please list all the items you expect to pay for and what you estimate each one will cost.

ITEM	AMOUNT
For example: 100 photocopies	\$10.00
	<b>TOTAL:</b>

OTHER COMMENTS ABOUT THE BUDGET (OPTIONAL):

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## **Section C: Terms and Conditions**

- 1) Funding provided must only be used for the approved project in accordance with the proposed budget. Changes that impact on the nature and/or objectives of the project must be reported to the Ministry and the school board. Funding may not be used for ineligible expenses as defined in the Program Guidelines.
- 2) If the grant does not cover the entire cost of the project, the organization is responsible for raising the balance of funding from other sources. The Ministry and the school board will not be responsible for any cost overruns for the project.
- 3) The implementation of the project is the responsibility of the school council receiving the grant.
- 4) The school council will acknowledge the Ministry's contribution on press releases, printed materials, conference/workshop and other materials.
- 5) The school council shall provide, upon request by an official of the Ministry, school board or Provincial Auditor, all documents and information related to the school council's participation in this program, and access to the premises where the program is being carried out, in accordance with school board policy.
- 6) Funding will be granted on a one-time basis only; applicants are required to apply annually. Applicants with outstanding project reports from previous year(s) will not be considered for funding.
- 7) The project must be completed and the funds expended by June 30, 2007. The school council is to complete and submit the project report with its Grant and Expense Report to its School Board by July 31, 2007, together with original invoices and expenditure records. As government-funded projects are subject to audit, these records must be retained for seven (7) years by the school board, in accordance with school board policy. The school council is to complete and submit the project report with its Grant and Expense Report to the Ministry by August 31, 2007
- 8) If actual project costs are less than anticipated or, for any other reason, the full amount of the Ministry funding is not used for approved eligible expenditures, any unused balance of funding will be a debt owing to the Ministry. The Ministry reserves the right to redirect the funds within the board.
- 9) Upon default of any of these Terms and Conditions by the school council, the Ministry, at its sole discretion, may recover or redirect the funds advanced.
- 10) Subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act, all information pertaining to this grant is public information and may be released to third parties upon request.
- 11) The school council and its partners shall comply with all applicable federal, provincial, municipal laws, statutes, regulations, rules, ordinances and orders in respect of the performance of these Terms and Conditions.
- 12) By signing the 2006/07 Proposal Form, the organization agrees to abide by the 2006-07 Program Guidelines and 2006/07 Terms and Conditions.

FUNDING AND FINAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

- Project funding must be spent by June 30, 2007.
- Final reports are due to the Ministry of Education by August 31, 2007.

<b>DECLARATION</b> I declare that by signing this proposal that I have read the proposal and will comply with the 2006/07 Program Guidelines and 2006/07 Terms and Conditions. I further declare that it adheres to the by-laws of the school council and to the requirements of the regulations, guidelines, and policies of the school board with respect to school councils.
School Council Chair's Printed Name & Signature
Organization (School Council)
Telephone Number
Date

<b>DECLARATION</b> I declare that I have seen this proposal and it adheres to the guidelines, policies, and by-laws of the school and school board.
School Principal's Printed Name & Signature
Telephone Number
Date
Comments: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

**Section D: Reporting Template**

**Deadline for submission is XXXX**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

NAME OF SCHOOL	
NAME OF SCHOOL BOARD	
NAME OF SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR	
NAME OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL	
ADDRESS	
POSTAL CODE	TELEPHONE
E-MAIL	

**PARTNERS** (If applicable)

Please provide the following information for each of your partner groups if you have any.

ORGANIZATION	
CONTACT PERSON	
ADDRESS	
POSTAL CODE	TELEPHONE



ORGANIZATION	
CONTACT PERSON	
ADDRESS	
POSTAL CODE	TELEPHONE

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

A. NAME OF PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

B. WHAT WAS THE GOAL OF YOUR PROJECT? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

C. DID YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL? EXPLAIN. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

D. WHO DID THIS PROJECT BENEFIT? HOW?

Please describe **who** benefited from this project and **how** they benefited.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E. THIS PROJECT ENABLED THE SCHOOL TO:

(Check as many as apply and write a sentence to explain your choice)

Help parents support their childrens' learning.

\_\_\_\_\_

Contribute to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for parents.

\_\_\_\_\_

Bring in more parents from diverse communities.

\_\_\_\_\_

Improve communications with parents.

\_\_\_\_\_

Other

\_\_\_\_\_

F. HAS THIS PROJECT MADE PARENT INVOLVEMENT STRONGER? HOW DO YOU KNOW?

Please describe how you measured the success of your project.

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G. WHAT CHALLENGES ARE YOU STILL FACING WITH PARENT INVOLVEMENT?

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**Section D: Reporting Template**

**GRANT & EXPENSE REPORT TEMPLATE**

Please list all the items you paid for and what each one cost.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
For example: 100 photocopies	\$10.00
	<b>TOTAL:</b>

<b>DECLARATION</b> I declare that above expenses are accurate and fairly stated.
School Council Chair's Printed Name & Signature
School Principal's Printed Name & Signature

Authorized School Board Officer's Printed Name & Signature
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## **Appendix A:** **Project ideas and research-based strategies for engaging parents**

Some ideas for parent engagement projects are listed below along with research-based strategies for engaging families (Epstein, 1995). There are many other projects that can be developed, and school councils and their partners are encouraged to be original and innovative in their proposals.

### Communicating

Design and enhance effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.

- Publish newsletters in multiple languages (invite parents to contribute)
- Translate or adapt materials for parents

### Learning at Home

Provide information, ideas and activities to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.

- Create activities that will assist parents in helping their children at home
- Develop workshops to help parents support students through new experiences (for example, kindergarten, grade 1, middle school, high school, after graduation)

### Building Parenting Skills

Help all families build parenting skills and support children through their years as students.

- Set up parent resource rooms
- Host workshops (offer child care during events for parents of younger children)

### Volunteering

Recruit and organize parent help and support.

- Hold training workshops for school volunteers
- Plan events to thank volunteers

### Participating in Decision Making

Develop parent leaders and establish conditions for collaboration.

- Provide training for leaders in specific parent communities
- Create opportunities for parents, teachers and students to partner in a project (for example, learning together, community improvement)

### Collaborating with Community

Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

- Work with recognized community groups to organize events that will appeal to families
- Hold meetings, events or workshops in cultural or community centres

For an additional selection of project ideas, please visit the Ministry of Education website at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/>

# **ADVICE for the Establishment of a Regional/Provincial Grant Program**

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**June 2006**

**Interim Parent Involvement Advisory Board**

## **Introduction**

Part of the mandate of the Interim Parent Involvement Advisory Board (IPIAB), as determined by former Minister of Education Gerard Kennedy, was to develop criteria for evaluating requests for funding to support parent involvement initiatives. The Ontario Government has committed to a series of investments to support parent involvement at various levels, as indicated in an appendix of the discussion paper “Developing Partners for Education” published by the Ministry of Education on December 1, 2005. The current advice focuses on a particular funding initiative: the provincial fund to support *“provincial and regional projects aimed at enhancing parent involvement”*.

The advice comes from discussions that took place at meetings of the IPIAB. During these discussions, members of the IPIAB identified a number of issues that we believe should be considered in setting up the grant program. This advice paper presents these considerations, followed by the principles that have guided the IPIAB’s deliberations, as well as a list of recommendations for the establishment of the grant program.

## **Considerations**

In discussing the establishment of the regional/provincial grant program, the members considered the following issues:

### ***Scope of eligible projects***

We engaged in discussion on what constitutes a regional project. Various members were inclined to define it as a project that involves more than one school board. However, it was pointed out that in Northern Ontario, school boards cover a much larger area and that this is also true of French-language boards. Likewise, the notion of a “family of schools” submitting a proposal together does not make sense in parts of Northern Ontario, for example.

It is important to exercise caution so as not to make it more difficult for certain groups to apply for a grant because of the unique characteristics of their geographical context. How large “regional” is still remains to be determined with these considerations in mind. For the IPIAB, what is key is that the projects have regional and provincial applications. While a project may take place in only one board, it may have implications for other regions, including potential replication on a larger scale.



## ***Eligibility of applicants***

We considered the eligibility of Parent Involvement Committees (PIC) and school boards for the grant. Some of us pointed out that a separate funding envelope is being made available to support the work of PICs at the board level, as indicated in the discussion paper cited above. It was also noted that the regional/provincial grant is the only parental involvement funding for which provincial associations are eligible, and that allowing boards to apply would make it difficult for organizations that are less well-resourced to compete for the funds.

This risk, however, can be mitigated by putting a cap on the amount of funds disbursed per project so as to ensure that funds are distributed among a variety of projects rather than being concentrated in the hands of a few. Another possibility is for applications to be re-directed to another grant program (for example, grants for school-based initiatives) when funds are available elsewhere and eligibility requirements are met.

We also considered the possibility of requesting that the main applicant be a group of parents and raised the question of who would manage the funds, should this group not be incorporated. In addition, we considered whether having a partner organization (possibly from outside of the education system) should be a requirement.

## ***Assessment of proposals***

We brainstormed a variety of criteria that could be used to assess and rank the proposals. The agreed upon criteria are listed in the recommendations. Other areas that we discussed include whether funding from additional sources is required, whether the project needs to directly address challenges that were listed in the Parents' Voice in Education Project report (for example, addressing the diversity of parents, supporting school councils, and creating a welcoming environment) and whether the outcome of projects should be of enduring quality. A suggestion was made that three support letters be required as part of the application package.

## ***Process for allocation of funds***

We considered various caps for the grants as well as the possibility of reserving a certain amount for smaller projects so as to ensure that the funds are not monopolized by a few applicants with expensive projects. We felt the maximum amount for a grant would need to be sufficiently large to allow for the implementation of significant projects but small enough to ensure that funds are distributed among a variety of projects.

We also discussed the possibility of having criteria that would be more demanding for more expensive projects. For example, a sliding scale could be set with basic criteria for low-cost projects, additional criteria for projects in a certain range and more demanding requirements for larger projects.

Other issues we considered were the duration of projects and timing of the grant allocations. We feel it is important that applicants be able to access the funds as early as possible in the school year but we also want to ensure that those who have missed the deadline will be able to apply, should there be remaining funds after the first round of proposal reviews.

## **Principles**

In considering the above issues and formulating recommendations, the IPIAB was guided by a number of guiding principles, including:

- Creativity/openness
- Leadership by parents
- Respect for the school calendar
- Equity
- Inclusion
- Transparency
- Recognition of the diversity of the province

We hope that these principles will be respected in the establishment of the grant program.

## **Recommendations**

In view of the above considerations and in line with the guiding principles listed above, we offer the following recommendations:

*Regarding the scope of eligible projects*

The IPIAB recommends:

- That the definition of “projects that enhance parent involvement” be left open so as to encourage creativity and allow for a wide range of parent involvement activities; and
- That the definition of “regional” be loose so as to be respectful of the particularities of various regions, but that projects be required to have possible implications and applications beyond their “region”. Applicants should be expected to share lessons learned so that projects may be replicated on a broader scale.

### *Regarding the eligibility of applicants*

The IPIAB recommends:

- That anybody be eligible to apply, giving priority to parent-led initiatives; and
- That this decision be reviewed after the first year of implementation to ensure fair access to the funds.

### *Regarding the criteria for assessing proposals*

The IPIAB recommends that the following criteria be used to evaluate proposals:

- Projects are aimed at enhancing parent involvement;
- Projects are led by parents or carried out in partnership with parents;
- Projects have provincial implications and presents potential for replication;
- Applicants have demonstrated how their project will contribute to student success, school culture change, a welcoming environment and/or parent training and capacity building;
- Projects have potential to reach a significant number of parents;
- Projects address a demonstrated need;
- Projects include clear deliverables and will lead to measurable outcomes; and
- An adequate plan is in place for evaluating the project.

### *Regarding the process for the allocation of funds*

The IPIAB recommends:

- That a cap be set at \$50,000;
- That this cap be reviewed after the first year of implementation;
- That projects be required to be completed within a year (note that this does not preclude applicants from developing projects that would be sustained over longer periods of time but the Ministry of Education would only commit to funding a discrete phase with clear deliverables in a given year); and
- That a deadline for applications be set and that proposals be considered on a first-come first-served basis, should there be funds remaining after the first round of proposal reviews.

### *Regarding additional decisions*

Aside from the considerations identified above, various details of the process for reviewing grant applications still need to be clarified.

In a motion passed on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the IPIAB recommended that the Minister appoint a transition team consisting of some or all of the members of the IPIAB to:

- Oversee the establishment of a nomination process for the PIAB;
- Form the initial selection committee; and
- Establish the process for reviewing grant applications.

Consistent with this motion, the IPIAB recommends that the transition team be given the task of establishing the process for reviewing applications for the regional/provincial grants. Establishing that process will include making decisions regarding such aspects as:

- Who should review grant applications;
- The content and format of the proposal kit; and
- Cost eligibility.