

# Latinx Parents for Change

## Parent School Ambassador Project



## **A Message from Working Women**

Working Women Community Centre (WWCC) is a charitable organization that provides a variety of programs and services which help immigrant women adjust to living in Toronto.

Our wide range of successful programs is making a significant impact on engaging parents and fostering their child's school performance. Some programs include On Your Mark, a tutoring/mentoring program identified as the largest ethno-specific tutoring program in Canada working with over 300 students in 9 schools in Toronto, and 175 volunteers; and HIPPY, a free home-based program that recognizes parents as children's first and best teachers.

The Latinx Parents for Change project uses theoretical and practical tools for parents to reflect on their current realities, gain transferable skills, exchange knowledge and share practices as a community to take collective action towards a more inclusive and accessible school system.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## Project Overview

Meaningful parental involvement is a powerful predictor of children's educational success and well-being. Studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between family engagement and improved academic achievement, and yet, there is a growing number of parents who remain disengaged and disenfranchised by the education system, particularly parents from the Latin American community (Ornstein, 2000).

Based on a series of participatory community needs assessments, Latinx<sup>1</sup> parents identified some of the barriers to their involvement in schools and expressed interest in learning more about how to become advocates for their children in the education system, and to develop leadership skills, and to understanding school governance, and how to actively participate in their school/community life.

In an effort to reduce drop-out rates and systemic barriers, Working Women Community Centre (WWCC) and the Mennonite New Life Centre (MNLCC) collaborated to implement Latinx Parents for Change - Parent Ambassador Project (PAP). The main objective of the project is to provide parents with the knowledge, tools and resources to become Ambassadors in their communities, promote participation in parental involvement committees and increase Latinx representation in school councils in Toronto.

PAP offers 27 hours of training on topics of Canadian political system, school governance, leadership, parental involvement, special education, equity and social justice. Once training is completed, parents are encouraged to implement their learning back in their communities. Successful learnings have been demonstrated by parents joining school councils, delivering trainings in their communities and/or actively engaging more parents in their children's education.

This project is supported by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) and is funded by the City of Toronto and Access and Equity Human Rights Investment Funding Program (AEHR).

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<sup>1</sup> Latinx is the gender inclusive term for Latin American peoples.



## Goals

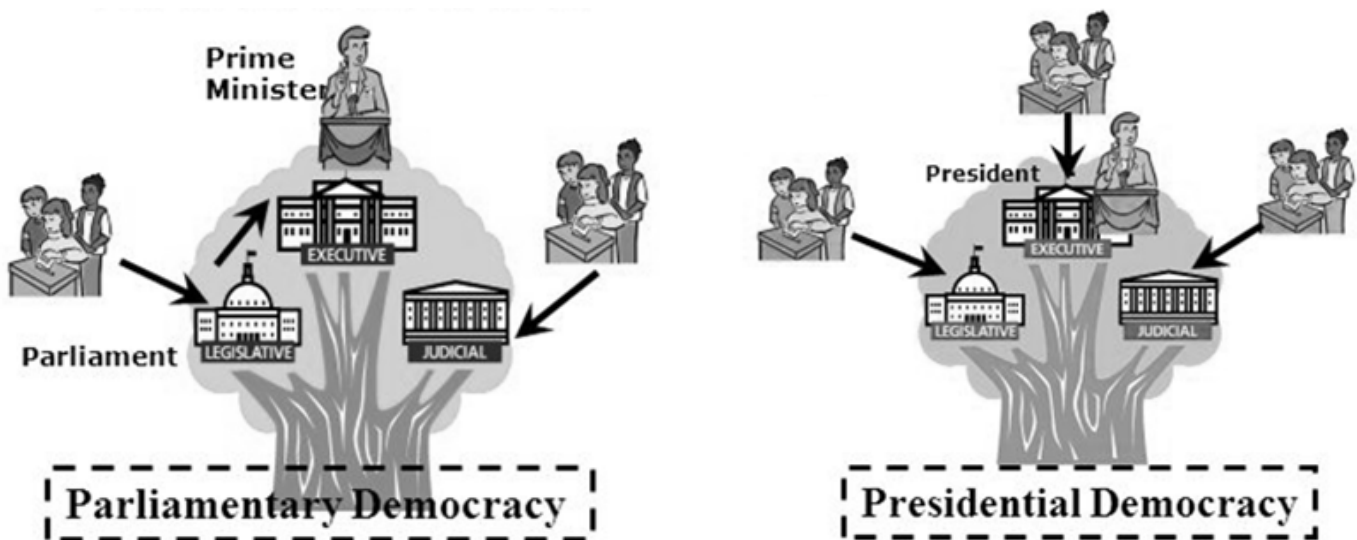
- To provide Latinx parents with tools and resources to better support and advocate for their children's educational success
- To promote Latinx parents participation in the school councils and/or parent involvement committees
- To encourage parents to increase and enhance their participation in their children's education plans and goals
- To foster the development of local and informal parent based networks in each participating school (peer to peer support, informal interpretation from parents to parents etc.)
- To provide Latinx parents with an in-depth understanding of the Education System in Ontario and its impact on their children's education.

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# Unpacking the Canadian Political System

## Canada's Political System

Canada works under a Parliamentary democracy. This means that there is no President, but a Prime Minister. Citizens do not elect the Prime Minister, the party (or a coalition of parties) with the greatest representation in the parliament (legislature) forms the government, its leader becoming prime minister or chancellor.



*Parliamentary vs. Presidential Democracy*

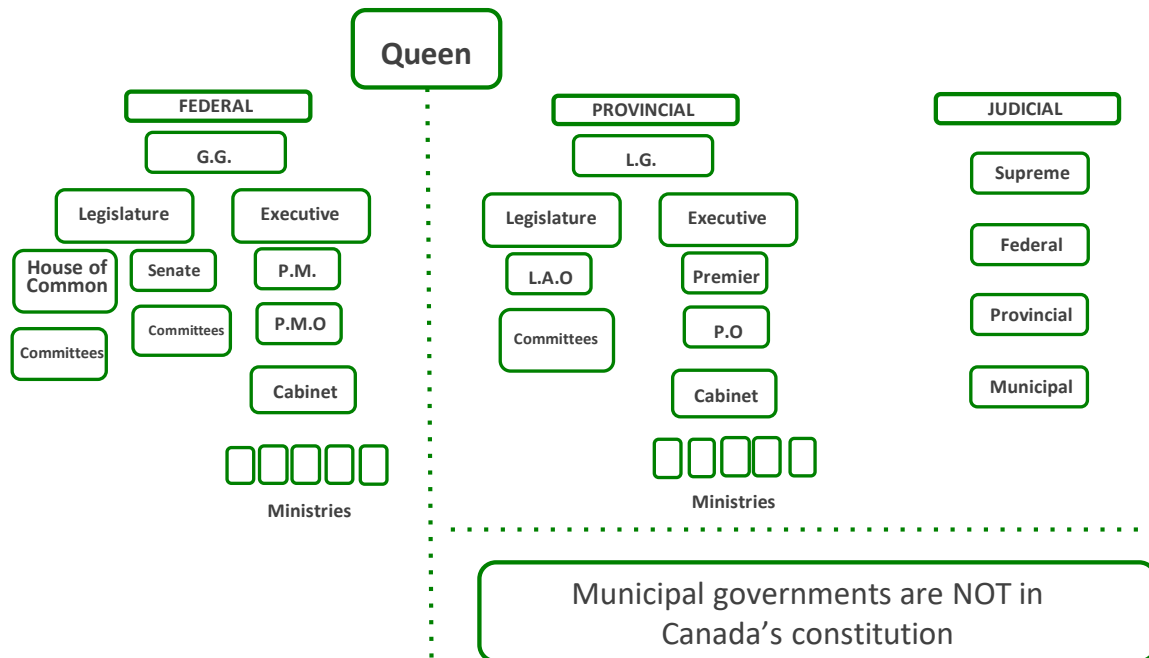
## Canada's Levels of Government

Canada has three levels of government to help run our country – federal, provincial and local governments. Three branches work together to govern Canada: the executive, legislative and judicial branches. The executive branch (also called the Government) is the decision-making branch, made up of the Prime Minister, and the Cabinet.

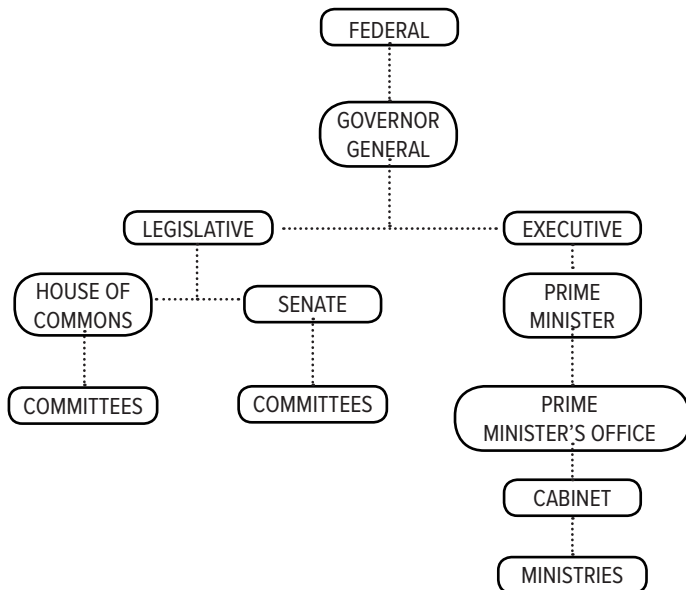
The legislative branch is the law-making branch, made up of two parts of parliament: the appointed Senate and the elected House of Commons. The judicial branch is a series of independent courts that interpret the laws passed by the other two branches.

The constitution gives the federal and provincial government's total control over their areas of policy. The federal government can't tell the provinces how to manage education or welfare, and the provinces can't tell the federal government how to run the military.

## Structure of Canadian Government



## Structure Of The Federal Government



## Responsibilities of the Federal Government

- Employment Insurance
- Direct/ Indirect Taxation
- Postal Services
- Immigration, Citizenship & Refugee
- National Defence
- Navigation/ Shipping
- Aboriginal Affairs (Nations)
- Criminal Law, Including Criminal Procedure
- Currency/ Coinage
- Banking/ Incorporation of Banks/ Paper Money
- Census / Statistics
- Bankruptcy
- Patents /Copyrights
- Sea Cost, Ferries and Inland Fisheries
- Quarantine
- Marriage /Divorce
- Weights and Measures
- Penitentiaries
- Foreign Affairs

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## How Does a Bill Become Law?

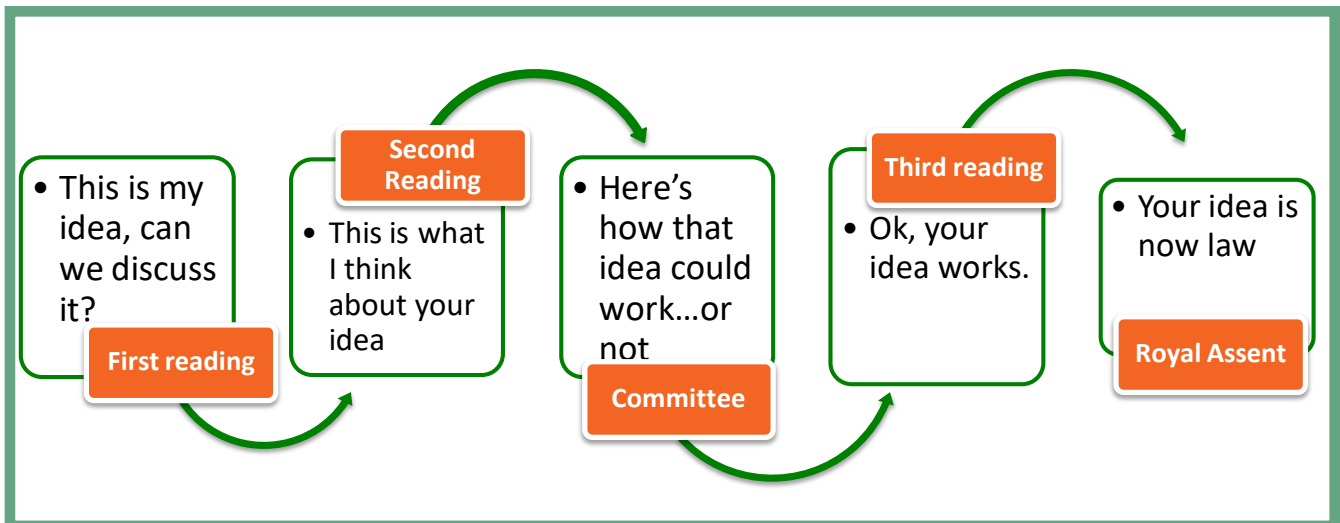
To create a new law, also called an act or a statute, the government first introduces a bill which must pass through various stages in both the House of Commons and the Senate in order to become law.

### WHAT IS A BILL?

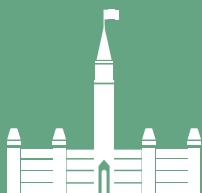
A bill is a proposed law that is introduced in either the House of Commons or the Senate. Most bills are introduced in the House of Commons. Bills can amend or repeal existing law or can contain completely new law.

There are two kinds of bills: public and private. Public bills relate to public policy and may be sponsored by a Minister (Government bill) or by a private Member (Members' bill). Private bills benefit a particular individual or group.

## Pre-Legislative Process



### DID YOU KNOW?



Canadian House of Commons has 338 Members of Parliament (MPs)

IN 2015



**54** women out of **88** MPs were elected for the very 1st time



### In the First House:



The first House can be either the House of Commons or the Senate and is always the House in which the bill was introduced. If the first House is the House of Commons then the second House is the Senate and vice versa. A bill must pass through all the following stages, regardless of the House in which it was introduced, in order to become law.



**1st Reading:** This is a formality whereby the bill is introduced to the House. The bill is then printed in its 1st reading form, often with explanatory notes.

**2nd Reading:** The main principle and purpose of the bill is debated. If passed, the bill is then referred to a committee for further study. In some instances, a bill may be referred to committee prior to receiving second reading. Bills are not re-printed at 2nd reading.



**Committee:** Committee members study the bill clause by clause. The committee may make amendments.

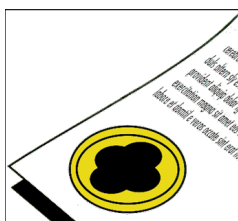
**Report Stage:** The committee presents its report, which may recommend that the bill be accepted in its 1st reading state, or with amendments, or that it not be proceeded with further. During report stage debate, members can propose further amendments to the bill.



**3rd Reading:** The House reviews the bill in its final form and then orders the printing of the 3rd reading bill. The 3rd reading copy includes any amendments made to the bill thus far.

### In the Second House:

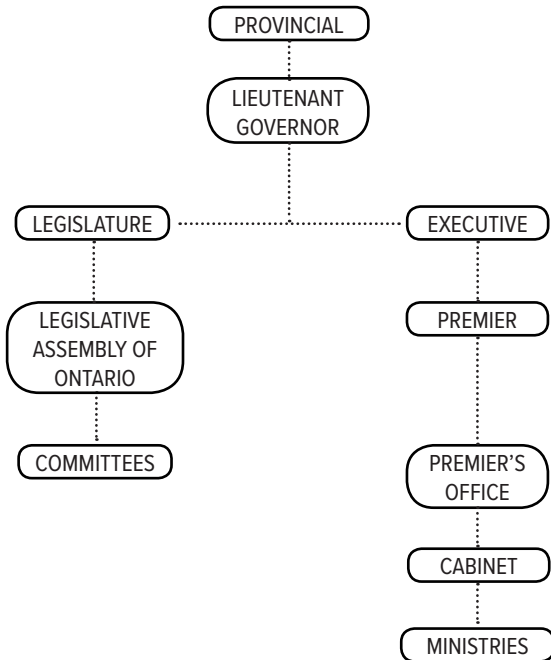
Once a bill has passed the 3rd reading stage in the first House, the bill goes to the second House where it must pass through the same stages. The Senate may amend, delay or refuse to pass bills, although traditionally the Senate passes most bills. Any amendments made by the second House however, must be agreed to by the first House or the bill does not become law.



**Royal Assent:** Royal Assent completes the enactment process. Bills may be given Royal Assent in two ways: by the Governor General or her deputy in a formal ceremony that takes place in the Senate before an assembly of both houses, or by written declaration. When a bill receives Royal Assent it is given a chapter number for the Statutes of Canada.

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## Structure of the Provincial Government



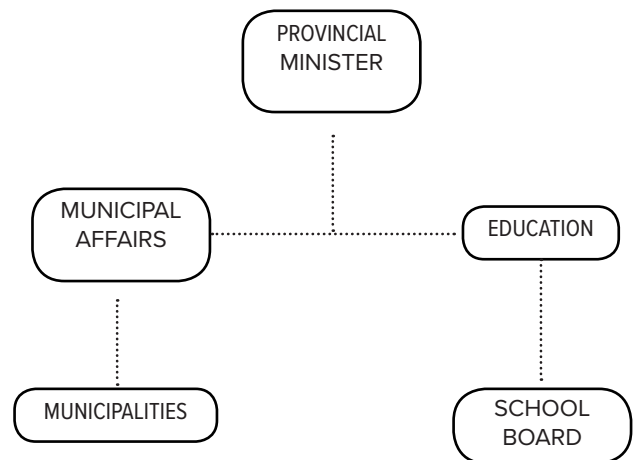
## Responsibilities of the Provincial Government

- Direct Taxation with Province
- Prisons
- Health Care
- Municipalities
- Formalization of Marriage
- Property and Civil Rights
- Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice
- Policing (Ontario, Quebec)
- Ontario Works, ODSP
- Natural Resources
- Highways
- Management / Sale of Public Land Belonging To the Province
- Incorporation of Companies
- Education

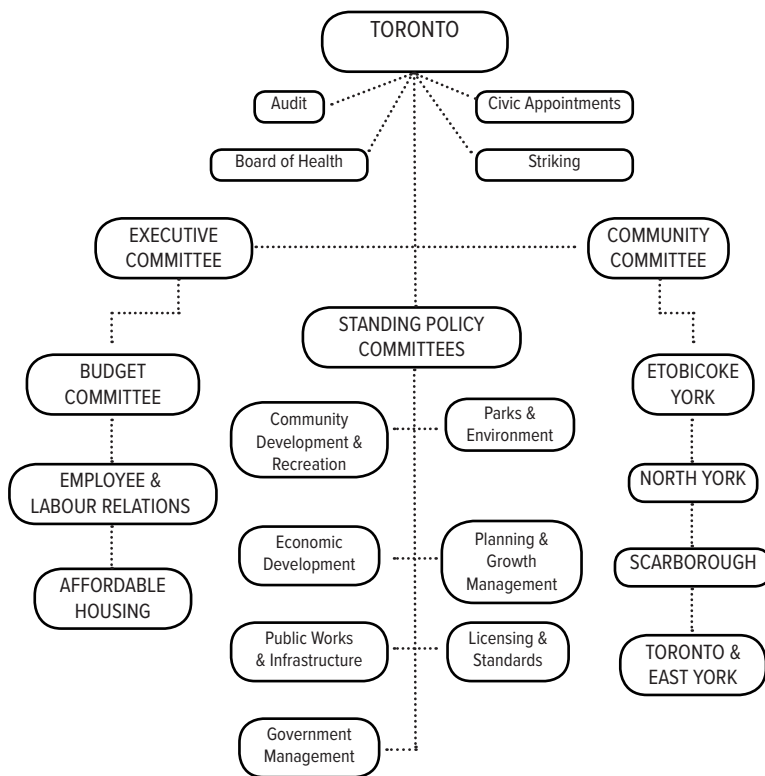
## Local Governments

Local governments were established by provinces to manage local affairs. They are not in the constitution, they are created by provincial laws and overseen by the appropriate ministries.

Local governments are often referred to as municipal government, though school boards are technically not municipal governments and are governed by the Ministry of Education not the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.



## Structure Of The Municipal Government



## Responsibilities of the Municipal Government

- Public Health
- Waste, Recycling Services, Snow Removal
- Public Libraries
- Building Licenses
- Arts and Culture Facilities/Events
- Property Taxes
- Water
- Policing
- Fire Protection
- Emergency Preparedness, Emergency Medical Services
- Public Transit (TTC)
- Parks and Recreation
- Parking



**REMEMBER:** Municipal governments are not in Canada's constitution, which means they govern under provincial regulations.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Women make up **50%** of the population in the City of Toronto

IN  
2015



Out of **44** members in City Council only **14** are women. Only **1** of those 14 is a woman of colour.

Source - Toronto Women's Alliance

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## The Structure of Council

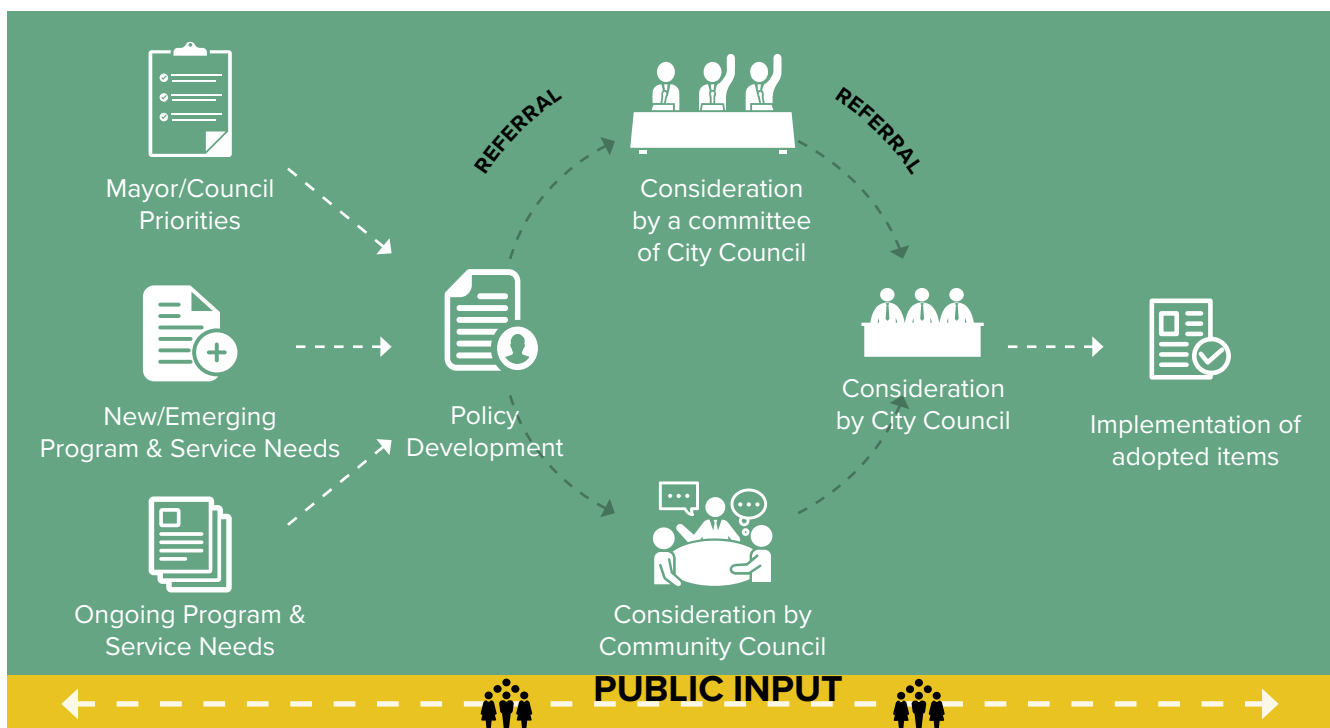
Toronto City Council is the main governing and legislative body of the City of Toronto. City Council is composed of the Mayor and 44 Councillors who make decisions on behalf of their constituents. Much of what is discussed at City Council are reports from its various Committees, including Community Councils, Standing Policy Committees, the Executive Committee, and other Committees of Council. These Committees report to City Council and make recommendations for a final decision, although Community Councils have some powers to make decisions on specific issues.

Each City Councillor sits on at least one of these Committees.

## Decision-Making & City Council

Generally, issues are identified by the public through research, follow-up to existing programs, services or policies or as part of the everyday work of running a city and achieving Council's priorities. Councils are required to review reports from the City and agency staff when deciding on a program, new proposal or alleviating emerging issues.

These reports are written by staff members with expertise in many subject areas including city planning, civil engineering, or public health. The reports may also present different options for how the City can proceed, discuss any past decisions on the same matter, and make recommendations to help Councillors make their decisions.



# Understanding the Education System in Ontario: Structure, Systems, Decision-Making and Influence

## The Government of Ontario and the Education Act

In Ontario, education is governed principally by the Education Act and its regulations. The Education Act has 25 parts, and its regulations set out duties and responsibilities of the Minister of Education and the duties and responsibilities of school boards, school board supervisory officers, principals, teachers, parents and students.

### Ministry of Education

Is the governing body for the education system. They are responsible for overseeing all aspects of Ontario's public education system. They allocate funds to school boards using the funding formula, develop provincial curriculum (what students will learn each grade), set policies and guidelines for school boards, sets regulation for diplomas and certificates, and approve textbooks and other learning resources. They are tasked with ensuring that all partners in Ontario's Education System work together.

The Ministry of Education has 6 district offices to assist Ontario's school boards, schools and students. These are located in Barrie, London, North Bay/Sudbury, Ottawa, Thunder Bay and Toronto

Toronto Address:  
200-900 Bay St, Toronto ON M7A 1L2  
Phone: 416-325-2579

### Ministry Of Education Responsibilities



Allocate  
Funds



Develop  
Curriculum



Set Policies &  
Guidelines

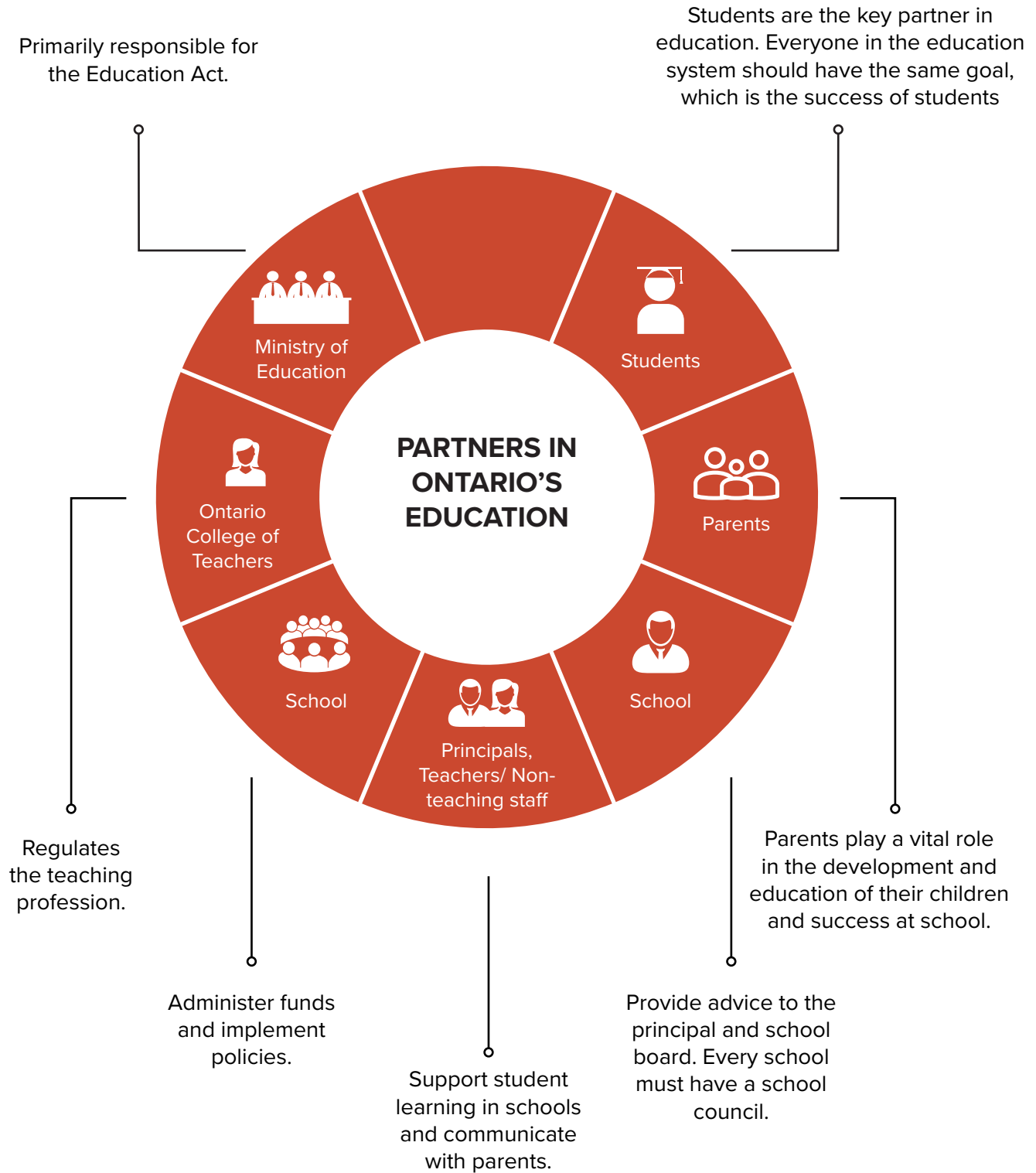


Set Req. For Diplomas  
& Certificates



Approve Textbooks  
& Other Materials

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## Overview of Ontario School Boards

Ontario's school boards operate the provinces publicly-funded schools and administer the funding they receive for their schools.

A small number of schools are governed by "school authorities". They manage schools offered through hospitals and treatment facilities, as well as schools in remote and sparsely populated regions.

The table below shows the number of district school boards and school authorities in the province, and the number of students in each category.

Ontario's School Boards. 2013-2014 (Projected)	Number of Boards	Number of Students
English Public Boards	31	1,232,185
French Public Boards	4	24,438
English Catholic	29	522,715
French Catholic	8	66,218
School Authorities	10	1,090

Source - Ministry of Education

## School Board Duties





## Public School Boards



Ontario's English and French public district school boards provide universally accessible education for all students, regardless of their ethnic, racial, or

cultural backgrounds; social or economic status; gender; individual exceptionality; or religious preference. Public school boards provide high academic standards in their programs and ensure that there are supports and resources to help all students reach those standards. Public school boards also focus on character education to ensure that students develop as caring and responsible members of their community and of Canadian society as a whole. Character education embraces values such as Citizenship, Cooperation, Courage, Empathy, Fairness, Honesty, Humility, Inclusiveness, Initiative, Integrity, Kindness, Optimism, Perseverance, Resilience, Respect, and Responsibility. The English and French public district school boards, in partnership with parents and caregivers, prepare students for success in whatever field they choose.

## Catholic School Boards



English Catholic and French Catholic district school boards have the same obligations, duties, rights, and privileges under the Education Act as do the public district school boards. In addition,

however, Catholic boards strive to create a faith community where religious instruction, religious practice, value formation, and faith development are integral to every area of the curriculum. Catholic schools exist to offer a system of education chosen by Catholic parents. In a Catholic education, the school, the home, and the Church work together to develop within students a way of living that reflects their faith. Students must be Catholic to attend Catholic elementary schools, but they DO NOT have to be Catholic to attend Catholic high schools



**REMEMBER:** The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Toronto Catholic District School board (TCDSB) are both publicly funded boards.



Canada has constitutional provisions to guarantee public funds to separate schools. Separate schools in Ontario have special rights guaranteed by the Constitution and by the Education Act. Section 19 means that the Code cannot affect those rights, which are mainly related to the existence and funding of Roman Catholic Schools. The separate school establishment right is not available to citizens of any other faith (i.e., Orthodox Christians, Jews, Mormons, Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs). In other words, Catholic boards are the only public funded boards based on faith, preserving religio-cultural values and improving economic position.



**TRUSTEES:** School Board Trustees are locally elected every 4 years by the community to be representatives of the public and their advocate for public education. A Trustee's job is to participate in making decisions that benefit the whole board while representing the interests of his or her constituents, and also to communicate the views and decisions of the school board back to the constituents. A Trustee is responsible for identifying the needs and priorities of their community and for turning them into practical educational opportunities for students. Among the many, often sensitive issues Trustees deal with are budgets and finance issues, property issues, suspensions and expulsions of students and communications with the community. To see who your trustee is, check your district school board website.



**SCHOOL COUNCILS:** School Councils advise principals and, where appropriate, school boards on issues affecting the education programs and the operation of individual schools. Their membership reflects both the school and the community, and must include parents and guardians of students, the principal, a teacher, a student representative (secondary school councils), a non-teaching school staff member, as well as members from the community at large. Parents and guardians must make up the majority of council members.



**SUPERINTENDENTS:** Supervisory officers, often called superintendents, are board staff responsible for groups of schools in each school board. Superintendents may be involved in suspension appeals, especial education meetings and request to attend a school other than the home school. Superintendents may also be assigned by the board to oversee board-wide-programs (e.g. superintendent for special education). You can contact your school superintendent if you can't get the help you need from the school principal.



**SCHOOL PRINCIPALS:** School principals have many responsibilities including determining the organization of the school and ensuring ongoing maintenance of the school buildings. The principal provides the supports necessary to administer the school's budget, develops a school safe arrival program with the help of the school council, parents and the community; assigns teachers to classes and ensures student's progress and supervision is maintained throughout their studies. Other responsibilities may include

- student admission and placement;
- ensuring report cards are sent to parents;
- making recommendations to the school board on the appointment, promotion, demotion and dismissal of teachers; and
- Selecting textbooks and other learning materials from the approved Ministry of Education list, with the help of teachers.

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## As a Parent, What Do You Need To Know About Your Trustee and The Director Of Education?



### Directors

The director of education is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the school board. They are the sole employee that reports directly to the board and are accountable to the Minister of Education. The director must meet the rules and objectives set out by the Ministry. As a parent, it is important to remember that all school board staff report either directly or indirectly to the director of education. Some of the director's responsibilities include advising the board on operational matters; implementing board policies; or ensuring the board's multi-year plan establishes the board's priorities and identifies the resources that will be used to achieve them. Overall, the director has a significant influence on the board by allocating resources, managing staff and making sure advice and information is properly delivered to trustees so that they have the information they need to make decisions.



### Trustees

Trustees are, by law, paid very little and as a result generally need another job to make ends meet. That means they have a limited amount of time to review materials, conduct any independent research or discuss issues with each other or other people. As a result, they are very dependent on staff for information and advice. Trustees tend to accept staff recommendations unless there is strong and widespread public pressure to do the opposite. Trustees have difficulties keeping up with the demands from their constituents in the limited time they have available. As a parent, it is important to be aware that trustees have difficulties returning phone calls and emails in a timely manner. People often experience real lag time in reaching out to them.



### Elections

Municipal elections are held every 4 years and you as a Parent can elect your school trustee representative. Get to know who your current trustee is by visiting your school website or calling the school.

Trustees' campaigns are a great platform for those interested in pursuing public political careers. Trustees tend not to be prominent in elections. Mayors and Councillors are elected at the same time and are more visible, making it hard for Trustee candidates to get noticed. As a result, incumbents, and people with a lot of name recognition tend to get elected easily over challengers. Parents tend to be the most motivated to vote in Trustee elections and Trustees often campaign in small networks of parents connected to particular schools, so they often have strong connections to those networks.

## Ontario's New Well-Being Strategy

Education in Ontario has recently undergone significant renewal and change. There is a new focus on the holistic well-being of students.

### What Is Well-Being?

Well-being is a positive sense of self, spirit and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs are being met. Well-being in early years and school settings is about helping children and students become more resilient, so that they can make positive, healthy choices to support learning and achievement, now and in the future.

### What Makes Up Well-Being?

The Ministry is focusing on four domains of well-being, which include:



#### EMOTIONAL

The ability to learn about and experience emotions, and understand how to recognize, manage, and cope with them. It includes developing a sense of empathy, confidence, purpose and resilience.



#### COGNITIVE

The development of abilities and skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and the ability to be flexible and innovative.



#### SOCIAL

The development of self-awareness, including the sense of belonging, collaboration, relationships with others, and communication skills.



#### PHYSICAL

The growth and development of the body, affected by physical activity, sleep patterns, healthy eating, and healthy life choices.

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## Well-Being Strategy

### Positive Mental Health

It involves helping school boards develop and implement mental health and addiction strategies and working with staff to support positive mental health for all students, including supporting those with mental health needs or addictions.

*Can you Feel it?* It's a program that supports students with building the necessary life skills to manage and cope with stress in their everyday lives. Healthy Schools public health nurses can work with schools to incorporate "Can You Feel It?" as part of a comprehensive strategy to building resiliency and positive mental health. For more information visit <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org>

### Safe and Accepting Schools

Sets out expectations for all school boards to provide safe, inclusive and accepting learning environments that support the achievement and well-being of every student. These expectations include addressing and preventing bullying and creating a positive school climate.

*Stand Up Against Bullying Poster Campaign:* A series of posters created by Dufferin-Peel students are distributed to all schools every November for Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. Each poster incorporates the header, "Stand Up Against Bullying", as well as, "Look to God, but above all feel looked at by God." (Pope Francis). The posters can be viewed on the board website at [www.dpcdsb.org](http://www.dpcdsb.org).

### Healthy Schools

Schools are key to establishing the learning conditions necessary to help students reach their full potential. With these conditions in place, students are more likely to adopt healthy, active habits and continue with them throughout their lives.

*School Food and Beverage Policy* is helping children to make good dietary choices – something which can lead to a reduced risk of developing serious, chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes. Schools are now required to ensure that 80% of the food and drinks they sell fall into the healthiest category (with high nutrients and lower amounts of fat, sugar and/or sodium).

### Equity and Inclusive Education

Involves identifying and removing discriminatory biases and barriers in the system to support student achievement and well-being by demonstrating respect for our diverse identities and strengths.

In 2008 the Safe School Action team created *Shaping a Culture of Respect in our Schools: Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships*, proposing a range of strategies to prevent gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour in schools. To review the document please visit the Ministry of Education's website.




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How are you contributing to your child(ren)'s well-being?

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## Breaking Down the Structure of Parental Involvement in Schools in Ontario

### Ontario's Parent Involvement Policy

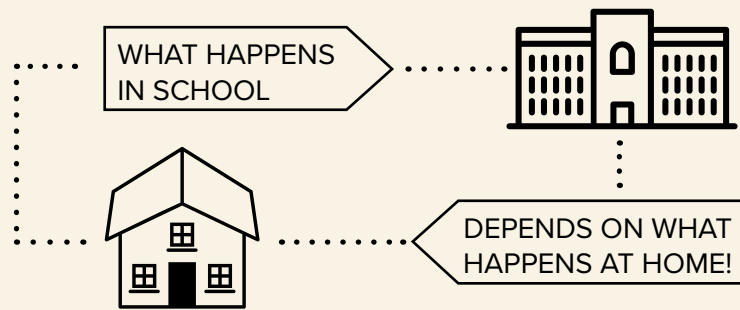
The policy acknowledges the important role that parents play in ensuring success both for their own children and for Ontario's public education system as a whole.

The Ontario's Parent Involvement Policy takes into consideration the following elements:

- Recognizes and supports the important role parents have contributing to their children's learning at home and at school.
- Recognizes, encourages and supports many forms of parent engagement.
- Identifies strategies to remove barriers to parent involvement (e.g. communications and language).
- Supports parents to acquire skills and knowledge they need to be engaged and involved in their child's learning.
- Provides a parent voice at the local level (e.g. Parent involvement committees and school councils as well as individual parents talking to teachers and principals).

#### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY

Is defined as a combination of commitment and active participation on the part of the parent to the school and to the student.  
(LaBahn, J. 1995).



### How Can I Get Involved?

Study after study has demonstrated that student learning and achievement improve when parents play an active role in their children's education and that good schools become even better when parents have a voice and actively engage with the school.

For many parents, the most important thing that the school can do to help them feel included is to communicate effectively with them. Parents want to know about changes before they happen.

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## School Councils

- Most schools councils consist of five to ten active parents
- Parent engagement takes time to build, and it has to be actively encouraged to make it work.
- One of the biggest concerns for parents is poor communication between the home and school in all official interactions with the school
- The School can provide you with an interpreter if you need one. If you don't feel confident conveying your message in English, ask a friend or another parent to help you ask for an interpreter.
- Effective communication is essential.

Every publicly funded school in Ontario is required to have a school council. School councils are made up of individuals representing parents, the school, and the community. They provide advice to principals and, where appropriate, to the local school board to ensure that their school responds to local needs and reflects local values. Strong school councils help build strong school communities and contribute to children's success at school.

The school council provides an avenue for consultation, advice, and information sharing among all members of the school community. School councils are encouraged to represent and share the views of their community and to establish open, inclusive practices that invite participation.

School councils may provide advice on any matter to the school principal and, where appropriate, to the school board. School boards and principals are obligated to consider and respond to each recommendation made by a school council.

To assist members, the Ministry of Education has published *School Councils: A Guide for Members and Tips for School Councils*. Both resources are available on the Ministry of Education website: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/guide](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/guide)



School Councils may advise the principal or the school board on:

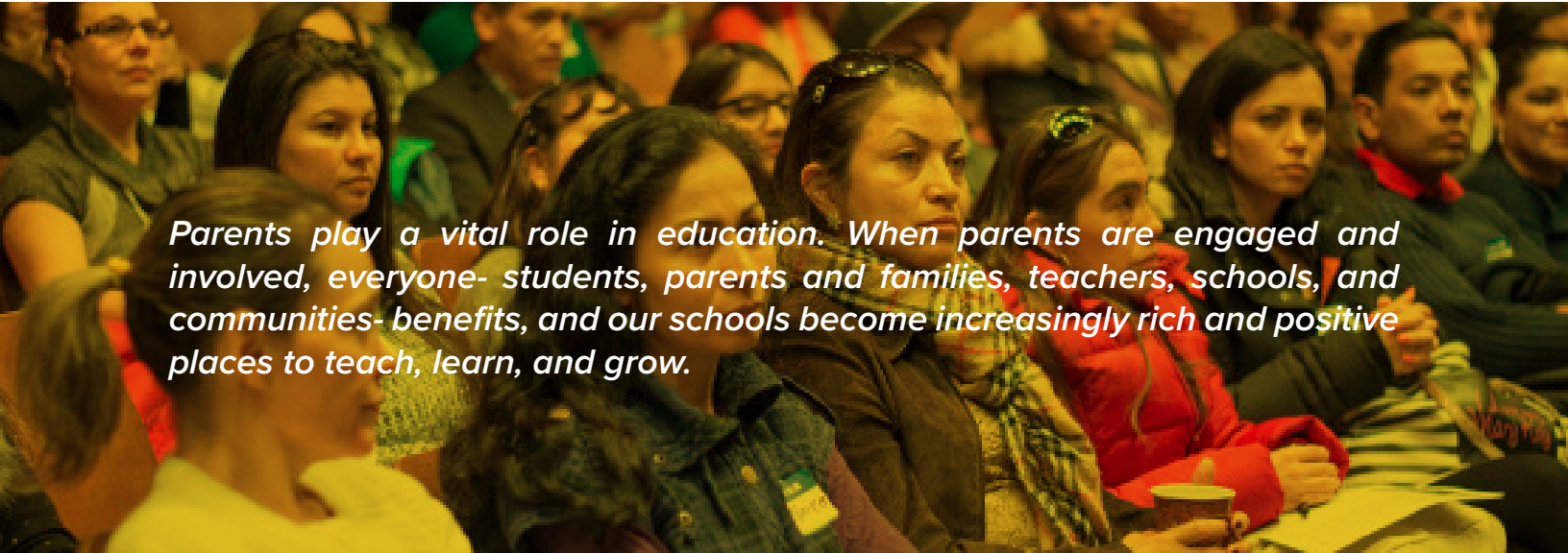
- school year calendars
- codes of students behaviour
- curriculum priorities (not curriculum content as this is set by the Ministry)
- programs and strategies to improve school performance on provincial and school board tests
- safe arrival program (elementary school)
- communications to parents and communications to the community
- community use of the school, and community programs and services provided at the school through school-community partnerships
- school board policies that will affect the school; and selection of principals.

According to the Education Act (amendment 612/00), school council elections must be held annually, within the first thirty calendar days of the start of the school year. Any parent who is interested in the school council election process or in participating as a member on the school council has the opportunity to do so. Elections are held at the beginning of the school year to ensure that even parents who are new to the school community will be able to participate in the election of their representative.

## Parent Involvement Committees (PIC) In Ontario

In Ontario, every school board is required to establish a Parent Involvement Committee (PIC). The Ministry provides funding to support the work of this committee. It is important to note that while school councils oversee only one school, PICs oversee a group of schools.

PICs are an advisory body and are a vehicle for the participation of parents at the board level. Their purpose is to support, encourage and enhance meaningful parent involvement to improve student achievement and wellbeing throughout the board and its schools.



*Parents play a vital role in education. When parents are engaged and involved, everyone- students, parents and families, teachers, schools, and communities- benefits, and our schools become increasingly rich and positive places to teach, learn, and grow.*

PICs are formal structures and act as advisory body to the local school board. The PIC is a parent-led committee; the chair/co-chairs are parents and the majority of members are parents. The director of education, a trustee of the board and up to three community representatives are members of the PIC. Subject to board by-laws, a PIC can include a principal, teacher and/or support staff.

### What Do Parent Involvement Committees (PIC) Do?

While school councils are school based advisory structures, PICs focus on matters that affect more than one school. The PIC provides information and advice to the board on effective parent engagement strategies and practices. PICs also communicate with and support school councils, and undertake activities to help parents support their children's learning at home and at school.

The PIC regulation also states that the Ministry may solicit the advice of PICs on matters that relate to student achievement and well-being. PICs can assist school boards by identifying strategies to increase parental engagement, including outreach to parents who find involvement more challenging due to language, recent immigration, and poverty, newness to the system or other factors.

PICs can promote the initiatives of school councils, encourage dialogue on relevant board policies and help share effective practices that support parent engagement in their children's learning. They can also help you identify parent and school council training needs within a district and contribute to the development of workshops, forums and conferences to address these needs.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Ministry of Education has created resources to support PICs including a Fact Sheet, Tips for Running Effective PIC Meetings and a Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Handbook.



Do you think you are ready to join your child(ren)'s school council? If so, ask your school principal to find out when the next meeting will take place.

## Parent Involvement Committee Structure In Toronto Boards

There are parent involvement structures both in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Toronto Catholic District Board (TCDSB). As a parent you can participate in the parent involvement committees according to your children's board.

### Public School Board

If your child is enrolled in a Public School, here is what you need to know about Parental



What does a Parent Involvement Advisory Committee do?

- Consult and work with parent, staff and community to identify issues related to parent engagement.
- Make recommendations or provide recommendations or comments to the board on any parent/education related matter
- Work and support school councils across the board

How can parents get involved with a parent involvement advisory committee (PIAC)?

- Get elected as a PIAC representative or alternate at your ward meeting or contact your Trustee
- Get involved with TDSBs Community Liaison Groups.
- Join one of PIACs Working Groups. Working group members are volunteers

and are open to all TDSB parents/guardians

- Attend PIAC meetings. TDSB parents/guardians are welcome to attend meetings as observers.

PIAC supports parents/school councils in the following ways:

- Facilitation of Working Groups on an array of issues. To view PIAC working groups
- Participation on a number of TDSB committees such as: School Calendar; Caring and Safe Committee; TDSB Consultation Committee.
- Organize the annual School Council Appreciation Event
- Collaborate with TDSB to organize the annual Parent Involvement Make a Difference Conference
- Ongoing outreach and support for School Councils

### Community Liaison Groups

The current TDSB policy on Parent and Community Involvement support and recognize parent/community groups who are organized to work with the Board on educational issues of specific interest and relevance to members of their groups.

Community Liaison Groups facilitate an ongoing working relationship between the TDSB and system-wide community groups who wish to contribute to the Board's mission in areas of specific interest.

### Special Education Advisory Committee

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Assist the board in understanding the special needs of exceptional children and youth, and to advise the board in matters that apply to the delivery of special education services and programs.

To learn more visit [www.tdsb.on.ca](http://www.tdsb.on.ca)

### Catholic Board



If your child is enrolled in a catholic public school, here is what you need to know Catholic Parental Involvement Committees.

### What Is Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (CIPC)?

Toronto CPIC is a parent-led organization. Toronto CPIC members are volunteer parents/guardians, who collect information and ideas from their wards, discuss the information at meetings, and disseminate information to the right people.

The focus of the committee is to support student academic achievement through increased parent involvement.

### What Does The CPIC Do?

Members of CPIC work at both the Ward and Board level. Members provide information and advice on parent engagement to the school board; create initiatives that promote and facilitate parent engagement; and educate parents to help them support their children's learning at home and/or at school.

### The following are voting members:

- 24 Parent Member: Ward Representatives - elected by parents (two-year term)
- 4 Parent Member (at large) – elected by 24 Parent Members (one-year term)
- 3 Community Representatives - appointed by the committee one from OAPCE and/or the Archdiocese of Toronto

### The following are non-voting members:

- Trustee representative
- Director of Education or designate
- Liaison Officer to the TCDSB

### Who qualifies to become a member of PIC?

All parents/guardians with at least one child or more currently registered in one of our TCDSB Catholic schools. An employee of the TCDSB is not eligible to be elected to this council.

### Special Education Advisory Committee

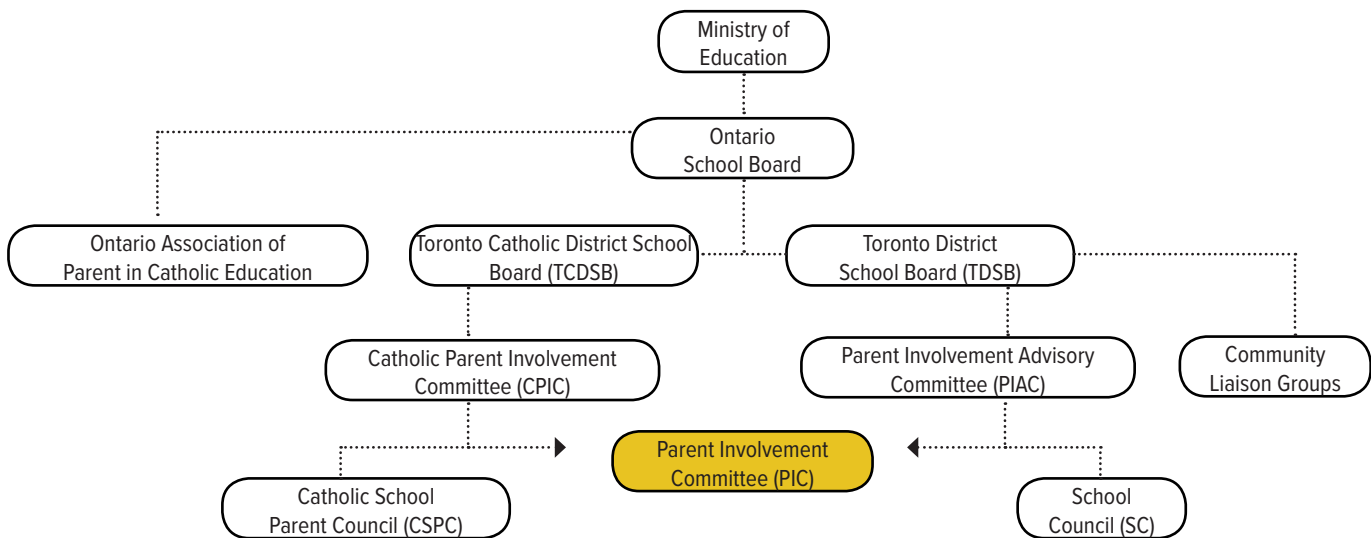
The Committee may make recommendations to the Board in respect of any matter affecting the establishment and development of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the Board.

### Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education – Toronto OAPCE

The organization ensures value-added input to the TCDSB and the province to improve and enrich the Catholic education of students.

Learn more at: <https://www.tcdsb.org>

## Overview of Parent Involvement Advisory Committees (PIAC) and Catholic Parental Involvement Committees (CPIC)



### Public Board Committees

- Parent Involvement Advisory Committee
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

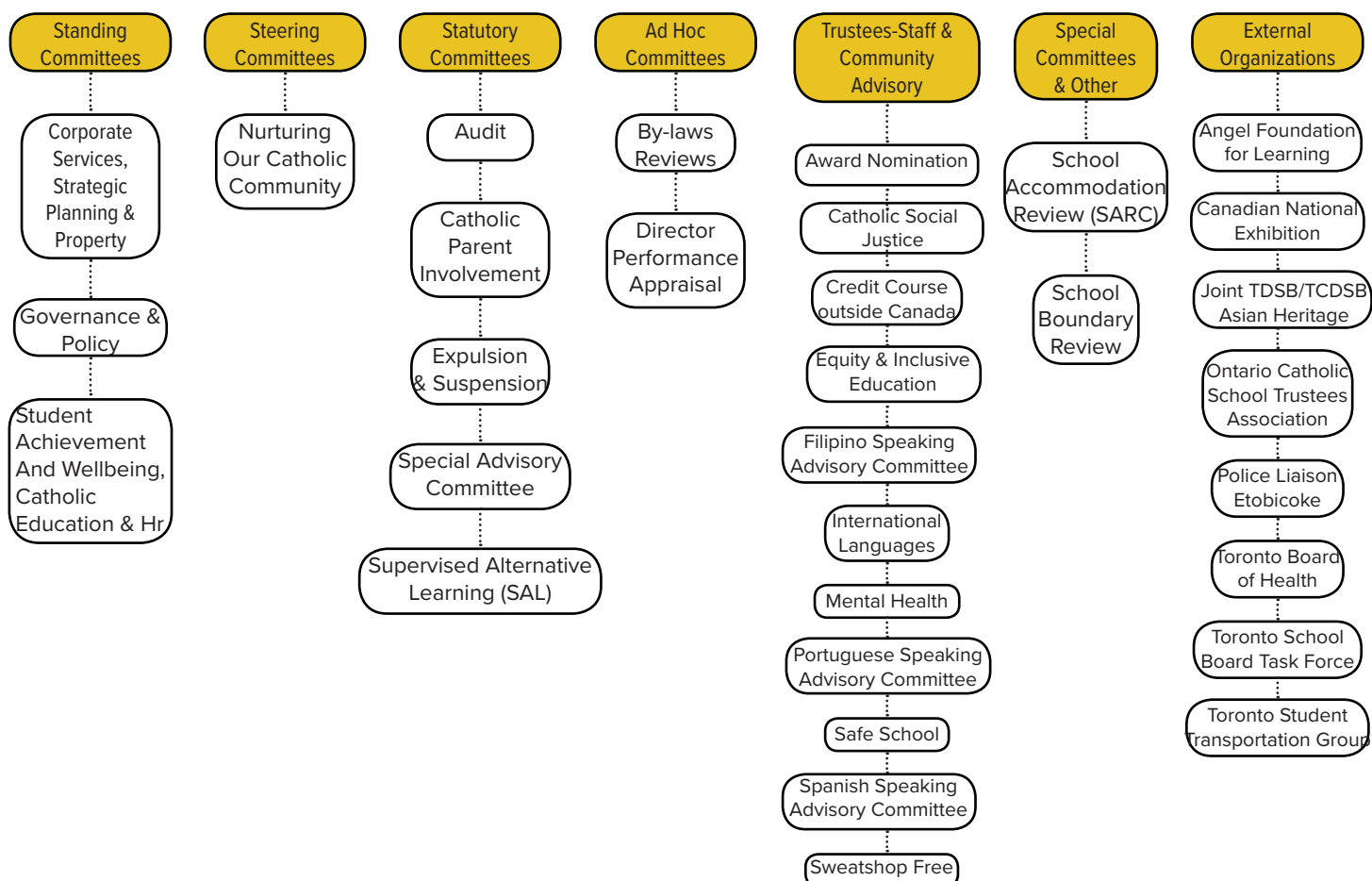
### COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEES

- Aboriginal Community Advisory Committee (ACAC)
- Alternative Schools Advisory Committee (ASA)
- Community use of schools advisory committee (CUSAC)
- early years advisory committee (EYAC)
- environmental sustainability community advisory committee (ESCAC)
- Equity Policy Advisory Committee
- French as a Second Language Committee (FSLAC)
- Innter City Advisory Committee (ICAC)
- Student Nutrition Advisory Committee

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**PIAC Working Groups**

Special Events (Parent Engagement)	PIAC Development (Best Practices)	Advocacy (Parent-Board- Government Engagement)
Parent Conference	Bylaws (Ad hoc)	Special Education
Chair Appreciation Event	Budget	Pools
Special Education Event	Membership	Full Day Kindergarten (FDK)
	Nominations (Ad hoc)	P/VP
		Pics and Hubs (Dormant)
Communication/ Outreach (Parent Engagement)		Fundraising (Dormant)
Calendar		Curriculum & Library
Communications (Website & PIAC Branding)		Concussion (Return To Learn)
Outreach (SC411 / PIAC Branding)		

**Catholic Public Board Committees**

“Parents Reaching Out Grants” (PRO) encourage parent engagement at the local, regional and provincial levels. They are designed to support parents in identifying barriers to parent engagement in their own community and to find local solutions to get more parents involved in their children’s learning.

There are two types of grants:

- Parents Reaching Out Grants to School Councils support school-based parent engagement projects.
- Regional/Provincial Grants for which parent organizations, Parent Involvement Committees (PICs), publicly funded school boards, non-profit organizations and postsecondary institutions operating in Ontario can apply.

What kinds of projects have been funded through Parents Reaching Out grants? Thousands of projects have been funded across Ontario. Some of these include:

- **“Their Success Depends on Us!”** at St Gregory Separate School – Powassan (Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board) A Parent Support Centre offering parents hands-on workshops and resources covering topics such as effective communications with the school and at home as well as a numeracy support group for parents to help their children succeed in school.

- **“Books for Breakfast”** at CC Carrothers Public School – London (Thames Valley District School Board) A series of breakfast and read sessions for parents and children. Guest authors talked to parents and children during the breakfast session and then provided a short program for parents discussing ways to build and enhance literacy skills and foster a love of reading.
- **“Homework Survival Strategies”** at Britannia Public School – Mississauga (Peel District School Board) Workshops for parents focusing on homework strategies, knowing your child, parenting skills and how to support their school work at home.

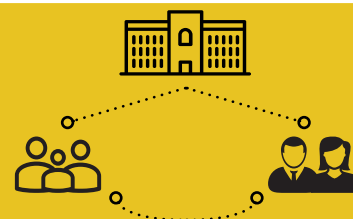
Read more Parents Reaching Out success stories at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/success.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/success.html)

If you need more information on the program, please call 416 325-2929 or toll free 1-800-387-5514. Persons with a hearing disability should call 1-800-268-7095. If you need technical help with the application form, please send your questions to [support@smartsimple.com](mailto:support@smartsimple.com).

More information about application requirements and deadlines can be found at: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reaching.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reaching.html)

### DID YOU KNOW?

There are various ways to support your child(ren)’s success in school. From attending a school or community event, these activities foster a sense of community within the school, aimed at building stronger relationships between parents and teachers. For more ideas visit [peopleforeducation.ca](http://peopleforeducation.ca)





## Early Childhood Resources

Here are some programs for parents to get involved in your children early education.



**Ontario Early Years:** These programs provide opportunities for all children to have access to inclusive, play and inquiry-based learning opportunities and for parents and caregivers to have access to information about early learning, child development and specialized services as well as access to high-quality services to support them in their roles. For more information visit: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/)



**HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters):** is a free home-based program which recognizes the parents to be their children's first and best teachers. For newcomer families who do not have the tools and resources to prepare their preschoolers to enter school, HIPPY provides parents with these tools and supports that allow them to make a real difference in the lives of their children. For more information visit: [www.workingwomencc.org/programs-services/hippy/](http://www.workingwomencc.org/programs-services/hippy/)



**Better Beginnings, Better futures:** An initiative to prevent young children in low income, high-risk neighbourhoods from experiencing poor developmental outcomes, which may then require expensive health, education and social services. It emphasizes quality early child development programs, community and parental involvement, and program integration. Programs are available in many communities across Ontario. For more information visit: [www.bbbf.ca](http://www.bbbf.ca)



**Ready for School Connects:** This two-week program is designed for newcomer families with children entering kindergarten. While their children participate in daily programs designed to prepare them for kindergarten, parents attend workshops on topics including effective discipline, the kindergarten curriculum, the education system in Ontario, and services available in the community. For more information visit: [www.rfsc.ca](http://www.rfsc.ca)



Do you want to have a greater impact at the school board level? If so, check the website of your designated school board and find out more about the parental involvement committees (PICS).

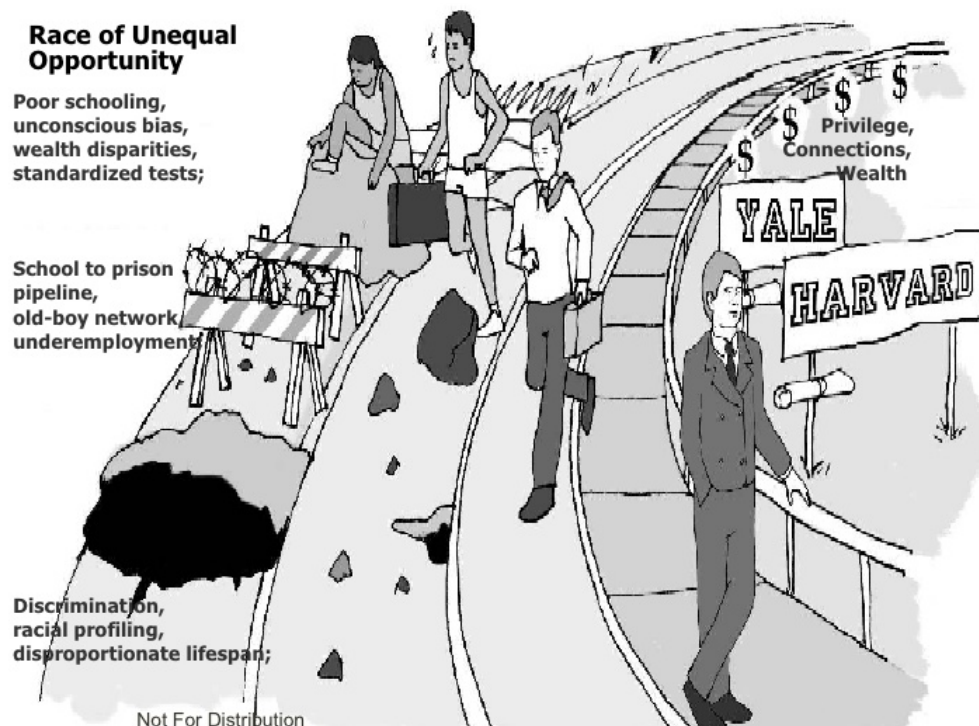
## Navigating the School System Through an Equity and Social Justice Lens

Equity and Social Justice are the beliefs in a fair society for all. This includes an equitable distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges. A just society is one where all human beings are valued and respected. But in order to work towards that, we must first understand the historical contexts that allow for the different types of oppressions to exist in today's society. It is important that our educational institutions become spaces that work to promote and protect equity and social justice for their students and families. We hope that the following terms will help Latinx parents understand the many forms of oppression and the ongoing effects of colonization, racism and capitalism. It is a system based on power and unequal distribution.

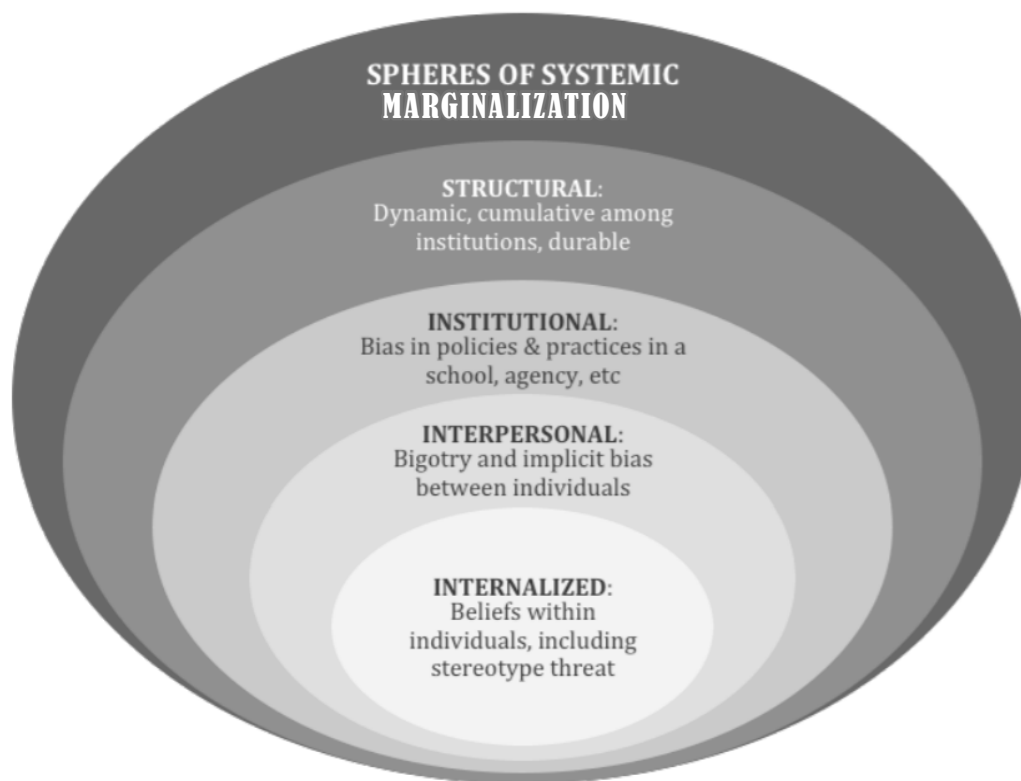
### Structural or Systemic Marginalization

Marginalization (racism, sexism, ableism, etc) manifests itself in multiple spheres of our lives and takes many forms; including internalized, interpersonal, institutional and structural.

In most conversations, people think about oppression such as racism, as a problem occurring between two (or more) people. However, from a systems perspective, different facets of oppression interact to reinforce a system.



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The presence of structural oppression is evidenced by consistent differences in outcomes in education that correlate with marginalized communities. Structural inequity describes a dynamic process that generates different outcomes based on class, race, gender, immigration status, etc. These structural inequities favour some people, but work against most people. The outcome of structural inequity is a very uneven terrain of opportunities that is constantly changing and does not require explicitly biased actors. The challenge then is to identify the most effective way to change the processes that create inequity.

A structural analysis is a powerful tool that can be used to examine how historical legacies, individuals, institutions and structures work together as a system to distribute advantages and disadvantages along certain lines.

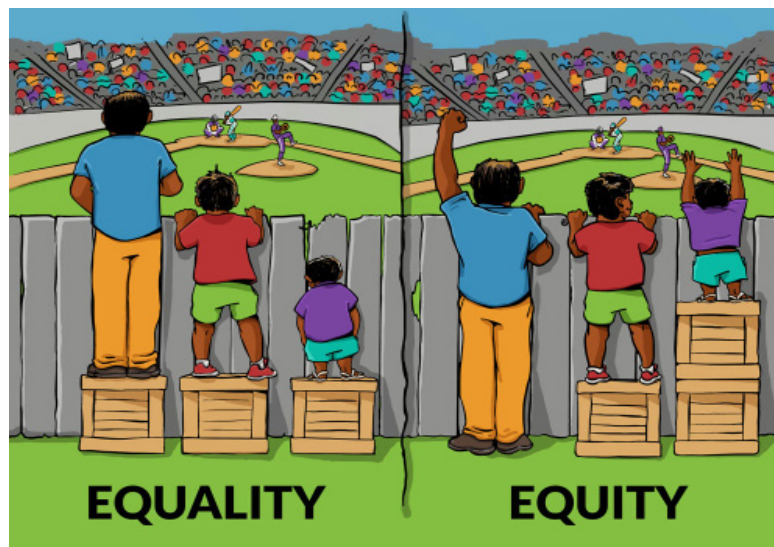
Systemic oppression occurs when established laws, customs and practices systematically reflect and produce inequities based on one's membership in targeted social identity groups.

For instance, minority groups such as immigrants or indigenous peoples may face higher systemic barriers to access education, healthcare, employment, and services.

## Difference Between Equality and Equity

It is important to clarify that every child is different from their personalities to their ethno-racial backgrounds. However, there is a strong misconception that equity and equality mean the same thing – and that they can be used interchangeably, especially when talking about education.

Equity can be best described as making sure that all students have equal ACCESS to resources for a high-quality education. At the same time, the truth remains that many students need more to get there due to historically underfunded and marginalized schools in low income communities predominantly made up of racialized and newcomer families. The pursuit of equity is understanding this structural gap and therefore dedicating more resources to schools in these communities that allow for better improved access to educational opportunities and supports that are available in other more privileged neighbourhoods.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits actions that discriminate against people based on protected grounds, life, age, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, creed, race, etc. and in protected areas such as employment, housing, services and facilities, etc.

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## Understanding Oppressive Systems



To better understand equity and social justice, we must become aware of our oppressive systems. There are many oppressive forces that discriminate against people based on their race, gender, sexuality, immigration status and more. Working under an Anti-oppression theoretic approach, we hope to challenge systems of oppression in a way that is self-determined by the people affected. Working towards anti-oppression is working towards a world that allows people the freedom to be their whole selves and live with dignity and peace.

## Colonization

The European colonizers exterminated physically and culturally millions of indigenous peoples across the Americas and founded the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade.

The consequences of colonization are still felt today – particularly the discrimination towards indigenous communities and people from Africa and its diasporas.



### DID YOU KNOW?

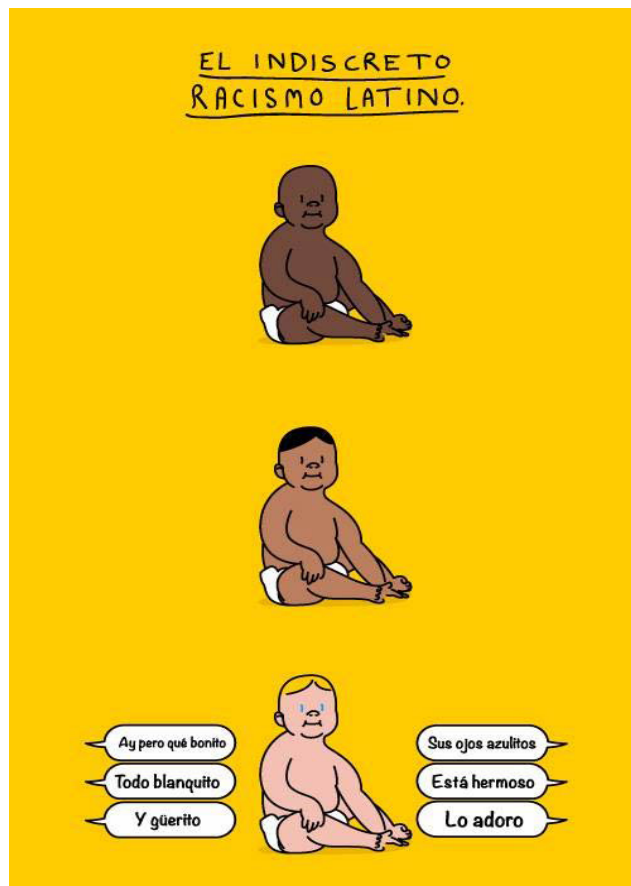
Residential Schools for Aboriginal children were established after 1880, operated by the Canadian government in partnership with a number of Christian Churches. These residential schools were set up to forcibly and violently assimilate Aboriginal children into the Canadian mainstream White European Christian society. This was enforced by separating children from their families and communities and attempting to eliminate their intellectual, cultural, language, and spiritual connections to their indigeneity - this is also commonly referred to as cultural genocide. The last residential school only closed in 1996. There is an estimated 80,000 survivors currently trying to heal from the traumatic experiences of living through the residential school system. These conditions led to generations of further exploitation, stereotypes and stigmatization, lack of adequate housing, poor health, and a continued severe under funding of services, including public education, for diverse indigenous communities across this land (Truth & Reconciliation Commission).



## Prejudice Vs Discrimination

Prejudices are irrational feelings and thoughts of dislike against a person or group of people based on stereotypes.

Discrimination occurs the moment that one puts their prejudices in action. For example, this happens when someone is treated negatively at school due to their race, religion or sexual orientation.



## Racism

Is based on the idea that some races are inferior or superior to others. Racism is founded on the notion that a person's race determines their human capabilities, leading to the discrimination of people based on their skin colour, language or culture. In Toronto, we can see the effects of racism in economic, social and cultural inequalities. According to data from the ethnic diversity survey, 49.6% of Black people reported experiencing higher racial discrimination compared to the 35.9% of racialized people in general.

In Canada we still see the effects of anti-Black racism in our school systems with the lack of Canadian Black History being taught in classrooms. We also see a lack of representation of Black teachers and Latinx teachers in our schools, as well as at all levels of power, including the government and the private sector.

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## Sexism

Sexism is the discrimination based on a person's sex or gender.

In Canada, examples of women's inequality can be seen through the gender pay gap in which racialized women earn significantly less than white men and white women. All discrimination is intersectional because our lives are affected by many personal and social issues. Therefore women of colour will experience sexism differently than white women, because they may also be experiencing racism and/or discrimination based on immigration status or language, on top of the sexism they face. Similarly, according to the Canadian Income Survey, First Nations, Metis, Inuit and immigrant women are more likely to live in poverty.

Women are also most likely to experience gender-based violence and harassment as a form of sexism. This violence can occur in the home as domestic violence/intimate partner violence, in the workplace, in community spaces, and/or other public spaces. Sexism occurs when women's lives, voices and experiences are devalued, objectified, sexualized and not seen as important to



Image provided by [CanadianWomenFoundation.org](http://CanadianWomenFoundation.org)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Aboriginal women in Canada report rates of violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault, 3.5 times higher than non-Aboriginal women. Young Aboriginal women are five times more likely than other Canadian women of the same age to die of violence. Between 1997 and 2000, the rate of homicide for Aboriginal women was almost seven times higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal women.

On December 8, 2015, the Government of Canada announced the launch of an independent national inquiry to address the high number of missing and murdered Indigenous women & girls.



## Ableism

Ableism is the discrimination against people with disabilities including physical, cognitive, emotional and mental disabilities. Much of our public and private spaces are designed for able-bodied people.

Some examples of discrimination against people with disabilities can be seen in public transportation systems, schools, government agencies, businesses and more. A lack of accessible resources can impact the very wellbeing of people with disabilities.



## Homophobia/Transphobia

The negative feeling towards people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender, queer, questioning or intersex (LGBTQI). Often times this community faces violence for their sexual preferences or gender identity. Trans-gender women for instance are often the most targeted demographic group for hate crimes.

Similarly, in Canada, same sex couples are legally entitled to marry while laws in other countries and states prevent civil or religious unions of the LGBTQI community. It is considered that these are forms of state sanctioned homophobia.



*The City of Toronto provides service request assistance via interpreters in 180 languages by calling 311.*

## Languages

There are over a 140 languages spoken in Toronto. There are currently different types of organizations, such as settlement agencies, working to provide translation and interpretation services for newcomers. However, access to interpreters is not always guaranteed everywhere.

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## Immigration Status

In 2007, the TDSB's new policy "Don't ask Don't tell" prevents schools from discriminating against undocumented people and encouraging schools to create inclusive spaces for non-status students. This new practice was implemented to prevent schools from asking families about their immigration status.

The TDSB and TCDSB cannot deny the enrolment of students whose parents are without immigration status. In 2010 the TDSB sent further information along with the a poster to continue encouraging schools to create inclusive spaces for non-status students.

In 2013 Toronto became a Sanctuary City, where no one can be refused from public services because of their immigration status. After much debate, Toronto City Council voted on more recommendations to further implement training to city staff and revising policies to reflect that undocumented people should not be discriminated against when trying to access any city service.



### REMEMBER:

As a parent, you are not obligated to inform school staff of your legal status nor of your immigration process. If you are denied access to schools anywhere in Ontario contact: [noneisillegal@riseup.net](mailto:noneisillegal@riseup.net) | For more info visit: [Toronto.noneisillegal.org](http://Toronto.noneisillegal.org)




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What forms of social injustice and/or inequity have you identified in your child(ren)'s school?

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## Identifying and Overcoming Challenges: Special Education

### What Is “Special Education”?

All students require support from teachers, classmates, family, and friends in order to thrive and to gain the full benefit of their school experience. Some students have special needs that require supports beyond those ordinarily received in the school setting. In Ontario, students who have behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities, may have educational needs that cannot be met through regular instructional and assessment practices. These needs may be met through accommodations, and/or an educational program that is modified above or below the age-appropriate grade level expectations for a particular subject or course. Such students may be formally identified as exceptional pupils. The ministry sets out definitions of exceptionalities that must be used by school boards after determining that a student is an “exceptional pupil”.

### What Should You Do If You Think Your Child Needs Special Education Support?

- Ask your child(ren) if there are particular things that are consistently difficult at school.
- Ask the teacher if he or she thinks your son or daughter needs extra support and if the teacher can provide the extra help.
- Some medical conditions may affect learning (e.g. hearing, vision, etc.) - it might help to talk to your child’s doctor.

### Actions To Take, Meeting With The School Staff

- If you think your child needs more support, ask the principal or vice-principal to hold a meeting with other school staff (called a School Team Meeting) to talk about your child(ren).
- Prepare for the meeting. Sometimes it helps to write down questions, such as:

- ◊ *What kinds of supports or programs would help my child succeed?*
- ◊ *What is available in the school?*
- ◊ *Would my child have to wait a long time to get into the right program?*
- At the School Team Meeting the school staff may recommend one or more of the following options:
  - ◊ *that the teacher continue to provide support in the classroom*
  - ◊ *that the teacher/team develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the student*
  - ◊ *that a student be formally “assessed” to find out if he or she has special needs and what those needs are and/or – that the school hold a more formal Special Education meeting, called an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).*

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## What is a Special Education Assessment?

A Special Education assessment is an evaluation of a student by a specialist to determine if a student has special needs and what those needs are. Your principal or vice principal will explain what you need to do to have your child assessed. The board has specialists on staff who will assess students at no cost to parents, but there may be a waiting list.

## What is an IEP?

The Individual Education Plan (IEP), describes what the school will do to help your child. The Plan must be developed in consultation with parents. A student does not have to be formally assessed to have an IEP.

The IEP should include:

- A list of the student's strengths and needs.
- An outline of the special education services the student will receive, where and when the service will be provided, and who will provide it.
- A description of how the student's progress will be measured and reviewed.
- A set of goals for the student and teacher to work toward over the year.
- A list of any special equipment to be provided.

*An IEP must be completed within 30 school*

*days after your child has been placed in a special placement and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it. The IEP must be reviewed in each reporting period.*

## What is an IPRC?

Sometimes the School Team will recommend the school hold an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) – which is a meeting to officially identify a student's special needs (often called "exceptionalities").

An IPRC may be requested by the parents or the school. Once parents have made a request in writing, an IPRC must be held. The school must inform the parents about an IPRC, and it is very important for parents to attend. The IPRC will officially decide:

- If a student has special learning needs.
- What kind of learning needs the student has.



- The best placement and program for the student.

What happens at an IPRC, and do parents have a role?

The IPRC meeting usually includes the student's teacher and/or guidance counsellor, the principal, a psychologist, a school board representative and the parents.

Using information from the staff and parents, the committee will recommend a placement for the student, and the parents will be asked to sign a document agreeing to the committee's recommendations. You may take the document home and think it over before deciding whether to sign it.

Some tips for your IPRC:

- ◇ You can bring a family member, a friend or someone from a support association to

the meeting.

- ◇ Bring any doctor's notes or assessments about the student's medical condition or about his or her learning skills.
- ◇ Take a photograph of your child to help the committee remember who they're talking about.
- ◇ If a particular placement is recommended, you may ask to visit it.
- ◇ If you disagree with the decision of the IPRC, you may appeal it, but there is a time limit for the appeal. Your principal can explain the process.
- ◇ The IPRC process may seem very formal, but it means that you and your child will have a legal right to request ongoing support, which will help him or her succeed in school.

Will my child's support change over time?

Your child's placement will be reviewed



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at least once in every school year – you can always ask for changes or for more information at the review.

Where can parents go for help?

Ask your teacher, principal or guidance counselor for more information:

- People for Education has more information and links to special education organizations at [www.peopleforeducation.com/links/specialed](http://www.peopleforeducation.com/links/specialed)
- If you have a school settlement worker, they can help explain the Special Education process.
- Other parents can be a wonderful resource—talk to the parents in your school about how Special Education

works or contact your school board’s Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

- At [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca), you can find an IEP Resource Guide, an Educator’s Guide to Special Education and the document, Education for All.



#### REMEMBER:

Some issues can be solved by the teacher in the classroom, so speak to the teacher first if you are worried about your child’s progress.

- Needing Special Education support is not a bad thing—all students learn differently, some just need different kinds of support to succeed.
- Just because your child does not speak English, it does not mean that he/she needs Special Education help.
- Some problems are a normal part of adjusting to a new language and school. It may help to provide the principal with information about the student’s academic skills in his or her first language.
- Some parts of the process for getting Special Education support can feel confusing and it may have many unfamiliar names. Always ask questions if there are things you don’t understand, or, if you are not comfortable in English, ask for an interpreter
- Parents play an important role in Special Education. Don’t give up. It is alright to ask for support for your child.

## IDENTIFICATION PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE TIMELINES AS OUTLINED IN REGULATION 181/98 IPRC

Process	Time Frame	Actions
IPRC Meeting is Requested by Parent in Writing	Within 15 days of request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal sends letter of acknowledgement (SAP/IPRCcom)</li> <li>Letter indicates approximate date of IPRC</li> <li>Parent Guide to Special Education must be sent (SAP/IPRCcom)</li> </ul>
IPRC Meeting is Requested by Principal	Within 15 days of request by principal to the Special Education Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal sends letter to inform parent that Principal has requested an IPRC (SAP/IPRCcom)</li> <li>Letter indicates approximate date of IPRC</li> <li>Parent Guide to Special Education must be sent (SAP/IPRCcom)</li> </ul>
IPRC Meeting is Scheduled	Special Education Department informs school of IPRC meeting schedule approximately 2 – 3 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Education Department notifies the school principal about the schedule of students from that school</li> </ul>
Parent is Informed of IPRC Meeting	Parent must be in receipt of the invitation at least 10 days prior to the IPRC meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School sends letter of invitation to parent (SAP/IPRCcom)</li> <li>Parent Guide to Special Education is again sent (SAP/IPRCcom)</li> <li>All IPRC documentation is included with invitation for parental review prior to meeting</li> </ul>
IPRC Meeting is Held	Generally 30 minutes scheduled for an initial IPRC/20 minutes for a Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair explains purpose of IPRC</li> <li>Student's strengths and needs are documented</li> <li>Decisions about exceptionality and placement are determined</li> <li>Categories and definitions of exceptionalities are identified</li> <li>Recommendations about program and services are documented on Page 2</li> <li>Statement of Decision is reviewed and given to the parent</li> </ul>

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Parent Agrees with IPRC Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Either at IPRC meeting or subsequent to meeting</li> <li>◊ Upon student's placement in special education program</li> <li>◊ Within 30 school days of placement in program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent completes and signs Statement of Decision and subsequently potentially an Offer of Program Placement</li> <li>• School seeks parental input for the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP)</li> <li>• School completes the IEP and provides the parent with a copy</li> </ul>
Parent Wishes Further Discussion	Within 15 days of receipt of the Statement of Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents request a second meeting of the IPRC</li> <li>• Generally new information is available or the parent wishes the Committee to consider previous information in a different light</li> </ul>
Special Education Department Arranges Reconvening of the IPRC	As soon as possible, keeping in mind that parent has 30 days after receiving the decision of the IPRC to file an appeal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The original committee must be reconstituted</li> <li>• The parents are given an opportunity to outline their reasons for asking the committee to reconsider its decisions</li> <li>• A new Statement of Decision is produced which may reflect the same or revised decisions</li> </ul>
Parent Disagrees with Decisions of the IPRC	Within 30 days of receipt of the IPRC Statement of Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent files notice of appeal with Secretary of the Board (Director)</li> </ul>
Notice of Appeal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Within 15 days of notice received</li> <li>◊ Within 15 days of selections made</li> <li>◊ Within 30 days of selection of Chair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School board and parent each select one member of Appeal Board</li> <li>• The two identified members select a Chair</li> <li>• Appeal Board meeting is held (unless both parties consent in writing to a later date)</li> </ul>
Special Education Appeal Board (SEAB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Within 3 days of SEAB meeting</li> <li>◊ Within 30 days of receipt of recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEAB recommendations sent to relevant parties</li> <li>• School board considers recommendations and sends statement of its decision to parties</li> </ul>
Board's Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Within 30 days of receipt</li> <li>◊ After 30 days and with no notice of appeal from parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents appeal to Special Education Tribunal</li> <li>• Board implements its decision</li> </ul>

## Identifying and Overcoming Challenges: Mental Health

### What Is Mental Health?

Mental health is part of our overall well-being and relates to our ability to enjoy life, maintain fulfilling relationships, and cope with adversity and stress. It gives us a sense of spiritual, social and emotional well-being.

There may be times, however, when we experience mental health problems in which our thinking, mood, and behaviour limit our ability to function successfully in parts of our daily lives.

Some mental health problems are mild and temporary. Others can be more serious, last longer, and require specialized and intensive treatment. Mental health problems can affect anyone, regardless of age, education, or social position. The first signs often appear in childhood or adolescence.

### What do students learn about mental health at school?

Throughout the curriculum, students are taught living skills that provide a strong base for their future mental and physical well-being. These are skills that give a person a positive sense of self, that help them form and maintain healthy relationships, think critically and creatively, solve problems, and make wise decisions. Learning and talking about mental health can increase understanding of mental health issues and reduce the stigma associated with mental health problems. Key things that students learn across the curriculum include:

- understanding mind-body connections and the role of physical activity in supporting mental health and overall well-being
- understanding factors that contribute to emotional well-being, recognizing sources of stress, and developing the adaptive, management, and coping skills needed to deal with adversity and stress
- developing self-awareness and the ability to recognize warning signs of emotional difficulty, and understanding how to respond to them and seek support
- developing communication and social skills and the ability to identify and build healthy relationships
- understanding possible connections between substance abuse, addictions, and mental health, and knowing how to get help
- understanding the causes and nature of mental illness and ways of reducing the stigma and stereotypes associated with it.

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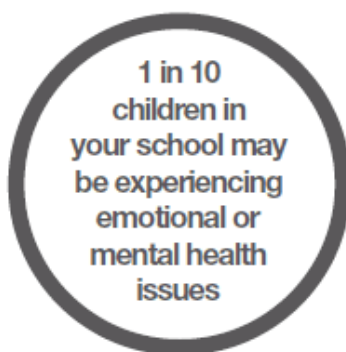
### What elementary students learn

Students in Grades 1-3 learn to describe their emotions appreciate the benefits of healthy active living for their mental well-being, and understand the importance of positive relationships with other children and adults. Learning in these areas helps students develop self-awareness and also includes strategies for seeking help.

In Grades 4-8, students learn strategies for maintaining mental well-being, coping with stress, and asking for help when they feel worried or sad. Topics that require greater sensitivity or maturity – managing anger, preventing bullying, and using social media responsibly, for example – are also introduced gradually at this time. In addition, students learn basic information about some common mental health and substance use problems, about ways of reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, and about supporting friends with mental health problems. One of the most important things students learn at this stage is that help-seeking is a skill, not a weakness, and that students should talk with a caring adult if they need assistance with their thoughts and feelings.

### What students in secondary school learn...

Secondary school students learn more about the signs and symptoms of mental health problems as well as ways of checking the accuracy of on-line health information and finding sources of support. They also cover complex topics like substance use and other harmful behaviours, cyberbullying responding to stress and peer pressure, and suicide prevention. Teachers are advised to introduce these topics with care and sensitivity, and to select resource materials in consultation with school board mental health professionals.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Schools have an important role to play in building skills, knowledge, and habits that help mental well-being and can reduce the risk of social and emotional problems. Learning about mental health can help students both academically and socially, and create support for students who are experiencing social or emotional difficulties.

## Talking with your children about mental health

Routine interactions with children provide them with much of the psychological support they need, but there may also be times when it is important to talk to them directly about mental health issues. These situations may arise if a child, or someone close to them, is showing signs of mental health problems. Starting these conversations is not always easy, but the following tips may help:

- Help them describe their emotions (e.g., “You look like you feel sad. Saying good bye can be hard. I feel sad too.”)
- Look for opportunities to talk informally in a relaxed setting.
- Let the discussion develop gradually over time rather than trying to cover too much in one conversation. Children may need time to become comfortable talking about their concerns.
- If children are uncomfortable speaking directly about their own feelings and experiences, approach the issues indirectly. Talk about imaginary situations or about characters in books or television programs.
- Let them know that you are there to talk and help, and that their mental health, like their physical health, can change over time.

If your child seems to be struggling with a mental health disorder, he or she can be referred to a mental health professional for further assessment and treatment. Ask your child’s teacher if she or he has noticed behavioural changes, and discuss ways in which the school might provide support. Check with your family doctor about possible medical reasons for changes in behavior or emotions.

*Taken from Ontario’s Ministry of Education, 2015 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/mentalhealthfact.pdf>*



### Additional Resources

- ABCs of Mental Health  
<http://www.hincksdellcrest.org/ABC/Parent-Resource/Welcome>  
A source of expert information about child development, signs and symptoms of difficulty, and supportive strategies that can help at home and school.
- Parents for Children’s Mental Health  
<http://www.pcmh.ca/>  
PCMH is a support and advocacy network focussed on child and youth mental health. Parents who have children experiencing a mental health problem might value insights and resource recommendations from parents who have “been there”.
- Children’s Mental Health Ontario  
<http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/parents/introduction.php>  
Fact sheets and links to resources about child and youth mental health and information about getting help from Ontario’s mental health system

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## Identifying and Overcoming Challenges: Bullying

### What Is Bullying?

The Education Act defines bullying as aggressive behaviour that is typically repeated over time. It is meant to cause harm, fear or distress or create a negative environment at school for another person. Bullying occurs in a situation where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.

### Types of bullying

Bullying can take many forms. It can be:

- physical – hitting, shoving, damaging or stealing property
- verbal – name calling, mocking, or making sexist, racist or homophobic comments
- social – excluding others from a group or spreading gossip or rumours about them
- written – writing notes or signs that are hurtful or insulting
- electronic (commonly known as cyber-bullying) – spreading rumours and hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cell phones (e.g., text messaging) and on social media sites.

### Electronic bullying or cyber-bullying

Is electronic communication that:

- is used to upset, threaten or embarrass another person.
- uses email, cell phones, text messages and social media sites to threaten, harass, embarrass, socially exclude or damage reputations and friendships.
- includes put downs, insults and can also involve spreading rumours, sharing private information, photos or videos or threatening to harm someone.
- is always aggressive and hurtful.



In Ontario schools, principals are required to address cyber-bullying if it has an impact on the school climate. For example, if the student is being bullied and is embarrassed as a result of an email message that was sent about him or her to other students in the school, he or she may not want to attend school.

**Regardless of its form, bullying is unacceptable**

### How can I tell if my child or teenager is being bullied?

A young child may not know the word "bully", but she knows when someone is being mean, hurting her, or making her feel sad or scared. She may not tell you because she may be worried she'll make things worse if she "tells", "tattles" or "rats"

Your teenager won't necessarily tell you there's a problem either and may use a term such as "harassment" rather than "bullying" to describe the behaviour. Teenagers often prefer to handle things on their own. They might think you'll get upset, that you will take away their technology, such as their cell phones, or they might just find it embarrassing to have a parent involved.

Even if she doesn't talk about it, you can watch for signs that your child is being bullied. Here are some signs to watch for:

Children who are being bullied may not want to go to school or may cry or feel sick on school days.

- They may not want to take part in activities or social events with other students.
- They may act differently than they normally do.
- They might suddenly begin to lose money or personal items, or come home with torn clothes or broken possessions, and offer explanations that don't make sense.
- Teens who are bullied and/or harassed may also start talking about dropping out of school and begin skipping activities that involve other students.



**Nearly one in three  
Ontario students (29%)  
report being bullied at  
school, according to a 2011  
study from the Centre  
for Addiction and Mental  
Health (CAMH).**

*Bullying takes place when there is an imbalance of power between people. An "imbalance" could mean one student is older, of a different race or has more friends than another.*

*-Pepler, D., Craig, W., Connolly, J., Yuile, A., McMaster, L., & Jiang, D. (2006). A developmental perspective on bullying. Aggressive Behavior, 32, page 376*

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### **My child is being bullied. What should I do?**

- Listen to your child and assure him that he has a right to be safe.
- Be clear on the facts. Make notes about what happened and when it happened.
- Help your child see that there is a difference between “ratting”, “tattling” or “telling” and reporting. It takes courage to report. Reporting is done not to cause trouble for another student, but to protect all students.
- Make an appointment to talk to your child/teenager’s teacher, another teacher that your child/teenager trusts or the principal or vice-principal of the school.
- Difficult as it may be, try to remain calm so that you can support your child and plan a course of action with him or her.
- Stay on course. Keep an eye on your child’s behaviour. If your meetings with school staff haven’t made the bullying stop, go back and talk to the principal. Follow up on the steps that were agreed to at the meeting.
- Speak to the instructor or coach if the bullying is taking place during after-school activities or sports events.
- Contact police if the bullying involves criminal behaviour, such as sexual assault or use of a weapon, or if the threat to your child’s safety is in the community rather than the school.

### **How can I help my child deal with bullying?**

- By working with the school to help your child or teen handle the bullying problem, you are leading by example and giving a clear message that bullying is wrong.
- 
- Regardless of age, you can help by encouraging your child to talk to you about bullying and by giving the following advice:
- 
- Stay calm and walk away from the situation.
- Tell an adult whom you trust – a teacher, the principal, the school bus driver or the lunchroom supervisor – about what happened or report it anonymously.
- Talk about it with your brothers or sisters, or with friends, so that you don’t feel you’re alone.
- Call Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or visit [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)

### **How do schools deal with bullying and other incidents?**

Students who bully others, whether it happens in person or online, can face different consequences.

When addressing bullying, principals use a progressive discipline approach. Ontario’s progressive discipline policy allows a principal to choose from a range of options to address



the behaviour and help the student learn from his or her choices. Some examples include:

- an apology for a hurtful or disrespectful comment
- a review of the expectations for the student
- a meeting with parents/guardians
- anger management counselling
- having the student suspended from school.

In more serious cases, the principal may recommend that the student be expelled from school if the student was previously suspended for bullying and continues to present an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person. These rules apply to both elementary and secondary students.

All board employees are required to report serious student incidents, such as bullying, to the principal. Principals are required to investigate all reported incidents of bullying.

Board employees who work directly with students, such as teachers, social workers and guidance counsellors, must respond to all inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour that has a negative impact on the school climate, including bullying.

School boards are required to provide programs, interventions or other supports for students who have been bullied, who have witnessed bullying and who have engaged in bullying.

For more information on how staff deal with incidents at school, talk to your school's principal if you would like to learn more about the services available through the school.

Principals must contact the parents/guardians of students who have been bullied, as well as students who have engaged in bullying, and tell them:

- what happened

#### DID YOU KNOW?

All schools and boards are required to have:

- policies to prevent and address bullying
- bullying prevention and intervention plans
- policies for progressive discipline and equity and inclusive education.

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- what harm was done to the student
- what steps were taken to protect the student's safety, including any disciplinary measures taken in response to the incident
- what supports will be provided for the student in response to the incident.

In addition:

- principals must invite parents to have a discussion about the supports provided to their child.

### **If my child is being bullied, what can I expect from the school?**

The school must have a procedure that allows you, students and other people to anonymously report incidents of bullying.

If you are concerned about your child or simply want more information, ask to see your:

School board's bullying prevention and intervention policy.

- School's code of conduct, which sets out how students, teachers, and other members of the school community should behave towards one another.
- School and board's bullying prevention and intervention plan. This document outlines what school staff can do to solve the problem.
- School's results from the School Climate Survey. This anonymous survey helps schools assess feelings about safety and make decisions about how to prevent bullying and promote safe and accepting schools. Surveys must be done at least every two years.

If staff becomes aware that your child is being bullied, you can expect the school to contact you. You may find that your child's teacher or another teacher your child trusts may be able to help identify some strategies that will help resolve the problem.

Schools are expected to make every effort to fully investigate your concerns, while protecting students' privacy. They will assist all students who are involved in bullying, including those who engage in bullying, those who are bullied and those who witness bullying.

The school will have a process you can follow if you are concerned about the support provided to your child. If you are not satisfied with the school's response, you may contact the supervisory officer of your school board. In addition, you may consider joining the *Safe and Accepting Schools Team* at your school. The team is responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive and accepting school climate. It includes the principal, at least one parent, school staff, a student and a community partner.

## Identifying and Overcoming Challenges: Streaming

### What is streaming?

The practice of streaming is grouping students based on ability. Ontario officially ended streaming in 1999, but recent reports make a compelling case that we may have ended streaming in name only. Officially we do not have streams but “pathways.” And the idea is to place students into different classes within these pathways, purportedly to better suit their needs and interests

### Dividing Students into Separate Tracks

The new system created in 1999 established applied and academic courses in grades 9 and 10, which were prerequisites for a range of “destination based” courses in grades 11 and 12.

The policy was intended to end streaming in Ontario secondary schools and create a system that kept “options open for all students.” In most cases, however, students in applied courses are in different classrooms, have different teachers, and experience a different curriculum. Data from the Ministry of Education on course selections in 2014 show that 62% of students taking applied math were taking three or more applied courses, and that only 11% of students in applied math take no other applied courses. Students are, in effect, grouped into separate tracks.

### The Association between Applied Courses and Low-income Students

The applied/academic system may perpetuate current economic and educational disparities among families. Demographic data from EQAO, along with 2006 Census data, show that schools with higher percentages of students from low-income families also have higher proportions of students in applied mathematics. A recent TDSB study found that only 6% of students from the highest income neighbourhoods took the majority of their courses as applied courses, compared to 33% of students from the lowest income neighbourhoods. In addition, we see an overrepresentation of non-white students in applied tracks.



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## The Link between Applied Courses and Widening Achievement Gaps

There is evidence that the current course selection system may be exacerbating achievement gaps in secondary school. In 2013, EQAO reported a 40% gap in test performance between students in academic and applied courses. Over the past five years, the percentage of students in applied English who passed the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test declined from 62% to 51%.

The gap between success in applied and academic courses is also evident when students are followed from elementary to secondary school. Of the students who did not meet the standard in Grade 3 or in Grade 6, and took academic mathematics in grade 9, 47% met the standard on the EQAO Grade 9 academic mathematics assessment. The results were much different for students in applied mathematics: of the students who did not meet the standard in Grade 3 or in Grade 6, and took applied mathematics in grade 9, only 30% met the standard.

### Recent Initiatives: Success Combining Applied and Academic

A small number of schools in Ontario have delayed early course selection by combining applied and academic courses in grade 9. In one such school, teachers reported improved student behavior and time on task in the grade 9 academic math class. After the change, 89% of the students writing the grade 9 math test achieved the provincial standard or higher, compared to the District average of 82%, and the province at 84%.

### Next Steps

*Ontario's education policy states that the system should keep "options open for all students." The reality is that forcing students as young as 13 years old to choose between two paths through school closes many options. In particular, it may disadvantage our most vulnerable students. We strongly recommend delaying course decisions involving academic and applied courses to a later point in secondary school.*

*-People for Education Annual Report 2015*

## Promoting Active Parental Participation in Schools: A Road Map to Student Success

You Are the Best Advocate for Your Child(ren)'s Success. Addressing Your Questions and Concerns

As a parent, it is important to understand the education system as a vehicle for student's success. Parents can often become frustrated when they have a question or concern relating to the school system because they're not sure who to contact for an answer. Below you will find a useful step-by-step process with some of the most common issues parents ask about, and the appropriate person to contact.

### Step 1: Classroom Teacher

For any issue pertaining to classroom:

- Classroom rules or consequences
- Homework or assignments

### Step 2: School Principal

For any of the above issues, if unsatisfied with the Teacher's response:

- For any issue pertaining to individual
- School Student registration
- Student schedules
- Student suspensions
- Report card concerns
- Teacher's conduct
- School safety and security
- School Code of Behaviour
- School budget and fundraising
- School council issues

### Step 3: School Superintendent

For any of the above issues, if unsatisfied with the Principal's response:

- Alternate attendance requests
- Suspension appeals

### Step 4: Trustee

If unsatisfied with both the Principal's and School Superintendent's response (often will help facilitate resolution by directing back to the above)

- Any item on a Board agenda
- Board policies under review
- Board budget
- Issues in the community
- News reports
- Ideas for new Board initiatives

### Board Office

- Continuing Education
- Night and summer school
- Adult education
- ESL
- Board document

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## School Councils

School councils provide advice to the principal and school board on things like:

- school year calendars
- strategies to improve school performance
- codes of conduct and dress
- curriculum priorities
- safe arrival programs
- community use of schools
- community programs provided at the school
- selection criteria for principals and board policies that will affect the school
- organizing social events for the school

## Who Should You Talk To If You Have A Question Or Problem?

If you want to meet with the teacher, you should call the school office and leave a message that you want to make an appointment. If you think your child needs extra support or a special program, you can ask for a meeting with the teacher and other school staff. Remember that schools should provide you with an interpreter. Here are some tips when addressing school problems.

### Talk to your child

- Ask your child questions to help you gather information.
- Try using “open-ended questions” like,
  - “What do you find difficult about ...?”
  - “Tell me what happened...”
- Listen to what he or she says and ask more questions.





### Talk to your child's teacher

- Talk to the teacher about your concerns and how your child feels.
- Try using comments like “My child told me that...”
- Ask questions to help you understand school policies and procedures.
- Listen to the teacher's point of view and suggestions.
- Talk about what you and the teacher will do so your child gets the same message from you and the teacher.
- Take your time before making any decisions or judgements – you don't have to decide right away. Agree to talk again to see if the solution is working.

### Talk to the principal or vice-principal

If the teacher is not able to help, speak with the principal or vice-principal. They may be able to help directly or involve other teachers or other staff at your school.

### Talk to the school superintendent

If the problem still isn't solved, contact the school superintendent for assistance. The school secretary or principal can tell you how to contact the superintendent or you can go to your school board's website to find the information.

#### For more information:

Call People for Education at **416-534-0100** or obtain copies of this tip sheet in other languages at: [www.peopleforeducation.com](http://www.peopleforeducation.com)

Visit the Ministry of Education website at: [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

Visit [www.settlement.org/edguide](http://www.settlement.org/edguide) for videos and information in many languages.



#### REMEMBER:

- Be informed: Find out about your school's policies.
- Attend all regular parent-teacher interviews and events. It is easier to solve problems if you and the teacher have already met.
- Attend any meetings about your child that the school invites you to. (e.g. special education, IEP, school discipline)
- If your problem can't be easily solved, keep written notes about important meetings and conversations.
- Ask for an interpreter if you are not comfortable expressing yourself in English.
- Concerns about our children can be upsetting. Try to stay calm. People are more likely to listen to your concerns if you express them calmly.

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## Education for Students without Immigration Status

The TDSB and TCDSB have a Board Policy requiring its schools to admit students living in our communities who are without immigration status in Canada.

According to the Education Act, a person who is otherwise entitled to be admitted to a school and who is less than eighteen years of age shall not be refused admission because the person or the person's parent or guardian is unlawfully in Canada. (section 49. Education Act)

In order to properly register your child(ren) for public school, you may choose from either the Toronto District Board (TDSB) or the Toronto Catholic District Board (TCDSB). Each board have specific documents that are required in order to register your child(ren) in school. Here is a short description of the requirements for each school board:

### TDSB

- Proof of age (a birth certificate or baptismal record or passport)
- Proof of address
- Immunization
- Health Card

### TCDSB

- Birth Certificate
- Proof of Catholicity (child's baptismal certificate or parent baptismal certificate)
- A letter of enrolment to the R.C.I.A./R.C.I.C. program
- Proof of Address
- Immunization Record

Please note that an Ontario photo card (Ontario ID) can be issued without any immigration requirement. To apply for an Ontario photo card visit: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-photo-card>.

- ☐ A rental agreement can be used as a proof of address.
- ☐ An affidavit or signed letter of confirmation from a person of recognized standing in the Toronto community (e.g. family doctor, community shelter director, and faith leader) may be used to support verification.



### REMEMBER:

You are not obligated to provide information on your immigration status. No one at the school should ask you for proof of your status in Canada.

## The Value of Volunteering In The School System

As a parent, volunteering at your child's school is a great way to learn more about how the school system works, engage in your child's education, and build stronger relationships with school staff.

### 1 Volunteering is fundamental to a healthy and democratic society in Canada

- Volunteering on the school council is a good example of school governance that shapes your child(ren)'s school.
- It gives everyone a voice and the space to contribute to the quality of life in communities.

### 2 Volunteering builds the capacity of organizations

- It provides schools with the skills, talents, and perspectives that are essential to their relevance, vitality, and sustainability.
- Participating in parental involvement committees (PIAC) can provide opportunities to take major decisions in the school system as a volunteer.
- It increases the capacity of schools to accomplish their goals through programs and services that respond to and are reflective of the unique characteristics of their communities.

### 3 Volunteering is personal

- It promotes a sense of belonging and general wellbeing to you and your child.
- It provides the opportunity for parents and other like-minded individuals to engage in their child(ren) school according to their personal preferences and motivations.

### 4 Volunteering is vital for strong, inclusive, and resilient communities

- It promotes change and development through the collective efforts of those who know the community best.
- Volunteering at the school promotes a sense of belonging and connectedness to the school community.
- It identifies and supports local strengths and assets to respond to community challenges while strengthening the social fabric.

### 5 Volunteering is about building relationships

- It connects people to the causes they care about, and allows community outcomes and personal goals to be met within a spectrum of engagement
- It creates opportunities for parents to better connect with other parents, teachers, school staff, principals and maintain relationships throughout their child(ren)'s school years.

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## Volunteer Opportunities at Schools

Parents and community members are encouraged to participate in volunteer activities in their schools and support programs and services to help students succeed.

## Volunteering at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB)

Here are some ways you can help in your child's classroom or school:

- Reading with students who need extra help;
- Arts and crafts activities;
- School plays or concerts;
- Arranging material in the library;
- Coaching sports activities;
- Supervising children on field trips;
- Serving as a speaker on topics related to the classroom program;
- Serving as a skilled mentor to a student who needs extra support;
- Collecting community materials for a classroom project;
- Producing the school newsletter or handbook;
- Participate in meetings and activities of the School Council.

Parents and community members who wish to volunteer must, like all TDSB employees, complete a Police Reference Check (which will include a vulnerable sector screening and be cleared before they can tutor/mentor in any TDSB location or participate in activities with our students).

Your local school principal can provide support with the Police Reference Check process. In addition, volunteers in schools cannot be used to perform activities that are the responsibility of teachers or other Board employees, and must be limited to extra support activities.

Contact your local school for more information on volunteering and the Police Reference Check Office at 416-393-0759 for any questions regarding the reference check process.

You can also contact: The Central Co-ordinator, Parent and Community Engagement at 416-397-3528.

### **Make a Difference: Become a Tutor/Mentor in a School**

Tutors and mentors can make a significant contribution to the personal growth and academic development of students.

A single positive relationship with a trusted tutor or mentor can greatly impact a student's self-esteem, learning skills, and confidence. It can also help establish a sense of purpose and hope for the future. Consider making that kind of difference in the lives of students.

All tutor activities for schools are performed under the direct supervision of a teacher. These activities may include the following:

- Working with groups of students requiring remediation
- Working with groups of students requiring enrichment
- Aiding teachers in the preparation of lesson plans
- Assisting with technology in the library
- Helping students to prepare for competitions, such as Mathematics Leagues or the Science Olympics
- Assisting students to prepare multi-media presentations
- Organizing a mathematics, science or technology fair
- Familiarizing teachers and students with educational software

Every year hundreds of people volunteer their time and talents to work with the school system. Keeping them involved and helping them to do a worthwhile job is the most demanding aspect of a volunteer program.

Check here the TCDSB manual: <https://www.tcdsb.org/FORCOMMUNITY/VolunteeringWithTCDSB/Documents/volunteer%20manual.pdf>

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## Individual Work With Students

Depending on the interests and backgrounds of the volunteers, activities can fluctuate from individual and group work with students to organizational capacities and enrichment programs. Following are some suggestions as to how volunteers can be employed within the school:

PRIMARY	JUNIOR	INTERMEDIATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop eye-hand coordination - individual use of beads, patterning, left to right progression, visual motor skills.</li> <li>• Practice in cutting, folding, arrangement; (for child with underdeveloped fine motor skills).</li> <li>• Work with children as they paint or colour; discuss their work, and underwrite their descriptions on their pictures for them.</li> <li>• Talk to children to stimulate their writing skills such as stories, poems, descriptions, etc; and provide help when needed.</li> <li>• Listen to children read - encourage them to talk about the story and their thoughts.</li> <li>• Use word games, view films or videos, read to children to develop their background of experiences and their vocabulary.</li> <li>• Use individual blackboard work and use concrete materials to reinforce number concepts, addition and subtraction, place value, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to children read. Discuss the story. Check for meaning, inference, relating reading to life.</li> <li>• Rote drill of multiplication facts; division.</li> <li>• Individual reinforcement in areas of fractions, algebra, geometry.</li> <li>• Dictation of spelling words in preparation for tests.</li> <li>• Individual help with research projects in Science/Social Studies.</li> <li>• Specialized use of Library - processing books, researching a topic; and/or focusing on works of one author.</li> <li>• Extension of research into a topic based on the child's interest.V</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proofread essays for students.</li> <li>• Help with preparation for public speaking skills - topic, sentence structure, main idea, delivery, presentation.</li> </ul>

### Group Work/Various General Activities

- Language arts
- Physical education
- Baking
- Science
- Arts/crafts

### Use of Parent Volunteers on Excursions

Schools often use parent volunteers to aid in the supervision of students as well as helping carry out programs. Parents can engage in an active role in the planning and execution of the excursion.

There are other ways that you can give back to the community while supporting your child(ren)'s success at school.

Check with your school or children's teacher to see if there are other ways you can volunteer in your child(ren)'s classroom.

### Volunteering in the Community as a Tutor/Mentor or Site Supervisor

Working Women Community Centre offers the On Your Mark academic support program, this initiative provides one-to-one and small group tutoring for students of Portuguese and Spanish speaking descent in elementary and high school. The program is geared to students who are struggling with literacy and numeracy standards for their grades and students who are attending special education



support services. This program works to prevent drop-outs and to encourage the pursuit of post-secondary education.

On Your Mark works with volunteer tutors who use a student-centered approach to learning; sessions are organized around the needs of the individual student. In addition to the academics, the sessions provide mentoring, foster friendships and help build self-esteem. On Your Mark students can discuss education and career goals with their tutor as they enter high school and when pursuing post-secondary education. – On Your Mark operates during the school year and within both the public and catholic school boards.

Positions available:

- Site Supervisor
- Tutor
- Administrative/Resource support

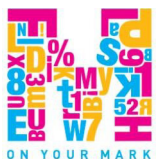
For more information about how to get involved contact:

Working Women Community Centre

Mireya Arrechea at 416 532 28 24 Ext: 246 or

Sonia Neves Ext: 244

admin@workingwomencc.org



### For more information

#### **[www.peopleforeducation.ca](http://www.peopleforeducation.ca)**

Read People for Education's report on parent involvement, *Doing what matters most: How parents can help their children succeed in school*. You can also join our online community to connect with other parents, and go online and get your questions about education in Ontario answered.

#### **[www.eqao.com](http://www.eqao.com)**

To find out more about the questionnaires that students, teachers, and principals complete every year as part of the EQAO testing, or see the survey results, visit the Education Quality and Accountability Office website.

#### **[tvoparents.tvo.org](http://tvoparents.tvo.org)**

TVOParents has a wide range of useful resources for parents, including videos in many languages, interviews with experts and up to date research



## Parent involvement that makes a difference

In August 2011, People for Education released a report, *Doing what matters most: How parents can help their children succeed in school*, which reviewed thirty years of research from Canada, the United States and England.

They concluded that accross these different contexts, there are four things parents can do at home to facilitate their child(ren)'s success in school.

### 1. Have high expectations for your children.

Let your children know that you think it is important that they do well in school. High parental expectations have the greatest impact on student achievement.

When parents consistently express belief in their children's potential and tell their kids that they expect them to succeed academically, students do better.

### 2. Talk about school.

Talk with your children about what's happening at school – activities, programs and what they are learning. Surprisingly, this has a greater impact on academic achievement than monitoring homework, being at home after school for your kids, or limiting the time they are allowed to watch TV or go out during the week.

### 3. Help your children develop a positive attitude toward learning and good work habits.

The greatest influence you can have on your kids' chances for success in school lie in how you influence their attitudes, their sense of personal competence, and their work habits, including persistence, seeking help, and planning.

Rather than trying to “teach” your children, focus on helping them handle distractions and crises of confidence, praise them for effort and persistence and demonstrate a positive attitude about school as a whole. These are the attributes that will build solid foundations for ongoing success.

### 4. Read together (in any language)

Reading is one of the foundations of all education, and you can make a big difference by reading and talking about books and stories with your children.

Reading with children is the best way to turn them on to reading. But this doesn't mean that you should be forcing them to sound out words. Instead of focussing on teaching your children the mechanics of reading, teach them to love reading. Make reading fun and enjoyable!

#### DID YOU KNOW

Only **46%** of Grade 3 students say that they talk to a parent/ guardian “every day or almost every day” about their school activities.

By grade 6, that percentage drops to **38%**.

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## Discovering Your Inner Leader: Roles of a Parent Ambassador

### What is a Parent Ambassador? Are You One?

Parent Ambassadors take responsibility for the well-being and improvement of their communities. What inspires you? What makes you click? As a parent, what change do you want to make in your school or community?

It is important to recognize that there are many ways to engage in your community and take leadership roles to motivate, engage others and/or organize events. Parent Ambassadors can

Some motivator questions that can help you become parent ambassador include:

- What kind of changes/improvements would you like to see in your school community?
- How might you create a sense of responsibility/ownership in your school community?
- How can you make a more inclusive and welcoming environment?
- How can you help foster relations and support other parents that require assistance?
- What communication channels would you find most effective?
- How do you support your children's success?
- What community groups have you identified that can help support your process?
- How can you influence others to help your cause?
- Are there any community leaders that inspire you and your community?
- Why would you like to become a leader in your community?

### Tools To Become an Effective Parent Ambassador

#### 1. Understanding Outreach

An important tool for parent ambassador is community outreach and its implementation. Outreach is a term that is commonly used to describe a wide range of activities, from actual delivering services to dissemination of information; and as a tool to help expand access to health services, practices or products. Often times agencies and organizations use outreach as a means to provide the necessary information for families in their community that are either unaware of existing programs or do not realize they are eligible to attend.



### What You Need To Know About Effective Outreach

- Meet parents where they are
- Be respectful
- Listen to your community
- Build trust and relationships; people feel more comfortable getting involved if they already have a connection with someone.
- Build a strong network
- Get the word out
- Make written information friendly and easy to understand
- If possible, provide information in the primary language of those you who will use the service
- Invite invite and invite!
- Follow-up, follow-up and follow-up!

What is the purpose of Outreach?	Where could outreach be done?	Different ways of Outreach into the community...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To raise awareness (i.e., meetings, events, programs and services)</li> <li>• To learn a new ways to mobilize the community</li> <li>• To reach out to vulnerable and isolated members of the community</li> <li>• To learn about the community characteristics, needs, strengths and resources</li> <li>• Strengthen the referral network</li> <li>• To engage other parents/ community members</li> <li>• To build a solid support system of parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Centres</li> <li>• Schools (after school)</li> <li>• School Events (concerts, cultural events, fundraising, put-lock dinners, multicultural celebrations)</li> <li>• TTC stops/streets</li> <li>• Malls</li> <li>• Religious places of worship E.G. Churches, Mosques, Temples</li> <li>• Public parks</li> <li>• Social gatherings</li> <li>• Apartment buildings</li> <li>• Laundry rooms</li> <li>• Playground/Playscapes</li> <li>• Community events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handing out flyers</li> <li>• Talking to people in your community face-to-face</li> <li>• Setting up information tables at the school</li> <li>• Fundraisers</li> <li>• Parades</li> <li>• Fairs</li> <li>• Information booths</li> <li>• Pledge cards</li> <li>• Websites</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Commercials</li> <li>• Newspaper articles</li> <li>• Bus advertising</li> <li>• Radio interviews</li> <li>• Word of mouth</li> <li>• Phone, emails, online notifications</li> </ul>

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## 2. Becoming a Public Speaker

Public speaking can often seem intimidating. However, we do it constantly without even noticing from talking in team meetings to telling our story to a friend.

As a parent you can build on essential skills to become public speakers in your school and community, from talking about your child(ren)'s education to other parents, participating in school or community meetings or inspiring other parents or people in your own community.

### Why Public Speaking?

- You have something to say
- You represent the voice of a community or group
- You want to share knowledge or experience
- To show support or encouragement

- Pace yourself
- BREATH – Use pauses to enhance your speaking
- Start with your strongest points
- Make eye contact
- Use body language to enhance your speaking
- Keep your mind in a positive place
- Move on from mistakes. No retakes

### Before you speak:

- Become comfortable hearing your own voice
- Make notes/use cue cards based on the situation
- Know your environment
- Know your audience
- Know how much time you have. Time your speech (100 words = approx. 1 minute)

### After you speak:

- Focus on the positive
- Walk away satisfied and review what was good
- Keep flexing your public muscle. It will only keep getting stronger!

### Tips on how to use Assertive Communication

### Practice: While you speak

### 3. Developing Assertive Communication

Being assertive is not necessarily easy, but it is a skill that can be learned. Developing your assertiveness starts with a good understanding of who you are and a belief in the value you bring. Assertiveness helps to build on self-confidence and provides many other benefits for improving your relationships with others (in school and community) and in other areas of your life as well.

- Communicate your needs and the needs of your child clearly
- Make requests, not demands
- Use “I” statements:
- Watch the tone and volume of your voice; try not to shout or whisper
- Ask for an interpreter if you’re not comfortable speaking
- Try to control your emotions
- Avoid using terms like “always” or “never”; instead give clear examples
- Use facts instead of judgments

Try to

*Assertive communication is the ability to express positive and negative ideas and feelings in an open, honest and direct way. It recognizes our rights while respecting the rights of others.*

*- Christine Morlet, CSP Influence Specialist*

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## Presenting Concerns at a School Board Meeting

As covered earlier, most school board committee meetings are open to the public. School boards are eager to hear from the community and issues that concern students and their families. The way to do this is through a delegation.

### What is a Delegation?

Parents and any residents of Toronto who are interested in Catholic education are always welcome to attend public sessions of Board and Committee meetings. Each meeting agenda has time set aside to hear delegations. These are brief verbal presentations from parents and others who wish to inform the Board of Trustees about a concern, idea or initiative at the local or board-wide level.

The speaker is viewed as being “delegated” by his/her school community or organization with the authority to speak on their behalf.



### TDSB- How to Address a Committee

Requests to speak to a permanent, statutory, standing or special (ad-hoc) committee must be submitted in writing to Governance and Board Services by 4 p.m., two (2) working days before the committee meeting day by submitting the Delegation Request Form:

Requests must include:

- the name of the speaker and the name of the organization (if the speaker is representing an organization such as a school council or community group)
- the topic and a description of the delegation matter
- contact information for the speaker (address, phone number and/or e-mail)

Individuals may submit written statements to a committee which will be distributed to the members of the committee prior to the meeting. **Written statements must be delivered to the Governance and Board Services at least two (2) working days before the committee meeting.**

### General Delegation Rules

#### Subject Matter

Delegations may address a permanent, statutory, standing or special (ad-hoc) committee on an item on the agenda or on another matter relevant to the mandate of the committee. Information about committees and their mandates is available on the TDSB's website: [Trustee Committees](#)

**Time Allotted**

The length of time allotted for presentation by a delegation will be up to five (5) minutes. If a delegation involves more than one speaker, the maximum time allotted remains at five (5) minutes.

**Acceptable Behaviour**

Delegations are encouraged to voice concerns but should not use any offensive language, make negative or derogatory personal references, or cross debate with other delegates, staff or trustees of the Board.

**Questions**

Following presentations, members of the committee and other trustees may ask brief questions for clarification only.

**Discussion**

Discussion of presentations will take place when their corresponding items are reached on the meeting agenda. If the delegation addressed a matter relevant to the mandate of the committee, but not an item on the agenda for that meeting, a trustee may move a motion requesting consideration of the matter at another regular meeting of the committee.

**Limitations**

A delegation may be made on a topic only once to any committee within a 12-month period, unless the subject matter of the delegation has changed substantially.

**Exceptional Circumstances**

If a situation arises where the number of delegations submitted for a committee meeting cannot be accommodated by the agenda, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the Executive Officer, Governance and Board Services, will determine whether a special meeting of the Committee of the Whole would be required to hear all delegations.

**Confidential Matters**

Requests by delegations to appear before a committee on matters which are deemed to be of a confidential nature, will be considered in private session.

**Disclaimer**

A delegation request does not guarantee the approval of your request for a delegation. Please be aware that information submitted will be considered to be public information and may be subject to full disclosure.



For more information and to obtain the Delegation Request Form visit <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Delegations>

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### **TCDSB- Addressing a Committee**

Anyone wishing to address the full Board of Trustees, must register by completing an online registration form found on the website. The Delegation Registration Form can be submitted by fax to the Recording Secretary at 416-229-5353 or by email to [delegations@tcdsb.org](mailto:delegations@tcdsb.org).

Delegations who register prior to 11 a.m. the day of the meeting, are invited to speak for up to 3 minutes during the first part of each session. Delegations are heard in the order of their registration, and they are invited to leave copies of their written submissions with the secretary at the committee meetings. These will be circulated to all trustees. Please note that all board meetings are videotaped and webcast live.

### **Private Matters**

During a presentation in public session of a regular or special Board meeting, Standing Committee, should the delegate use the name/title/position of any person in a negative, critical or derogatory fashion, directly or indirectly the Chair of the meeting shall advise the delegation to limit comments to non-personal references. Should personal references continue to be made, the Chair has the authority to stop the delegation from proceeding.

During a delegation in a private session of a regular or special Board meeting, Standing Committee, should a situation arise where a delegate intends to refer to someone in a negative way then the following will apply:

Delegations intending to use the name/title/position of any person in a negative, critical or derogatory fashion must indicate this intention at the time of registration, and prior to presenting, will be requested to address the Standing Committee in private session.

The Board shall inform staff if a delegation intends to speak of them at a Standing Committee meeting, in a negative, critical or derogatory fashion. The staff member has the right to be present during the presentation and be represented by the agent of their choice.

### **How Do I Register to Speak at a Board Meeting?**

Complete the online Delegation Registration form on the board's website Delegation Information webpage.

For inquiries, call the office of the recording secretary at 416-222-8282 ext. 2293.

### **What Happens Once I am Registered?**

The recording secretary will confirm the date and time of the meeting. Delegations are to speak for no more than 3 minutes. Delegations are encouraged to provide a written summary of their presentation and leave it with the recording secretary at the meeting. (Where possible, please email your submission to the recording secretary in advance of the meeting).

Please note that if a person is not able to attend a meeting, but wishes to have their delegation received and considered by the Board, a written submission can be provided to the recording secretary for distribution.

The recording secretary should be informed if the delegation has any specific audio visual needs. A delegation may only speak once at a meeting. There may be up to a maximum of ten (10) delegations per meeting. Delegations will be listed on the meeting agenda or in an addendum, and the topic and point of view shall be included in the documentation. Private information shall not be included. First priority will be given to delegations speaking to a specific item on the meeting's agenda and those who have not yet spoken to the issue. Next priority will be given to delegations speaking to time-sensitive topics.

### **Board and Standing Committee Meetings are Videotaped**

All delegations, as well as attendees at Board and Standing Committee meetings are reminded that the proceedings are videotaped and webcast live as they happen.

### **What Happens at the Meeting?**

Delegations are invited to address the Board of Trustees in the order in which they registered. This portion of the meeting takes place early on in the proceedings.

Once the delegation finishes the presentation, Trustees have an opportunity to ask questions so that they can fully understand the concerns/ideas expressed. They may also have some further inquiries for staff with respect to the presentation they have heard.

### **After each delegation the Trustees will do one of the following:**

1. Receive the presentation (this means that the presentation becomes part of the formal record of the meeting but no further action is required.)
2. Receive and refer to staff for a report (this means that Trustees feel the issue needs further exploration and discussion and want to see a report brought back to them for consideration. Timelines should be specified so that the delegation knows when the report will come before the Board.)
3. Receive and refer to staff for a follow up with the individual making the presentation (this means the Trustees feel that the matter can be resolved through the appropriate department or staff member(s) without a report coming back to board.)



For more information and to obtain the Delegation Request Form visit

<https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/TrusteesoftheBoard/boardmeeting/information/Pages/Delegation-Information.aspx>

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## Glossary of Terms

**Latinx:** (pronounced “La-TEEN-ex”) is a gender-inclusive way of referring to people of Latin American descent.

**WWCC:** Working Women Community Centre

**MNLC:** Menonite New Life Centre

**TDSB:** Toronto District School Board

**TCDSB:** Toronto Catholic District School Board

**AEHR:** Access and Equity Human Rights Investment Funding Program

**PICs:** Parental Involvement committees

**PIAC:** Parent Involvement Advisory Committee

**Community Liason:** Community liaisons serve as a very important link between residents of a particular community to the organization that provides a particular service.

**CPICs:** Catholic Parent Involvement Committee

**CEO:** Chief Executive Officer

**PIP:** Parent Ambassador Project

**PRO:** Parent Reaching Out Grants

**IPRC:** Identification Placement and Review Committee

**HIPPY:** Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

**TTC:** Toronto Transportation Commission

**SEAC:** Special Education Advisory Committee

**ESL:** English as Second Language

**Policy:** A set of policies are principles, rules, and guidelines formulated or adopted by an organization to reach its long-term goals and typically published in a booklet or other form that is widely accessible.

**Non-Status:** a person who has not been granted permission to stay in the country, or who has stayed after their visa has expired. The term can cover a person who falls between the cracks of the system, such as a refugee claimant who is refused refugee status but not removed from Canada because of a situation of generalized risk in the country of origin.

**OYM:** On Your Mark

**Advisory body:** A group established to provide advice and recommendations. An advisory body does not have final decision-making power.

**Constitution:** The document that defines the structure of an organization and sets out the principles according to which it is governed.

**Education Act:** In Ontario, the act that sets out the duties of the various persons

or entities responsible for the delivery of education. The Minister of Education is responsible for the administration of the Education Act.

**Individual Education Plan (IEP).**

A written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. An IEP must identify learning expectations that are modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course, and/or any accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations. The IEP is not a daily lesson plan itemizing every detail of the student's education.

**Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE):** An organization established in 1940 to represent parents of children enrolled in Catholic education in Ontario in its dealings with the provincial government and other organizations involved in education.

**Regulation:** A rule made and approved under an act of the Legislature. Regulations extend acts: some outline detailed directives, while others serve as vehicles to communicate annually changing provisions. Robert's Rules of Order. A formal system of meeting procedures designed to assist organizations

to operate in a smooth and orderly fashion.

**Statute:** An act of the Legislature approved by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council.

**Ethnicity:** The shared national, ethno-cultural, racial, linguistic, and/or religious heritage of a group of people, whether or not they live in their country of origin.

**Gender identity:** a person's perception of having a particular gender, which may or may not correspond with their birth sex.

**Gender expression:** the way in which a person expresses their gender identity, typically through their appearance, dress, and behavior.

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## Resources

**People for Education** <http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/>

**Ontario Ministry of Education** [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

**Toronto District School Board** <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/>

**Toronto Catholic District School Board** <https://www.tcdsb.org/>

**French Public District School Board- Conseil Scolaire Viamonde** (formerly Conseil scolaire de district du Centre Sud-Ouest) [www.csviamonde.ca](http://www.csviamonde.ca)

**French Catholic School Board Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud**  
[www.csdccs.edu.on.ca](http://www.csdccs.edu.on.ca)

**On Your Mark Tutoring and Mentoring Program**  
[www.workingwomencc.org/location/gladstone/programs-services/on-your-mark/](http://www.workingwomencc.org/location/gladstone/programs-services/on-your-mark/)

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# PARENTAL PYRAMID OF INTERVENTION

## HOW TO ADDRESS STUDENT CONCERNS

- Keep on top of your child's homework/assignments/marks/report cards
- Know your child's teachers

