PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEES:

Supporting links between Ontario's school boards and Ontario's parents

DEDICATION

In memory of Anna Hariton, chair of the Wellington Catholic District School Board's Parent Involvement Committee. Anna was dedicated to her community, giving generously of her time and talent, even when her illness made it challenging. She will be deeply missed by everyone whose life she touched, both in the Guelph/Wellington community and across the province.

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INTRODUCTION

"I proudly promote our PIC to parents across the school board. I leave the meetings inspired and have made some key decisions around the education of my children as a result of some of the discussions that have taken place at PIC." — PIC Chair, Northern Ontario

« Nous sommes fiers du taux de participation aux réunions du CPP. Nous sommes également heureux d'avoir la présence des conseillers scolaires. Enfin, nous sommes également fier du lien que nous avons développé avec PPE »[1]
— Président du CPP, Northern Ontario

Parent Involvement Committees (PICs) and Comités de participation des parents (CPPs) are board-level advisory committees in Ontario's school boards. PIC/CPPs are a direct link between parents and their board's senior administration, and their role is to encourage parent involvement in their children's learning to support student achievement and well-being.[2]

Parent Involvement Committees have been part of Ontario's publicly funded school system since 2005, and mandatory under Ontario's Parent Engagement Policy[3] since 2011. But there has been very little research on what PICs and CPPs are doing, and how they vary across the province. This year, People for Education — working with Parents partenaires en éducation and an advisory group of PIC members — conducted a survey to find out more about the work of PICs/CPPs. This report is based on survey results from PIC/CPPs in 67 of Ontario's 72 publicly funded school boards.

PIC/CPP MEMBERSHIP

"The advantage of having a PIC is that we work directly with the Trustees, Superintendents and the Director, so all meeting conversations, questions & concerns are dealt with by a variety of different Board people at different levels." — PIC Chair, Greater Toronto Area

Under s.33 of Regulation 612, PIC/CPP membership must include parents, the director of the school board, and a trustee. PICs may also choose to include representatives from community organizations, teachers, principals, or other board staff.

The number of members per PIC/CPP reported in the survey ranged from 2 to 70, with an average of 20 members per PIC/CPP:

Members	Number of school boards
10 or fewer members	12 school boards
11 to 20 members	31 school boards
21 to 30 members	14 school boards
31 + members	10 school boards

The wide range in membership numbers is not correlated to the population size of the school boards. It may be a reflection of the different models that boards use to determine PIC/CPP membership. Some boards include all school council chairs as members, while others have a set number of positions for parents.

The vast majority of PIC/CPPs (60 0f 67 boards) reported that parents make up 50% or more of their membership. In the seven boards reporting that parents made up less than half of the PIC membership, parents were still the largest group within the PIC. For example, one board reported four parents, three principals, one trustee, and the Director as members.

Survey respondents were asked about school and board staff membership on their PIC/CPP:

- All respondents reported that their Director was on the PIC/CPP;
- 70% of PIC/CPPs reported at least one principal rep;
- 28% reported one or more teacher reps on the PIC/CPP;
- 46% of participants reported one or more community organization reps.

Even though the PIC regulation requires that at least one trustee be appointed to the PIC/CPP, six respondents reported that they did not have a trustee representative.

When asked if any board staff (e.g: administrative assistant) are assigned to support the work of the PIC/CPP, 90% of respondents reported that they have board staff support.

WORKING TOGETHER – PICS AND OTHER PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

"We work closely together with the Catholic School Parents Association (CSPA)... The CSPA has been in place for many years, long before we had a PIC, and is a well-known and branded voice of parents in the board. As such we decided to retain CSPA and work closely together with the PIC." — PIC Chair, Eastern Ontario

One-third (22 of 67) of the PIC/CPPs report there is another regional parent group in their board, most often some form of regional school council or council of school council chairs. There is often an overlap in membership, with members of the regional parent group sitting on the PIC. The survey respondents also mentioned relationships with provincial parent organizations, including the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education, and Parents partenaires en éducation.

GETTING TO PIC: HOW PIC MEMBERS ARE CHOSEN

"We hold an annual recruitment campaign...Aside from the diversity we promote in terms of mandated geographical representation and elementary and secondary representation; we have two specific positions for a parent member appointed by Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and a parent member representing First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and families." — PIC Chair, Southwestern Ontario

Survey respondents indicated a wide range of methods used to choose the parent members of the PIC:

- 17 PICs (25%) reported that school council chairs are automatically part of the PIC. Several respondents commented that the school council chair can appoint another council member as a rep for the school;

- A further 17 respondents said that parent members are elected/selected from among school council members;

- 9 PICs reported that their members are appointed by the board;

- Some of the "other" methods for PIC/CPP membership identified include:

  ◦ Any parent who volunteers becomes a member;
  ◦ Members are elected by regional/ward councils or families of schools;
  ◦ Current PIC/CPP members or a sub-committee of the PIC/CPP chooses new members;
  ◦ Representatives from other board committees (eg. Special Education Advisory Committee, Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee) are invited to participate.

INCREASING DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP ON THE PIC

Many PICs indicated that they strive to balance membership to ensure representation of both elementary and secondary parents, and across school regions within their board. To ensure a broader cultural diversity among members, PIC/CPPs used the application process to identify diverse parents, as well as recruitment drives at conferences and school events. Several respondents emphasized the importance of face-to-face connections to engage potential members.

INCREASING PIC/CPP PARTICIPATION – CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

By far, the biggest challenge facing survey respondents is recruiting and retaining members. The problem is particularly prevalent in northern boards with large geographical areas, where it is more difficult to attend meetings.

Several PICs commented that they are using technology such as videoconferencing and online meetings to overcome these geographic barriers.

PICs also reported a general lack of time and interest among parents. In boards where all school councils are represented on the PIC, several respondents commented that parents were time-challenged by membership on both the school council and the PIC/CPP.

In terms of membership recruitment successes, several PICs cited improved outreach as their most successful strategy. Outreach activities included annual networking events; personal invitations; and a specific emphasis on increasing the PIC/CPP's visibility by sponsoring more school council events, system-wide initiatives and using social media to promote the PIC.

‹‹ Il est difficile de convaincre parfois les parents à s'investir dans un autre comité. Parfois, les parents ne comprennent pas ce qu'est le CPP. ››[4]

— Président du CPP, Northern Ontario

HOW THEY WORK: PIC/CPP STRUCTURE

"I feel that this committee has greatly evolved over the past 5 years. We benefited from the assistance of SEAC Chair and Vice-Chair to align the process to their already established advisory committee."

— PIC Chair, Greater Toronto Area

MEETINGS AND SUB-COMMITTEES

Under section 40 of Regulation 330[5], PIC/CPPs are required to meet at least four times per year. Although the number of PIC/CPP meetings held per school year ranged from 2 to 10, 63% of respondents reported meeting 4–5 times per year. When asked about sub-committees or working groups, 43% of PIC/CPPs reported a range of sub-committees, including: communications, conference planning, bylaws, faith, budget, and special events. Eleven boards reported having a committee focused on Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grants — writing proposals and overseeing successful PRO projects.

Many PIC/CPP members also participate in other board committees (Special Education Advisory Committee, Accommodation Review Committee, etc):

- 32% of respondents indicated that PIC members participate in other board committees all or most of the time;
- 37% responded that PIC members sometimes participate in other board committees;
- 31% reported that PIC members never participate in other board committees.

The PIC/CPP regulation[6] requires that all PIC/CPP meetings be open to the public. When asked how often non-members attend PIC/CPP meetings, only 18% of respondents reported non-members always or often attend, 30% reported that non-members sometimes attend, and 52% reported that non-members rarely or never attend meetings.

MEMBER TRAINING

"The PIC symposium is offered by the Ministry of Education each year. We welcome learning opportunities for our members. For example, we sent a representative to the OPSBA Child and Youth Mental Health Summit. We have also sent members to community-based workshops/conferences on topics related to Safe Schools, mental health, and equity and inclusiveness."

— PIC Chair, Southwestern Ontario

"Over time we have developed relationships with other PIC chairs and members, especially our neighbouring boards. But in the past year, I have reached out to other PIC chairs (across Ontario) to understand how their PIC functions and to share best practices."

— PIC Chair, Greater Toronto Area

When asked about training opportunities, 55% of respondents reported that their members receive orientation, training, and/or professional development. Orientation activities included orientation workshops, an information binder, and mentors for new members. Respondents also mentioned participation in conferences and workshops, including the annual PIC Symposium hosted by the Ministry of Education, and People for Education's annual conference. Other training opportunities offered include guest speakers at meetings, professional development provided by staff and administration on Board goals and programs, and weekend retreats.

One way for PIC members to increase their knowledge is through making connections and networking with PIC members from other boards. Almost 54% of respondents said that they connect with other PICs—usually at conferences and the Ministry's annual PIC symposium. Several PICs mentioned connecting with other PICs (usually co-terminus boards) to submit a PRO grant proposal together.

GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

"Our main activities focus on a series of events that serve as a resource for parents in areas like literacy, math, faith formation, and mental health. We are also launching our annual volunteer recognition award this year, to honour one outstanding parent volunteer from each of our schools. Our communications work includes the first edition of our CPIC newsletter, website improvements, and a greater presence on social media." — PIC Chair, Greater Toronto Area

PIC/CPPs are important advisory bodies to the school board. According to Regulation 612, the mandate of the PIC is to "support, encourage, and enhance meaningful parent engagement at the board level in order to improve student achievement and well-being" by:

- Providing information and advice to the board on parent engagement;
- communicating with and supporting school councils; and
- undertaking activities to help parents support their children's learning at home and at school.[7]

PIC/CPP GOALS

"We are in the process of developing goals for the PIC. The committee has just recently been formed with one parent and the director of education. Our first goal will be to establish a full committee...pulling from our existing school councils." — PIC Chair, Northern Board

Almost all respondents identified increasing and encouraging parent involvement in their child's learning as the main goal of their PIC. Forty-seven percent of the respondents directly identified parent involvement/engagement as their key goal. When other goals, such as enhancing communication to parents and school councils (29%) and supporting the work of school councils (9%), were mentioned, respondents connected

those goals to supporting parent involvement. For example, one PIC commented "Our goal is to provide resources, professional development and support to our school councils to help parents enhance learning and student success at home and at school."

Communication and information sharing were recognized as key tools in creating awareness and increasing parent engagement.

PIC/CPP ROLES

« Informer les conseils d'école de projets pédagogiques prioritaires du Conseil; donner la voix aux parents sur des questions qui les concernent, donner l'occasion aux parents de partager, offrir des occasions de formation aux parents et offrir des conseils au niveau de l'amélioration du rendement des élèves à l'administration du conseil. »[8] — Président du CPP, Northern Board

Throughout the survey, PIC/CPP members indicated that they do a number of things to support school boards in working with parents. When asked to rank their most important role as a PIC/CPP, the most frequently indicated areas of work were providing the school board with parents' perspectives on:

- parent engagement and ways to communicate with parents;
- ways that boards can help parents support their children at home and school, and;
- school board policies.

Interestingly, for participants in this survey, the roles that they may be most capable of fulfilling, such as direct communication with parents and school councils, were ranked as less important, while the roles that they may be least capable of doing reliably, such as providing a parent perspective on school board policies (given the diverse range of parents and communities within school boards, parents may have many, often opposing views) were reported as highest importance.

One of the challenges raised by respondents is the lack of awareness about PIC/CPPs and their roles. One participant commented, "We have had trouble with board staff and parents knowing what a PIC is. The senior staff we work with know of us and our roles, but often times principals, vice principals, and parents don't have any idea."

PIC/CPP ACTIVITIES

When asked to identify their main activities for the year (2013/14), the majority of respondents mentioned organizing events, conferences and workshops, including parent engagement symposiums, school council appreciation dinners, parent conferences, workshops and webinars. Events were organized with the aim of supporting and promoting parent involvement in their children's learning.

PIC/CPP events covered a wide range of topics, including cyber-bullying, math, literacy, 21st century learning, and mental health. Several PICs also offered workshops to support school councils in applying for PRO grants.

"Support schools in the PRO grant process. Organize a spring symposium on mental health. Participate in the formulation of a new strategic vision for the school board." — PIC Chair, Northern Board

Other activities mentioned by PIC/CPPs include facilitating communication between parents and the board, providing input on school board policies, and developing PIC/CPP websites and resources. A few respondents' activities focused on member recruitment, PIC/CPP structure, and increasing awareness of the PIC/CPP.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

"We provide an annual report to our board of trustees and administration on events and initiatives (including challenges) that have taken place during the school year. We report to parents through our regular meetings, monthly newsletters and our website."

— PIC Chair, Eastern Ontario

Under Regulation 330,[9] the minutes from PIC/CPP meetings must be posted on the school board website and sent electronically to all school council chairs in the board. The majority of PICs (82%) said that they report on their activities to their board's Director and trustees, but the reports are also shared with parents, school councils and the general public through email and website posts. The reports may be in the form of meeting minutes, committee reports, annual reports, or newsletters.

COMMUNICATION

"We always have a superintendent and a trustee at our meetings. They are excellent with respect to facilitating communication. At strategic vision meetings, the PIC is invited to attend with the other stakeholders (trustees, principals, union reps) and offer input. That is refreshing."

— PIC Chair, Northern Ontario

« Au CPP, il existe une belle collaboration et communication. Les gens sont ouverts d'esprit. C'est un plaisir d'avoir le privilège d'avoir accès à des gens aussi compétents! » [10]

— Président du CPP, Eastern Ontario

Throughout their survey responses, PIC/CPPs repeatedly emphasized that communication and information sharing are key tools in supporting and increasing parent engagement. They recognize that frequent and effective communication is an essential part of their work.

REACHING OUT TO PARENTS

When asked how they communicate with parents, all of the survey participants indicated that they use two or more methods. Eighty-five per cent of respondents use a website to share information such as news, policy developments, and PIC/CPP initiatives, making it the most commonly used communication tool. The next most common mode of communication is through updates sent out to school councils. It is interesting to note that based on the survey responses, social media is more frequently used as a communication tool than email.

How does your PIC/CPP communicate with parents?

Website	**85%**
School Council Updates	**75%**
Newsletters	**45%**
Social Media	**43%**
Email to Parents	**34%**

SEEKING PARENT INPUT

When asked how often they get feedback from parents who *are not* PIC/CPP members:

- 14% of respondents reported that they 'always' or 'often' get feedback;

- 49% reported that they 'sometimes' get parent input; and

- 37% reported that they 'rarely' or 'never' get input.

The survey results indicate that the most common way for PIC/CPPs to get feedback from parents is through school councils or regional parent groups (ward councils, regional school councils), with 60% of respondents relying on this method. The next most common method was through parent surveys (37%). Just over one-third of respondents reported that parents provide feedback directly to the PIC/CPP, either through in-person conversations, email, or at PIC/CPP meetings and consultations. Many PICs use a combination of these tools to solicit input.

Of the parents that do provide input to their PICs, most are concerned with how they can play a more active role in their child's education. They request information on school safety, mental health, parent engagement, and fundraising for school initiatives. Parents also provide suggestions for guest speakers, topics for PIC/CPP events, and input into school board policy development.

"We do parent surveys in conjunction with the board. Also, we created a PIC e-mail to receive parent enquiries and comments directly. It is publicly posted on our website and is shared in all of our communications." — PIC Chair, Central Ontario

COMMUNICATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET

Overall, survey respondents reported that they have effective two-way communication with their board and school councils:

- 89% of PICs report two-way communication with their school councils, both via email and at meetings. Several respondents mentioned that all school councils in the board have reps on the PIC, which helps to ensure all councils are being reached;

- 95% report two-way communication with senior board administration (director/superintendents). Many respondents commented that having the Director and senior board staff as required members of the PIC/CPP makes communication easier;

- 90% report two-way communication with school board trustees. Most of the comments talked about the value of having a trustee rep on the PIC/CPP as a conduit between the board and parents.

"This year we established a Facebook page for our school councils to communicate on. It is a slow start but is getting more and more interaction as councils realize they can use it for advertising any upcoming events and meetings." — PIC Chair, Southwestern Ontario

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COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Overall, PICs described their communication with school councils, trustees and senior administration as effective. It appears that when senior board officials attend PIC/CPP meetings and foster an atmosphere of open communication, they gain the trust and respect of PIC members. Similarly, trustees in some boards have taken an active role in communicating and participating in meetings — which PICs report helps build effective relationships.

Three respondents did raise concerns about the level of respect among senior administration for parents and PICs. They commented:

- "Having been on our board PIC for 10 years, before PICs were even thought of by ministry, we have found that it is an uphill battle dealing with senior staff. They think we will go away with our suggestions and ideas. Not being taken seriously is our biggest issue."

- "The main challenge is getting the buy-in of all stakeholders. It needs to become a common belief and part of the educational system, that 'Parents are Partners' in education and need to be treated as such. Parents need to be viewed as part of the educational community — not as an unwanted outsider or annoyance."

- "We would like to move towards a culture within the Board where the PIC is considered 'part of the team' and not just a check box that has been filled in. We would like to be consulted and asked for advice as a normal course of action, not just when the Ministry mandates it."

Some of the barriers to communication reported by the PICs include a lack of understanding about what PIC/CPPs do, school councils who do not have PIC reps, and the challenge of focusing communication efforts on a volunteer basis. One PIC raised the issue that while the school board provides an email address for each school council, the majority of school councils do not use them, and their private emails are unavailable. Other challenges raised include connecting over large regions or with a large volume of parents, and difficulty in ensuring the relevance of information and updates sent out.

Several respondents commented on the need for functional websites that ease the task of effective communication. The utility of social media and electronic communication were recurring themes, though as one respondent pointed out "social media is not the 'be all and end all.'"

FUNDING

Parent Involvement Committees have two main funding sources to support their work: the Ministry provides school boards with funding for their PIC/CPP, and PIC/CPPs can also apply for Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grants.

"Funding by the Ministry of Education for regional projects have too many limiting criteria...For example, we are not allowed to spend more than 5% on publicity, but our biggest challenge is to encourage parent engagement in our activities." — PIC Chair, Eastern Ontario

$5,000 MINISTRY GRANT

Each year, the Ministry provides boards with $5,000 in annual base funding, and an additional 17 cents per student to support boards' collaborative work with their PIC/CPPs. For some boards, this may be close to $50,000 in total annual funding.

The majority of PICs allocate funds from the Ministry of Education for:

- conferences and networking events (e.g. PIC Symposium, end of year dinner);
- parent workshops (e.g. guest speakers, Parent Involvement Nights);
- communication initiatives and publicity (e.g. website development, newsletters, pamphlets);
- professional development and training opportunities; and
- operational and travel costs.

PARENTS REACHING OUT GRANTS

Parent Involvement Committees can apply to the Ministry of Education for Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grants of up to $30,000 at the regional level to support parent involvement activities.

PRO grants are "designed to support parents in identifying barriers to parent engagement in their own community and to find local solutions to involve more parents in support of student achievement and well-being."[11]

This year, 53% of PICs reported applying for a PRO grant. All of the applications were successful, but 45% of applicants got less funding than requested. Funding requests ranged from $7,500 to the maximum $30,000. The amount of funding received ranged from $7,500 to $22,500.

Survey respondents used PRO grant funding for projects focusing on parent/community engagement; collaboration and networking; student use of digital technology and social media participation; youth mental health; student engagement in learning, and support for diverse and marginalized families. Virtually all of the initiatives took the form of full- or half-day conferences or workshops.

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

Only eight respondents reported funding from other sources. Seven said that their school board provides extra funding, and one respondent said that their PIC/CPP receives additional support by renting tables to vendors at conferences.

PIC OVERSIGHT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL FUNDING

Survey participants were asked if their PIC/CPP helps to manage any government funding for school councils. Respondents from 9 PICs (13%) said that they do help to manage this funding.

FUNDING CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

"I feel that the funding has been well allocated through the criteria set out in the grant proposals and that the ministry's Regional Advisers are a good resource and fair in challenging situations."
— PIC Chair, Eastern Ontario

While most respondents were content with the amount of funding received and the timing of release of funds to PICs, several participants raised concerns about the spending guidelines/restrictions for PRO Grants. One PIC member commented that the spending cap on some categories (e.g. guest speakers, advertising) makes it difficult to cover costs in areas that are often very expensive.

BOARD LEVEL PARENT GROUPS – ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

« C'est très avantageux et quel privilège que d'avoir l'oreille du directeur de l'éducation, d'un surintendant, d'une direction d'école et d'un conseiller scolaire! ›› [12]

— Président du CPP, Central Ontario

"The advantage of having a parent involvement group at the board level is that it gives parents a voice in the education system. It allows parents to help guide the board in it decisions. Parents are at the school level and have insights that the board does not. It gives the board another perspective and allows for greater insight into issues affecting school communities."

— PIC Chair, Southwestern Ontario

When asked about the advantages and disadvantages of having a parent group that works at the school board level, participants talked about the following advantages:

- Easier to communicate and network across the board;
- Working at a higher level — can pool resources;
- Parents bring a diversity of expertise to the table;
- Impact is board-wide;
- Easier to get parent input on matters before the board;
- Gives the board a broader perspective into issues affecting the school community;
- Parent committee is seen as more legitimate because it is at the board level.

Many respondents mentioned the advantages of working with senior board staff. They said that having the ear of the director, superintendents, trustees and principals makes the board more aware of parents and what they bring, and fosters a more positive relationship between parents and senior administration.

Some of the disadvantages identified include:

- Potential for communication breakdown — more layers to work through;
- PIC members may not be representative of the diversity of parents within the community, or may want to promote their own agenda;
- Being at the board level may mean that awareness of the PIC among average parents 'on the ground' may not be very high;
- Board can exert too much control over the PIC/CPP.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE –
PIC/CPPS AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT

One of the last questions on the survey asked participants if they feel the PIC/CPP is making a difference in terms of reaching parents and increasing student academic success and well-being. Of the 58 participants responding to this question, the majority (74%) reported that they are making a difference. 7% said they did not feel they are making a difference, and 19% indicated that they were unsure how much difference that they were making.

When asked how they know if they are making a difference, PICs reported:

- Positive feedback from parents after PIC events;

- Parent surveys indicate increased awareness, positive connections;

- Increased attendance at PIC events;

- Positive feedback from school and board staff about increased parent engagement;

- Increase in the number of parents on communication lists.

"We have increased attendance at our workshops and the number of people on our mailing lists, so we feel our communications strategy and parent event selection is working well. We also feel our excellent working relationship with our school and board partners has allowed us to engage more of our parents and be able to help them when their individual engagement is experiencing difficulties. Being able to understand the parent and put them in touch with the right board personnel is our key strength and is only possible due to the great relationships we have built." — PIC Chair, Eastern Ontario

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were developed in consultation with Parent Involvement Committees and the People for Education Network:

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education:

- support its regional offices to facilitate annual meetings among PICs from co-terminous boards early in the school year, to provide an opportunity to share effective practices, build links between PICs/CPPs in the region, and provide information about the Parent Engagement Office and its services;

- work in consultation with PICs/CPPs to update the funding guidelines for PRO grants & PIC funding;

- use the Ministry's annual PIC forum as an opportunity to consult with PICs, as well as a training and development opportunity for PIC chairs, including discussions about how PICs are working, building an effective team and communication tools;

- provide details of the parent engagement funding received by school boards, and direct school boards to ensure that disbursements of this funding are approved by the PIC;

- provide PICs with information about how other PICs are organized so that they are aware of the range of possible structures;

- direct school boards to provide PIC chairs with contact e-mails for all school council chairs in the board, to ensure that PIC/CPPs can fulfill their required mandate of "communicating with and supporting school councils".

It is recommended that school boards:

- provide PIC Chairs with email address and contact information for all school council chairs and PIC/CPPs members in their board;

- provide a website for the PIC/CPP or a separate tab on the board site for PIC information;

- inform PICs of all parent engagement funding received by the board. Ensure that any disbursements of PIC funding are approved by the PIC/CPP.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Many of the PICs/CPPs who participated in this research initiative provided comments that included tips and effective practices. Among the suggestions for PICs/CPPs:

- Establish relationships and share effective practices with other board committees (eg. SEAC, Aboriginal Education Committee). Work together to offer joint information sessions for parents.

- Establish clear goals for the year, and identify method(s) to measure success in achieving those goals.

- Identify other parent groups and community organizations in the area and make connections; invite them to partner on projects; talk about the benefits of working together.

- Connect with other PICs/CPPs to share ideas and collaborate for the benefit of parent engagement.

- Include communication guidelines in PIC by-laws to ensure information reaches parents in a timely fashion, and is accessible to all parents (eg. translation of key messages).

ENDNOTES

1   Translation: We are proud of the turnout at CPP meetings. We are also pleased to have the presence of school trustees. Finally, we are proud of the relationship we have developed with Parents Partenaires en Education.

2   Section 27, Ontario Regulation 612/00: School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees, Retrieved from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_000612_e.htm#BK25

3   Government of Ontario, Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools, http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/PE_Policy2010.pdf

4   Translation: It is sometimes difficult to convince parents to get involved in another committee. Sometimes parents do not understand what the CPP is.

5   Section 40(1), Ontario Regulation 330/10, retrieved from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2010/elaws_src_regs_r10330_e.htm

6   Section 40(5), Ontario Regulation 330/10, retrieved from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2010/elaws_src_regs_r10330_e.htm

7   Section 27, Ontario Regulation 612/00: School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees, Retrieved from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_000612_e.htm#BK25

8   Translation: Inform school councils about board's priority projects; give voice to parents on issues that affect them, provide an opportunity for parents to share, offer training opportunities for parents, and offer advice on improving student achievement to board administration.

9   Section 47, Ontario Regulation 330/10, retrieved from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2010/elaws_src_regs_r10330_e.htm

10   Translation: There is great collaboration and communication [on our CPP]. People are open-minded. It is a pleasure to have the privilege of access to such competent people!

11   http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reaching.HTML

12   Translation: It's very beneficial and what a privilege to have the ear of the director of education, a superintendent, a principal and a trustee!

Appendix: Surveys

For over 15 years, People for Education has used annual surveys to keep track of things like parent involvement and the effects of policy and funding changes on our schools.

This year, for the first time, we are surveying Parent Involvement Committees (PICs) and Comités de participation des parents (CPPs). Working with Parents partenaires en education (PPE) and an advisory committee of PIC/CPP members from across Ontario, we have developed this survey in order to learn more about the work that PICs/CPPs do to support parent involvement in their school boards.

Please help with this important research. The survey should take 15-30 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions, please contact Jacqui Strachan, Director of Outreach and Parent Support, at jacqui@peopleforeducation.ca.

Individual survey responses will remain confidential.

Only overall results will be published.

CONTACT INFORMATION

School Board: _____
Contact person: _____
Position: _____
Contact phone: _____
Contact email: _____

MEMBERSHIP

How many people are on the PIC? _____
Of those people, how many are:

Parents _____
Principals _____
Teachers _____
Trustees _____
Director or Superintendent _____
Community Organizations _____
Other _____

Are there other regional parent groups in your school board (eg. regional school council)?
☐ yes ☐ no

Please describe your relationship with the other regional parent groups in your school board:
_____
_____

Are each of the schools in your board individually represented on your PIC? ☐ yes ☐ no
Are your PIC members: (Please check all that apply)
☐ Selected/elected by school councils   ☐ Appointed by the board
☐ School council chairs automatically on PIC   ☐ Other (please specify) _____
What steps does your PIC take to increase the diversity of its membership? _____
_____

What challenges or successes have you experienced with the selection process of your PIC members?
_____
_____

STRUCTURE

How many meetings do you have in a school year? _____

Do your PIC members receive any training/orientation/professional development? ☐ yes ☐ no

Please describe the training/orientation/professional development that your PIC members receive.

_____

_____

Does your PIC have subcommittees or working groups (ex. Communication committee, conference committee, budget committee, etc.)? ☐ yes ☐ no

Please list the subcommittees or working groups that are part of your PIC: _____

_____

Do representatives of your Parent Involvement Committee participate in any non PIC Committees of the Board (ex. SEAC, Accommodation Review Committee)?

☐ All of the time ☐ Most of the time ☐ Some of the time ☐ None of the time

Does your PIC connect with PICs from other boards in any capacity? ☐ yes ☐ no

Please describe your connection with other PICs. _____

_____

Are board staff assigned to support your PIC's work? ☐ yes ☐ no

How often do non-members attend PIC meetings?

☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

PURPOSE AND ACTIVITIES

What are the main goals of your PIC? _____

_____

What are the main activities of your PIC this year? _____

_____

Do you report on these activities? ☐ yes ☐ no

Who do you report to and how? _____

Parent Involvement Committees have many important roles. Of the following list, which ones would you rank as the top three? Please provide an example for each of the top three selected. (1 = most important, 2 = second most important, 3 = third most important)

	1	2	3
Providing parent perspectives on parent engagement and ways to communicate with parents Example:			
Providing information and advice to the board on ways to communicate with parents Example:			
Suggesting ways the board could help more parents support their children's learning at home and at school Example:			
Sharing information with school councils Example:			

Sharing information with all parents Example:			
Supporting the work of school councils Example:			
Providing a parent perspective on board policies Example:			
Organizing events for parents Example:			
Other Example:			

COMMUNICATION

How does your PIC share information such as news, policy developments or PIC initiatives with other parents? (Please check all that apply)

☐ Website ☐ School council updates ☐ Newsletters ☐ Email to parents ☐ Social media
☐ Other (please specify) _____

What is the most effective way your PIC receives input from parents (ex. survey, reports from school councils etc.)? _____

Do parents who are not members provide input to your PIC?

☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

What are the most common topics parents provide input on? _____

_____

Is there two-way communication between School Councils and your PIC? ☐ yes ☐ no

Please describe the two-way communication between School Councils and your PIC. _____

_____

Please describe any barriers to two-way communication between School Councils and your PIC.

_____

Is there two-way communication with senior administration (directors, superintendents) in your board?

☐ yes ☐ no

Please describe the two-way communication between senior administration in your board and your PIC. _____

Please describe any barriers to two-way communication between senior administration in your board and your PIC. _____

Is there two way communication between your PIC and school board trustees? ☐ yes ☐ no

Please describe the two-way communication between school board trustees and your PIC. _____

_____

Please describe any barriers to two-way communication between school board trustees and your PIC. _____

Are there other comments, successes, or challenges with respect to communication? _____

_____

_____

FUNDING

PICs receive funding from the Ministry of Education. How does your PIC use this funding? _____

_____

This year, did your PIC apply for a Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grant? ☐ yes ☐ no

    How much funding did your PIC ask for? _____

    Was your PICs application successful? ☐ yes ☐ no

        How much funding did your PIC receive? _____

Does your PIC have other sources of funding? ☐ yes ☐ no

    What are the other sources of funding? _____

Does the PIC help manage any government funding for school councils? ☐ yes ☐ no

Do you have additional comments about funding for PICs (such as amounts, timing of release to PICs, spending guidelines, ministry approved uses, etc.)? _____

_____

_____

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Do you feel that your PIC is making a difference reaching parents and increasing student academic success and wellbeing? How do you know? _____

_____

Are there advantages or disadvantages to having a parent involvement group that works at the board level? _____

_____

Are there any additional comments, successes or challenges with your PIC that you would like to share?

_____

_____

_____

_____

ABOUT PEOPLE FOR EDUCATION

People for Education provides information and services for parents around the province.

Does your PIC distribute People for Education information or materials to parents in your schools?

    ☐ yes ☐ no

Please rate the following as to how useful they are:

	Very Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	Don't Know
P4E's Newsletter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P4E's Website/Online community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P4E's Parent Support phone line	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P4E's Parent Tip Sheets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P4E's Annual Report on Schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P4E's Annual conference	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Depuis plus de 15 ans, People for Education (P4E) mène des sondages annuels pour mesurer des enjeux comme la participation des parents et l'effet des changements des politiques et du financement sur les écoles.

Cette année, pour la première fois, et en collaboration avec Parents partenaires en éducation (PPE) et un comité consultatif de membres de CPP/PIC de partout en Ontario, nous sondons les comités de participation des parents (CPP).

Nous avons développé ce sondage afin d'en apprendre davantage sur le travail que font les CPP pour soutenir la participation des parents dans leurs conseils scolaires.

S'il vous plaît, contribuez à cette importante recherche. Il vous faudra de 15 à 30 minutes pour remplir le sondage et la date limite de remise est le 30 avril 2014.

Si vous avez des questions, veuillez communiquer avec Sylvie Ross, directrice générale de PPE, à dg@reseauppe.ca.

Les réponses individuelles au sondage resteront confidentielles.

Seuls les résultats globaux seront publiés.

COORDONNÉES
Conseil Scolaire: _____
Personne contact: _____
Poste: _____
Téléphone: _____
Courriel: _____

MEMBRES
Combien de personnes siègent au Comité de participation des parents (CPP)? _____
Parmi ces personnes, combien y atil de:

    Parents _____

    Directions d'école _____

    Enseignants ou enseignantes _____

    Conseillères ou conseillers scolaires _____

    Direction de l'éducation ou surintendance _____

    Organismes communautaires _____

    Autres _____

Y atil d'autres groupes régionaux de parents dans votre conseil scolaire?

    ☐ oui ☐ non

Veuillez décrire votre relation avec les autres groupes régionaux de parents de votre conseil scolaire:

_____

_____

Chaque école de votre conseil scolaire Estelle représentée individuellement au sein de votre CPP?

    ☐ oui ☐ non

Les membres de votre CPP sontils: (Cochez tout ce qui s'applique.)

☐ Choisis / élus par les conseils d'école   ☐ Nommés par le conseil scolaire

☐ Membres d'office du CPP à titre de présidente ou président de leur conseil d'école

☐ Autres _____

Quelles mesures votre CPP prendtil pour accroître la diversité de ses membres? _____

_____

Quelles difficultés ou succès avezvous connus relativement au processus de sélection des membres de votre CPP _____

_____

_____

STRUCTURE

Combien de réunions tenezvous pendant l'année scolaire? _____

Les membres de votre CPP reçoiventils une formation / une orientation / du perfectionnement professionnel?   ☐ oui   ☐ non

Veuillez décrire la formation / l'orientation / le perfectionnement professionnel que reçoivent les membres de votre CPP.. _____

_____

Votre CPP atil des souscomités ou groupes de travail (p. ex. comité de communication, comité des conférences, comité du budget, etc.)?   ☐ oui   ☐ non

   Veuillez énumérer les souscomités ou groupes de travail de votre CPP: _____

   _____

Des représentants ou représentantes de votre CPP participentils à des comités du conseil scolaire autres que les comités du CPP (p. ex. CCED et Comité d'examen des installations)?

   ☐ Toujours   ☐ La plupart du temps   ☐ Parfois   ☐ Jamais

Estce que votre CPP a des liens quelconques avec des CPP d'autres conseils scolaires?   ☐ oui ☐ non

Veuillez décrire votre relation avec d'autres CPP. _____

_____

Le conseil scolaire affectetil de son personnel pour soutenir le travail de votre CPP?   ☐ yes   ☐ no

À quelle fréquence des nonmembres assistentils

   ☐ Toujours   ☐ Souvent ☐ Parfois   ☐ Rarement   ☐ Jamais

BUT ET ACTIVITÉS

Quels sont les objectifs principaux de votre CPP?   _____

_____

Quelles sont les activités principales de votre CPP cette année?   _____

_____

   Faitesvous rapport de ces activités?   ☐ oui   ☐ non

      À qui faitesvous rapport et comment? _____

Les comités de participation des parents ont plusieurs rôles importants. Parmi les rôles énumérés cidessous, lesquels classeriezvous comme les trois premiers? Veuillez donner un exemple pour chacun des trois premiers sélectionnés.

(1 = le plus important, 2 = le deuxième en importance, 3 = le troisième en importance)

	1	2	3
Fournir le point de vue des parents sur la participation des parents et sur les moyens de communiqué avec les parents Exemple:			

Informer et conseiller le conseil scolaire sur les moyens de communiquer avec les parents Exemple:			
Suggérer au conseil scolaire des façons d'aider plus de parents à appuyer l'apprentissage de leurs enfants à la maison et à l'école Exemple:			
Transmettre des renseignements aux conseils d'écoles Exemple:			
Transmettre des renseignements à tous les parents Exemple:			
Soutenir le travail des conseils d'écoles Exemple:			
Fournir le point de vue des parents sur les politiques du conseil scolaire Exemple:			
Organiser des activités à l'intention des parents Exemple:			
Autre Exemple:			

COMMUNICATION

Comment votre CPP transmetil aux parents des renseignements tels que des nouvelles, des développements en matière de politiques ou des initiatives du CPP? (Cochez tout ce qui s'applique.)

☐ Site Web ☐ Sommaires envoyés aux conseils d'école ☐ Bulletins d'information ☐ Courriels aux parents ☐ Médias sociaux ☐ Autre: _____

Quel est le moyen le plus efficace pour votre CPP de recueillir les commentaires des parents (p. ex. sondage, rapports des conseils d'écoles, etc.)? _____

Estce
que votre CPP reçoit des commentaires de parents qui n'en sont pas membres?

☐ Toujours ☐ Souvent ☐ Parfois ☐ Rarement ☐ Jamais

Quels sont les sujets les plus communs sur lesquels les parents fournissent des commentaires? _____

_____

Y atil une communication bidirectionnelle entre les conseils d'écoles et votre CPP? ☐ oui ☐ non

Veuillez décrire la communication bidirectionnelle entre les conseils d'écoles et votre CPP. _____

_____

Veuillez décrire les obstacles à la communication bidirectionnelle entre les conseils d'écoles et votre CPP. _____

Y atil une communication bidirectionnelle entre le CPP et la haute direction (direction de l'éducation, surintendance) de votre conseil scolaire? ☐ oui ☐ non

Veuillez décrire la communication bidirectionnelle entre la haute direction de votre conseil scolaire et votre CPP. _____

Veuillez décrire les obstacles à la communication bidirectionnelle entre la haute direction de votre conseil scolaire et votre CPP. _____

Y atil une communication bidirectionnelle entre le CPP et les conseillères et conseillers scolaires?
☐ oui ☐ non

Veuillez décrire la communication bidirectionnelle entre les conseillères et conseillers scolaires et votre CPP. _____

_____

Veuillez décrire les obstacles à la communication bidirectionnelle entre les conseillères et conseillers scolaires et votre CPP. _____

Avezvous d'autres commentaires, ou des réussites, ou défis à signaler en matière de communication?
_____
_____

FINANCEMENT

Les CPP reçoivent des fonds du ministère de l'Éducation. Comment votre CPP utilisetil ces fonds? ___
_____

Cette année, votre CPP atil demandé une Subvention pour la participation et l'engagement des parents (PEP)? ☐ oui ☐ non

Quelle somme votre CPP atil demandée? _____

Votre demande atelle été acceptée? ☐ oui ☐ non

Quelle somme votre CPP atil reçue? _____

Estce que votre CPP a d'autres sources de financement? ☐ oui ☐ non

Quelles sont les autres sources de financement? _____

Estce que le CPP aide à gérer des fonds reçus du gouvernement pour les conseils d'écoles?
☐ oui ☐ non

Avezvous
d'autres commentaires sur le financement des CPP (p. ex. sommes versées, moment où elles sont versées aux CPP, lignes directrices en matière de dépenses, utilisations autorisées par le Ministère, etc.)? _____
_____
_____

CONCLUSION

Pensezvous que votre CPP fait une différence pour joindre les parents et augmenter la réussite scolaire et le bienêtre des élèves? Comment le savezvous? _____
_____

Y atil des avantages ou des inconvénients à avoir un groupe de participation des parents qui travaille au niveau du conseil scolaire? _____
_____

Avezvous d'autres commentaires, ou des réussites, ou défis, à signaler relativement à votre CPP?
_____
_____
_____
_____

À PROPOS DE PARENTS PARTENAIRES EN EDUCATION

Parents partenaires en éducation fournit des renseignements et des services aux parents de la province.
Estce que votre CPP distribue aux parents de votre conseil scolaire des renseignements ou du matériel
de Parents partenaires en éducation?   ☐ oui   ☐ non
Veuillez indiquer dans quelle mesure les ressources suivantes sont utiles:

	Très utile	Utile	Assez utile	Pas utile	Ne sais pas
Page Facebook	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Compte Twitter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Site web de PPE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ressources parentales sur le Web	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programme de conversations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Congrès/AGA	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Formation en animation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

À PROPOS DE PEOPLE FOR EDUCATION

People for Education fournit des renseignements et des services aux parents de la province.
Estce que votre CPP distribue aux parents de votre conseil scolaire des renseignements ou du matériel
de People for Education?   ☐ oui   ☐ non
Veuillez indiquer dans quelle mesure les ressources suivantes sont utiles:

	Très utile	Utile	Assez utile	Pas utile	Ne sais pas
Bulletin d'information de P4E	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Site Web/Communauté en ligne de P4E	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ligne téléphonique de soutien aux parents de P4E	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fichesconseils pour les parents de P4E	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rapport annuel de P4E sur les écoles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conférence annuelle de P4E	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐