

ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PEAC) Advisory Committee Newsletter



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3... 2... 1... Blastoff!

The members of PEAC are excited to launch the first of our quarterly newsletters, designed to provide school councils, parents and caregivers with support and direction to help enhance your child's academic experience with the York Region District School Board.

Who is PEAC?

PEAC is an advisory committee of parents who share their ideas and feedback with the Board to:

- provide advice on parent engagement
- support school councils with their initiatives
- deliver resources to help parents support their children with at-home and in-school learning

We believe that parent engagement matters, and our newly launched [website](#) and newsletter are just two of the ways we hope to support you. Take a look today!

How to get involved?

PEAC meetings are held virtually every second month and are open to the public. We are currently accepting [applications](#) for membership. The closing date is **June 15, 2021**. Interested applicants are invited to a virtual [information session](#) on May 31, 2021 at 7:30 pm.

Checklist on How to Finish the School Year Strong and Prepare for a Successful Next Year



✓ Prepare the School Council Annual Report

Every school council must prepare and submit a written report to the school and to the Board which outlines the council's goals, activities, and achievements, including any fundraising activities. The principal, on behalf of the school council, must ensure that a copy of this annual report is provided to every parent who has a child enrolled in the school. Ask your principal about the report today!

✓ Review and Update the Principal Profile

School councils might find it useful to review the current school profile in conjunction with the principal profile. This approach would help council members select the most important attributes that a principal or vice-principal should have in order to meet the identified needs of the schools. The attributes selected could then be listed in bullet point form, as shown in the example below.

<http://bit.ly/ExampleofPrincipalProfile>

✓ Review Election Process for 2021/22 School Year and Update School Council Constitution, if needed

School councils must develop certain bylaws to provide them with direction for the operation of council business and to help the council work effectively. At a minimum, the regulation requires councils to develop bylaws to address the following areas: election procedures, filling vacancies, conflict of interest, and conflict resolution procedures.

Access an [example of a School Council Constitution](#)

✓ Plan for Staff and Volunteer Appreciation Event

This year we appreciate teachers and volunteers more than ever! Show them you care. Make use of technology and send your administrators and teacher a short thank you video, storyboard or PowerPoint. A thank you banner hung outside the school will get the attention of passers-by. Create a Google Form to nominate teachers or simply give them shout outs that could be announced by the principal. Big or small, be there for people who supported you this year!

Snapshot on... Stonehaven Elementary School

Learning to engage families virtually during the pandemic

This past year has taught us how to be resilient, compassionate and creative. We've learned how to think outside of the box, apply new skills and be resourceful. It has been a challenging year for different reasons, and we are proud of how well students, teachers, staff, school councils and families embraced the situation.

Stonehaven Elementary School in Newmarket, Ontario, is one of the many schools in our region who found ways to adapt to the virtual environment. They successfully enhanced engagement through monthly online events. Their goal and purpose was to support the mental and social well-being of the EVS and face-to-face students by bridging the gap that was created by the need to social distance. Below are the steps they took to make their plan a success.

Enhancing Inclusion and Engagement through School Council Initiatives

Step 1:

Identify a need
and set a goal

At the first council meeting of the year, have an open floor discussion about the needs of your school. Identify a need that you feel your school can best support this coming year. Make this the guiding goal and purpose for your year's plan.

Step 2:

Establish
subcommittees

Subcommittees are an excellent way for parents to be involved in the planning of activities that are relevant to them and their children. They enhance engagement and provide an opportunity for volunteers to share their unique skills and abilities with the team.

Recruitment:

Make an open call for volunteers during the meeting, through direct email messages to council members and past volunteers, and an announcement to the school community via a newsletter or email



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Step 3:

Planning the engagement and fundraising calendar



Take a look at the year ahead and add the events and activities that will support your goal to a calendar of events. You may want to include a theme, engagement event, spirit day and fundraiser.

Some virtual events you may want to consider are:

- **Movie night** with Netflix Teleparty or similar host
- **Cooking session** with a chef, local food network or parent or student host
- **Martial arts lesson** with a local dojo
- **Read-a-Thon** using School Cash Online
- **Storytelling Night** with teachers reading their favorite stories and airing it through Google Meets
- **Snowman building contest**
- **Talent Show** with students' video submissions and airing the compilation through Google Meets
- **Random Act of Kindness** campaign
- **Bingo and Trivia Night** with personalized bingo cards generated through Google docs

Step 4:

Implementing the plan

The key to success is having clear and consistent communication with your school community. You can create visually appealing event posters for free through Canva.com or Google docs. Let the community know about your events through email and Twitter. Allow your volunteers to take the lead and plan the events. Help them learn a new skill if needbe. It can be empowering.

Step 5:

Review the plan

Take time to review what was good about your event and/or how you can do things differently next time. Use that information to help guide you with the planning of your next event. Increased participation overtime is a clear sign that you are engaging your families.

Do you have a positive practice or success story that you would like to share with other schools?

Send a message to leadership.development@yrdsb.ca so we can feature your school in the next edition of Engagement Matters