

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

## POLICY

CODE: B 2.8

### Policy Statement

Parent engagement in the London District Catholic School Board is founded on a vision of parents as equal, valued, and active partners in the education of their children. London District Catholic schools deliver a Catholic education in partnership with the family, the home, the parish, and the faith community to develop and foster the student's learning potential in service of both the Church and society as a whole. A strong parent voice in Catholic education is essential to maintaining a system that is responsive to student learning needs and opportunities.

### Purpose

As per the Ministry of Education's *Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools (2010)*, the positive impact of parent engagement on student achievement and success is acknowledged by the Board in this policy. Students will be both supported and inspired in their learning when a culture of high expectations is established that also gives parents:

- A valued, welcoming, and respectful role as the primary educators and models for their children;
- The opportunity to be involved in a school culture that promotes student success and a whole school approach;
- Engagement through on-going communication and dialogue with the school, school administration and staff, and other partners in the parish and faith community, including other parents, in order to support a positive learning environment at home and at school; and
- The information and tools that are necessary to participate fully in the education of their children within a Catholic school.

### Application and Scope

This policy recognizes the role that parents play when they are positively engaged in their children's learning and are able to make meaningful contributions to school life. In addition, the policy supports the need to ensure that parents have the skills, knowledge, and voice to undertake their role as a partner in Catholic education.

#### 1.0 Principles:

- 1.1 Parent engagement in the London District Catholic School Board is based on a comprehensive Parent Engagement strategy that is focused on the following areas for action:

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- 1.1.1 Empowering parent voice within the schools and activities of the London District Catholic School Board by fostering and sustaining a positive, welcoming school climate in which all parent perspectives are encouraged, valued, and heard;
- 1.1.2 Supporting the student attraction and retention strategies for the instructional programs of the Board;
- 1.1.3 Identifying and removing potential barriers to parent engagement that may be preventing some parents from fully participating in their children's learning;
- 1.1.4 Providing parents with the knowledge, skills, and tools that they need to support student learning at home and at school;
- 1.1.5 Encouraging parents to model effective social skills development in order to model Catholic concepts such as forgiveness and positive problem resolution;
- 1.1.6 Reviewing and expanding communication and outreach strategies such as local workshops, presentations, tools, and resources in order to share information and strategies related to supporting learning at home and parent engagement in schools; and
- 1.1.7 Recognizing the common purpose of improving student learning and personal development within the Catholic faith partnerships of the home, school, and parish.

### **2.0 Requirements:**

- 2.1 Parents are formally involved in assisting the Board with its Parent Engagement strategy through their participation:
  - 2.1.1 At the school level on the Catholic School Council;
  - 2.1.2 At the District level on the Parent Involvement Committee and the Special Education Advisory Committee; or
  - 2.1.3 In any other formal or informal initiative of the Board or the local school community that is designed to encourage parent voice, including, but not limited to public meetings of the Board of Trustees, public input sessions, board events and sponsored conferences and workshops, and participation on board ad hoc committees when invited.
  - 2.1.4 Input is sought from Parents on policies during the public consultation process.

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#### **2.2 Catholic School Council**

- 2.2.1 The Catholic School Council is an advisory body that, through the active participation of parents, is designed to (1) assist the school community to improve student achievement, success, and well-being; (2) to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents; (3) to assist the Principal to promote the activities of the Catholic School Council and to engage parents in its activities; and (4) to be a visible and vocal advocate for Catholic education in the local community.
- 2.2.2 Each school is to have a properly constituted Catholic School Council subject to Regulation 612/00 of the Education Act, as well as relevant Ministry and Board policies and procedures.
- 2.2.3 As part of the Parent Engagement Strategy, Catholic School Councils are encouraged to meet regularly within their Family of Schools and to participate in the meetings of the District Parent Involvement Committee.
- 2.2.4 The organization of Catholic School Councils is described in the District Handbook for Catholic School Councils, which is to be annually reviewed by the District Parent Involvement Committee and published on the appropriate Board websites. The Handbook for Catholic School Councils will incorporate the following information:
- 2.2.4.1 Composition and Membership, including terms of office, vacancies, and officers;
  - 2.2.4.2 Elections;
  - 2.2.4.3 Meetings;
  - 2.2.4.4 Voting;
  - 2.2.4.5 By-laws;
  - 2.2.4.6 Minutes and Financial Records;
  - 2.2.4.7 Input on fundraising within the school;
  - 2.2.4.8 Annual reporting to the school community;
  - 2.2.4.9 Confidentiality guidelines for volunteers; and
  - 2.2.4.10 Any other items deemed to be of importance to parent engagement through the activities of the Catholic School Council.
- 2.2.5 The Principal is to ensure that a Catholic School Council is established in the school and functions in accordance to Ministry and Board policies and procedures. The Principal is to work with parents in the effective running of the Catholic School Council in support of parent engagement in improving student achievement, success, and well-being.

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### **2.3 District Parent Involvement Committee**

- 2.3.1 The District Parent Involvement Committee is an advisory body to the Board of Trustees whose role is to develop the board parent engagement strategy by supporting, encouraging, and enhancing parent engagement across the London District Catholic School Board in order to improve student achievement, success, and well-being, and well as being a visible and vocal advocate for Catholic education.
- 2.3.2 The District Parent Involvement Committee supports and communicates with Catholic School Councils in support of the board parent engagement strategy.
- 2.3.3 The mandate of the District Parent Involvement Committee under Regulation 612/00 is:
- 2.3.3.1 To be responsible for ensuring the parent engagement strategy is effectively communicated to all stakeholders and to effectively engage parents and schools as partners in improving student achievement, success, and well-being.
  - 2.3.3.2 To communicate information from the Ministry of Education to Catholic School Councils and to the parents of the London District Catholic School Board.
  - 2.3.3.3 To work with Catholic School Councils and Board and school administration in order to (1) share practices to help parents engage their children in learning, particularly those parents who may find such engagement difficult; (2) identify and reduce potential barriers to parental engagement; (3) assist the Board to establish a welcoming environment for all parents and families; (4) develop the skills and practices that will help Catholic School Councils with their work, and (5) determine, with the Director of Education and in keeping with Board policies, how parent involvement funding is to be allocated to Catholic School Councils.
- 2.3.4 As part of the Board's Parent Engagement strategy, the District Parent Involvement Committee will play an active role in supporting the activities of Catholic School Councils, including meetings within the Family of Schools.
- 2.3.5 The organization of the District Parent Involvement Committee is described in the Handbook for the District Parent Involvement Committee, which is to be annually reviewed by the PIC Executive and published on the appropriate Board websites. The Handbook will incorporate the following information:

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- 2.3.5.1 Composition and Membership, including terms of office, vacancies, and officers;
  - 2.3.5.2 Elections;
  - 2.3.5.3 Meetings;
  - 2.3.5.4 Voting;
  - 2.3.5.5 By-laws;
  - 2.3.5.6 Minutes and Financial Records;
  - 2.3.5.7 Input on parent fundraising and allocation of Ministry parent involvement funding within the District;
  - 2.3.5.8 Strategies for effective parental communication and engagement;
  - 2.3.5.9 Reporting to the Board of Trustees and to an annual general meeting made up of Catholic School Council representatives; and
  - 2.3.5.10 Any other items deemed to be of importance to parent engagement through the activities of the District Parent Involvement Committee.
- 2.3.6 The Director of Education or Supervisory Officer designate is to ensure that the District Parent Involvement Committee is established and functions in accordance to Ministry and Board policies and procedures. The Director of Education or Supervisory Officer designate is to support the Executive in the effective running of the District PIC in support of parent engagement in improving student achievement, success, and well-being.

### **2.4 Special Education Advisory Committee**

- 2.4.1 The Special Education Advisory Committee is an advisory committee of the Board that provides input into special education services for identified students. The mandate, organization, and reporting of the Special Education Advisory Committee is governed by Regulation 464/97 of the Education Act.
- 2.4.2 The District Parent Involvement Committee will have representation on SEAC in order to liaise and coordinate activities and initiatives supporting parent voice.

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### **3.0 Expected Outcomes for Policy**

It is expected that this policy will provide the basis for a Parent Engagement strategy that is regularly reviewed and will align the activities of parents, staff, parish, and the faith community with those of the Board of Trustees in order to enhance student achievement, success, and well-being within our Catholic education system.

Adopted: July 13, 1998

Revised: February 23, 2015