York *Region* DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

SCHOOL COUNCILS 2012-2013 YEAR IN REVIEW

DATA ANALYSIS SUMMARY OF ANNUAL REPORTS

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School Councils Report 2012-2013

Executive Summary

- A total number of 115 school councils completed the annual report. This consisted of 99 Elementary School Councils and 16 Secondary School Councils.
  (See Page 2 - **Table A** for response rate from each CEC area)

- In their efforts **to support parent, family and community engagement**, a large number of School Councils in both panels noted that they kept parents and the community informed through flyers, school and council newsletters, electronic bulletins, email, and council meetings.
  (See Page 3 - **Table 1** for other activities to support parent, family and community engagement)

- In their efforts **to support positive school climate**, a large majority of Elementary School Councils reported their involvement with technology resources and school programs. The most common activity to support positive school climate by Secondary School Councils was to support school spirit and student social events. (See Page 4 - **Table 2** for other activities to support positive school climate)

- School Councils from both panels indicated that their main activity **to support the diverse school community** was respecting religious holidays when planning their events.
  (See Page 5 - **Table 3** for other activities to support the diverse school community)

- Many Elementary School Councils indicated that they had been involved in **fundraising** this past year. In contrast, only a few Secondary councils noted that they had been involved in fundraising.
  (See Page 5 - **Table 4a** for number of school councils involved in fundraising)

- Fundraising money was most commonly used by School Councils to provide technology resources or programs to their schools. In addition, some School Councils also noted their school events were financially supported by the fundraising money.
  (See Page 6 - **Table 4b** for the list of activities where funds were used)

- Many School Councils in both panels noted **the need for the Board to allocate additional resources** in the area of technology in their schools. The need for upgraded computer software and hardware as well as access to SmartBoards, tablets and other digital devices were the areas identified by most of the school councils.
  (See Page 7 - **Table 5** for other areas identified as needing additional Board resources)

- In the next school year, both panels would like to receive information regarding speakers, programs and resources from the Board.
  (See Page 8 - **Table 6** for other areas where both panels would like to receive additional support or training from the Board)

Rationale:

To provide trustees, School Councils, principals and senior administrators with the status of School Council initiatives and a summary of the annual reports received from School Councils.

Summary of School Council Annual Reports

School Councils representing 115 schools completed the Annual Report and their responses are summarized in this review. Annual Reports from 99 Elementary School Councils and 16 Secondary School Councils were received, representing 58% of Elementary schools and 52% of Secondary schools. Overall response rate is 57%.

Table A below summarizes the number of responses received from each Community Education Center (CEC) area and the respective response rates.

Table A. Response Rate from each CEC Area

CEC	Number of Schools	Response Received	Response Rate
North	48	31	65%
Central	51	35	69%
East	51	26	51%
West	52	23	44%
Total	**202**	**115**	**57%**

The following sections summarize the information provided by School Councils in response to the questions asked in the annual report template.

Which of the following activities was your School Council involved in this past year?

1. Activities to Support Parent, Family and Community Engagement

In their efforts to support parent, family and community engagement, a large majority of School Councils noted that they were engaged in activities such as: **kept parents and community informed, hosted or supported workshops, presentations or social events, recruited more parents to their School Council and requested input from parents** (see Table 1 below for details).

Table 1	Elementary (N=99)		Secondary (N=16)	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Hosted or supported workshops, presentations, and/or social events (e.g., guest speakers, Literacy Night/ Numeracy Night, parenting classes, community breakfast, Fun Fairs, Triple P, concerts, cultural holiday celebrations)	91	92%	16	100%
Kept parents and community informed (e.g., flyers, school and council newsletters, electronic bulletins, email, council meetings)	95	96%	16	100%
Parent and SC involvement in school policies and practices (e.g., involvement in cell-phone policy, dress code, attendance policy, homework policy, student success initiatives)	60	61%	10	63%
Requested input from parents (e.g., surveys, focus groups, forums, at council meetings)	86	87%	15	94%
Recruitment of more parents for School Council (e.g., invitations to meetings)	92	93%	15	94%
Communication Improvements (e.g., with administration and staff, forums, common language, parent survey, more input)	68	69%	14	88%
Language support for parents (e.g., translation, dual language books)	28	28%	1	6 %

* % in each column may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Other Information/Activities:
Two Elementary School Councils also mentioned that they had established a school resource library for the parents to search and borrow useful information and resources from their schools. One Elementary School Council had planned to reach out the families and parents by arranging a series of three evening presentations for parents at three different community sites in the 2013-2014 school year.

The most common activities to support positive school climate by both responding Elementary and Secondary School Councils were the **school spirit and student social events** and the **promotion of healthy living to students.** Furthermore**,** a large number of responding Elementary School Councils reported their support in **technology resources and school programs.** (see Table 2 below for details).

<u>Table 2</u>	Elementary (N=99)		Secondary (N=16)	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Environmental initiatives and "greening" (e.g., Eco-League, tree planting, beautification, outdoor classroom)	61	62%	3	19%
School safety efforts (e.g., traffic issues, yard safety and supervision, Restorative Approaches, anti-bullying initiatives)	86	87%	7	44%
Supporting school activities through the lens of inclusivity (e.g., field trips, refreshments)	80	81%	6	38%
School spirit and student social events (e.g., Lunches/barbeques, Yearbook, spirit days, assemblies, student recognition, field trips, extracurriculars, collaborative community events)	93	94%	10	63%
Promoted healthy living to students (e.g., purchase of sports equipment, sportswear, athletic programs, Healthy Schools initiatives, hot lunch programs, healthy snacks, milk programs, Breakfast Program, Guest speakers, lice screening)	92	93%	8	50%
Support for, and appreciation of, staff (e.g., appreciation events, funding for classrooms)	80	81%	7	44%
Character education (e.g., Character Matters initiative, Caught you Caring)	42	42%	2	13%
Improvements to school/school grounds (e.g., improved signage, carpeting, playground)	62	63%	4	25%
Resources and programs (e.g., Technology/computers, arts program, workshops and events)	94	95%	6	38%
Collaboration with local businesses and organizations	68	69%	7	44%

* % in each column may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Other information:
One Elementary School Council also noted that the school spirit was not at its highest due to the lack of extracurricular activities during 2012-2013 school year.

3. Activities to Support the Diverse School Community

School Councils from both panels indicated that their activities to support the diverse school community most commonly focused on **respecting religious holidays when planning events** (see Table 3 below for details).

Table 3	Elementary (n=99)		Secondary (n=16)	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Multicultural (i.e. culturally sensitive) School Events	44	44%	4	25%
Reducing Barriers (e.g., language, special needs, socio-economic)	56	56%	6	38%
Respecting religious holidays when planning events	80	80%	12	75%
Direct resources & funding to supporting cultural diversity	24	24%	3	19%
Efforts to ensure diverse representation on School Council	58	58%	7	44%

* % in each column may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Additional information:
One Elementary School Council has indicated that a community/family resource room was established at school last year to support their diverse school community.

Funding and Fundraising

4.a) Was your School Council involved in fundraising activities during this past year?

The majority (96%) of the Elementary School Councils indicated that they had been involved in fundraising this past year. Secondary councils were much less likely to indicate the same with only four (25%) noting that they had been involved in fundraising (see Table 4a below for details).

Table 4a	Elementary (n=99)		Secondary (n=16)	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	95	96%	4	25%
No	4	4%	12	75%

* % in each column may sum to more than 100 due to rounding.

4.b) If yes, please list the activities for which the funds were used:

For this open response item, only a few Secondary School Councils provided a response so they were combined with the Elementary Councils for the summary below. Fundraising money was most commonly used by School Councils to provide **technology resources or programs** for their schools. Nearly half of responding School Councils also indicated their financial support for **school events** (see Table 4b below for details).

Table 4b	Count
Technology resources or programs (e.g., computers, laptops, SmartBoards)	68
Support for school events (e.g., transitions events, information evenings, Welcome to Kindergarten, graduation)	47
School site improvements (e.g., beautification, painting, furniture purchase/repair, playground equipment)	28
Literacy resources or programs (e.g., books, Silver Birch/Red Maple)	25
Arts resources or programs (e.g., costumes, musical instruments, art supplies)	24
Healthy/active living resources or programs (e.g., hot meals, sports equipment, lice check , outdoor learning environment, Eco-Challenge, You're the Chef-Healthy Eating Program)	22
Science/mathematics resources or programs (e.g., equipment, Scientists in the School, robotics club, math manipulatives)	15
Classroom/teacher resources (e.g., fund for teacher use, early years resources, teacher/class websites)	15
Equity and inclusivity (e.g., subsidizing field trips for disadvantaged students, special needs supports, multicultural events, food bank, community resource fund, Angle Fund – money for families who cannot afford school related costs)	11
School safety and spirit (e.g., anti-bullying events/programs, yearbook, student recognition awards)	7
Support field trips (e.g., transportation, way to identify students)	7
Supply teachers (e.g., for athletic events and competitions, release time)	4
Staff appreciation (e.g., lunch, tea, thank you gift for teachers)	1
Miscellaneous (e.g., agendas for students, professional development, school improvement planning initiatives, Angle Fund for families who cannot afford school related costs.)	4

5. In which areas do you see the need for the Board to allocate additional resources? (e.g., ESL, special needs, technology, staff professional development)

Many School Councils in both panels noted the need for additional Board funding for **technology** in their schools. A need for upgraded computer software and hardware as well as access to SmartBoards, tablets and other digital devices were also identified by most school councils. Other needed areas for additional resources were **staff professional development**, **support for special needs students** and **maintenance of school and grounds** (see Table 5 below for details).

Table 5	Count
Technology (e.g., computers, SmartBoards, laptops/netbooks, iPods/iPads)	58
Staff professional development (e.g., special needs training, lunch room attendant training, technology, first aid, anti-bullying & initiatives)	25
Support for special needs students (e.g., staff training, assistive technology, other resources and more materials)	21
Maintenance of school and grounds (e.g., playground, air conditioning, facilities for wheel chair accessible, outdoor greening – plant trees, security camera, parking lot)	16
Healthy living/physical activity (e.g., sports equipment, play equipment, physical education, outdoor activities)	13
Literacy programs and resources (e.g., libraries, books)	11
Support for English Language Learners (e.g., staff training, assistive technology, other resources)	10
Support for parents and the community (e.g., support for newcomers, access to community resources, helping parents help their children at home, multicultural outreach programs, translation and language barrier support)	9
Field trips (e.g., buses, identification of students while on trip, more trips on sports, nature and science, outside of the classroom)	8
School staffing (e.g., supply teachers for sports teams/events, community liaison staff, educational assistants, caretakers)	6
Classroom supports (e.g., fund for teacher use, general resources, text books, classroom equipment, supply teacher)	6
Arts programs and resources (e.g., musical instruments, craft supplies)	1
Miscellaneous (e.g., school safety, bully prevention, transitions, character matters, mental health, guidance counseling, school specific programs, extracurricular activities, translation of information into other languages)	12

Building System Capacity

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6. Identify below what additional support or training your council would like to receive in the next school year?

The most commonly selected category for both panels was to provide **information regarding speakers, programs and resources** from the Board. Some Elementary School Councils indicated that they would also like to receive additional funding for IT resources, books for libraries, tools for teachers to implement Living School initiatives and resources for Parenting Programs. Some Secondary School Councils indicated that they would like to have the o**pportunity and financial support to attend School Council, Board Forums, conferences and workshops on topics of interest** (see Table 6 below for details).

Table 6	**Elementary (n=99)**		**Secondary (n=16)**	
	Count	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
Collaboration (e.g., opportunity to collaborate, network or share and interact with other SC; building community partnerships)	64	65%	8	50%
Opportunity (& Financial Support) to Attend School Council, Board Forums, Conferences, Workshops on Topics of Interest	53	54%	10	63%
Training/Information & Strategies for Increasing Effectiveness of School Councils (e.g., training on how to support SPCI goals & priorities; P.D. on what and how SC should be involved in; P.D. to help SC understand school programs)	49	50%	5	31%
Provide Information Regarding Speakers, Programs & Resources Available (e.g., anti-bullying; internet safety; provide information about available programs and resources such as *Character Matters*, *Restorative Approaches*)	79	80%	14	88%
Guidance on How to Recruit New School Council Members (e.g., parents; teachers; volunteer trainer)	55	56%	7	44%
Guidance on How to Involve Parents of Various Religious, Language and Cultural Backgrounds (e.g., translations of documents; interpreters, ESL challenges; multicultural sensitivity training)	54	55%	5	31%
Training in Fundraising and Planning Fundraisers (e.g., how to negotiate, with whom, where and when; ideas for fundraising; do's and don'ts; continued development & clarity around fundraising)	35	35%	0	0%
Guidance on How to Increase Parent Volunteer Involvement (e.g., more volunteer recognition events, training for parent volunteers to support early literacy, help with PRO grant proposals)	72	73%	6	38%
Additional Funding (e.g., IT resources-laptops; hardware; software; resources for libraries; textbook; tools for teachers to implement Living School initiatives; resources for Parenting programs)	77	78%	8	50%
EcoSchool Initiatives (e.g., Ontario EcoSchools Program certification, tips on supporting environmental programs in the school)	50	51%	7	44%

* % in each column may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

School Councils Year 2012-2013

Other suggestion/issue regarding additional support or training from the Board:

Several School Councils suggested that additional training is needed especially on new school council members and on building an effective team. In addition, workshops for School Council members to develop and implement community outreach strategies and to increase parental engagement are also required.

Assistance or support from the Board on some inclusivity projects to promote diversity and acceptance of special needs would also be of great help.