

Parent, Family and Community Engagement Advisory Committee

School Council Forums

Fall 2013

CEC East
October 21, 2013
Bur Oak S. S.

CEC North – East
October 21, 2013
Newmarket H. S.

CEC Central
October 23, 2013
Alexander Mackenzie H. S.

CEC North – Georgina
October 30, 2013
Keswick H. S.

CEC West
October 30, 2013
Maple H. S.

October is Learning Disabilities Awareness Month

October is Learning Disabilities (LDs) Awareness Month across Canada (www.ldac-acta.ca/). Our local association, the Learning Disabilities Association of York Region (LDAYR), is committed to supporting the right to learn, the power to achieve, and will continue until that is a reality for everyone in our community. To find out more information about Learning Disabilities and/or ADHD, or to find out what events, programs, and services are happening in your community, please visit: www.ldayr.ca

**“LD is NOT who I am,
it is what I have.”**



Message from the Chair, Tazmeen Lalani

A warm welcome to all our families – we hope that everyone has settled into a routine for the new school year. In this issue, I want to revisit the concept of parent engagement. Over many years, the research is growing to support what many of you may have observed in your family, that is, that our children do better at school when we take an interest in their learning. In the early 90's The Ministry of Education started to recognize the link between parent engagement and student success. In 2006, the Office of Parent Engagement was established to initiate and implement parent engagement strategies. One of the most successful strategies of the Parent Engagement Office were the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants. Many of you may have personal experience in your local school councils with PRO Grants and how this provincial funding permits parents to make a difference in a broader sense within the school community. In 2009, the Ministry of Education formally recognized the role of parents and their contribution to school boards through the passing of Bill 177, the *Student Achievement and Governance Act*. This bill lead to changes to support the mandate that each school board form a PIC (Parent Involvement Committee) which would permit a diverse group of

parents to provide input to the Board. In York Region District School Board, the PIC is termed the *Parent, Family and Community Engagement Advisory Committee (PEAC)*. This name was chosen to reflect the integral contribution of parents, families and the community on each student's learning. As Chair of PEAC for the past 3 years, I can personally tell you that parent participation is valued in our Board and that there is an evolving partnership between staff, community agencies and government to strengthen this relationship. What does this all mean to you as a family? This means that your participation is welcomed and there are choices in how you can become engaged to fit your family's needs. An important aspect of promoting parent engagement is effective communication. When we understand what the goals are of the curriculum and what type of learning takes place in the classroom, we can better help our children to achieve their learning potential. We need to recognize that any child's success is a partnership based on reciprocal and respectful communication. With your input, PEAC continues to advise the Board; our committee members continue to reflect the diversity of our community. During my term with PEAC, I have learned that it is not

quantity of what we do that determines the success of our students but rather the quality of our actions. Additionally, we may not always see the immediate benefits of our efforts. As a mom for example, I rarely get a detailed response when I ask "How was your day at school?" But, I have come to understand that by asking questions, my children know that I am interested in their learning and well-being. On behalf of PEAC, our members look forward to meeting many families throughout the school year. Please stay tuned as PEAC is partnering with the Board to hold our first-ever Parent Conference in the spring of 2014. We value your voice and accordingly, we are using the feedback from last year's school council forums in developing this exciting initiative. On behalf of our PEAC members, I wish you a safe and successful school year and I look forward to connecting with many of you this year.

*Tazmeen Lalani
Chair
Parent, Family and
Community Engagement
Advisory Committee*

“Education is like a baseball game, it needs all its players:

- Parent
- Teacher
- Community
- Student.”

-author unknown

Parent, Family and Community Engagement Advisory Committee:

Parent Members:

- Linda Aversa
- Jolene Brackett
- Margaret Cosgrave
- Susan Del Tin
- Linda Gilbert
- Jantje Hogen
- Tazmeen Lalani (Chair)
- Colin Ninvalle
- Gayle Palmer
- Gayathiry Prabakaran
- Brian Teelucksingh

Community Members:

- Lourdes Crabtree
- Corrie McBain
- Lynn Ziraldo

Trustee Representatives:

- Juanita Nathan (Vice-Chair)
- Carol Chan

Staff Support:

- Janet Atkinson, Vaughan S.S.
- Camille Logan, Inclusive School and Community Services
- Cecil Roach, Equity and Engagement
- Joan Lachhman, Inclusive School and Community Services
- Patricia Yeates, Kleinburg P.S. and Glenn Gould P.S.

Ex Officio:

- Trustee Anna DeBartolo, Chair of the Board
- Ken Thurston, Director of Education

@Ross Doan Public School:

Reaching Out

Classrooms



At Ross Doan Public School, we have been working diligently to enhance the ways that we reach out and connect with our parent community. We have progressed through a series of strategies which have enabled us to build stronger partnerships and open windows into our school that were not there in the past.

We began our journey by offering a **Parent Conference**, where parents listened to keynote speakers including, our **Healthy School Nurse** and our **Digital Literacy Resource Teacher (DLRT)**.

Parents also had an opportunity to choose a classroom to visit and observe students engaged in differentiated learning experiences through the integration of technology. The **70% turnout** from our parent community spoke volumes to us.

Through the **Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant**, we have created a triad of schools that work together to plan and facilitate informative and interactive parent sessions. In collaboration with **Roselawn P.S.** and **Sixteenth Avenue P.S.**, **Ross Doan P.S.** has provided opportunity for parents from the community to gather to listen to insightful speakers, learn more about schooling in Ontario, and reflect together to inform next steps in our journey.

Translators and Teacher Liaisons were also partners in these endeavors. This year, we continue to refine the multi-modal methods to reach our highly diverse community, representing 27 different language groups. Our new **school website**

(<http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/rossdoan.ps/Pages/default.aspx>) houses each homeroom teacher’s website and/or blogs (see the images above) (<http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/rossdoan.ps/classrooms/Pages/default.aspx>).

Google Translate (<http://translate.google.com/>) which is built right into the website, is one tool for translation of information by those who speak another language. The school’s Twitter account **@RossDoan** is used to highlight key events and provide reminders for parents. Several of our teachers “tweet” on a regular basis, as well. **The School Council Online Forum**

(<http://rdpsschoolcouncil.hoop.la/home>) is a one-stop shop for everything related to the work of our council. **School Connects** (<https://www.schoolconnectsweb.com/Default.asp?yorkrdsb>) and an email tree also allows for voicemail and email respectively to be placed directly in mailboxes of each of our parents.

A parent recently shared with me how thrilled she

was when her mother, who lives in Russia, shed tears of joy when she witnessed the learning that was happening in her granddaughter’s kindergarten class through the teacher’s blog. This is a testament to the powerful impact that the use of technology can have to connect people in ways never thought possible. Looking ahead, we will continue to provide opportunities for face-to-face and digital communication with parents to engage with us to see their children’s integrated learning experiences first hand.

Bernadette Smith
Principal,
Ross Doan P. S.

Did you know?

The Board website has recently been redesigned to include a large section focused on **Resources for Parents**. This section includes numerous resources for parents on a variety of topics for elementary and secondary students. Go to the Board’s main website (www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca) and click on the **Parent tab**.

