

Parental Involvement Activity Package

This package includes:

Hamilton Wentworth Survey and Results

Epstein Chart of Parental Involvement

Activity Sheets

Research Documentation

Self Evaluation Template

School Council Evaluation Template

Parental Involvement Committee Core Beliefs

Workshop Evaluation form

October 21st, 2006



Activity One: Parental Involvement in Education

1. Take a few minutes to review the preceding chart of Parental Involvement. The following research article on Parental Involvement in Education is included for reference and to share with your school community. If time allows please read it prior to discussion. Put a question mark beside words or statements you're not clear about and a star beside information that you feel is important.
2. Once you have reviewed the chart, share with others at your table
 - (a) what you saw as important information
 - (b) any words or statements you weren't clear about (perhaps others had similar ??'s; or others can clarify for you)

Note: Facilitators will assist with questions from tables ...

Parental Involvement in Education

Parental involvement in schools became a major educational issue in the late 1980's. There was concern for the quality of education children were receiving. The province began taking a greater role in monitoring student achievement levels. The government was ever more watchful of the expense of public education and looked at the public sector as a means to reduce the debt. With declining resources, schools were concerned about maintaining high-quality programs and services. Parents wanted assurance that their children would receive adequate preparation to lead rewarding adult lives.

According to the report entitled *Parent Voice in Education Project* submitted to the Minister of Education in March, 2005 states that now, more than ever, parents want to contribute to the education of their children. But is there evidence to show that parental involvement actually makes a difference?

Definition of Parental Involvement

The term "parental involvement" includes several different forms of participation in education and with schools. Joyce Epstein, a renowned researcher in the field, has assisted educators in developing school and family partnership programs. She has developed a framework which defines six different types of involvement.

1. **Parenting:** Helping all families establish home environments to support children as students including parent training and support programs.
2. **Communicating:** Designing effective two-way communication about school programs and children's progress.
3. **Volunteering:** Recruiting and organizing parent help and support to assist teachers, administrators, students and other parents.
4. **Learning at Home:** Providing information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other program-related activities, decisions and planning.
5. **Decision-Making:** Involving parents in the decision-making process and developing parent leaders and representatives. This includes an active School Council and other parent organizations as well as parent representation on school teams/committees.
6. **Collaborating With the Community:** Identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning.¹

Parental Involvement and Student Achievement

The research overwhelmingly demonstrates:

- a) Parental involvement in children's learning is positively related to student achievement. The more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning; the more beneficial are the achievement effects.
- b) The most effective forms of parental involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities in the home. Programs which involve parents in reading with their children, supporting their work on homework assignments, or tutoring them using materials and instructions provided by teachers show impressive results.
- c) The earlier parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects will be.

- d) Orientation or training activities for parents are beneficial as they enhance the effectiveness of parental involvement. It is important to note that when it comes to the extent of the training, a little is better than a lot.
 - e) Schools with the most successful parent involvement programs are those which offer a variety of ways parents can participate.²
- Continued communication about student progress and attendance at school-sponsored activities.³

Other Benefits

Research reveals many other benefits for schools and parents other than student outcomes.

- a) School personnel benefit from improved rapport. This rapport is often expressed in parents' increased willingness to support schools with their labour and their resources during fundraising or special projects. As well, improved student achievement, attitudes and behaviours all have a positive effect on the school staff.
- b) Parents also benefit as their involvement results in improved attitudes toward the school and improved self concept. Parents often begin their involvement doubting they will make much difference. They are generally gratified to discover the important contribution they make.⁵

Is parent involvement an important factor for creating effective schools? The answer is an emphatic "yes." Parents are the school's most important partner in providing a child's education. It can, however, take extraordinary efforts to build a strong partnership which results in authentic and meaningful parental involvement. Schools have to reach out to families and make available a variety of involvement opportunities. Parents, in turn, have to make a commitment of time and energy to support their children both at home and at school. The effort involved is well worth it.

Adapted from:

¹ J. Epstein, *Caring for the Children We Share* – Phi Delta Kappan, 1997

^{2,5} K. Cotton & K. Wikelund, *Parent Involvement in Education* – NWREL, 2001

³ J. Hollifield, *High Schools Gear Up To Create Effective Schools and Family Partnerships*, - ERIC, 1994

⁴ J. Zelazo, *Parent Involvement in a Two-Way Bilingual School* – presentation, 1995

C. Corter & J. Pelletier, *The Rise and Fall of Parent and Community Involvement in Schools*, Orbit Vol. 34, 2004

For a copy of the new Ministry of Education's initiative: *Developing Partners in Education* visit: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/partnership/developing.html>

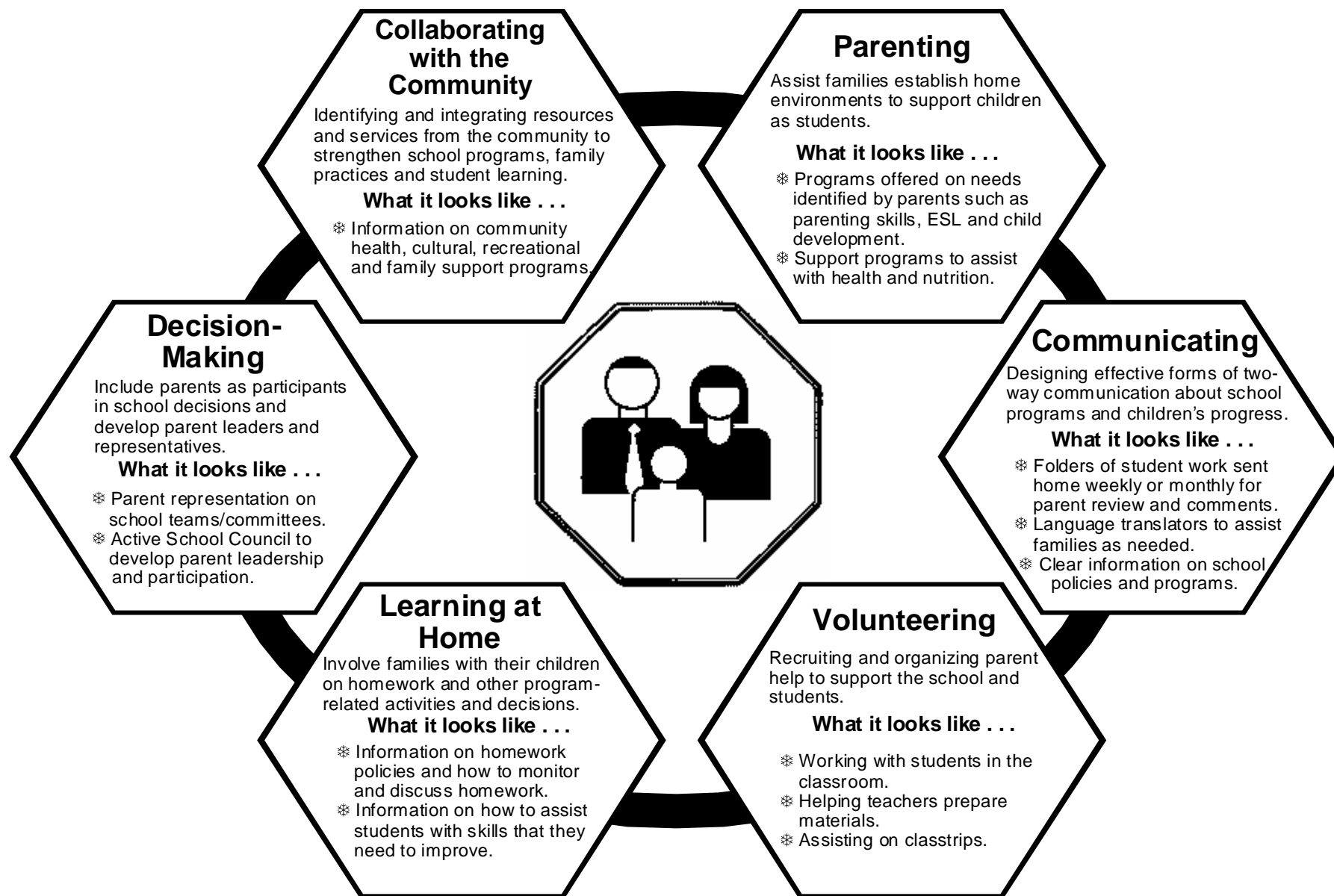
Activity Two: Towards Meaningful Parental Involvement

1. At your table, review each of the following Types of Parental Involvement; and
- (a) Identify roadblocks/challenges and successes
 - (b) What actions, roles and responsibility can you/others do to make involvement more meaningful

Type of Parental Involvement	Identified Roadblock/Challenge Successes	Recommended Actions Personal, Committee, Board
<p>Learning at Home:</p> <p>Assisting children with their homework and other school activities and decisions.</p>		
<p>Volunteering:</p> <p>Parents help to support the school and children.</p>		
<p>Communicating:</p> <p>Learning about school programs and children's progress.</p>		

<p>Parenting:</p> <p>Families have established home environments to support children as students.</p>		
<p>Collaborating with the Community:</p> <p>Accessing resources and services from the community to strengthen family practices and children's learning.</p>		
<p>Decision-Making:</p> <p>Parents participate in school decisions through representation on school teams/committees/School Council.</p>		

Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement





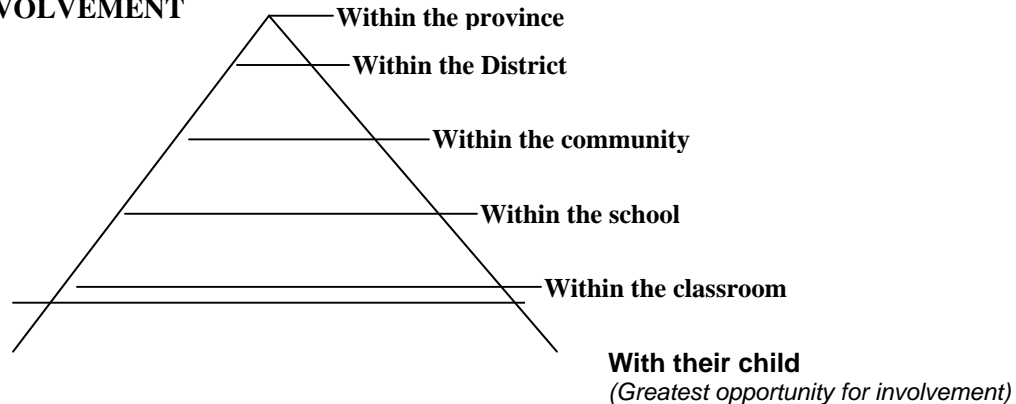
Hamilton Wentworth Parent Involvement Committee **Information and Registration**

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much ~ Helen Keller

CORE BELIEFS

- » That Parent Involvement is key to student success
- » That every Parent should feel empowered and welcome to participate at any of the different levels of involvement
- » That barriers to involvement are addressed and that every family's unique needs must be recognized and respected, including perhaps social, economic, linguistic and cultural.
- » That Parents are provided with knowledge and understanding to be partners in their child's education. This will require a continual effort to improve the ways that people can become and stay involved
- » That a philosophy of trust be developed and supported. This will build and reinforce collaborative relationships at each level to support student success
- » That there be direct and open communication between parents and school personnel.

LEVELS of INVOLVEMENT



PROJECTED GOALS OF THE PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE (PIC)

- » That all Parents find an avenue to be involved in their child's education at some level.
- » That the PIC assists and empowers Parents to advocate for their child, school and system.
- » That the PIC assists in the development of collaboration between individual schools and the Parents. This will ensure that Parents perceive schools and the District School Board are open, welcoming and responsive

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES

- » Facilitate an Open Forum Meeting that will allow individuals to participate in discussions around Parent Involvement (definitions, barriers, challenges)
- » Offer a Parent Conference on an annual basis that will promote education and inclusion
- » Utilize a base line survey to measure and define increased Parental involvement
- » Develop and implement a Profile of Excellence Award program to acknowledge the work of volunteers both individually and as organizations
- » Develop a listing of best practices from the Profiling Excellence Program
- » Develop system for measuring parent involvement
- » Coordinate education opportunities and information available for parents
- » Facilitate the creation and distribution of a Parent Handbook
- » Develop a Volunteer Skills Portfolio Program to assist Parents in becoming more effective in their role and increasing their comfort level
- » Link to the Effective Schools correlate of Positive Home/School Relations

The Ministry of Education requires that the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC):

Be chaired by a parent, and that the membership will include a majority of parents representing a ‘diversity’ of stakeholders as well as trustee representatives and the Director of Education.

The Ministry expects that “in the longer term Parent Representatives will be chosen by their peers.”

According to the Ministry of Education the PIC will:

- Approve expenditures for activities funding with the specific allocation
- Be consulted on the strategies for using the funds to reach out to parents who find involvement more challenging
- Seek out the advice and ideas of various groups as they plan and implement strategies to involve more parents at the regional level
- Evaluate the Board’s responsiveness to parents

Please consider registering to become involved with the PIC in one of two ways:

- As a member of the PIC (4 meetings per year and the possibility of chairing a sub-committee)
- As a member of a sub-committee

Please indicate if you have a specific area of interest:

- Cultural Diversity
- Rural Challenges
- Special Education
- French Immersion
- Programs of Choice
- Well rounded education (including the arts and physical education)
- Mentoring Program for parents (to assist with navigating the system and advocating)
- Awards/Recognition for parents
- Other

Indicate which of the following applies to you:

I am a member of

- School Council
- School Council Support Group
- Home & School Association
- PTA
- Other school based group

I am New (within 12 months)

- to the Canada
- to Ontario
- to Hamilton
- to the HWDSB

Please indicate your present level(s) of involvement in the education system:

- Assist my child with homework
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Volunteer in the school
- Volunteered to help on school trips
- Volunteered to help with extra-curricular activities
- Have sat on a school level committee
- Have been involved with developing a School Improvement Plan
- Attended meetings offered by the Board (i.e. Director’s Forums)
- Have sat on a Board level Committee

Name: _____ School(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

- I am unable to make a commitment at this time but would like to be kept informed.

Criteria for selection to the PIC may have to be developed if warranted by the number of registrations received in an effort to ensure that the Committee is representative of the District.

Thank you for taking the time to register. Our vision is to provide opportunities for all those who are interested in participating to do so – at whatever level they choose, to what degree they choose. We firmly believe that everyone has a role to play and we look forward to working together.... that is how we can truly assist our students in reaching their full potential.

About Today's Session ...

I liked ...	I didn't like ...
I want to know more about ...	Other ...

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