

## Parent Involvement Committee Minutes

**Date:** Feb. 25, 2013  
**Time/Place:** 5 to 6:30 p.m.  
Trustees' Area, HJA Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga

Anthony Blair, Parent representing Brampton, Co-chair  
Stan Cameron, Trustee representing Caledon  
Barbara Cyr, representing the board's Special Education Advisory Committee  
Salha Jeizan, representing Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel  
Meredith Johnson, Trustee representing Mississauga  
Harinder Malhi, Trustee representing Brampton  
Marilyn Matis, Parent representing Caledon  
Tony Pontes, Director of Education  
Kelly Ralston, Parent representing Mississauga  
Lisa Skeete, Parent representing Mississauga  
Sukhjit Singh, Parent representing Mississauga  
Dan Wilkinson, Parent representing Brampton

### **Regrets:**

Shan Rai, Parent representing Mississauga  
Janace King-Watson, Parent representing Brampton  
Lisa Thompson, Parent representing Brampton

### **Resource:**

Alison Farbar, Acting Communications Officer  
Jay Fedosoff, Leader, Parent and Family Literacy Centres  
Varsha Naik, Community Liaison Co-ordinator  
Carla Pereira, Acting Manager of Communications

## **Approval of minutes**

The committee approved the minutes of the Jan. 28 meeting with a minor editorial change.

## **New member**

Anthony introduced Marilyn Matis, the newest member. Marilyn is a parent representative from Caledon.

## **Parent Engagement Toolkit**

Anne Kerr, a former teacher, is currently on contract with CODE to work with parent groups across Ontario to gather parent feedback related to parent engagement. CODE has previously

produced parent engagement toolkits, which were sent to every school in Ontario. CODE is now producing a third toolkit on creating safe and accepting schools.

Anne shared that CODE wants parent input on the development of the new kit. CODE is also conducting consultation with teachers and administrative.

Anne provided members with a list of questions and invited members to provide their feedback by March 8 to her at [anneli.kerr@gmail.com](mailto:anneli.kerr@gmail.com).

The second phase of the consultation will take place this spring. The documents Anne distributed at the meeting are attached to these minutes.

### **Budget Update**

The committee discussed whether or not it would like to have food at future meetings in order to save money. The decision was made to keep the food order as is for now.

### **Reports from Sub-Committees**

The *SPARK!* sub-committee updated the committee on plans for the school council event on May 7 at Fletcher's Meadow Secondary School. The purpose of the event is to provide a forum for school council members to share ideas and effective practices. Councils are invited to send two members to the event. They will also be invited to submit success stories. Three councils will be invited to present their success story at the event. School councils selected to present success stories will receive a \$200 grant to use towards parent involvement at their school.

Jay asked if other groups could submit success stories, or does it need to be school councils. Barb explained that any project would be eligible as long as a school council is involved.

Jay suggested adding 'parent involvement' to the subhead on the promotional flyer. The group agreed.

**ACTION:** The call for registrations and success story submissions will be distributed to school council chairs and schools following Spring Break.

### **New member selection sub-committee**

Lisa, Barb, Salha, Kelly, Anthony volunteered to sit on the new member selection sub-committee.

**ACTION:** Alison will prepare the draft materials to circulate to the sub-committee.

### **Correspondence received**

Anthony shared an invitation for parents to provide feedback on the teen version of the parent engagement toolkit.

**ACTION:**Anthony will share the request with the committee.

Anthony shared the invitation from the Ministry of Education for the Parent Involvement Committee Symposium on April 19 and 20. PICs are invited to send two members to the symposium. Anthony and Kel plan to attend the event.

### **New business**

Alison shared that there's funding leftover from unspent PRO grant funding from previous years. The funding is being used to purchase copies Beyond the Bake Sale, a guide to school-community engagement. The remaining funding will be use to purchase materials to support community outreach, including display materials to create a Peel District School Board booth.

Anthony mentioned the TDSB conducted research related to parent engagement. He will share it with the committee.

### **Next meetings**

The next meeting is on March 25.

All meetings will start at 5 p.m. and take place in the Trustees' Area at the HJA Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street in Mississauga.

## PARENT TOOL KIT: SAFE AND ACCEPTING SCHOOLS PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) and the Ontario Ministry of Education Parent Engagement Office are highly aware of the power and benefits of parent engagement. As you may recall, a Parent Engagement Guidebook, Parent Tool Kit and a Teen Edition were produced to support parents. In these documents are examples of useful exercises and proven techniques to support parents' involvement in their children's education.

[http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/Parent\\_Engagement/Parent\\_Engagement.html](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/Parent_Engagement/Parent_Engagement.html)

The Ontario Government passed into law Bill 13, the *Accepting Schools Act*. Bill 13 requires school boards to prevent and address inappropriate and disrespectful behavior among students in our schools. These behaviors include bullying, discrimination and harassment. The new law makes it clear these behaviors are unacceptable in our schools. It promotes respect and understanding for all students regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or disability or any other factor. (Please see attachment included.)

An additional Tool Kit for Parents on Safe and Accepting Schools is being developed by CODE and the Parent Engagement Office. We are looking for input from you as the Parent Involvement Committee Chair to ensure that the information in this tool kit will be useful to parents. If you have time to consult with other PIC members or School Councils or individual parents, that would be helpful but not necessary. Our timelines are very short, so any input by you is appreciated.

Please send your replies by **March 8, 2013** to [Anneli.kerr@gmail.com](mailto:Anneli.kerr@gmail.com).

If you prefer, parents are also invited to provide their feedback in conference calls or individual phone calls. To schedule these opportunities, please Contact Anne Kerr, Project Lead, at [Anneli.kerr@gmail.com](mailto:Anneli.kerr@gmail.com).

There will be a second phase of consultations in late spring.

Thank you in advance for participating

**PARENT TOOL KIT: SAFE AND ACCEPTING SCHOOLS  
PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

Question 1:

What things do you think make a school safe and accepting?

Question 2:

Of the above things that you see are needed, what specific concerns do you have about your school or community?

Question 3:

Of the things you mentioned in response to question 1, what specific concerns do you have about schools and communities other than your own? Examples welcome.

Question 4: How can children help make schools more safe and accepting?

Question 5: How can parents help their children develop behaviours that will help create a safe and accepting school culture?

Question 6: What other actions can parents take to help make schools more safe and accepting?

Question 7: Are you aware of any effective strategies or programs that are in place to support a "safe and accepting school"?

Question 8: Do you have any other suggestions?

PLEASE RETURN ANSWERS TO ANNE KERR BY MARCH 8, 2013 AT  
[Anneli.kerr@gmail.com](mailto:Anneli.kerr@gmail.com)

NOTE: The term "Parent" is also meant to include guardian and caregiver.

# Creating Safe and Accepting Schools: Information for Parents about the Accepting Schools Act (Bill 13)

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We know that a safe, inclusive and accepting school is essential for student achievement and well-being.

That is why the government introduced Bill 13, the *Accepting Schools Act*, which has now been passed into law.

## What is Bill 13?

Bill 13 requires school boards to prevent and address inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour among students in our schools. These behaviours include bullying, discrimination and harassment. The new law makes it clear that these behaviours are unacceptable in our schools. It promotes respect and understanding for all students regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or disability or any other factor.

## How does Bill 13 help schools and boards prevent and address inappropriate behaviour, including bullying?

It builds on the work already done by school boards and schools. Bill 13 requires boards to:

- Have policies in place on progressive discipline, bullying prevention and intervention, and on equity and inclusive education.
- Consider tougher consequences for students who bully others. This can include suspending and considering expulsion if:
  - the student has already been suspended for bullying and the student's presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of others or
  - the bullying was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate.

The Education Act already requires supports for suspended and expelled students:

- If students are expelled or on long-term suspension (more than five school days), they will receive academic/non-academic support through a [suspension/expulsion program](#).

Students who are suspended for up to five school days will receive a homework package.

- Provide training and information to teachers and other school staff on an annual basis about bullying prevention and promoting positive school climates.
- Include goals around positive school climate and bullying prevention in their multi-year plans and make these plans available to the public.

## Does Bill 13 change the role of principals?

- The bill gives principals new, specific responsibilities. They are now required to:
  - Investigate any incident reported by a board employee which could lead to a student being suspended or expelled, including bullying.
  - Notify the parent/guardians of students who have harmed another student about the incident, when the students' behaviour could lead to them being suspended or expelled. Also invite the parents to discuss the supports that will be provided to their child.
  - Invite the parents/guardians of the student who was harmed in the incident to discuss the supports that will be provided to their child. Principals were already required to notify these parents.
  - Communicate with teachers and where appropriate, other board employees, who reported an incident which could lead to a student getting suspended or expelled. Principals will be required to inform them about the results of their investigation into the incident.

## How does Bill 13 support boards and schools to engage parents, students and other staff and stakeholders?

The bill helps parents to learn more about the support available to their children through the school and the efforts the school is making to build a more positive school climate.



reach every student



Boards are required to:

- Set up a process for parents to follow if they have concerns about the support their child is receiving.
- Develop a procedure that allows students, parents and others to safely report incidents of bullying.
- Conduct school climate surveys of staff, students and parents at least every two years.
- Offer parents more opportunities to learn about student safety and school climate.

### How does Bill 13 support students?

Bill 13 requires:

- Schools to provide support to students who have engaged in inappropriate behaviour or been affected by inappropriate behaviour.
- Schools to provide programs, interventions or other supports to both victims and bullies, and to those who witness the incident.
- Schools to provide ways for students to safely report incidents of bullying.
- Boards and schools to allow students to form groups at their school to raise awareness and understanding of all students on topics such as:
  - anti-racism;
  - people with disabilities;
  - gender equity;
  - sexual orientation and gender identity.These groups may include Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs).

Boards and principals will not be able to prevent students from using the name GSA or another name the students may choose for these groups.

Students may form other types of groups based on the needs of their school.

- The name of the student-led group must help promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students.

### How does Bill 13 affect organizations that rent space in public schools?

Bill 13 requires third parties, such as sports leagues and community groups, to follow standards of behaviour that are consistent with the Provincial Code of Conduct when they use space in public schools. The Code helps ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect and dignity. It has been in place for many years.

### How does a “whole school approach” make schools better places to learn?

Building a positive and inclusive school climate requires a “whole school approach” that is based on healthy and respectful relationships throughout the whole school and the community.

Safe, inclusive and accepting schools support students to do their best in the classroom and beyond. Everyone has a role to play in achieving safe, inclusive and accepting schools, including the government, school boards, school staff, parents, students and community members.

Together we can create positive school climates that help all students learn, grow and thrive.

### Bill 13 is part of a comprehensive action plan

The legislation builds on our Equity and Inclusive Education and Safe Schools Strategies. The legislation is part of a larger action plan which includes:

- Introducing more mental health workers in schools and expanded video counselling services with a psychiatrist for kids in rural and remote communities.
- Finding ways to include more equity and inclusive education principles and bullying prevention strategies throughout the curriculum, building on recommendations from the Ontario Curriculum Council.
- Conducting a public awareness campaign to highlight that all Ontarians have a role in preventing bullying.
- Creating an Accepting Schools Expert Panel to provide advice on resources and practices that focus on a whole school approach, including bullying prevention and intervention.

### More questions?

Parents can learn more online about Ontario’s:

- Action Plan for Accepting Schools at [www.ontario.ca/acceptingschools](http://www.ontario.ca/acceptingschools)
- Safe Schools Strategy at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/safekit.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/safekit.html)
- Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.html)
- Provincial Code of Conduct at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/standards.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/standards.html)

