

## Prayer for Catholic Education



O HOLY SPIRIT, Source of truth and grace, for those entrusted with the Christian development of children, enlighten our minds, strengthen our wills, and fill our hearts with generosity so that our homes, our parishes and our schools may cooperate effectively with You, and with one another in the exalted mission of Catholic Education. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

# Welcome to Your Catholic School Council

## An Introduction to Catholic School Councils

**“When parents are engaged and involved, everyone benefits, and our schools become increasingly rich and positive places to teach, learn, and grow.”**

(Supporting the *Ontario Leadership Strategy*, 2012, p.1)

Both the Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee and Durham Catholic District School Board recognize the significant role that Catholic School Councils play in supporting, promoting and enriching Catholic education. By volunteering your time to serve on Catholic School Council, you are helping to build the partnership between home, school and parish, and helping our system realize its mission, vision and values. Thank you for fulfilling this important role! We have created this handbook to help guide you in leading your school’s Catholic School Council. We hope you will find this collection of resources helpful. Additional resources and regularly updated information are also available at [www.dcpic.ca](http://www.dcpic.ca). We wish you much success in your work at the local schools. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any point.

This Catholic School Council Handbook will address the following areas of interest to support effective operation and promotion of parent engagement...

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# Roles and Responsibilities of the Catholic School Council

## Purpose

According to the Education Act, the purpose of a Catholic School Council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve student achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

## What is a Catholic School Council?

The Catholic School Council (CSC) is an advisory body which works to enhance communication between home, school and parish. Central to this role is the opportunity to foster and build parent and community involvement in Catholic education.

There is an overwhelming body of research to support that children do better in school when their parents are involved in their education. Some studies indicate that any form of involvement is better than none, and certain specific forms have a significant impact on student learning. By focusing on the promotion of parent engagement, Catholic School Councils will serve to strengthen overall student well-being and achievement.

The responsibilities of Catholic School Councils are established provincially in the Ontario *Education Act* under regulations 612/00 and 613/00 (an amendment to regulation 298). These regulations confirm the advisory role of Catholic School Councils and confirm the statement of purpose which is *to improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents*.

Regulation 612/00 outlines an expectation that any advice provided to the principal or school board will be based on the general views of the school community and the best interests of all students in the school. Matters that pertain to individual students or staff are, therefore, not addressed through the CSC forum. Matters of personal interest may be addressed with the principal directly.

Durham Catholic District School Board also has specific policies and procedures, in alignment with the Regulations, that govern Catholic School Councils in our schools. It is important for members to be aware of these policies and procedures:

- Policy 211 – Catholic School Councils
- Administrative Procedure 211-1 – Catholic School Councils
- Administrative Procedure 211-2 – Catholic School Council Committees
- Administrative Procedure 211-3 – Catholic School Council Constitution

For ease of reference, the above noted Policy and associated Procedures have been provided in this handbook, along with a complete copy of Regulation 612. The Ministry of Education also

provides a resource handbook entitled *School Councils: A Guide for Members (Revised 2002)*. We recommend reviewing this resource as well, as it contains useful information pertaining to the roles and responsibilities.

## Catholic School Council Composition

- Parish Priest or Designate
- Parent Representatives (numbers are based on each school's Catholic School Council Constitution – see Administrative Procedure 211-3)
- Student Representative (if applicable and in secondary schools)
- School Principal (non-voting member)
- Teaching Staff Representative
- Non-Teaching Staff Representative
- Community Representative
- O.A.P.C.E. Affiliate (This is one member of the CSC, usually the Chair, who will act as a liaison between the Ontario Association of Parents for Catholic Education, receiving and sharing information. This member must be designated annually.)

## Responsibilities

Administrative Procedure 211-1 (3.2.2) – outlines specific responsibilities as follows:

- promote the spiritual life of the school;
- submit an annual written report on its activities to the principal and to the Board;
- within this annual report, include a report on any fundraising activities in which it has participated;
- consult with parents of pupils enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the Catholic School Council;
- provide advice to the principal with respect to:
  - school code of conduct;
  - school policies or procedures related to policies and procedures established by the Board respecting appropriate dress for pupils;
  - school improvement plans, based on annual school priorities and goals that are consistent with those set by the Board;
- promote the best interest of Catholic education locally and provincially;
- establish goals, procedures and priorities of the Catholic School Council;
- attend training sessions provided by the Board and the Ministry of Education;
- hold a minimum of four meetings a year;
- communicate regularly with parents and other members of the community to seek their views on matters being addressed by the Catholic School Council;

- operate according to a constitution and by-laws developed by the Catholic School Council and aligned with the policies of the Durham Catholic District School Board.

The Chair/Co-Chair also has very specific responsibilities as outlined in Administrative Procedure 211-1. Please review these to ensure that the Catholic School Council runs efficiently and has systems in place for the retention of records and organization of meetings, etc..

Key to the Role of Chair/Co-Chair is to:

- ✓ Play a neutral role
- ✓ Promote positivity
- ✓ Develop and maintain enthusiasm
- ✓ Ensure all voices are heard

## What is the Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (DCPIC) and how does DCPIC support Catholic School Councils?

The Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (DCPIC) is a parent-led advisory committee working within the Durham Catholic District School Board. The main purpose of DCPIC is to encourage, support and enhance meaningful parent involvement to improve student academic achievement and well-being. By providing a direct link between parents, Catholic School Councils, the Director of Education and the Board of Trustees, the DCPIC is committed to working in partnership with all stakeholders to promote faith formation and student success in all of our schools. Primary functions of the DCPIC include:

- Supporting parent involvement at the regional level;
- Acting as a link between the Director of Education and Trustees;
- Seeking the advice and ideas of school councils, other parents and partners;
- Advising the Board on topics that matter to parents; and
- Planning and implementing strategies to involve more parents at the regional level.

DCPIC members will reach out to local Catholic School Council members, through a variety of communication tools throughout the year, to provide support and seek feedback. The DCPIC also provides resources to assist local Catholic School Councils in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities and organizes events to promote parent involvement. Please contact us for more information:

DCPIC.ca

Twitter.com/DCPIC

Facebook.com/DCPIC.ca

[info@dcpic.ca](mailto:info@dcpic.ca)

Parent Resource Centre (Giffard Centre)

1003 Giffard Street, Whitby, ON

(contact us for hours of operation)

# Durham Catholic District School Board's Mission, Vision, and Values



*Catholic Education: Learning and Living In Faith*



## Our Mission

We are called to celebrate and nurture the God-given talents of each student as we serve with excellence in the light of Christ.

## Our Vision

Each student in our Catholic learning community embodies excellence and equity by embracing the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations—to be:

- a discerning believer;
- an effective communicator;
- a reflective, creative and holistic thinker;
- a self-directed, responsible lifelong learner;
- a collaborative contributor;
- a caring family member; and
- a responsible citizen.

## Our Catholic Values

By living these values with an open mind and a faithful heart we bear witness to these words:  
"You are the hope of the Church and of the world. You are my hope." – Saint John Paul II

### As a Catholic Learning Community, we value:

**Faith**, evangelizing ourselves and others through scripture, sacrament, prayer and action in service with the home, school and parish.

**Hope**, giving witness to the belief that we can become who we are called to be.

**Love**, being present to others with care, compassion, solidarity, community and joy.

**Peace**, creating opportunities for contemplation, spirituality, reconciliation and forgiveness.

**Wisdom**, listening and responding to the Holy Spirit.

**Inclusion**, ensuring a sense of belonging by promoting the dignity and worth of each human life.

**Excellence**, building on God's grace to achieve our earthly and eternal vocations.

**Creativity**, celebrating diverse and innovative expressions of God's gifts.

**Service**, seeking out and responding to local and global needs with prudence, fortitude, humility and charity.

**Stewardship**, shepherding God's creation and resources for the common good.

**Responsibility**, demonstrating accountability and fidelity in our thoughts, words and deeds.

**Justice**, acting and serving with integrity in communion with the Gospel and teachings of Jesus.

## Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

*The Graduate of the Catholic School Is Expected to Be:*

- **A discerning believer** formed in the Catholic Faith community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection and moral living.
- **An effective communicator**, who speaks, writes and listens honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of gospel values.
- **A reflective, creative and holistic thinker** who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good.
- **A self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner** who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.
- **A collaborative contributor** who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.
- **A caring family member** who attends to family, school, parish, and the wider community.
- **A responsible citizen** who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.



## Elections

Nomination and elections for the Catholic School Council shall be held within the **first 30 days** of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the chair or co-chairs of the Catholic School Council after consulting with the principal of the school. The principal shall give written notice of the date, time and location of the election at least 14 days before the date of the election. This notification shall be in writing to parents of children enrolled in the school at the date notice is given. This notice can be delivered via the students and is to be posted in the school in an area accessible by parents, and also on the school website. Elections will be conducted by secret ballot. Voters must appear in person to exercise this right.

## Eligibility

Parents or guardians who have children enrolled in the school are eligible to stand for election. Elections will be conducted as follows:

- parents/guardians who and have children enrolled in the school will elect parent members;
- teachers will elect the teacher member;
- non-teaching members of staff will elect the non-teaching member;
- students will select students (mandatory in secondary; at the direction of the principal in elementary).

Students will be the children of separate school supporters and/or eligible to be separate school supporters except for the age requirement (e.g., secondary school). If an employee of the Board works at a school that his/her children attend, the employee may stand for election on the Catholic School Council as a staff representative, but not as a parent representative. Eligible voters shall cast one vote for each of the positions in their representative group. The number of parent positions is dependent upon what is listed in each school's Catholic School Council Constitution. If there is a tie for the final position on the Catholic School Council, the winner shall be determined by lot. No individual campaign literature for Catholic School Council elections may be posted or distributed in the school. School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates.

Election procedures shall be supervised by the principal. Parents/guardians shall be the majority on the Catholic School Council. Separate school supporters will form the majority of parent/guardian members. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson will be separate school supporters.

If all of the elected positions are not filled through the election process, the Catholic School Council shall proceed. The Catholic School Council should however, seek members to fill the vacant positions through outreach into the community. Individuals will be appointed by the Catholic School Council for the remainder of the term.

A school may have such other officers as are provided for in the Constitution of the Catholic School Council.

## Election Timeline Task Analysis

May/June	The Chair/Co-Chair and Principal shall consult on the plans for election of parent members in the upcoming school year.
Early to mid-June	By the last meeting of the school year, the date, time, and location of the election should be determined, as well as a communications plan to advertise in the fall. Publish the election date in the June newsletter and on the school website and calendar. Consider holding the election on the same night as the open house.
Late August	In welcome-back-to-school information, the Principal includes information of how to obtain nomination forms and information about the due date by which nominations must be received at the school, who is eligible to stand for election, the date of the election, and other information about the election. This information must be made available to parents at least fourteen days prior to the election.
Early September	The Principal posts Catholic School Council election information in an area of the school that is easily accessible to parents and on the school website. Parents will be reminded to return nomination forms to the school.
Mid September	A list of parent nominees is prepared and maintained by the Principal. A reminder of the election date and information on the election process should be sent to parents/guardians. If the school doesn't receive enough nominations to warrant an election, then the nominated parents can be acclaimed to the Catholic School Council.
Within the first 30 calendar days of the school year	<p>Prepare election ballots and ballot box for the election of parent representatives, and arrange for non-voting volunteers (scrutineers) to assist with the voting process should a secret ballot election be necessary. Prepare a procedure for "selection by lot" should there be the need for a tie-breaker (e.g., draw straws).</p> <p>The election of the Teaching Rep, Non-Teaching Rep, and Student Representative(s) (secondary) should take place prior to the election meeting or shortly after the election of parent representatives. Staff reps are elected by their staff group, and the student rep is appointed by the Student Council.</p> <p>The community member is appointed by the Catholic School Council once it is formed.</p>
Late September to Early October	First meeting of the new Catholic School Council takes place, and meeting dates, times, and locations for the upcoming year are determined. (The first meeting must take place within thirty-five days of the start of school). The Catholic School Council is required to schedule at least four meetings per year.

	<p>The names of the new Catholic School Council members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election, as are the dates, times, and locations of future meetings. This could be done on a bulletin board at the school, through the newsletter and on the school website and calendar. Submit the Catholic School Council Membership Form to the Board.</p> <p>At the first meeting, determine which member of the newly formed Catholic School Council will serve as O.A.P.C.E. Liaison (usually the Chair). This person is willing to receive and share information from O.A.P.C.E. with the Catholic School Council.</p>
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## School Council Code of Ethics

A Catholic School Council Member shall;

- ✓ promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all School Council activities;
- ✓ foster and affirm Catholic education and function in the best interest of all students;
- ✓ be guided by The Durham Catholic District School Board Mission Statement, its Policies and Procedures and the appropriate Catholic School Council Regulations in accordance with **Ontario Regulation 612 and 613 of the Education Act**;
- ✓ maintain the highest degree of integrity and respect the diverse opinions of others;
- ✓ demonstrate respect for each Council member and all partners of the school community;
- ✓ work as a Catholic School Council partner in order to build consensus;
- ✓ respect the confidential nature of individual issues and discuss items which pertain to the entire school community;
- ✓ remain respectful, collaborative and sensitive to the needs of others, at all times;
- ✓ use established communication procedures to address issues or concerns;
- ✓ accept the final decision of the Council;
- ✓ declare conflicts of interest;
- ✓ encourage a positive working environment in which individual contributions are valued and acknowledged.

## Catholic School Council Month by Month Task Analysis

### September

- ✓ CSC Election (review Constitution in preparation for election)
- ✓ Inaugural Meeting
- ✓ Major Fundraiser discussion and sub-committee set-up
- ✓ Discussion of how to spend \$500 grant for parent engagement
- ✓ Letter to parents introducing council and reiterating resources for parents such as DCPIC lending library for parents or in-school resources
- ✓ Think about sending representative to “When Faith Meets Pedagogy Conference”
- ✓ Identify and determine if a representative from council should attend any conference(s)
- ✓ Inform parish priest/designate of meeting dates and extend open invitation
- ✓ Determine if this is the year to review the school’s Code of Conduct/Dress Code

NOTES:


## October

- ✓ Complete Catholic School Council Membership Form and submit to Board
- ✓ Review Code of Ethics
- ✓ Establish Norms for Meetings
- ✓ Establish Objectives
- ✓ Discuss Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grant initiative
- ✓ Review Fundraising Plan for Charitable Donations
- ✓ Set-up or confirm sub-committee membership for initiatives
- ✓ Share DCPIC schedule of meetings and events and promote participation
- ✓ Review EQAO results and establish ways to support school improvement
- ✓ Chair & Vice Chair to attend Regional Orientation and Commissioning Mass

NOTES:


## November/December

- ✓ Receive a presentation on the School Improvement Plan for Student Well-being and Achievement
- ✓ Discuss faith formation activities during Advent
  - Social Justice initiatives (e.g. Christmas giving campaigns)

NOTES:


## January/February

- ✓ Discuss faith formation and sacraments
  - Opportunity to support first communicants and confirmand
- ✓ Consider organizing a guest speaker event for the school (invite Board personnel)
- ✓ Attend a Board meeting
- ✓ Attend a DCPIC meeting
- ✓ Complete and submit the Community Profile for Leadership Form

NOTES:


## March/April

- ✓ Prepare for PRO Grant submission for the following year (due in May)
- ✓ Lenten reflection
- ✓ ShareLife campaign
- ✓ Needs of graduating class(es)
- ✓ Needs of Catholic Education Week

NOTES:


## May/June

- ✓ Ensure records of all agenda and minutes are retained for a minimum of 4 years
- ✓ Prepare and publish Catholic School Council Year-End Report to Community
- ✓ Initial discussion for next year's major fundraiser
- ✓ Celebrate successes
- ✓ Set date for September Elections

NOTES:


# Tips for Running Effective Meetings

## Setting Goals

At the onset of every school year it is good practice to highlight the accomplishments of the previous year and begin discussions around prioritizing activities or initiatives for the upcoming year. At an early meeting, the Chair should lead a discussion around the formation of sub-committees and identify tasks and priorities for the upcoming year.

Some examples of sub-committees are:

- Faith Formation
- PRO Grant
- Social Justice

Consider using a universal acronym such as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) when setting goals.

The following is a checklist:

- ✓ List the issues and prioritize
- ✓ Narrow the focus
- ✓ Develop an implementation plan through consensus
- ✓ Communicate goals to the broader parent body
- ✓ Decide on a method to evaluate the outcome of the goals
- ✓ Celebrate and communicate successes

## Meeting Agendas

A carefully planned and organized agenda is the key to a successful meeting.

A good agenda briefly outlines what you intend to discuss and in what order. A reasonable time frame, which allows for sufficient presentation/discussion time should be considered. The Chair and Principal shall collaborate in advance of each meeting to create the Agenda.

Tips and items to include when creating an agenda:

- ✓ Include an opening and closing prayer
- ✓ Allow time at the onset of the meeting to welcome guests and/or introduce new members
- ✓ Review and approve previous minutes
- ✓ Include time for sub-committee reports (if applicable)
- ✓ Include a Principal's and Chairperson's report
- ✓ Include an opportunity to share information from the Parish

## Sample Agenda

**Name of School**  
**CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**  
Date/Time/Location

1. WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER  
**Opening Prayer:**
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Council meeting of Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair asks if there are any errors or omissions in the minutes and if any items require clarification)  
Moved by:                      Seconded by:
3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:  
Moved by:                      Seconded by:
4. BUSINESS ARISING:  
(Updates and/or discussion on items requiring follow-up from the previous meeting)
5. PRESENTATION(S):
5. REPORTS & UPDATES:
  - A.      Principal's Report
  - B.      Sub-committee Report(s)
  - C.      Chair's Report
6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:
  - A.
7. AJOURNMENT  
**Closing Prayer:**  
(Note time that the meeting ends)

## Minutes

The elected secretary of the Catholic School Council or designate has the responsibility of recording, preparing and circulating the minutes of every meeting. Minutes should provide a brief summary of what was discussed and any actions taken. Minutes of meeting must be retained for a minimum of four years. The following sample provides one structure which may be helpful when recording minutes.

### Sample of Meeting Minutes

#### St. Somewhere Catholic School Council Meeting Date/Location/Time

Name of Members present:

Regrets: (List names of members)

Agenda Item	Summary/Action Taken
Welcome and Introductions	The meeting was called to order at 7:35pm and “Name” offered the opening prayer.
Approval of Minutes	_____ moved that that the minutes of the “date” meeting be accepted.  _____ seconded the motion. CARRIED
Approval of Agenda	_____ moved the approval of the Agenda.  _____ seconded the motion. CARRIED
Declaration of Conflict of Interest	{Parent member} declared conflict of interest regarding...
Business Arising from the Minutes	Thank you letters were sent out to the parish staff for hosting the Family Mass.
Presentations	Review EQAO Grade 9 results was led by the math department. A preliminary plan was presented for consideration, with a focus on parent engagement to support student improvement.
Reports	Provide a very brief summary of the content highlights of each report.
Adjournment and Date of Next Meeting	Meeting was adjourned at _____ p.m. Next meeting takes place on “date” at 7pm in the school library.

## Reflection Worksheet

### Did you have an effective meeting?

If the answer is “yes” to any of the following questions you are on your way to running and/or participating in effective meetings.

As a CSC member, use the following questions to guide you in your venture to improve the efficiency of your council meetings. If you are the Chair of your Catholic School Council consider printing these and circulating to CSC members as a checklist for efficiency.

- ✓ Can you identify the purpose of the meeting?
- ✓ Did you have a sense of accomplishment after the meeting?
- ✓ Do you feel that you contributed to the meeting with relevance?
- ✓ Do you feel that your peers valued your input?
- ✓ Do you feel that the meeting generated ideas, alternatives or solutions?
- ✓ Do you feel that different points of view were encouraged?
- ✓ Do you feel committed to the decisions made and actions to be taken?
- ✓ Are you enthusiastic about working together to serve the school community?
- ✓ Do you feel that the meeting adhered to time allocations effectively?
- ✓ Did you listen and provide your full attention to the speaker(s) during the meeting?

# Robert's Rules of Order

## Business

**General Method:** Chair summarizes the action that the group is discussing and announces that if there are no objections, the action is adopted. If there is an objection, then proceed to motion, discussion and vote.

**Obtaining the Floor:** Chair recognizes the speaker. If they are not recognized, they do not have the right to speak.

**Point of Order:** At any time, "point of order" may be declared and the speaker must be quiet. The point is made by the person who raised it and the Chair rules on the point. If **yes**, "The point of order is well taken" and it is correct. If **no**, "The point of order is not well taken," the Chair explains the decision and the original speaker continues. The Chair can seek the opinion of advisors before ruling. No seconder is required.

### Motions:

1. One person makes the motion.
2. Another person seconds it. There is a period for brief informal remarks/informal discussion/suggestions; **THEN** put in writing and gives the motion to the Chair.
3. Once the Chair states it, then the Motion is the text of the Chair.
4. The Motion is debated with the Mover and Secunder being given first and second opportunity to discuss the Motion. The Mover is the only person who is allowed to speak to a Motion a second time, as part of the closing process, prior to the vote on the Motion.

At any time, should debate appear to be dragging or if the same comments are being continually repeated, a member may state, "Call the question" at which time debate ceases and the Chair shall call for a vote. Otherwise, the Chair would "Call the question" when all questions and debate have ceased and the Mover has made closing comments. During debate "Question of Clarification" may be declared, as well as "Supplementary Question (s)", should additional information become available.

5. The mover cannot modify or withdraw the Motion unless permission by the Chair to do so is granted, or by moving an amendment to it. The motion can be withdrawn IF the Chair **HAS NOT YET STATED IT**, whether or not it has been seconded. Another member can suggest that the mover withdraw the motion. Only the mover can amend or withdraw the motion,

although other members may suggest “friendly amendments.” Amendments are voted on before the main motion.

**Adjournment:** Requires a second. Is non-debatable. Majority vote.

**To Recess:** Requires a second. Is non- debatable. Majority vote.

**Question of Privilege:** Chair asks the member to state the question. The member expresses his complaint and expresses, as a motion, a solution. The Chair can ask for general consent OR if not, ask for a seconder and then go to a vote.

**Point of Order:** This may be raised by anyone if it is suspected that the rules are being broken. The Chair rules on the point; if yes, “point of order well taken.” If no, “point of order not well taken.” If the member objects to the decision, rises and states that saying “I appeal from the decision of the Chair”, or “I challenge the Chair’s decision.” (Also known as Challenging the Chair) **IF THE APPEAL IS SECONDED**, the Chair defines the reasons for the decision and states “shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?” If debatable, **NO PERSON MAY SPEAK MORE THAN ONCE.**

## Faith Formation

The role of Catholic School Council includes a responsibility to promote the distinct Catholic character and spiritual life of the school. The success of the Catholic School Council, in this endeavor, depends upon the committee's willingness to engage in faith formation activities such as prayer, reflection, education, outreach, and advocacy for Catholic schools. Catholic School Councils may wish to use the following activities when setting goals related to faith formation.



## Prayer

Begin and end each meeting with a prayer, for example: the school prayer, the Prayer for Catholic Education, Scripture readings of the day, personal reflection, prayers, liturgies, and/or music taken from Religion program used in the classrooms. Consider inviting the Parish Priest, Youth Minister, Lay Pastoral Assistant or Chaplain to preside over the prayer at one or more of your meetings. Alternate the responsibility for leading prayer among members.

- ✓ At meetings, include a short liturgy or activity related to the liturgical season.
  - Lenten reflection,
  - Lighting of the Advent wreath, etc.
- ✓ Create a sacred space and set a tone for community prayer.
- ✓ Plan a commitment service for new Catholic School Council members.
- ✓ Pray for members of the school community who are sick or suffering a bereavement.
- ✓ Contribute prayer books or resource to the parent lending library or Learning Commons.
- ✓ Attend parish missions, liturgies or other parish prayer activities.
- ✓ Include Catholic School Council participation at school liturgies and masses.

## Reflection

- ✓ Plan an evening of reflection and invite the entire school community to attend.
- ✓ This evening may take place at the school, church, chapel (secondary school), or an off-site location such as a Retreat Centre, an outdoor education setting, etc.).
  - Invite the Parish Priest, Lay Pastoral Assistant or Chaplain to preside.
  - Include an introductory prayer, scripture readings, reflections, prayers of the faithful, and a closing prayer. Choose scripture readings to reflect a theme or liturgical season such as light, forgiveness, healing, peace, waiting, joy, desert, etc.
  - Provide refreshments and an opportunity for community members to share and socialize.



Your gathering can be as simple as:

- ✓ At the beginning of the school year, plan a commissioning ceremony for Catholic School Council members;
- ✓ Plan a Family Mass or a Teaching Mass for the school community in collaboration with the parish priest; or
- ✓ Provide opportunities at meetings for members to reflect upon and ask questions about current practice in the delivery of religious education and family life programs.

## Education

- ✓ The meeting agenda should include an opportunity for the Principal, Teacher representative, and/or Parish representative to highlight school and/or parish projects that involve the school community.
- ✓ Invite groups which promote Catholic teachings and values to present and share information at meetings (Right to Life, Holy Childhood Association, Rose of Durham, Knights of Columbus, religious orders - vocations, etc.).

- ✓ Form a Faith Formation Sub-Committee to plan activities for the Catholic School Council and the wider community. Ensure that a Parish representative is appointed to support the work of this committee.
- ✓ Send a representative to attend the **When Faith Meets Pedagogy Conference** in October and report back to the Catholic School Council.
- ✓ Read and share publications and articles published by groups which promote Catholic education (e.g. Institute for Catholic Education (ICE), Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA), and Ontario Association for Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE)). Use the parish rep to recommend other resources which may be appropriate.
- ✓ Include a faith component in the Catholic School Council newsletter insert.

## Outreach

- ✓ Support school activities that reach out to the needy such as food drives, collections for St. Vincent de Paul, Rose of Durham, ShareLife, etc.
- ✓ Plan an outreach activity in conjunction with the Parish (e.g. clothing drive for Third World country)
- ✓ Support, through fundraising, programs which promote Catholic values and traditions (e.g. ShareLife, Rainbows, Sacramental programs, etc.).

## Advocacy for Catholic Schools

- ✓ Maintain a resource library of articles and literature related to the history of Catholic education.
- ✓ Provide input to questions posed by the Durham Catholic District School Board and other advocacy groups with respect to the future of Catholic education.
- ✓ Encourage student leadership in parish activities -lectors/altar servers at Mass, support for outreach projects, childminding for adult faith formation evenings, etc.
- ✓ Assist students to become involved in parish activities.

## Parent Engagement (\$500) and PRO Grant Funds for Catholic School Councils

Grants can be an important source of funds for Catholic School Councils. The Province of Ontario offers three grant programs which are specifically designed to support parental engagement initiatives.

These are:

1. \$500 grant to Catholic School Councils to promote parent engagement provided directly to the CSC through the Board. There are limitations on the use of the funds and reporting is required.
2. Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants for School Councils are accessed by applying directly to the Ministry of Education. Schools may apply to the Ministry for a grant amount of up to \$1,000. There are limitations on the use of the funds and reporting is required.
3. Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Regional Grants: Organizations, other than School Councils, may apply to the Ministry for a grant in an amount up to \$30,000. There are limitations on the use of the funds and reporting is required. Board committees such as S.E.A.C. and DCPIC apply for these regional grants annually.

### 20 Suggestions for Spending \$500 Parent Engagement Grant:

1. Offer child minding at your Catholic School Council meetings.
2. Offer pizza and a movie to the children during meetings. They will bring their parents to you!
3. Offer homework club for students during your meetings.
4. Create publications to promote how the Catholic School Council works and to encourage involvement in the school.
5. Host a parent open house during Catholic Education Week.
6. Host a parent breakfast at school (make a presentation about parent involvement).
7. Host events that celebrate the cultural diversity of your school community.
8. Hire interpreters to be present for meet the teacher nights and parent teacher interviews (advertise this ahead of time).
9. Host informal "Coffee with the Principal" events. Offer light refreshments and highlight a different area of focus for the school.
10. Host an informal "Breakfast with the Catholic School Council" when parents are dropping their children off.
11. Translate flyers and notices in multiple languages to promote inclusion.
12. Add a social "meet and greet" aspect to Catholic School Council meetings so parents can get to know each other- 15 minutes of tea and networking at the beginning of the meeting can go a long way towards helping people feel connected and included.

13. Consider holding a Saturday session so parents who work during the evenings can attend.
14. Invite Board personnel to offer a workshop for parents about a parent's role in the education system, communicating with the school, safe and caring schools, understanding report cards, etc. Offer child minding and translate the flyers.
15. Host "Issues Nights"- Invite guest speakers to discuss topical educational or parenting issue (e.g. drug and alcohol prevention, homework, reading, parenting a teenager, etc.).
16. Provide refreshments for parent events throughout the year (interviews, open house, workshop events).
17. Provide take away resources or door prizes for parents at orientation sessions, guest speaker or workshops events.
18. Use this funding to augment PRO Grant Funds (additional \$ for speakers, food, etc).
19. Taxi or bus fare money to encourage parents to attend school events.
20. Create "Welcome Packages" for new families.

## PRO Grant Guidelines

School councils can submit only **1** proposal. If a school council submits more than 1 proposal, **ONLY** the first proposal submitted will be processed.

The maximum amount provided for a school council proposal will be \$1,000.

All proposals must be approved by the school council through a motion of the school council.

Special consideration will be given to eligible projects from school councils that did not receive funding the year before.

Projects must comply with the regulations, by-laws, policies, and guidelines of the school board and Catholic School Council. The school principal can provide information in this area.

School councils may develop proposals:

1. Individually
2. With another school council(s) in the same board; or
3. With other groups in the school or in the community (i.e. Family of Schools).

When working in partnership with other groups, each school council is eligible for the maximum amount of \$1,000. Each school council is responsible for its project budget, the successful completion of the project, and the submission of a final report to the Ministry. School councils must verify and abide by their by-laws, guidelines and policies and those of the school Board when applying in a partnership.

## Project Focus

Each grant application should contain information from the following two parts:

### *Part 1*

The grants are intended to support school-based initiatives to reach parents who face barriers to becoming involved in their child's education or school under the following categories:

1. Communication – could include translation of documents into ethnic languages, providing parents with information related to curriculum or other school-based initiatives;
2. Geography – reaching parents living in a larger or remote geographic area;
3. Parents New to the System – parents who have a child in school for the first time, have recently moved into the area, or have recently arrived as newcomers to Canada; or
4. Other types of barriers.

### *Part 2*

The grants should focus on initiatives that are designed to inform or engage parents in support of improved student achievement and well-being.

## What Project Costs or Activities Are Not Eligible for PRO Grant?

1. Activities that have already taken place
2. Payment to staff including salaries, honourariums, gifts
3. Purchase of goods & services for which the Ministry provides funding, such as textbooks, library books, manipulatives, school furniture, laptop computers, cameras, projectors, student transportation, etc.
4. Student focused activities/purchases including speakers, books, dual-language books, welcome to Kindergarten bags, student materials or supplies for home use—e.g. markers, paper, glue, scissors, software, prizes, student agendas, calendars, arts and crafts, scrapbooks, supplies, etc.
5. Computer software, voice messaging systems or website maintenance
6. Capital items such as televisions, sports equipment, shelving
7. Celebrations such as barbecues, fun fairs, volunteer teas, dinners
8. Entertainment costs, including movies/dances/concerts/performances
9. School signs, announcement boards/screens
10. Landscaping
11. Refreshments – **exceeding the maximum of 15%** of the total grant application
12. Promotion – **exceeding the maximum of 5%** of the approved funding
13. Prizes or incentives to parents and/or students
14. Lessons for parents—French, English as a Second Language, computer, CPR
15. Fridge magnets, recipe books, T-shirts

## Applying for a Grant

The application is to be completed and submitted on-line. Information can be saved to allow work on the application at different times. Make a copy of the completed application for the school council file and provide a copy to the:

1. Director of Education
2. Principal of the school

Please keep your registration email address active for one year for future notifications, and submit the Proposal and Budget, to the Board, no later than the end of May each year. A Declaration must be signed by both the School Council Chair and the Principal. The Declaration, with the appropriate signatures, must be completed and mailed to the Parent Engagement Office by the end of May each year at the following address:

Ministry of Education  
Parent Engagement Office  
12th Floor, Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Should your proposal be approved, this declaration will become the contract between your Catholic School Council and the Ministry of Education. A copy of the proposal **must** be provided to the Director of Education to ensure that the submission is consistent with Board policies and strategies related to parent involvement. Please be sure to keep a copy of the proposal for your records and provide a copy to the Principal.

The grants will be awarded through a provincial review process. There is no appeal process. Project funds must be spent by the end of the school year (June) in which the grant was issued. The Report Back form is to be completed online by accessing the following website on or before August of the year the grant is issued:

<http://education.factorial.ca>

When the Report Back Form has been completed, three copies are to be printed and to be distributed as follows:

1. One for the Catholic School Council file
2. Second copy for the Principal's file
3. Third copy to be submitted together with receipts to the School Board (to the attention of the Supervisory Officer responsible for Parent Engagement).

For more information regarding PRO Grants, please visit the Ontario Ministry of Education's website at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reaching.html>

## Understanding Parent Engagement

# Parents Matter



### Parent engagement means

- *Making learning an important part of a child's day*
- *Supporting your child's learning at home and at school*
- *Participating in the life of the classroom, school and community*

### How parent engagement is building student success

When parents are involved in their children's education, everyone benefits – students, parents, teachers, schools and communities. Great schools can become even better places to teach and learn, and student achievement often improves.

### Supporting parent engagement in Ontario schools

Ontario's Parents Reaching Out grants encourage parent engagement at the local, regional and provincial levels. They are designed to involve more parents in support of student achievement and well-being. There are two types of grants:

#### Parents Reaching Out Grants for School Councils:

These grants support parents in identifying barriers to parent engagement in their own school community, and finding local solutions to help more parents get involved. These barriers may include: being new to Ontario's education system, unfamiliar with the language, living in poverty or far from the school.

#### Parents Reaching Out Grants for Regional / Provincial Projects

These grants support initiatives that will improve parent engagement in public education for an entire region of the province or at the provincial level, with a goal of supporting student achievement and well-being. They help fund projects that create a welcoming climate in schools and school boards and give parents the opportunities to build their knowledge and skills so they can help support greater student success.

Find out more about these grants at:  
[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reaching.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reaching.html)

### Resources and information for parents

A wide variety of materials for parents of elementary and secondary students are available at: [ontario.ca/EDUparents](http://ontario.ca/EDUparents). This page has information for parents about the province's publicly funded education system **in many languages**. Information is also available for parents of younger children.

Parents of infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers and school-age children can:

- Learn about child care in Ontario and early years programs at [ontario.ca/childcare](http://ontario.ca/childcare).
- Get information about full-day kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds at [ontario.ca/kindergarten](http://ontario.ca/kindergarten).

Parents of elementary students can:

- Find resources to help their children with reading, writing and math in English, French and other languages at [ontario.ca/EDUparents](http://ontario.ca/EDUparents).

Parents of secondary school students can:

- Learn about the Student Success Strategy; a variety of initiatives and resources offered in Ontario's publicly funded schools. This strategy helps students graduate from secondary school and succeed in their chosen pathway (apprenticeship training, community living, college, university or the workplace). Learn more at [ontario.ca/studentssuccess](http://ontario.ca/studentssuccess).

**At home, at school  
and in the community...  
parents matter!**

[ontario.ca/EDUparents](http://ontario.ca/EDUparents)

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support every child  
reach every student



# Parents Matter

## Parent engagement is building student success



### Benefits for parents and students

As a parent, you have a strong influence on your children's attitudes toward school learning and future success. When you are involved in your children's learning – from the early years to high school – you are giving them an important head start in school and in life. How do students and parents benefit?

- Improved student achievement
- More positive attitudes about school
- More success with homework
- Higher rates of high school graduation
- More consistent school attendance
- Fewer behavioural problems
- Opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the school and the community
- A brighter future for students at school and later in life.

### Tips for parents

An engaged parent is an interested parent. Here are just a few of the ways you can become more involved in your children's education from the early years to Grade 12.

- **Demonstrate interest:** ask what happened at school today and create an ongoing dialogue. This helps set the stage for joint student-parent decision making as your children get older.
- **Create a place for studying:** encourage a regular homework time with limited distractions. Set appropriate times for phone calls and leisure time on computers and electronic games.

- **Help with homework:** talk to the teacher to learn more about how you can help your children outside of school. For older students, set priorities for after-school activities, job and chore hours, homework and leisure time.
- **Attend parent-teacher conferences:** develop a plan with the teacher on how to best support your children's learning needs.
- **Participate:** get involved in any way that is comfortable – whether it's parent information nights, volunteer activities, arts and sporting events, school council or your board's Parent Involvement Committee.
- **Stay informed:** find out what is happening in the classroom, the school and the school community.

***Not all of these tips will suit every parent.  
Get involved in a way that's right for you.***

***At home, at school  
and in the community...  
parents matter!***

[ontario.ca/EDUparents](http://ontario.ca/EDUparents)

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reach every student



## Accessibility at the Durham Catholic District School Board

Consistent with the Gospel values, the Durham Catholic District School Board shall promote the dignity and value of the whole person. As such, the Durham Catholic District School Board is committed to ensuring compliance with the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)**.

The Accessibility Policy PO434 and its associated Administrative Procedure AP434-1, Customer Service Accessibility Standards, states:

- 3.1 The Board will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that all services, policies, and procedures are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity to all with particular attention for persons with disabilities;
- 3.2 The Board will welcome all members of the school and broader Community to its facilities by committing staff and volunteers to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of persons with disabilities. Such services will incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of assistive devices and service animals.

Therefore, the following notice is to be added at the bottom of all meeting notices held at Board facilities including all schools and administrative buildings:

**If you require accessibility related accommodations for attendance at this meeting, please notify the meeting organizer in advance of the meeting date so that arrangements can be made.**

Where accommodation needs are requested, the meeting organizer must discuss the request with their administrator who will seek support, if required, through their respective Superintendent.