

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT:

## Strategies & Resources for Parents & Schools

*An example of parent engagement*



**What:** School council communications  
**Who:** Parents, teachers, administration and support staff, local community  
**When:** Throughout school year  
**Where:** School, home, local media  
**Why:** To inform and educate our school community, to seek input from our school community

### How:

#### Email

- Collected **email** addresses from each family at the beginning of the school year via the *Student Verification Form* (included a check box to ask for parent consent for the school to release the email address to school council).
- Created a database of email addresses in a computer spreadsheet e.g., Excel
- Ensured confidentiality by using the Bcc feature whenever group emails were sent (e.g., upcoming events, parent information evenings, e-newsletters)
- Did not release parent email addresses to any outside group.

#### Parent Class Reps

- Identified a parent class rep with email access for each homeroom class and supply him/her with email address(es) for each student.
- Used email to communicate information for class specific purposes (e.g., teacher needs another parent for a field trip, special class event requiring parent-volunteers).

#### Electronic Newsletter

- Created an electronic newsletter (using software e.g., Constant Contact for which there is a cost but we are investigating switching to Mailchimp next year which is free).
- Sent home hard copies of newsletters with students where email access is unavailable.
- Encouraged teachers, administration, and support staff to subscribe to the electronic newsletter which they can do by signing up on the School Council website.

#### Bulletin Board

- Created a School Council Bulletin Board in a prominent place in the school foyer to post school council meeting minutes, meeting announcements, and upcoming events.

#### Website

- Posted upcoming events, school council meeting minutes, and newsletters, resources and website links for parents, how to contact school council, sponsors, forms for milk and lunch programs for students, etc.

#### Personal Communication

- Ensured the school council chair has an opportunity to speak briefly at **school staff meetings** and to meet **weekly with the principal** to discuss issues and plan events.
- Invited local media to school events and contact them with important school information (e.g., receiving a PRO grant) so that the news is shared with the local community.
- Created and distributed a **parent survey** each fall to collect input from parents and identify volunteers
- Participated in all school events where parents are present (Meet the Teacher, JK/SK parent open house, parent information evenings).

**Cost:** Various

**Overcoming Barriers**

**Communication:** See Above

**Geography:** See Above

**Parents New to the System:** If your school has many parents whose first language is not English, consider printing or ordering free multilingual resources from OCISO

(<http://www.ociso.org/>), the Ministry of Education

(<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/abc123/eng/tips/>) or People for Education

(<http://www.peopleforeducation.com/>)

**Other:**

**School:** Castor Valley Elementary School

**Website:** [www.castorvalley.ca](http://www.castorvalley.ca)

**Submitted By:** Heather Wilson, School Council  
Chair

**For More Info:** [wilsonheather@rogers.ca](mailto:wilsonheather@rogers.ca)

**Date:** March 30, 2010



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