



December 2008

The Simcoe County District School Board produces this regular e-bulletin to help parents support children on their journey of lifelong learning. We know positive connections between home and school support student achievement. In each edition you'll find practical tips and strategies to help your child achieve success in those important years of learning from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Bringing School Home is available through the Simcoe County District School Board website (www.scdsb.on.ca). As well, parents, guardians and other interested members of our school communities may subscribe through our website and have the bulletin e-mailed directly to their e-mail accounts (readers may also unsubscribe at any time). Please send your comments and feedback to: webadmin@scdsb.on.ca.

Question of the month: Parental Involvement in Education

I want to feel more connected to my child's experiences at school. As a parent, how can I be more involved in my child's education?

Parents play a key role in their children's education – in fact, they are their children's very first teachers.

There are many valuable ways for parents to participate in their child's schooling. Here are a few excellent opportunities to get involved, from the classroom to the school level and beyond:

- Helping with homework
- Asking your children about their learning
- Communicating with your children's teachers
- Volunteering at the school
- Lending a hand on school trips
- Serving on your School Council or Board Parent Involvement Committee
- Participating on a provincial education committee

Talk to your school principal or vice-principal if you'd like to find out about opportunities that may exist at your child's school.

Why is parental involvement important?

Parents are strong role models in their children's lives. As such, parents' attitudes toward learning can influence and shape how their children view education, as well as their own capacity to learn.

According to parent involvement expert Dr. Joyce L. Epstein, student achievement is greatly improved when schools, families, and communities work together to support young people in their academic endeavours.

Research has shown that partnerships between these key groups can result in successes which benefit everyone involved – a true win-win-win for students, parents, and communities!

By becoming involved, parents demonstrate that they value education, care about their children's progress, and are committed to providing support when needed. These powerful messages help prepare children for a lifetime of learning in which "home" and "school" are not separate, but rather two unique environments within which to develop, learn, and grow.

School Councils

What are School Councils?

Comprised mostly of parents, School Councils are a vital link between schools and their surrounding communities. Each School Council functions as an advisory board and provides input to school administrators about a variety of school-based topics and issues.

Key excerpts of SCDSB policy relating to School Councils are posted on the [SCDSB website](#).

Who participates on School Councils?

Although membership may vary slightly from school to school, all School Councils consist of a majority of parents, as well as the school principal or vice-principal, a teacher, a non-teaching school employee, and a student. Some Councils also include one or more community representatives.

New School Council members are recruited and elected on an annual basis. For more information about School Councils and how you can be involved, talk to your school principal or download the Ministry of Education's "[School Councils: A Guide for Members](#)".

Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)

What is the Parent Involvement Committee?

The Ministry of Education has mandated every school board to have a Parent Involvement Committee (PIC). At the Simcoe County District School Board, the PIC acts as the steering committee for School Council Chairs meetings and enhances communication with parents. The PIC also reviews grant applications for Ministry funding related to parental involvement.

Detailed information about the SCDSB's Parent Involvement Committee is available on our [website](#).

Who is involved in the PIC?

The PIC is comprised of 12 parent representatives, as well as trustee and administrative representatives. The majority of PIC members must be parents and only the parent members have voting privileges.

How are the 12 parent representatives selected?

To ensure continuity from year to year, each spring the PIC will elect six current members to represent the three SCDSB regions in the following school year. At the first School Council Chairs meeting of the school year, six representatives from the SCDSB's three regions will be nominated and elected to serve on the PIC. Parent representatives may serve on the PIC for a maximum of two years.

How else can parents support learning?

While parent involvement on committees such as School Councils and the PIC is invaluable, there are also many other ways parents can support and encourage their children's learning. Here are a few ideas:

- Lead by example: be a lifelong learner yourself!
- Look for ways to "bring the lesson home" by tying in school lessons with everyday experiences
- Instill confidence in your child that she is capable of learning

- Encourage your child to seek help when he doesn't understand something
- Share suggestions and input with your School Council, school principal and child's teacher

Links

We invite you to visit www.scdsb.on.ca often for news, facts, school information, Board highlights and hundreds of other pages about Simcoe County's public education system. This month we are featuring information regarding [SCDSB policies](#), which are approved by School Board trustees (the Parent Involvement Committee policy number is 4311).

Our internet surfing this month leads to two valuable resources for parents:

- The Ministry of Education's "[Involving Parents in the School: Tips for School Councils](#)"
- Curriculum Services Canada's "[Supporting Your Child's Learning](#)" podcast

Next Issue

The next issue of ***Bringing School Home*** will feature 'Aboriginal Education in the SCDSB.'

Quote of the month

"We need to ensure that no child in this country is prevented from realizing his or her full potential. For this to happen, children need the active involvement and support of their parents throughout the pre-school years and while they are at school."

~ Tony Blair, former British Prime Minister

The Simcoe County District School Board is deeply committed to ensuring all learners have the opportunity to realize their dreams within a vibrant and successful public education system. We are very proud of our 50,000 students who are learning and achieving in our 107 schools and seven adult learning centres throughout our urban and rural communities. Working with school communities, our dedicated and skilled staff members provide quality programs to help students develop lifelong learning skills in safe, caring environments. Our schools are located in the Huronia and Georgian Bay regions of south-central Ontario.

For more information visit our web site at www.scdsb.on.ca



Simcoe County
District School Board