

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

## PARENT REACHING OUT (PRO) GRANT

### Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grant

The Ontario Ministry of Education’s Parent Involvement Policy provides each school board with funds specifically allocated to support school-based initiatives which enhance the participation and engagement of parents in their child’s education.

Starting this school year, the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) funding will be allocated to each school board through Grants for Student Needs (GSN). Through the GSNs, the Ministry provides each school board with base funding to support the parent engagement activities of its school councils.

Each school will receive \$500.00 per year to lead initiatives that address local parent needs and/or remove barriers that prevent parents from participating and engaging fully in their children’s learning and educational progress.

### PRO Outcomes

At the school level, school councils work toward improving student achievement and enhancing the accountability of the education system to parents.

PRO funds are to be used to find local solutions that lessen barriers to parent/guardian engagement in their own school, with the goal of equity of outcomes for student achievement and well-being. Essential to this process is ensuring that all parents have access and inclusive means to support their engagement.

The following are some of the potential outcomes resulting from locally focused parent engagement initiatives:

- Parents demonstrate increased confidence in public education
- Parents have improved experiences of a welcoming school where parents' perspectives are encouraged, valued & heard
- Parents demonstrate awareness of, and participate in school activities, initiatives, and events
- Parents are more involved their child's education
- Parents are provided with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to support their child's learning at home and school
- Parents feel connected with each other, and with members of their community
- Parents understand how to address local needs, and/or systemic barriers in the school community

- Racialized parents are aware of, and supported, to take on leadership opportunities in the school, and board community

### PRO Performance Measures

- Increased parent participation in activities, initiatives, and projects at the local level
- Increased promotion and evidence of diversity, equity, and inclusion at local level
- Increased evidence of parent involvement in leadership roles, reporting, and in decision making at the local level

### Pre-Planning for Parent Engagement Activities

When selecting a parent/guardian engagement initiative councils should consider:

- Aligning the initiative with school plans, so that the learning is closely connected to the local parents’ needs (*i.e., an initiative that is successful in one school community, exactly duplicated in another community may not be as successful*)
- Surveying parents to plan activities that are meaningful and relevant to them, so that they may consider them worthy of their time to attend
- Focusing the outreach to families that may not feel included or visible in the life of the school
- Designing the initiative with different language abilities, parenting styles, circumstances, and work schedules in mind (*i.e., events in the parents first language; accessibility; time of events; etc.*)

### Themes for Parent Engagement Initiatives

- Social inclusion and racism
- Creating and maintaining a safe and welcoming environment
- Respecting parents as valued partners regarding decisions about their child’s education within the education system
- Improving communication between the teacher and the home
- Improving knowledge of Ontario Curriculum expectations and supporting resources



## Eligible PRO Initiatives

Initiatives that identify and address local barriers to parent engagement and may include, but not limited to:

- Development of parent resources (*e.g., leadership resource for parents, resources addressing well-being, mental health, and anti-racism for students and families; existing resources translated into different languages, etc.*);
- Delivery of parent information sessions (*e.g., how to support children and families at home; how to understand curriculum; special education sessions, transition to high school, etc.*);
- Delivery of parent engagement sessions (*e.g., parent networking sessions with an educational/information component*);
- Creating a parent lending library (*e.g., books, curriculum documents, pamphlets, information packages, that provide parents with information and strategies to assist their children*); and
- Innovative initiatives that enable enhanced and diversified parent engagement and involvement.

### Resources:

- [A Book List – Catholic Education, Equity, Diversity and Indigenous Education, and Parenting](#)
- [Speaker's List to Support Parent Engagement Initiatives](#)
- [Examples of TCDSB Local Parent Engagement Initiatives](#)

## Ineligible PRO Initiatives

- Excursions, activities, resources, workshops, or speakers for students, even if parents are in attendance
- Purchase of student supplies for home use (*e.g., markers, paper, glue, scissors, prizes, student agendas, calendars, supplies, scrapbooks, arts, and crafts*)
- Purchase of goods and services for which the Ministry provides funding for students (*e.g., textbooks, library books, furniture, technology, student transportation; etc.*)
- Capital items, such as televisions, sports equipment, shelving, computers, handheld devices (*i.e., tablets/ laptops*)
- Payment to school board staff or volunteers, including salaries, gifts, gift, or honoraria
- Computer software or applications, online subscriptions, voice messaging systems
- School signs or announcement boards
- Landscaping or equipment for outdoor classrooms or school yards
- Fundraising events or prizes/gift certificates for fundraising events
- Social/family events without an educational component for parents

## Accessing PRO Funds

- **No application is required**
- Each school automatically receives \$500.00 to be used in the academic year that it is received
- Funds are not meant to be accumulated and can be used in conjunction with PIC funds
- School councils, in partnership with the school principal, are responsible and accountable to the Ministry via the Board for the use of the funds for their intended purposes
- The initiative is discussed and approved through a motion at a CSPC scheduled meeting, and recorded in the meeting's minutes
- CSPC or the school must upfront the funds for the project. The funds are then reimbursed to the party that paid for the initiative
- The chair/co-chairs and the principal must complete the required documentation for reimbursement of funds (*i.e., transfer the funds from the school's outside agency account, to the designated account*)
- CSPC and the principal is responsible for budgets, successful completion of the initiative and the paperwork required for the reimbursement of funds
- At the end of its term, a school council must prepare and submit a written report to the school and to the board, outlining the council's goals, activities, and achievements.

## TCDSB PRO Reimbursement Process

1. Council/school pre-plan for the use of current funds
2. Presentation at a CSPC public meeting, followed by a vote that is recorded in the meeting's minutes
3. Initiative is completed
4. The CSPC chair/co-chairs and the principal complete and sign the reporting template
5. The principal completes the internal TCDSB cheque requisition
6. The principal submits complete package (*i.e., Reporting template, cheque requisition, original invoices*) to Manuela Sequeira, and retains copies for the school's CSPC financial records
7. Once approved, Business Services will transfer the funds to the identified account and a confirmation email will be sent to the school's general email account
8. The principal notifies the CSCP chair/co-chairs that the transfer has been made

### Resource:

- [TCDSB PRO Reporting Template](#)

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