



**PROTECTING AND ENHANCING
PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation
Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants
des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario
www.osstf.on.ca



**AN OSSTF/FEESO
MEMBER RESOURCE**

**ADVICE WHEN DEALING
WITH CODE'S PARENT
ENGAGEMENT GUIDEBOOK**



INTRODUCTION

The guide was created by the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) without the input of teachers and support staff who work in schools. As a result, it fails to take into consideration many issues identified by OSSTF/FEESO.

The stated goal of the guidebook is to support parent engagement initiatives within schools and boards and to help with planning parent meetings devoted to parent engagement. “CODE recognizes the importance of parent involvement in the development of children’s healthy relationships and building of positive school climates.”

ITEMS OF CONCERN FROM THE GUIDE

“With their [parents’] busy lives, it may be challenging to be present at meetings held at the school” (p.6). Strategies suggested include a variety of electronic communication, such as blogs, podcasts, and web conferences.

Provide transportation: Setting up a driving pool for School Council meetings may help attendance at meetings. If feasible, provide a minibus to pick up parents from more isolated areas. (p.7)

“Some of the suggested activities in this guidebook provide opportunities for parents to share their own best practices and to enhance skills that support their children as they build relationships.” (p. 8)

School Council meetings don’t always have to occur in a school. Some housing complexes have meeting rooms that could be used or community centres in neighbourhoods may also be available. (p.7)

The *Education Act* requires that all schools conduct anonymous school climate surveys (PPM 144). School Councils are asked to review the process and results of these surveys with administration. (p.11)

Considering the mental health issues of our students, this document recommends inviting experts to meetings, to review the ways that parents can contribute to good mental health. (p.24)

ADVICE FOR MEMBERS

Review OSSTF/FEESO policies regarding school advisory councils (8.9.10), and section 8.28 on professional judgment.

Refer to your collective agreement regarding workload issues.

Review OCT professional advisory on the use of electronic communication and social media.

Members should not be using their own vehicles to transport parents to meetings to provide transportation due to insurance and safety issues (as also recommended by the Ontario School Boards’ Insurance Exchange).

The role of our members is to enhance and support student learning. While we work with parents as a school community, it is not our role to facilitate the training and education of parents.

There may be WSIB ramifications in addition to insurance and safety concerns. Refer to your collective agreement regarding workload issues.

There are potential concerns around the use of the results of these surveys to evaluate members’ job performance, particularly in light of the anonymous nature of the process. Members should refrain from commenting on the performance of their colleagues.

The use of school board employees who provide expert advice in support of mental health and well-being should be considered as resources.

WHEN FACED WITH THESE ISSUES, CONSULT YOUR LOCAL LEADERSHIP.