

Public Engagement Resources

A Handbook for School Community Councils and Principals

Saskatchewan School Boards Association

http://www.saskschoolboards.ca/scc/Principalshandbook_Jan07.pdf

This handbook is designed to support the ongoing development of School Community Councils. It is based on the *Final Report of the Local Accountability and Partnerships Panel* (May 2005) and the Department of Learning *Policy Directions for School Community Councils* (November 2005). The Panel's purpose was to recommend a framework for how parents and communities might be meaningfully engaged in schools.

A Typology of Public Engagement Mechanisms

By Gene Rowe and Lynn J. Frewer, 2005

<http://bit.ly/hEz6jc>

This academic research paper attempts to define the concept of public participation. It also provides definitions of public engagement mechanisms and types of public engagement used in a variety of settings. This paper also explains how public participation mechanism techniques are improperly used in certain situations.

All Eyes Forward: Public Engagement and Education Reform in Kentucky

By Molly A. Hunter, *Journal of Law and Education*, Volume 28, Issue 4, October 1999

<http://bit.ly/gbPxPb>

This article takes a look at extensive education reforms initiated in Kentucky throughout the 1990s. The article analyzes an important court case that set forth a number of changes in Kentucky's education. The "Public Dialogue" is of particular importance as it looks at the work of the Prichard Committee which worked to stimulate public engagement in education. This section looked at the ways in which government, educators, businesses and citizens worked together to engage people in public education to improve student achievement.

Beyond Random Acts: Family, School, and Community Engagement as an Integral Part of Education Reform

By Heather B. Weiss, M. Elena Lopez and Heidi Rosenberg, *Nation Policy Forum for Family, School, and Community Engagement*, Harvard Family Research Project, December 2010

<http://bit.ly/hJiqBK>

The document attempts to reframe family engagement policy and align it with 21st century learning. The focus throughout is centred on Family, Student and Community Engagement (FSCE) as a key component to education reform. With a focus on shared responsibility between educators, and family and community members, the research suggests there isn't a one-size fits all approach but rather multiple approaches need to be incorporated to have success in reframing family engagement to improve student achievement. There is also a strong emphasis on data collection. Examples of how FSCE is being incorporated are included throughout the paper.

Citizen Mobilization and Community Institutions: The Public Education Network's Policy Initiatives

By Brenda J. Turnbull, Policy Studies Associates, May 2006

<http://bit.ly/hrByWA>

An in-depth look at the examples from *Taking Responsibility: Using Public Engagement to Reform Our Schools*. This document analyzes strategies used by communities and schools to increase public engagement in public education. It looks at successes and failures by local communities to sway public opinion that can lead to policy or systemic change.

Communities Count: A School Board Guide to Public Engagement

National School Boards Association

https://secure.nsba.org/pubs/item_info.cfm?who=pub&ID=14

The community engagement process, rationale, benefits and concerns are explored in this publication. It examines some common principles and engagement methods as well as the steps required to be successful in engaging the community in education.

Making a Difference for Kids: Running for Election as a School Board Trustee

Ontario Public School Boards' Association

<http://bit.ly/gIBdkJ>

The information provided in this document is fairly generic. Under the heading "Trustees, School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees" is information of importance to school boards to build their network with the community to meet the needs and wants of the public in making decisions.

Parent Engagement: Building Partnerships for the Future

Education Today, Summer 2008, Page 30 (available in print or in online databases)

For the 2007-2008 school year, the Ontario Ministry of Education distributed \$2.3 million in funding for projects designed to increase engagement and make the school system more accessible to parents. This short article explains some of those initiatives in the province of Ontario that resulted from the funding grants. For example, the Rainbow District School Board created a series of tip sheets and an accompanying DVD to provide strategies for parents to help their children become better readers.

Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools

Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010

<http://bit.ly/hpXsiA>

Based on research, Ontario's Ministry of Education recognized a need to focus on parent involvement in their children's education. It sets a vision for parent engagement in Ontario schools; identifies strategies to fulfill the vision; identify and remove systemic barriers to parent engagement; promote specific involvement practices; and, identify the role of other partners in education to encourage parent engagement.

Participation Works! 21 techniques of community participation for the 21st century

By New Economics Foundation, 1999

<http://bit.ly/gb06lp>

This document analyzes 21 various public engagement techniques in order to engage the public. It divides public engagement meetings into various techniques and provides explanations of each. It is a document out of the United Kingdom but its techniques could be applied to local needs and initiatives in Canada.

Political Knowledge, Political Engagement and Civic Education

By William A. Galston, Annual Review of Political Science, Volume 4, 2001

<http://bit.ly/hqOIyv>

This academic research paper looks at the disengagement of the public with civic issues and policies. This is all traced back to education of democratic political issues during people's schooling. It examines the apathy during elections, particularly with younger generations. Although much of the discussion is centred on politics in the United States, much of the discussion overlaps with the disengagement in civic politics and education in Canada. The focus on effectively reengaging people in civic education and political knowledge is important to improving public discourse regarding politics. For decades it was believed engagement in politics in the classroom didn't result in greater participation in the democratic process, however these theories have been challenged more recently.

Public Engagement in Canadian Education: What Can We Learn From "Waiting for Superman"?

Canadian School Boards Association, 2011

<http://cdnsba.org/all/education-in-canada/waiting-for-superman>

This blog examines the documentary *Waiting for Superman* and what lessons can be learned by Canadian educators from the film. The blog post has a number of links to related articles of interest.

Public Engagement in Education

By Will Friedman and Aviva Gutnick with Jackie Danzberger, Public Agenda, 1999

http://www.publicagenda.org/files/pdf/public_engagement_in_education.pdf

This American research document analyzes education reform and failures in outcomes-based education reform while examining public engagement education reform as an alternative. It focuses on having public input throughout the process of educational reform and therefore limiting the amount of bureaucracy in education reform. The arguments presented explain that overly politicizing educational reform leads to more confusion than a public engagement process to educational reform. The document looks at case studies of successful public engagement efforts including rural, urban and national perspectives. It also investigates situations where outcomes-based education weren't properly administered and weren't conducive to effective educational reform.

Public Engagement for Public Engagement: Joining Forces to Revitalize Democracy and Equalize Schools

Edited by Marion Orr and John Rogers, Stanford University Press, 2010

<http://www.sup.org/book.cgi?id=17518>

This webpage provides information on the book, including the foreword and the preface. The book focuses on the importance of community participation in the success or failure of public schools, and the "engagement gap" that exists in public schools. In the first chapter of the book it explains, "Public engagement is about translating shared interests into deliberate collective efforts to promote education equity. The field seeks to simultaneously address educational and civic inequality through collective action of parents, community members, youth, and organized civic groups." Although based in the United States, public engagement in public education follows similar principles here at home. The book is available for purchase on the site above or on websites such as www.amazon.ca.

Public Engagement in School Reform: Building Public Responsibility for Public Education

By Amanda R. Broun, Wendy D. Puriefoy and Emily Richard, Public Education Network, April 2006

<http://bit.ly/eT5StP>

This essay looks at how the public voice is missing in public education and makes suggestions as to how to improve public engagement through the Public Education Network's vision. It examines the theoretical framework of public engagement and explains the need to look beyond the "usual suspects" to create public dialogue regarding education. It then looks at specific case studies in New York and New Jersey.

Research summary of public perceptions

Alberta School Boards Association

<http://bit.ly/hCPOGU>

A review of nine focus groups arranged throughout Alberta regarding school board public awareness and engagement. The document also reviews a telephone survey of 800 Albertans and 766 who completed the survey online.

Summary Report: Summit on Public Involvement in Public Education

Alberta School Boards Association

<http://bit.ly/hqOIyv>

This document reviews an initiative by the Alberta School Boards Association "to find ways to put the public back into public education." It looks best practices of public engagement for school boards. The *Summit on Public Involvement in Public Education* primarily included members of the public, elected trustees and representatives of other educational stakeholders in Alberta.

Taking Responsibility: Using Public Engagement to Reform Our Public Schools

Public Education Network, 2004

<http://bit.ly/ekCWFj>

An in-depth look at engagement in public education, the document attempts to provide a "snapshot" of how communities are working together to become engaged in public education. It focuses primarily on community organizations partnering with educators and other members of the community to increase the presence of education in discussions. There is a focus on the strategies of engagement and many examples are provided of successful engagement efforts. Additionally, emphasis is placed on policy shifts and systemic change regarding public engagement in education.

The Community Connection: Case Studies in Public Engagement

National School Boards Association

https://secure.nsba.org/pubs/item_info.cfm?who=pub&ID=13

The focus of this publication is the importance of community involvement in determining the quality and future direction of schools. Information is presented in two parts – the first is through analysis and discussion of the current issues and trends in school district practices. The second part examines some of the ideas and practical solutions currently used in school districts today.