

**PIC Feedback on Strategies and Tools to address the Six
Barriers to Parent Involvement**
(Wednesday, February 19, 2020)

1. Time

Strategies:

- Informal meetings among Trustees and parents during lunch times
- Make small bit size engagement tasks
- Hold a social/sport event for parents during lunch time once a month. E.g., yoga, Zumba, salsa, etc.

Tools:

- Webcast events for parents who are unable to attend
- Develop parental support material (for math, for example)
- Meet in community space during regular community meeting times

2. Newness to the System

Strategies:

- Introduce parents to local/ethnic community activities around the school
- Understanding parents cultural engagement with education

Tools:

- Provide information on how education works in Canada
- Welcome/mentor/partner newcomers
- Ask parents to volunteer with school activity
- Potlucks to acquaint newcomers with the school environment
- Develop Glossary of Terms for newcomers

3. Language

Strategies:

- Offer free ESL classes for parents at the school
- Clear messages; avoid jargons
- Get feedback from users
- Involve MLOs in homework groups, where applicable
- Teachers/Administrators to learn few words in another language to welcome parents in their own language

Tools:

- Have access to translators
- Offer more graphics
- Make homework obligatory so parents can help their kids at home at their own pace
- Enforce inclusion and mandate school councils to have members from the visible minorities present at the school
- Train teachers to engage and participate

4. Not Feeling Welcome**Strategies:**

- Reflect the community during events
- Make reference material and events that encompass diversity
- More focus on inclusion and diversity
- Do not treat difference as “hot topics”
- Ask parents to make a display to represent their family or donate to a time capsule to mark their presence in the school and make it valuable
- Formalize expectations for school teachers. E.g. Framework for type and frequency of communication with parents about learning, framework for ways to engage parents in classroom or school learning activities such as field trips
- Invite parents with special expertise to share their experience with students in areas that are connected to curriculum or other Board objectives for students

Tools:

- Involve parents in school activities, ask them to volunteer for a task in an event
- Offer annual potluck for all families
- Create a family event. E.g. decorate a bike, or create a family project to be done at school during a weekend
- Every school to create a diverse committee to engage marginalized groups and help those who are struggling in the system
- Meet in community spaces
- Provide translation
- Have orientation sessions to support newcomers on how the system works

5. Personal Experience with School

Strategies:

- Allow other agencies in the school to help advocate for families when there is conflict
- Create alignment between community mental health and educators/school service
- Intake strategies for kindergarten
- Councillors to connect with parents of high school students to explain choices about future education

Tools:

- Nurtured Heart Approach
- “Prime the parents” process in place
- Identify red flags early
- Professional development in collaboration with the community
- Create a mandatory task for teachers to talk to a random parent everyday
- Mandate parents to submit one comment to improve the school and follow up with phone calls for 5 mins

6. Family Responsibility

Strategies:

- Communicate the different ways to engage in a child’s learning (does not have to be through attending school council meetings)
- Work in collaboration with families
- Encourage a parent “buddy” system where parents share responsibilities

Tools:

- Movie night for families at school
- Garage sale for families at school
- Holiday season gift exchange
- Potluck at the end of school year
- Food market where any family can cook a dish and sell at the event
- Food trucks