

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

TOPIC: STUDENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AT THE EARLY YEARS LEVEL
NOVEMBER 16, 2023, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

STRATEGIC
PRIORITY

ENGAGEMENT OF ALL
STUDENTS, FAMILIES,
AND COMMUNITIES

Information for the Board - 10 Fast Facts

1. **Family engagement** is intended to create respectful, reciprocal relationships with families to promote authentic shared responsibilities for children's learning and development. Families are invited into the classroom to participate as members of the learning community and are **acknowledged as the first and continuing educators of children.** (MOE, 2012)



6. **A year at a Glance in the Good Spirit School Division:** at the beginning of the year, we work on building trusting relationships. Throughout the year we continue to learn from families and share information regarding the child's development and learning. At the end of the year, we share the learning, prepare for transitioning, and celebrate the successes together.



2. The **diversity** of families is valued and is used as a resource for building partnerships.



7. **Prekindergarten** starts with home visits and inviting families into the classroom with small groups or one-on-one family visits. PreK has time built into their schedule for family engagement on Fridays, although many times, events occur during the evening to accommodate families. The ministry suggests that two family engagement activities be held a month.

3. Family engagement involves continuous **communication** between educators and families, where both parties share insights, concerns, and information about the child's progress. Edsby and Seesaw are both used as online communication platforms.



8. In **Kindergarten** Good Spirit School Division has built family engagement time into the calendar encouraging events to be held one day during the family engagement window. The windows this year are Sept. 25th to Oct. 13th and Jan. 22nd to Feb. 9th. Student-led conferences occur twice a year, which allows families to learn about their child's development, goals, and learning. Kindergarten Orientation or open house is held in May/June to support transitioning students and families into kindergarten.



4. Engaging families also extends into the larger **community**. Schools can involve families in school events, workshops, and activities to create a sense of belonging or help families in making connections with community supports such as Children's Therapies, or the Family Resource Centre which offers a variety of programs for families.

9. GSSD **financially** supports family engagement by allocating \$200 per classroom for expenses.



5. **Practices that make a difference** in family engagement:
 - High Impact: Parent training events, goal-setting talks, regular personalized communication
 - Low Impact: Fundraising, parent volunteering, generic school newsletters (Harvard Family Research Project Webinar Series, 2011)



10. **Examples** of family engagement events in Good Spirit School Division:
 - Reading buddy adoption day
 - Brown Bear Learning stations
 - Self-Regulation activities
 - Getting to know your family - placemats
 - Inviting family members to share - beading, Pow Wow

