

Prince Edward Island Home and School Federation  
“Brainstorming Session”  
November 18, 2010, 6:30 - 8:30 PM  
Harmony House Theatre, Hunter River, PEI

1. **Newcomers**
  - Language challenges at meetings
  - How to engage newcomer parents?
2. **Attendance / Involvement**
3. **Annual Meeting Resolutions**
  - What’s good for some schools not good for others (i.e. fees)
4. **School Fees**
  - Should there be fees?
  - Fees need to be documented
  - “Banning” fees may not be best for all situations
  - Maybe some things - nobody should pay for
5. **Air Quality Testing**
  - Lack of information - “grey area”
  - Many agendas at play
  - Mixed messages
6. **School Websites**
  - H&S presence on school site
  - Websites for home & schools
  - Where are they housed? Who pays? Who updates?
7. **Role of Home & School at High School Level**
  - What to concentrate on?
  - How to continue to engage parents?
8. **How to encourage parent awareness of curriculum and policy?**
9. **Communication**
  - All
10. **Fundraising**
  - How to prioritize needs
    - “Open warfare”
  - Are we just a “fundraising committee?”
  - Who decides where money goes?
  - Is principal in charge?

- 11. Parent Engagement**
  - How to involve and engage parents in more than just fundraising?
- 12. Local to Local Sharing**
  - What are “best practices?”
  - Where to go for grants, etc.
  - Playgrounds, etc.
- 13. How to engage more fathers / male guardians / grandfathers, etc.**
- 14. Infrastructure Funding / Planning**
  - playgrounds
  - white boards / FM systems
  - what should we pay for?
  - parent involvement in capital planning
  - Could province pay the tax? (as in NB?)
  - How to write resolutions
- 15. Technology**
  - Wireways / Boxes
  - FM
  - Laptops? Cost issues
  - Engaging Corporate Canada
  - Do we need the latest / greatest equipment?
- 16. Taxes (PST/GST) on Home & School Purchases - possible resolution**
- 17. Lack of Commitment**
  - Parents unwilling to join executive
- 18. Succession Planning**
  - Grab grade one / kindergarten parents early
- 19. Bullying**

Total = 19 Brainstorming Topics

## TOP 3

1. **Parent Engagement**
2. **Fundraising**
3. **Infrastructure**

### 1. **Parent Engagement**

- speaker series, agenda / topics suggested by parents.
  - speaker first, then meeting.
  - boasted turnout
- childcare / movie night
- what if nobody shows up for speakers?
  - ask for interest / register in advance
  - ask parents what they want
- decouple “meeting” and “thing H&S is doing”
- food
- invite teachers to speak at meetings
- keep meeting to an hour
- time limit meetings
- days that work
  - last Tuesday of every month
  - moved to 6:30
  - some 6:00 - 7:00
  - some 90 minutes / some 1 hour

### 2. **Fundraising**

- Schools need long-term plans, not just year to year
- Fall back on Federation for “backup” when setting limits
- Break the tradition of principals assuming things “because that’s the way it’s always been done”
- fund things that benefit the school community as a whole
- **Accountability is key!** - don’t write a blank cheque
- In-classroom fundraising for microwaves, etc.

### 3. **Infrastructure** (playgrounds, capital funding, etc.)

- Beneficial for Home & School to be involved in long-term planning
- Reach out to school board to find out plans / agenda.
- Invite some parents to come and share their experiences.
- Resolution at AGM - one federation voice on the issue - on playgrounds
- Use Kindergarten as jumping-off point for discussion.
- Chocolate bar sales - allowed or not
- Principals “going direct” with fundraising, cutting out Home and School
- What is infrastructure - Federation come up with a standard list. **(ACTION)**

## **ACTION:**

- 1. Engage: Share what works with others (format, time, speakers, engagement, etc.) for parent engagement**
- 2. Engage: Hold President/Executive brainstorming twice a year. A better forum - the AGM and sets agenda for AGM in advance.**
- 3. Unified: Unified voice on what infrastructure is, and what should be funded by H&S (and where to turn if H&S won't fund)**