

Parent Engagement Opportunity Fund  
April, 2009

**Bloomfield Home and School Council**

President: Shelley Sentner / Gwen Clements

Principal: Maurice Poirier

**Name of Project:**

Welcome Back Barbecue, Parent Games Night

**Goal:**

- To provide parents with the opportunity to meet with staff at an informal gathering.
- To demonstrate the benefits of spending quality time with children.
- To provide parents with strategies to help their children develop reading skills.

**Description**

Parents were invited to come to school on September 17th for a Welcome Back-Meet & Greet Barbeque in an informal setting. Afterwards, everyone assembled in the gym for a brief outline of the goals of the school and parents were made aware of issues that the school wanted to address throughout the year. New teachers were introduced and Home & School president, Gwen Clements, gave a brief description of the importance of becoming involved as a volunteer or as a member of the school council. Following these presentations, parents went to their child's classroom to become familiar with the curriculum that being delivered by the classroom teacher.

**Did you Achieve Your Goal?**

Yes, we think we did. Our attendance was good and we received many positive comments from parents, students and staff. We see this a a positive beginning to more and mare parent involvement at our school.

### **Who did the project benefit?**

Parents and children both benefited. Parents were introduced to their child's teacher and as a result in future will find it easier to contact them in the future with concerns. Parents also heard how they can play an important role in the education of their child in cooperation with the school. Children always benefit when parents become actively involved with their education.

### **What Challenges are you still facing with parent engagement?**

The Bloomfield Home and School Council will attempt to further engage parents in their child's education by hosting a Math Games Night during the school year. We also hope to have the resources to provide a 30 minute presentation on how to help them help their children develop good reading strategies.

### **Thoughts about the project topic (provided by project partners)**

The combination of food and games can be a great way to break down the natural nervousness, uncertainty and apprehension that often accompanies the opening of the school year. Everyone, including teachers, wonders what lies ahead for the upcoming year. Friendly competition between teachers, parents and student as groups or together at such events leaves everyone with a feeling of togetherness that cannot happen nearly as easily in more structured settings.

Providing environments where the emphasis is on talking, sharing and fun can be a powerful way to "set the stage" for parents to become more engaged in their children's school learning and to have participants say, "Let's not wait so long to do this again!"