

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)** was held on Tuesday, May 17, at 6:30 pm virtually on zoom, with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: L. Tremble

Board Staff: j. chanicka, M. Gerard, M. Hoare, D. Liebermann, H. McKinna, L. Read, S. Shadaan, G. Shantz

Committee Members: M. Bond, C. Chugh, B. Daniel, C. Laughren, A. Misra, P. Shaw, C. Ugwuogo, M. Wang

Regrets: H. Asif, D. Ballantyne, Z. Gent, S. Lehal, R. Shaheen, N. Sheen

Guests: T. Malhotra

**Call to Order**

Committee Co-Chair M. Bond called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.  
Territorial Acknowledgement video was played and read by H. McKinna.

**Approval of Agenda**

1. Moved by C. Laughren, seconded by A. Misra:

**That the May 17, 2022 PIC meeting Agenda be approved.**

**-Carried-**

**Approval of Minutes**

2. Moved by A. Misra, seconded by C. Laughren:

**That the March 1, 2022 PIC meeting Minutes be approved.**

**-Carried-**

**Director's Update**

Director j. chanicka, Associate Director L. Read, Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard  
Coordinating Superintendent G. Shantz, D. Liebermann, Senior Manager, Research

**Student Census Update – D. Liebermann, Senior Manager, Research**

Consultations have wrapped up over the past few months with various stakeholder groups and we are now engaged in the first phase of knowledge mobilization with regards to the student census results.

**Collecting Identity-Based Data**

- WRDSB Census open from April – June 2021
  - Parents/guardians (K-3)
  - Students (4-12+)
  - Student census website - <https://www.wrdsb.ca/about-the-wrdsb/research/student-census>
  - Informational Video - [https://youtu.be/5\\_x9EM0SiRQ](https://youtu.be/5_x9EM0SiRQ)

## **Provincial Requirements**

- Anti-Racism Act (O. Reg. 267/18 and Data Standards)
  - Considering community interests before releasing potentially sensitive information
  - Boards must develop and make publicly available a report that includes results of analyses, notable differences, and information about collection methods and data quality
  - Open data file (de-identified files with all census results)
- Ministry of Education
  - Census data must be incorporated into Board Equity and Improvement Planning

## **Guiding Principles for Using Student Data**

- Student well-being and safety
  - Understanding how findings will impact students
- Privacy
  - MFIPPA and the WRDSB privacy impact assessment
- Deeper and broader understanding of identity-based student experiences and outcomes
  - Deliberately and purposefully sharing our learning
- Action-oriented
  - Using our learning to inform policies, programs and practices

## **Data and Reports for Release**

- Background and Reference Guide
  - Planning and processes, knowledge mobilization
- Summary Results Report
  - Results from each Census question (with notes)
- Supporting Documents and Resources
  - Glossary, guidelines, accessibility info, questionnaires, regulations, policies and procedures
- Open Data Files (de-identified all census results)
- Summary infographic and communications materials

## **Next Steps and Thank You!**

- Finalize summary reports for public release
  - Targeted for June 13
- Prepare communication (Ministry, Anti-Racism Directorate, staff, public) for release of data/reports
- Prepare next steps for board professional learning and action planning based on Census data
- Contact us: Dana Liebermann, David Lane

## **Questions**

- Q. Are you going to share any of this back to the students that participated? A. Yes and we also plan to let them know we appreciated their participation in the census and it will make a difference.
- Q. How and where the data be released. A. Initially Board level, phase two will be family of school level. Will not report for any group smaller than 15.
- Q. What is the engagement approach that you took with the community? How does the Board engage parents? A. We engaged with standing committees as we were preparing the census, including SEAC and EIAG, which include parent representatives to ensure we had appropriate response options. We did follow up with parents that were part of specific communities and community organizations regarding how to present the data back

- Q. Will the de-identified data be available for parents and students to access? A. As of June 13, it will be available on the wrdsb.ca website.
- Q. Will parents be notified that this data is available. A. Yes.
- Q. Was survey the primary method? A. The census was in the form of a survey. It was available in several languages and in paper format. Support provided to students in class, if needed.
- Q. Were people consulted on how they wanted to be engaged? A. Surveying is one method. We did use other methods to seek feedback as we prepared for the census and afterward.
- Q. How is census making a difference in informing your plans? A. Our report will be released on June 13, it will include questions and response rate. Part of the report will include action items and a commitment to what we will do with this information.

#### Strategic Planning Update, Director chanicka

Wrapping up one part of the process of the development of the multi-year strategic plan (MYSP). The team rallied and we had one of the broadest consultative strategic planning processes that we've had as a district. 10,000 people participated, half of which are students. Using four different methods, two through pop up tools we were able to collect the voice of students from K-12.

Partnered with Overlap Associates, they have done work both locally and internationally. Helped us get to as many voices as possible from across the region and to center students' voices. The results have been taken to the Trustees and the Senior team to pull them together in a meaningful way. It is now at the phase where it's going to be taken back to students where they will look at the highlights and tell us what's important to them. It will then come back to Trustees and we hope to have an outline at a public board meeting by mid-June. It's been an extensive process, ongoing since August 2021.

As we build the strategic directions, a key consideration is what the results of the student census are telling us, along with feedback we received in the last two years from students and families. We're trying to leverage the strategic process and build on the foundation of the information we've gathered from families, students and staff and build it into an ambitious plan for the system.

Sometime in the Fall, a Director's response to the MYSP will be shared with the community, including the results and plans. We've heard people are sometimes consulted but do not hear the results, so we want to address this. This allows us as an organization to be more transparent and accountable.

Q. What are the timelines and what is the plan? A. Hoping by mid-June we'll report back to Trustees in mid-June with an official launch of the strategic plan in Fall 2022. It will be shared with the public.

Q. M. Bond stated that PIC and WRAPSC were not consulted as a group in the strategic plan process but instead were consulted individually. We had expectations that parent groups were going to be consulted as a group. How were other groups focused on? A. The consultation with all standing committees of the board was completed in the same way. Some groups got together as a group to discuss their feedback and formulate their responses to the survey. None of the groups is less important than any of the other groups. We have an established relationship with the standing committees of the board and we wanted to try to get as many other voices as possible through the consultation process.

Q. Was it the same set of questions that we all read online or were some more specific questions used to draw out more information from groups? A. Trustees identified multiple groups across Waterloo Region that

reflected the diversity of the students and families that we serve. Some of the consultations with those groups were through focus groups, others through a survey invitation.

Q. What was your target number of response rates for students and families? A. The goal was to get as many voices as possible through the process. There was a communication plan to help us to try to reach as many voices as possible. As a district, this has been the most robust process we've ever had. It doesn't mean we can't do better, but we've come a long way and would like to always get as many voices as possible with the limited time we had. Statistically, with a student body of 65k students and utilizing a random sampling approach, a couple of hundred responses are considered statistically significant. We tried to have as broad of a reach as possible, including community groups, institutions, structures, etc. The previous strategic plan consultation 7 – 8 years ago, was a large ballroom-style consultation. We had a couple of representatives from a variety of groups. The vision this time was to try to ensure the consultation was far broader.

M. Bond stated that the Board should ensure there is clear communication. PIC was expecting to be consulted as a group and if this changes, let us know. In consultations and situations this year at PIC we're almost looked over, we are parents and represent other organizations, skills and experiences. The board does not appreciate who is in the room. We're all just parents and come with different experiences. PIC/WRAPSC parents had different expectations. Thank you for answering the questions. We are looking for action, not just words.

Director Chanicka stated he would own the miscommunication around the strategic planning process and apologized. Absolutely, we can take the feedback and learn from it and do better in terms of how we communicate. I do want to clarify at no point have I or we, as a board, ever communicated that PIC is not valuable or that we look over you or think of you as just parents. In the last number of meetings, we have emphasized this. In the minutes it is noted, how we can leverage the expertise of everyone on PIC and the many ways we appreciate and value PIC. We appreciate the parents volunteering their time for the PIC committee.

### **Trustee Report, Trustee Tremble**

The Trustee Report is included in the agenda package. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) has information about the Provincial election on its website ([opsba.org](http://opsba.org)) related to education and additional resources. They also have information on the Municipal elections in Oct 2022. There is a list of candidates running on each city's election website. Encourage everyone to read about your Trustee candidates, it is an important role. Sometimes ETFO runs information evenings for Trustee candidates.

OPSBA is running an "I heart public education" campaign, encouraging stakeholders and particularly students to make video clips in different languages saying "I heart public education". The videos can be sent to OPSBA and they will compile them into a video (there are prizes for students who submit videos).

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer C. Laughren shared the Treasurer's Report which is included in the agenda package. There were no questions.

Monies that were approved in March have yet to be spent, except for sending the 3 PIC and 3 WRAPSC parents to the April 2022 Online Children's Mental Health Conference.

### **Co-Chairs Report**

Co-Chairs M. Bond and B. Daniel each shared their respective Co-Chair Reports which are included

in the agenda package. There were no questions.

### **Presentation of Recommendations\***

*\*Presentations are included at the end of the minutes.*

PIC split into three groups to provide recommendations on the three questions Director Chanicka asked at the December 7<sup>th</sup> PIC meeting regarding how to improve parent engagement at the WRDSB.

#### **Questions asked by Director Chanicka:**

1. How can WRDSB change school council & other parent volunteer opportunities to be more inclusive, productive & varied?
2. How can communication be improved to support a productive relationship between parents/guardians & teachers?
3. How can the WRDSB improve the way parents/guardians navigate their schools and school system?

**Group 1:** C. Laughren (lead), M. Bond, M. Wang, R. Shaheen, P. Shaw.

C. Laughren presented the results for Group 1 to question #1.

**Question 1:** How can WRDSB change school council & other parent volunteer opportunities to be more inclusive, productive & varied?

Approach to feedback: small parent groups in facilitated discussions in which everyone present had an opportunity to speak. WRAPSC meeting with representatives from 27 different School Councils and 1 elementary school council and 1 secondary school council. Conversations guided by using a feedback template.

#### **Question 1 Feedback/Answers:**

1. Allocate WRDSB staff member(s) and their time to develop, maintain, resource, and oversee the implementation of a board-wide volunteer management program, which includes the more formal structure of PIC, WRAPSC, ad hoc involvement on Board-led committees, as well as school-based, principal-led volunteer engagement.
2. Develop a shared value statement and consistent management process for volunteers across the WRDSB system, including an outline of the scope of involvement and accommodation for the diversity among potential volunteers, which schools can then adapt to suit the dynamics within their respective communities.
3. Support and train school principals in how to involve volunteers as a part of their school community, specifically in adapting the above recommendation as an ongoing program to enrich their school's operations and their students' learning environment.
4. Communicate all volunteer opportunities on one centralized, fully accessible platform at each school to ensure equal opportunity for all parents with the capability for translation.
5. Support each school in organizing a School Council with a consistent purpose, structure, and recruitment process, endorsed by the principal, and designed to enrich its community.

Director Chanicka was thankful to receive this information and confirmed it will help us so much.

Dr. Pushor from the University of Saskatchewan states Educators should consider themselves visitors in the landscape of schools. Research shows literacy and numeracy scores go up when more families are engaged. We appreciate when you point out when our policies and procedures are not aligning. Really appreciate this and thank you to everyone for the work that has gone into this.

Trustee Tremble echoed the Director's thanks. It really offers some concrete things we can do and she would be happy to take the report back to Trustees.

**Group 2:** P. Shaw (lead), A. Misra, H. Asif, S. Lehal, M. Bond, C. Laughren

P. Shaw presented the results for Group 2 to question #2.

**Question 2:** How can communication be improved to support a productive relationship between parents/guardians & teachers?

Approach to feedback: PIC group #2, 10 secondary school parents, 9 elementary school parents, 2 newcomer parents with MLL learners attending 3 schools over the past five years. Conversations were guided by using a feedback template. Identified communication successes, challenges and barriers.

**Question 2 Feedback/Answers:**

1. Adopt a web-based Parent Portal to provide consistent and equitable access to communication from teachers, schools, and the WRDSB. Parent Portals share real-time information ranging from teacher's newsletters to student progress and attendance and support ongoing direct communication between teachers and families.
2. With representative participation of stakeholders, develop and commit to standards of communication that establish essential content, the timeline for distribution, and the expected tone of the messaging. Communication standards should support the Board's stated goal of engaging parents as partners.

Director Chanicka, thank you to all the PIC members for your work on this.

**Group 3:** B. Daniel (lead), C. Chugh, N. Sheen, Z. Gent

B. Daniel presented the results for Group 3 to question #3.

**Question 3:** How can the WRDSB improve the way parents/guardians navigate their schools and school system?

Approach to feedback: PIC group #3 reflected on their experience as a parent. Prepared a survey. 22 people were surveyed, small sample size due to time limitations (20 elementary, 2 secondary).

**Question 3 Feedback/Answers:**

1. Hold parent orientation sessions
2. Set up an online parent portal where parents can access various information as well as interact with staff directly
3. Provide opportunities for safe face to face parent-teacher meetings

4. Support teachers in enhancing classroom communications
5. Survey parents board-wide for feedback

Board staff stated their thanks for all of the feedback from questions 1, 2 and 3, including, this information is golden. Big thank you, a lot of hard work has gone into this. Strong partnerships with the parents and school board are so important. Such valuable information.

Director chanicka – this is such deep, rich information that can really support us moving forward with the strategic plan; including what are the structures we need to put in place and what are the resources? Thank you, this is a gold mine. Heartfelt gratitude. I really appreciate the feedback and extra effort from PIC that went into gathering this information and sharing it with us. This will support the WRDSB to improve as a district.

### **Consent Agenda**

M. Bond shared the Membership Report and PRO Grant Report are both included in the agenda package for PIC's review.

### **Presentation on PIC Guidelines for Policy Review, A Misra**

A. Misra shared a PIC WRDSB Policy Review Task Group Report is included in the agenda package.

The PIC Guidelines for Policy Review are in draft format. Director chanicka thanked the group that worked on this project.

The Policy Working Group is currently reviewing the Policy Review Process. Trustee Tremble suggested she can bring this information to Trustees on the Policy Working Group in relation to the process they are developing and offer feedback. It could be brought back to PIC at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year.

There may be an opportunity to set up a meeting with S. Reidel, PIC and a senior team member to have a conversation regarding the suggested Policy Review Guidelines. It could be part of a larger engagement strategy.

A. Misra suggested a cover note can be included on the PIC Guidelines for Policy Review regarding the status. More input from current PIC parents would be helpful. M. Bond will send out a survey to have an hour meeting to discuss the PIC Guidelines for Policy Review and also celebrate the wins over the past year!

### **Thank you from Director chanicka**

Thank you so much to the PIC Committee for the time effort and energy that you have contributed to PIC. I believe the work you invested in will really help us to think about doing things differently. My hope is you'll see it explicitly in some of the work that comes forward.

Thank you to everyone and thank you to those that are completing their terms. Deeply grateful for everything you've contributed. Looking forward to building on this work and with this group, it is some incredible work and I'm looking forward to actioning it.

### **2022-23 PIC Meeting Dates**

September 27, 2022, December 6, 2022, February 28, 2023, May 16, 2023.  
Location TBD, either Cambridge Room at Education Centre and/or Virtual.

### **Adjournment**

The Parent Involvement Committee Meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm.



# PIC Discussion Questions

## Feedback Report Summaries

Question 1: Christina Laughren

Question 2: Patricia Shaw

Question 3: Beth Daniel







**Q1: How can WRDSB change school council  
& other parent volunteer opportunities to  
be more inclusive, productive & varied?**

# Approach to Feedback

- ▶ “Working groups would be so much value-added, esp. at this point with strategic planning process.” – Director Chanicka, Dec. 7, 2021
- ▶ Small parent groups in facilitated discussions to foster relationships through rich conversations & experience sharing. Participants incl’d:
  - PIC: C. Laughren (lead), M. Bond, M. Wang, R. Shaheen, P. Shaw
  - WRAPSC: 27 school council representatives
  - 1 elementary school council & 1 secondary school council
- ▶ Conversations guided using feedback template, with emphasis on positive examples & barriers to parent participation (pre- & recent-pandemic state).
- ▶ Responses distilled into series of positive, constructive recommendations from PIC to Board staff.
- ▶ Research examples incl’d based on parent network experience for emphasis, where appropriate.
- ▶ Time-consuming process but outcomes worth extra effort for valuable exchanges about possibilities.

# Group Feedback Questions

Questions explored meaningfulness, relevance , inclusiveness & barriers:

- ▶ What makes a volunteer opportunity (in public school education) meaningful to you as a parent/family?
- ▶ What parent volunteer opportunities are offered in your school? Are adaptations made to ensure all interested parents feel comfortable and valued?
- ▶ Do you see a direct connection between your volunteer time & how this work impacts your school &/or your child's learning?
- ▶ What activities would appeal to more parents? Which methods could be used to encourage more parent participation? Are types of opportunities keeping pace with changes in education delivery?

# Recommendations

- ▶ Allocate WRDSB staff member(s) & their time to develop, maintain, resource, & oversee implementation of a board-wide volunteer management program, which includes more formal structure of PIC, WRAPSC, ad hoc involvement on Board-led committees, as well as school-based and principal-led volunteer engagement.
  - Diverse parent volunteer groups need a guide post, i.e. framework or structure.
- ▶ Develop a shared value statement & consistent management process for volunteers across WRSDB system, which schools can then adapt to suit the dynamics within their respective communities.
  - Policy #4021 & Procedure #AP1415 appear to be missing considered & respectful management process.
- ▶ Support & train school principals in how to involve volunteers as a part of their school community, specifically in adapting the above recommendation as ongoing program to enrich their school's operations & their students' learning environment.
  - School parent volunteers can be an "opportunity", not a "burden" rooted in "personal bias".

# Recommendations

- ▶ Communicate all volunteer opportunities on one centralized, fully accessible platform at each school to ensure equal opportunity for all parents with capability for translation.
  - Intrinsic barriers cause indirect messages of exclusivity.
- ▶ Support each school in organizing a School Council with a consistent purpose, structure & recruitment process, endorsed by principal & designed to enrich its community.
  - A council can be the 'welcome' into a school, offering an ongoing point of connection for parents/families.

## **Please consider this:**

*Volunteer involvement brings the surrounding community into the school environment; while parent volunteers serve as role models to students for an integrated connection between school and home.*

**Q2:** How can communication be improved to support a productive relationship between parents/guardians & teachers?



# Approach

- ▶ Conversations guided using feedback template:
  - PIC feedback group: P. Shaw (lead) A. Misra, H. Asif, S. Lehal, M. Bond, C. Laughren
  - 10 secondary school parents, 9 elementary school parents
  - 2 newcomer parents with English language learners attending 3 schools over past 5 years
- ▶ Identified communication successes, challenges, and barriers
- ▶ Research
- ▶ Recommendations

# Template questions

- ▶ Teacher communication methods, tools, or channels - Include all ways your child's teacher uses to connect with you.
- ▶ Frequency and timing of teacher communication - Include when you feel most and least connected.
- ▶ Communication process used by the teacher in connecting with you - Does the process make you and your family feel part of the school community?
- ▶ Teacher response to your concerns, issues and/or suggestions - Think about whether an opportunity for discussion or input is provided.



# Key Recommendation

## Parent Portal

- ▶ Adopt a software learning management system that provides a **Parent Portal** feature.
- ▶ A Parent Portal allows families to access all school-related information about students - in real time, including homework, attendance, clubs and teams, assessments, calendar, etc.
- ▶ Parent Portals support communication between teachers and parents on platform, without the use of email.
- ▶ Some commercially available Parent Portal platforms currently used in Ontario School Boards: Edsby, PowerSchool, MyFamilyRoom, Follet Aspen.

# Parent Portal Example: Edsby

The screenshot displays the Edsby Parent Portal interface. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the Edsby logo, a search bar, and user information for Lisa Lee. Below the navigation bar, the main content area is divided into several sections:

- Left Sidebar:** Contains school information (Tecumseh High School, High Prairie School District), a "Classes" list with teacher profiles (English, Geography of Canada, Principles of Mathematics, Science), and a "View Report Cards" button. At the bottom of the sidebar are "Portfolio" and "Learning Story" options.
- Top Banner:** A row of promotional tiles for "5 Exam Study Tips", "Peer Tutor Signups", "Anti-Bullying Awareness", "Valedictorian Nominations", "COVID-19: Stay Home!", and "Celeb Succ".
- Recent Activity:** A section titled "Recent Activity" showing three items:
  - Ms. Archer SCIENCE:** "Project: Model House Project - Friday, July 17 2020 @ 1:05PM". Description: "You and your partner will build a model house or modify a dollhouse with at least 2 rooms and wire it with the lighting circuits specified below." Details: "Room 1 has one light bulb controlled by a single switch", "Room 2 has two light bulbs that go on and off together, controlled by a single switch", "All lights must glow with the same brightness", "There is one main connection point on the source providing power to both switches in the house". Includes a "Submit" button and "2 days ago" timestamp.
  - Mr. Harris ENGLISH:** "Essay: Themes in Romeo and Juliet - Monday, July 20 2020 @ 7:05AM". Includes a "Resubmit" button and "4 days ago" timestamp.
  - Mr. Beard PRINCIPLES OF MATHEMATICS:** "Assignment: Transforming Functions - Friday, July 10 2020 @ 1:00PM". Includes a "Resubmit" button.
- Right Panel:** Shows the date "Fri, Jul 17" and a calendar icon. Below this are two "Overdue" assignments:
  - Overdue Assignment: Evaluation of your Lab Envi...** (Laboratory Training) with a "Submit" button.
  - Overdue Project: Model House Project** (Science) with a "Submit" button.Below the overdue items is a "Today Day 1" schedule:

Time	Subject
ALL DAY	PA Day
7:05AM	English (ENG1D_A)
7:05AM	Essay Work Period (English)
10:05AM	Principles of Mathematics (MPM1D_A)
10:05AM	Science (SNC1D_D)
1:05PM	Science (SNC1D_A)
4:05PM	Geography of Canada (CGC1D_A)

At the bottom of the right panel is a "Next Week" section with items for Monday, July 20th: "Science Ctr" and "Choir practice".

## 30+ School Boards with Parent Portals

- ▶ Algoma District School Board
- ▶ Avon Maitland District School Board
- ▶ Durham District School Board
- ▶ Grand Erie District School Board (Power School)
- ▶ Greater Essex Country District School Board (Edsby)
- ▶ Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
- ▶ Hasting and Prince Edward District School Board
- ▶ James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board
- ▶ Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
- ▶ Lakehead District School Board
- ▶ Limestone District School Board (portal for marks only)
- ▶ Near North District School Board
- ▶ Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- ▶ Peel District School Board
- ▶ Rainy River District School Board
- ▶ Renfrew County District School Board
- ▶ Simcoe County District School Board (PowerSchool)
- ▶ Superior-Greenstone District School Board
- ▶ Thames Valley District School Board
- ▶ Toronto District School Boards - On-line learning, parent portal
- ▶ Upper Canada District School Board (MyFamilyRoom)
- ▶ Upper Grand District School Board
- ▶ York Region District School Board
- ▶ Durham Catholic District School Board
- ▶ Halton Catholic District School Board
- ▶ Huron Perth Catholic District School Board
- ▶ London District Catholic School Board (PowerSchool)
- ▶ Niagara Catholic District School Board
- ▶ Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board
- ▶ Ottawa Catholic School Board
- ▶ Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board
- ▶ St. Clair Catholic District School Board
- ▶ York Catholic District School Board

# Challenges: Multiple Communication Tools and Information Sources used by Parents

- ▶ School-Day
- ▶ Google Classroom - no parent access to dashboard, teacher dependent
- ▶ My Way - no parent access to dashboard, student only
- ▶ D2L/Brightspace - usually no parent access to dashboard, student only
- ▶ Seesaw (learning platform for kindergarten to grade 5)
- ▶ TalkingPoints App (platform using text messages between teachers and families)
- ▶ Parent teacher conferences
- ▶ Paper planners
- ▶ Paper newsletters
- ▶ Information sheets from teachers and school
- ▶ Websites: Teachers, School, Board, Busing, etc.
- ▶ Email: Teachers, School, Board
- ▶ Twitter
- ▶ Instagram
- ▶ Facebook
- ▶ Phone calls from and to teachers and administration
- ▶ Phone blasts - automated phone calls/robo calls
- ▶ Paper report cards sent home in backpack, or mailed home at end of year
- ▶ Signs on school property
- ▶ The Record newspaper
- ▶ Information from School Council meetings, WRAPSC and PIC, through email, Facebook, websites, etc.
- ▶ Student/Parent handbook for individual school (online)
- ▶ Conversations with teachers and administration on the school yard and at school activities
- ▶ Unofficial Facebook groups by parents

# Challenges and Barriers

- ▶ Opt-in requirements
  - Email, School-Day, Google Classroom notifications
- ▶ Timing - information not available when families need it
- ▶ Language - English language learning families
- ▶ Technology requirements
  - Computer, Internet, Cell phone- texting and data requirements
- ▶ Google Classroom - for communication with parents
- ▶ Privacy concerns
- ▶ Volume of messages - email volume makes it easy to miss student or school specific relevant important messaging

# Conclusions

- ▶ Communication challenges hamper parents' effort to partner with their children's teachers and schools.
- ▶ Parents expressed that consistent, predictable, and timely communication from teachers and schools would support their child's development and success at school.
- ▶ Every parent participant expressed their willingness to contribute to Board-wide efforts to improve communication between schools and families.
- ▶ There is technology available and widely used throughout Ontario that has the potential to dramatically improve communication between WRDSB schools and families. Please consider implementing this technology at WRDSB.

# **WRDSB Parent Involvement Committee 2022 Focus Area 3 Recommendations**

**How to improve the way parents navigate their  
schools and school systems?**

**PIC Parent Members: B. Daniel, C. Chugh, N. Sheen, Z. Gent.**

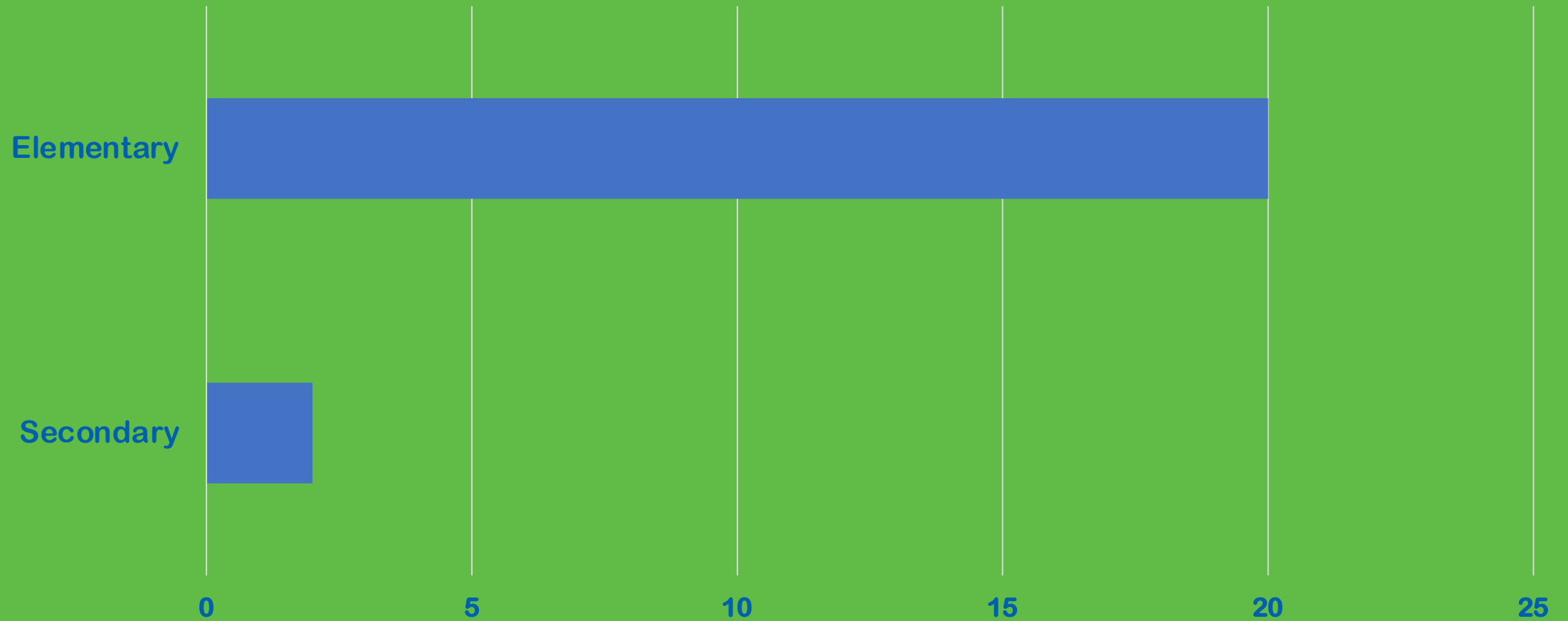
**May 17, 2022**

# Approach

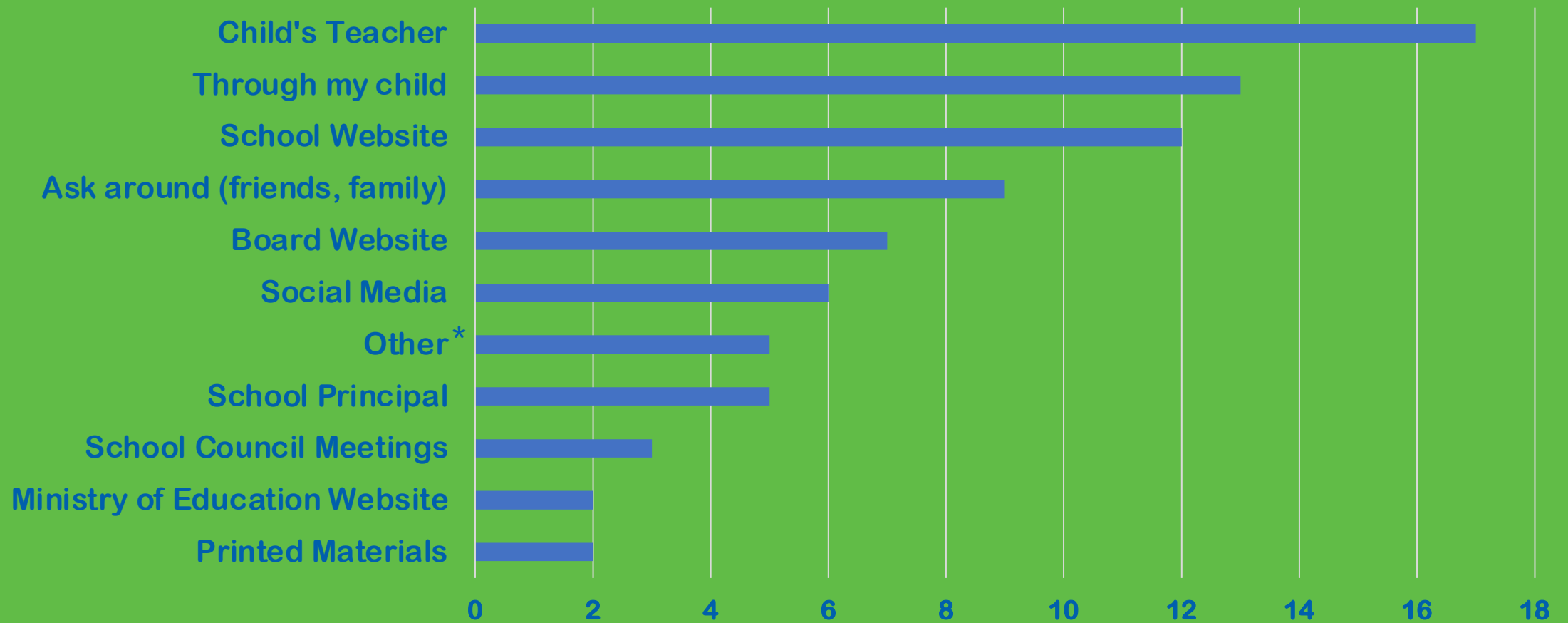
- Reflected on group's experience as a parent
- Prepared a test survey
- Gain perspective from those unlikely to participate
- People surveyed are selected randomly (small group sampled due to time limitations)
- Survey open between April 10 to May 10, 2022



# Findings – 22 participants

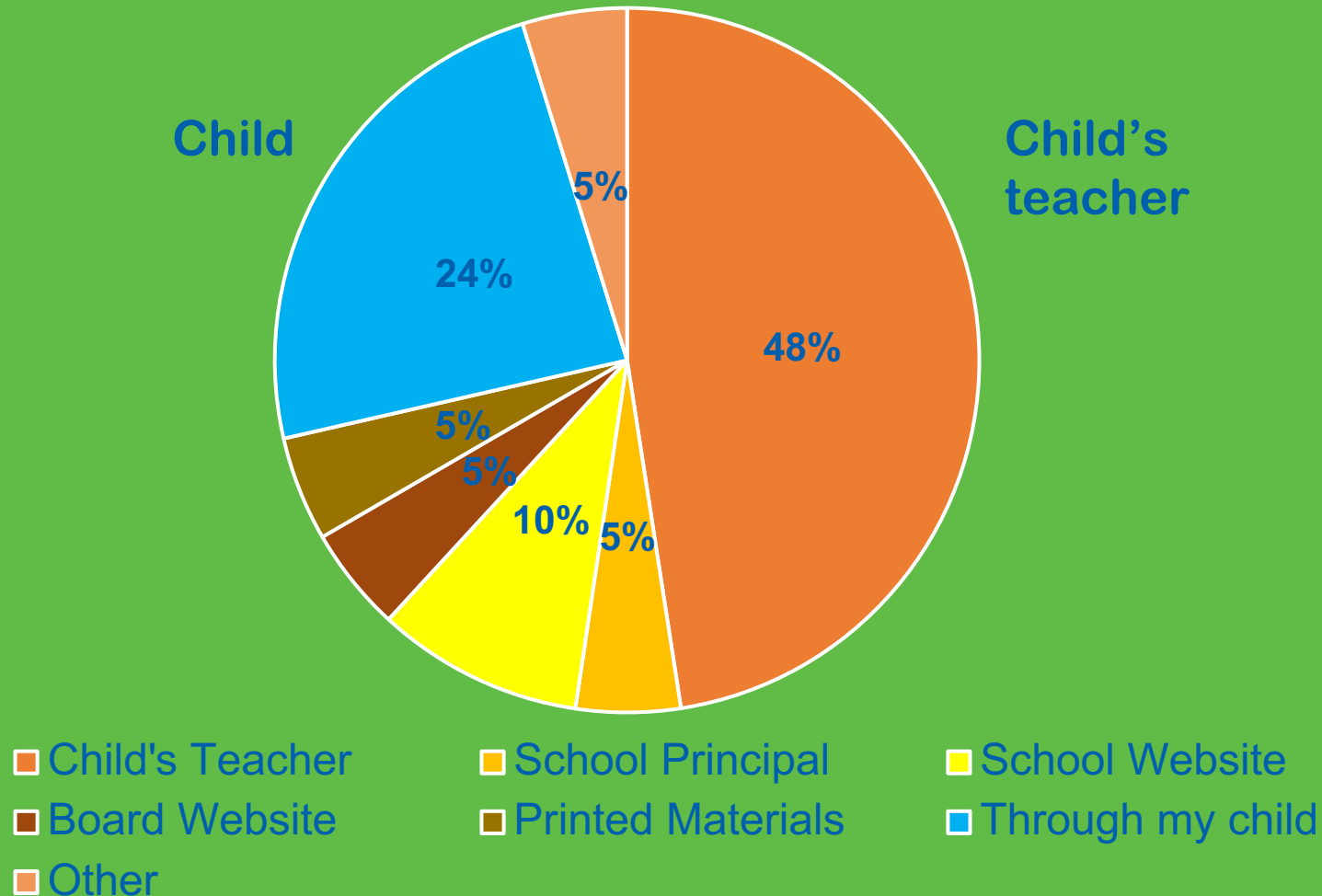


# What are ways you currently navigate your child's school and school system?

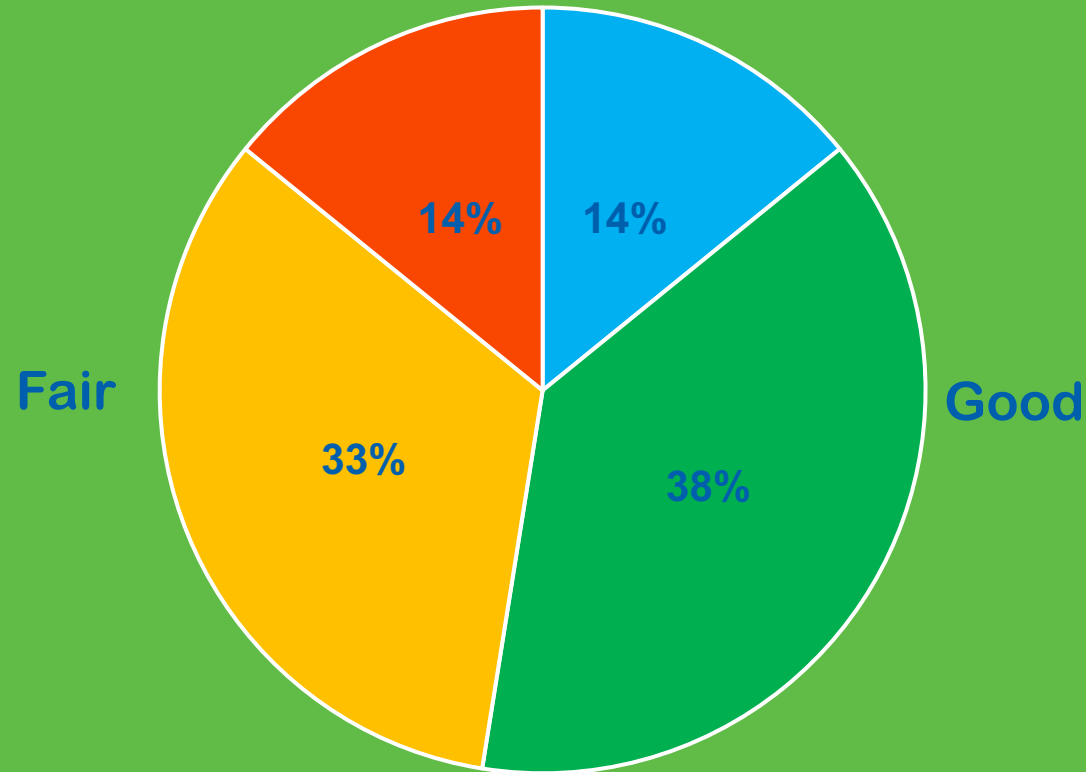


\* Other = child reports, email from principal, School Day

# Which from the list is the primary method you navigate your child's school?

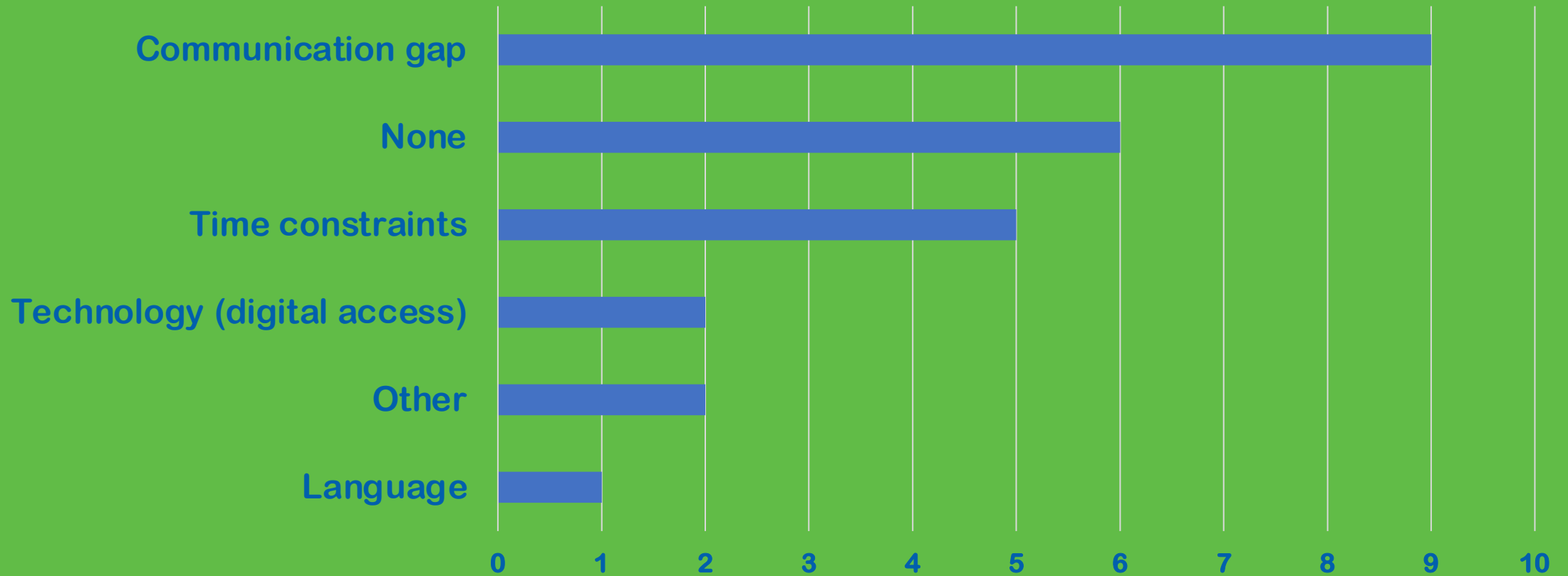


# How would you rate your navigation experience?



- Excellent - I find the information I need all the time in a timely manner.
- Good - I find most of the information I need most of the time.
- Fair - I find some information but not timely or not all the information I need.
- Poor - insufficient information, inaccessible, difficult to understand.

# Are there any limitations you encounter as a parent in navigating your child's school or school system?



# Recommendations

Recommendation	Analysis	Comments
1. Hold parent orientation sessions	While surveyed parents rated their navigation experience good/fair, there is room for improvement in clarifying and setting expectations for parents at the start of the school year and midway to refresh/reinforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In person, by child grade</li> <li>• 2 times a year (for parents that join mid session)</li> </ul>
2. Set up an online parent portal where parents can access various information as well as interact with staff directly	The primary method parents navigate their school system is through teachers, this would put a lot of pressure on the teachers and can impact quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamline communication – multiple emails per day from School Day.</li> <li>• Parents can see child’s progress, ask questions, and talk to teacher/school assistance directly. Where parents can see common posts/trending questions.</li> <li>• Make information accessible centrally</li> </ul>
3. Bring regular back face-to-face parent teacher meetings	Communication gap is the number one barrier for parents and the face to face meeting with the teacher will help reduce communication gaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need more communication to see where my kids are and how we can help them to move to the next level</li> </ul>
4. Train and equip teacher to communicate better	We have a large diverse board and training and coaching teachers to communicate better is important in a constantly changing environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to different cultural background or a different province, difficulty understanding or the Canadian/Ontario education system</li> </ul>
5. Send out survey board wide	A small sample was selected however there would be value to getting a larger data set and confirm the trends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey is carefully crafted.</li> <li>• Closed ended questions help focus responses and easier to analyze</li> </ul>