



I regret I cannot be with you today in person.

Since being appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Student Support and Parent Engagement I have had the chance to speak with many parents individually, in groups, and at PAC meetings.

I have spoken with DPAC chairs, executive members of BCCPAC, school trustees, superintendents, Principals, students and teachers.

I continue to learn from these discussions and appreciate all the ideas and suggestions coming forward.

One consistent message I hear is the need to improve communication between parents, teachers, schools and districts.

What isn't consistent is how schools address this. For example, some schools welcome parents into their classrooms, some not so much.

Students have told me that, in addition to their parents feeling welcome in the school and having good relationships with teachers, the other main factor that encourages their interest and engagement in school is the personal relationships they have developed and fostered with their teachers.

Teacher's passion for their students and their subjects are vital. How can government help parents and children to ensure that you both get the most out of your child's education experience?

A number of parents have requested a common website that is secure to their password - that allows access to information on their child's progress as well as upcoming classroom or school events / issues / notices that they may be interested in.

I want to assure you that we are listening and that we take your suggestions and concerns seriously.

We know that parent engagement is one of the most important predictor of a child's success in their learning. Government is working to ensure nothing stands in the way of that engagement.

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What are the current barriers you see that should be removed? What has worked in the past and what do you think should be repeated or expanded on in other classrooms, other schools or districts?

I have provided organizer Stephanie with business cards and I encourage people to contact her with their ideas on how government can assist parents with their engagement with their childrens' teacher, school, school district or the Ministry.

I want to continue the discussions with many of you and ask that any of you who have suggestions on how government can make it easier for you to be engaged in your children's education, please let me know.

We need to continue to look for ways to improve.

We need to know what is working, what the barriers are, what needs changing.

And we need to take the successes and share them with all schools, all districts.

Parent-led conferences like these are extremely important for parents to learn more about the education system and the importance of their role in it. It is a great opportunity for parents to learn from some of the top subject matter experts.

It is also an opportunity for parents to come together and learn from each other. Often the best information and ideas come from other parents. It is my sincere hope that each of you come away from this day energized and empowered by the role you play in your child's learning.

I also hope that you will continue to share your ideas and passion with me as we work together to make an already excellent education system better.

Thank you all for being here today.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jane', written in black ink.

Jane Thornthwaite  
Parliamentary Secretary for Student Support and Parent Engagement