

**EXPLORING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT AT A YUKON HIGH SCHOOL**

by

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PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION  
IN  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEADERSHIP

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 16, 2014

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### **Abstract**

This study employed a mixed methods research design to investigate parental engagement at a Yukon high school. The purpose of this study was to explore what strategies this Yukon high school was employing to ensure parental involvement in their children's high school education; what current strategies parents found most effective and what strategies parents would like to see to help them become more involved in their children's high school education.

Parents were first invited to complete a survey and had the opportunity to opt-in to the interview portion of the study. Following the analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data the combined results of the study were used to prepare recommendations for the Yukon Department of Education and High School principals across the territory containing recommendations to assist schools to involve parents in a meaningful way, thus implementing Article 18 of the Education Act.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to my supervisors and committee. To Dr. Peter MacMillan for taking over as my supervisor and for his help, advice, and guidance in bringing this to completion. To Dr. Linda Selby for helping me get started with my research and guiding me through the ethics process. To Dr. Simon Blakesly for his friendship, advice, and input on Yukon Education. To Dr. Gregory Nixon for joining my committee at the last minute and his detailed recommendations and guidance on APA formatting. I have enormous gratitude to all of you for helping me through this process of academic research.

Also, I like to thank the parents and guardians who participated in my survey, who willingly shared their opinions on Yukon education. I would also like to thank the interview participants for sharing their precious time during the interview process; your opinions were invaluable and my research could not have been completed without you.

A huge thank you to my family. I am grateful to my mother-in law and father-in-law for providing me a place to think while they had my children over the summer. Thank you to my amazing children, Ella and Noah, for being my inspiration every day. Finally, thanks to my awesome wife, Charlene Bradford, for all of her support; for pushing me to finish this even when I wanted to quit and for putting up with me through all my crankiness – I love you sweetheart.

## **Chapter One: The Research Problem**

### **Introduction**

Recent societal shifts have emphasized the importance of parental attachment over peer attachment; yet in the school system, students still spend the majority of their time influenced by their peers and teachers rather than their parents (Neufeld & Maté, 2005). While families and teachers both share a desire for students to succeed, they often don't know how to effectively collaborate and support achievement together, especially as students transition into their high school years. Families and teachers, together, need to seek solutions to build better working relationships in order to increase the chances that adolescents will reach their academic and social potential (Hill & Chao, 2009).

It has long been accepted that parents' expectations have a powerful effect on children's academic performance, dating back to early research by Boocock in 1972. While there is a lot of evidence that parental involvement is happening at the elementary level (Hill & Craft, 2003), it is more complex to ask what parental involvement looks like at the high school level.

Teachers at the high school level instruct a large number of students over the course of the day, making it difficult to build relationships with each parent and family. However, it is still important for teachers to work at building as many relationships as possible. Further, as Hill and Tyson (2009) note, there are potential benefits for parents to be involved in their teenagers' education. "Although teens may resist involvement from parents, parental involvement can have enormous benefits for adolescents' school achievements and emotional development" (Hill and Tyson, 2009, p. 761).

In the Yukon Territory, our public school system of over 5000 students from

kindergarten to grade 12 is run by the Department of Education. The Assistant Deputy Minister of Public Schools responsible for school operations, with three Superintendents of Schools and a Director of Student and Support Services provide assistance (Yukon Department of Education Website, 2013). The Yukon Department of Education is different than other regions of Canada in that it serves both as a 'school board' and a ministry, or branch of government.

"The Yukon has a dedicated and creative teaching staff and boasts one of the most favourable pupil-teacher ratios in Canada. There are over 700 school-based personnel. They include teachers, educational assistants, remedial tutors, and aboriginal language teachers. The Department of Education supports the schools with 26 curriculum and special needs consultants. Parents have input into the educational priorities of schools through elected bodies called school councils. Where requested, First Nations have guaranteed representation on school councils" (Yukon Department of Education Website, 2013).

Yukon education in general, and secondary education in Whitehorse in particular, exists in a context rich with opportunity. Yukon's educational philosophy has, for more than a decade, supported inclusion as an overarching philosophy, guiding the education of all students and contingent upon social policies defining education not as a privilege, but as a human right provided regardless of race, ethnicity, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, gender, age, or mental or physical disability ability (Bremner & Belanger, 2008).

In Whitehorse, there are four high schools. F.H. Collins Secondary School is the largest with approximately 630 students, which includes a large French Immersion

population and First Nations population, as well as English Language Learners and a special education classroom. Porter Creek Secondary School enrolls 534 students, including a strong First Nations population (31% self-identify). Vanier Catholic Secondary School has approximately 390 students with the majority of the student population being Catholic, including a large Filipino population. There is also a francophone secondary school, Académie Parhélie, formerly Ecole Emile Tremblay, which consists of fewer than 30 high school students (D. Hays, Principal of F.H. Collins Secondary School, personal communication, January 2012). As F.H. Collins Secondary School is the largest school with a diverse range of students and parents, it is very representative of Yukon parents. As it is my home school and the one I am most familiar with, it was the school I chose to focus my study on.

In the Yukon Education Act (2002), Article 18 states that parents have the right to be involved in their child's education and lays out how parents can be involved in the classroom. However, judging by the relative absence of parents seen within Yukon high schools on an average day, it would appear most parents are not capitalizing upon the rights afforded to them through the Act.

Based on discussions with several principals of Whitehorse high schools, the schools in the region do offer some level of parental involvement; for example, welcome Bar-B-Qs, parent-teacher-student conferences, monthly newsletters and similar activities and communications (D. Hays, Principal of F.H. Collins Secondary School, personal communication, October 2011). The question that emerges and forms the central question of this project is: Do parents find these to be sufficient opportunities for them to be meaningfully engaged in their children's education?

Although well intentioned, in the construct described above, educators have decided how parents can be involved, rather than allowing parents to decide how they would like to be involved. Although the entitlements of Article 18 are mandated in law, how can educators ensure that the school system is serious about delivering on its mandate and being proactive in getting parents involved?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this two-phase, sequential explanatory, mixed-methods study was to explore the extent to which Yukon parents feel welcome to share in their adolescent's educational journey, the strategies currently being used at involving parents in Yukon high schools, and which strategies parents find most effective.

As a teacher for the past eleven years at F.H. Collins Secondary School in Whitehorse, I have often wished there were more effective ways to have parents be involved in their child's education. Frequently, as an educator, my first contact with parents is to call them and inform them their son or daughter has not been attending class or is underperforming in school. This does not seem like a welcoming interaction with teachers; however, there are currently not any clearly identified alternatives. Now, as the parent of my own children who have recently entered the school system, I feel even more of an impetus to search out ways for parents to be involved in their child's education.

These questions about parental involvement in the Yukon education system led to the research questions of this study, which are threefold:

- 1) What strategies is F.H. Collins Secondary School currently employing to ensure parents are engaged in their children's high school education?
- 2) What current strategies do parents find most effective?

- 3) What strategies would parents like to see to help them become more involved in their children's high school education?

I conducted a study focused on these questions, the result of which are recommendations to the Yukon Department of Education and high school principals across the region to assist in the meaningful implementation of the Yukon Education Act, Article 18. These recommendations can be found in the results chapter.

In the first phase of the research study, a survey was sent home to all parents of F.H. Collins Secondary School parents that addressed the relationship parents have with their adolescent's school and their level of parental involvement. All parents were invited to participate if they chose to do so. Information received from this first phase was analyzed and then explored further in a second qualitative phase. In this phase, qualitative interviews were held to probe deeper and to gain a better understanding of the previous survey information. Participants in phase two will be those parents who took part in the first phase and who volunteered to be interviewed to be part of the second phase. Following up with qualitative research in the second phase will help to explore and clarify the reasons parents gave the answers they did in the first phase and to enrich the understanding and explanation of the quantitative results.

This research project consists of five chapters: In chapter one I have explained the problem, provided a rationale for the study, and explained the conceptual lens used in the study to answer the research questions. The second chapter provides a review of the literature in terms of families, schools and adolescents, and how to connect research policy and practice. The third chapter is a description of the methodology and study design used, which includes a

description of the procedures, participants, and ethical issues. The fourth chapter looks at the data, both quantitative and qualitative, while the fifth chapter discusses the findings, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations based on the study. Survey and interview questions, information letters to participants, and letters of consent can be found in the Appendices.



## **Chapter Two: The Literature Review**

The purpose of this literature review is to help inform my study by looking at past and current research and articles that explore parental involvement and see where the gaps in research lie, both generally and specifically here in Yukon.

### **Parental Involvement**

Generally, family/school relationships, or parental involvement in education, have been defined as collaborations among families, teachers, and schools to help students succeed in school (Epstein, 1987). Some have defined parental involvement as “parents’ work with schools and with their children to benefit their children’s education outcomes and futures success” (Hill et al., 2004, p. 1491).

In recent years, Gordon Neufeld and Gabor Mate’s (2005) book, *Hold on to Your Kids*, has drawn on research in attachment. It has become a handbook for parents who want to develop closer relationships with their children and to have more impact on their lives. In addition to their books, Neufeld and Mate use workshops, seminars, and an active website to encourage parents to become their child’s main attachment figure and, as a result, the most important persons in their child’s life.

This is not to say that there should not be other attachment figures. Neufeld and Mate (2005) encourage developing student-teacher attachment as part of a child’s village of attachment; they just believe that parents should come first. The difficulty becomes how do parents remain their child’s primary attachment when their children spend half their waking hours away from them at school? Neufeld and Mate suggest that parents introduce their children to their teachers and, thus, become an attachment link between

home and school. They support parents being involved in all aspects of their children's life, especially school (Neufeld & Mate, 2005).

It has long been acknowledged by psychologists that there is a strong correlation between parental involvement, parental expectations, and children's school performance. In her groundbreaking book, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Learning* (1972), Boocock explores the learning environment as "the social characteristics of schools and their surroundings, and the student's relationships with other individuals and groups, inside and outside of school, that affect academic success" (pp. 3-4).

Although Boocock explores many groups and their effect on student learning, she was one of the first scholars to write about the powerful effect parents and family can have on children's academic performance: "It is clear that high achieving children tend to come from families which have high expectations for them, and who consequently are likely to 'set standards' and to make greater demands at an earlier age" (p. 60).

There has been significant research into how parental school involvement is associated with early school success, including academic and language skills and social competence. While there has been proven implementation of this at the elementary level, parental involvement still needs to be addressed at high school age (Hill & Craft, 2003).

Parental school involvement is thought to decrease as children move to middle and high school, in part because parents may believe that they cannot assist with more challenging high school subjects and because adolescents are becoming autonomous. However, "[P]arents don't stop caring about or monitoring the academic progress of their children of high school age, and parental involvement remains an important predictor of school outcomes through adolescence" (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

In their studies, Hill and Taylor (2004) found that although parent involvement was still important to students' learning, the kind of activity mattered. Helping with homework, for instance, did not have much of an impact in secondary school. Visiting the school, volunteering, and attending school events seemed to be just moderately related to student achievement.

Research suggests that rather than just helping with homework, there are other supports parents can do that are twice as effective to support schooling. These activities, or "academic socialization", include communicating their expectations for their children's achievement; discussing learning strategies and fostering career aspirations; linking what children were learning in school, or were interested in learning, to outside activities; and making plans for the future (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Many of the things parents can do to advantage their adolescents, such as building social supports, occur outside of, but in conjunction with, the high school. When parents engage in shared activities with their adolescent and actively strategize about their futures, parents are giving their adolescents valuable experiences that lead to distinct advantages in and out of school, including a positive relationship with students' grades (Lareau, 2003; Jones & Schneider, 2009). Just as shared activities promote cognitive development and well being in young children, the same is true in adolescents (Jones & Schneider, 2009).

Recent research by deCastro and Castambis (2008) suggests that there are many ways high schools and school districts can go about getting parents involved. Inviting parents to health forums, university visitations, and career fairs are an easy way to involve parents in important decisions in their children's lives as well as act as catalysts

for continued discussion at home. Contacting parents on a more casual, regular basis with positive comments about their son or daughter is a strong way to prevent minor behaviour issues from escalating, thus reducing the number of disciplinary phone calls, as well as building strong school-parent relationships (deCastro & Castambis, 2009).

Alternatively, Levenson's 2010 article, "When Should a Parent Correct a Teacher?", which is about parents confronting teachers in the United Kingdom, does not offer much reassurance for parents who feel uncomfortable with schools and around teachers. She says challenging teachers results in a negative impact for students, and parents are in fact told that "[f]actual errors should be raised, but on matters of interpretation and approach interference is unwelcome" (p. 45).

## **Yukon Education**

Thankfully in Yukon, where many in the community, particularly First Nations parents, are wary of schools to begin with (Education Reform Project, 2007), the *Yukon Education Act* (2002) already addresses positive student goals and objectives in Article 4 and parental entitlement in Article 18.

Article 18 of the *Yukon Education Act* (2002) lays out what parents are entitled to from the school as:

Parents of students attending school are entitled:

- (a) To be informed of the progress, behaviour and attendance of their children;
- (b) On reasonable notice to the principal and teacher, to observe the instruction of their children if the parental visitation does not impede the instruction of other children;
- (c) To appeal decisions that significantly affect the education, health or safety of their children;  
and
- (d) To be consulted in the development of any specialized educational programs prepared for their children.

These entitlements seem appropriate, but questions remain: shouldn't these entitlements be better purveyed, if not promoted, to parents? Do parents know that with advanced warning they are permitted to sit in on their children's classes? Judging by how few parents are seen in high schools it seems unclear if parents realize how open their children's schools are, or should be, to them.

In the past six years, there have been three major studies on Yukon Education: the *Education Reform Project Final Report* (2007), *One Vision, Multiple Pathways: Secondary School Programming Practice* (2008), and the *Auditor General's Report* by Sheila Fraser (2009). The *Auditor General's Report* focused on the deficiencies of the Yukon school system and the quantifiable data available about Yukon student achievement based on summative assessments. The *Education Reform Project Final Report* served as a comprehensive analysis of the current education system in place in Yukon and recommendations on the direction education in the territory could go. The secondary school programming report articulated a vision for secondary programming in Whitehorse, spoke to the current programming and offered recommendations about the direction Whitehorse secondary schools could take.

The Secondary School review clearly states that of the seventy-three Whitehorse community stakeholders interviewed, only ten were parents (p. 25). This is exceedingly disappointing when viewed in the context of research stating the importance of parental involvement in children's academic success (Hill & Taylor, 2004). It seems that despite the findings in the research, education experts are taking more and more teaching upon

themselves and leaving less and less for the parent. The obvious deficiency in the recent Yukon research is parent input and my research will hopefully help supplement this area.

### **Mixed Methods Methodology**

Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry that combines both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches and the mixing of both approaches in a study. "It is, therefore, more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data; it involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research alone" (Cresswell, 2009, p. 203).

Quantitative data analysis is the process of analyzing statistical-based data, using the appropriate statistical test to address the research questions (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). Qualitative data analysis involves interviewing subjects and breaking the text of the interviews into small units (phrases, sentences) and then grouping them into themes based on the research questions (Cresswell & Clark, 2011).

Both qualitative and quantitative research forms have a long history, and while the combination of the two is more recent, it has proven to be quite beneficial in many educational research settings. The purpose of mixed methods research is to build on the synergy and strength that exists between qualitative and quantitative research methods to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible by using only one of the methods (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). This approach is most appropriate for this kind of study as it provides a broad understanding (from the survey data) as well as deep understanding (from the interview data). As noted by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), "[M]ixed

methods are often more efficient in answering research questions than either qualitative or the quantitative approach alone” (p. 167).

### **Chapter Three: Method**

The mixed methods design for this study was a two-phase sequential explanatory strategy. In this design, quantitative data was collected in the form of surveys and the results analyzed. Then, based on the results and analysis of that quantitative data, follow-up interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data. That qualitative data was analyzed and both sets of data and analyses were interpreted together.

A mixed methods research approach was ideal to explore the beliefs parents in the community hold on their involvement and, perhaps most importantly, gain insight into how they would like to see their ideas for future involvement implemented.

#### **Phase One: Parent Surveys**

The first phase of the study was conducted following Department of Education approval, F.H. Collins Secondary approval, and University of Northern British Columbia Research Ethics Board approval. After these approvals were gained, information packages were mailed in April of 2012 to all parents of students attending F.H. Collins Secondary in Whitehorse, Yukon. These information packages included: a letter with information about the study, its intended purpose, and a request for participation (See Appendix B); the survey itself, and information on how to participate in the second phase of the study. (See Appendix B & C)

Participants who agreed to participate completed the survey on paper and returned it via self-addressed stamped envelope. The survey consisted of two sections. The first section contained a short section with general demographic questions; the second section contained the questions pertaining to parental involvement. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, parents were not required to give their names or addresses. While anonymity



cannot be guaranteed, as a researcher I used processes to protect their identity as much as possible.

The reason for mass surveying was so that all parents had the opportunity to be included in the study if they wished, as well as to ensure quantitative validity in smaller demographics (Salkind, 2009). Limitations of this method included parents who did not have a fixed address or had poor levels of literacy. Additionally, care was taken to reduce question bias, so that parents were not swayed to respond in a particular way (Salkind, 2009).

The quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics for the whole sample and then based on demographics. Inferential statistics were used to examine relationships between demographics and participant response. Demographics looked at included: relationship to the child(ren), ethnicity, gender, number of children at the high school level, level of education completed, and level of community involvement.

## **Phase Two: Parent Interviews**

The second phase of the study was based on the survey analysis of the first phase. Six mothers and one grandmother, who indicated that they would be willing to participate in this phase, were invited to be part of an interview process. Seven questions were derived from the survey results that would form the basis of the interview. (See Appendix H).

After completing a letter of informed consent, participants were interviewed using a semi-structured process that allowed interviewees to answer the questions posed by the researcher, while also expanding on related areas. Contents of the interview were audio

taped and transcribed. The raw data was transcribed and thematically analyzed using open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to deduct results using Microsoft Excel.

### **Mixed Methods analysis**

In the final phase of the study, the data and analyses from both sections were compared, with the results of qualitative information reinforcing and deepening the results of the quantitative analyses.

### **Issues and Challenges**

The main challenges with this study were ensuring a large enough return on initial surveys, being able to adequately represent each demographic with the secondary phase of interviews, and the length of time to conduct the two phases of the study.

While it was hoped that the participants who self-selected into this phase of the study would fit a cross-section of demographics, six of the seven interviewees were mothers of students who may be referred to as academically successful – a typical bias problem. This presented a major challenge of trying to ensure that all groups and demographics were included in the qualitative phase of the study given that it is entirely voluntary. Due to Department of Education policy, I was not able to contact non-responders for the second, qualitative portion of the study. Due to the fact people who do not respond are possibly qualitatively different than people who do, unfortunately these differences, for qualitative, and in comparison to the quantitative, are unknowable.

To ensure validity of quantitative results, qualitative data collection and analysis were used to reinforce and embed the initial findings. This was especially useful when unexpected data arose from the quantitative study.

There were no anticipated risks to participating in this study. Due care was taken to ensure anonymity with the surveys and confidentiality with the interviews. Additionally, care was taken to try to avoid sensitive topics and ensure completed letters of informed consent.

All participants in phase two were assigned a pseudonym, and each participant's name was coded and stored in such a way as to make it impossible to identify them directly with any individual (e.g., they were organized by number rather than by name). As common ethics and research procedures require the destruction of data, and per UNBC policy, all surveys and any digital recordings of parent interviews have been kept in a secure location and will have all identifying data removed and destroyed after a period of two years.

## **Chapter Four: Data Analysis**

In a mixed methods study, reporting on findings can be complex due to the vast amount of data collected (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). The findings presented demonstrate how a mixed methods study can provide both statistical data and narrative data to increase understanding. First, results of the quantitative analyses are to be presented. The qualitative data are then to be presented by means of narrative themes.

### **Quantitative Surveys**

In April of 2012, 584 parent surveys (Appendix C) were sent out the households of all current students of F.H. Collins Secondary in Whitehorse, Yukon. In mid-May a reminder letter was sent out to parents who may not have completed the survey. Of those 584 surveys, eight were returned to sender, and 92 were returned completed giving a return percentage of 16%. This return percentage is considered a range that creates reliable and valid data (Cresswell & Clark, 2011) for an unsolicited mass survey.

Of parents who completed the survey, 74 respondents (80.4%) were female (either mother, grandmother or other). This is unsurprising as females often take on the primary caregiver role for children in a household and are often the first contact for the school. For the most part, the data between the two genders was similar when looked at separately except in a few instances. This is discussed further in this chapter.

The level of education of respondents is high, with 55 respondents (59.8%) having a university degree or higher. This is in contrast to the Yukon norm, which in the 2006 Canadian Census showed that for the typical parental age group (25 – 54) the percentage of with university degree or higher was 26.2%. See Table 1 for the raw data.

Table 1

*Highest Education Level by Age Group, Yukon 2006 Census*

	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total, 15+
No certificate, diploma or degree	1,885	615	760	810	605	545	340	5,555
High school certificate or equivalent	1,580	915	1,010	1,205	715	250	120	5,805
Apprenticeship or Trades Certificate or Diploma	160	340	605	865	570	230	110	2,890
College, CEGEP, or other non- university certificate or diploma	1,580	915	1,010	1,205	715	250	120	5,805
University Certificate, Diploma or Degree	220	1,000	1,300	1,505	905	210	40	5,180
Total Population	4,140	3,790	4,905	5,825	3,625	1,460	735	24,490

In terms of participation in volunteer activities, parents responding to the survey were active in the community, with 40.2% of respondents volunteering for at least one community group and 47.8% volunteering for more than one. This leads one to believe that many of the respondents to the survey would be willing to give their time to school activities if provided an easy system to do so.

The first stage of the research was driven by the research questions: (1) *What strategies are F.H. Collins Secondary School currently employing to ensure parental involvement in their high school education?* And: (2) *What current strategies do parents find most effective?*

The first series of questions looked at if parents felt included, if they were satisfied with their inclusion and whether they felt the staff at F.H. Collins Secondary was supportive of parents being included; see Table 2.

Table 2

*Percentage of Parent Responses to Questions Involving School Involvement*

	Very	Somewhat	Neutral	Somewhat Not	Very Not
How included do you feel in your son or daughters education?	21.7	48.9	12.0	10.9	6.5
Are you satisfied with your level of involvement?	18.5	50.0	5.4	23.9	2.2
How supportive do you feel the school is of you involvement?	22.8	45.7	23.9	6.5	1.1

Based on these results, it is clear that the majority of parents and guardians felt included in their children's education (70.6%), most felt satisfied with their level of involvement (68.5%) and a strong majority felt the school was supportive of the their involvement (68.5%). Interestingly, this is one area where the male and female

respondents diverged, with female guardians feeling either “supported” or “well supported” by the school (78.4%), while fathers felt less so (54.2%).

Next I looked at what activities parents participated in that the school already had in place, see Table 3.

Table 3

*Percentage of Parent Participation in School Activities*

	Yes	No
Welcome BBQ	15.2	84.8
Parent Teacher Interviews	82.6	15.2
School Council Meetings	2.2	97.8
Coaching	1.1	98.9
Band	5.4	94.6
Chaperone	25.0	75.0
Other	14.1	85.9

The three most popular activities that brought parents into the school were the Parent Teacher Interviews (82.6%), invitations to chaperone school activities (25.0%) and the Welcome Barbeque (15.2%). Of those that said that they also participated in other school activities, two wrote in Challenge Day and six wrote in Grad as the activities they had participated in. It was clear that parents were not involved in coaching or school council meetings with only 1.1% and 2.2% saying they participated in these activities at F.H. Collins Secondary.

Next, I looked at where parents were getting their information about what was going on in the school, whether it be from the school newsletter sent out by

administration, the student run newspaper, the school website or another way. As evidenced in Table 4 it became obvious the school newsletter that is e-mail directly to parents was the most frequent.

Table 4

*Percentage of where do you get your information about events at F.H. Collins?*

	Yes	No
School Newsletter	93.5	6.5
Student Newspaper	7.6	92.4
School Website	57.6	42.4
Other	12.0	88.0

Some of the write-in comments for the “other” included six mentions of being directly e-mailed by teachers and talking with their child was also mentioned six times. Interestingly, one parent wrote the following concerning comment, “Is there a way for in-school announcements about activities to be conveyed to parents? Often my children either don’t hear or disregard information over the P.A. and opportunities are lost. I feel parents are not properly informed about these events that, although not academic, enhance a child’s education.” Three parents wrote in that they wish the website was more frequently updated and/or more user friendly.



In terms of parental contact, parents were asked, "How often do teachers contact you about your child?" The results varied widely as evidenced in Table 5. (Note: In Yukon, there are two semesters in the school year and two terms in each semester.)

Table 5

*Percentage of Parent Response as to how often they are contacted by teachers*

	Never	Once a Year	Once a Semester	Once a Term	Monthly	Weekly
How often do teachers contact you about your child?	14.1	17.4	15.2	27.2	19.6	4.3

Additionally, 7 respondents (7.6%) wrote in that teacher contact varied widely from teacher to teacher and 3 wrote in that only when there was a problem. In a follow-up to this question, participants were asked if they felt this was the correct amount of contact, 51.1% said that it was the correct amount, while 47.8% said they wish that teachers contacted them more often. Of those who wanted more contact, almost all of them were contacted less than once a term.

When asked "How well does the school talk to you about how you can support education at home?" responses were mixed, with 40.2% of parents taking a neutral stance, 27.8% saying "poorly" or "very poorly" and 31.1% saying "well" or "very well".

When asked if they would attend potential parent support meetings 35.9% of respondents said "Yes", while another 57.6% said "Maybe". Five write-ins stated that it

would depend on the topic. The student use of technology was suggested by three write-ins. There was a definite increase in those saying they would attend parent support meetings by parents who felt the school did not support them. 64% of parents who felt the school supported them “poorly” or “very poorly” said, “yes” they would attend parent support meetings, compared to 32.1% of parents who felt the school supported them “well” or “very well”.

When asked how aware they were of their rights as parents under the Education Act, parents were divided with 44.0% feeling Unaware or Very Unaware and 50.6% feeling Somewhat Aware or Very Aware.

## **Qualitative Interviews**

In June of 2012 semi-structured interviews were conducted with six mothers and one grandmother. These guardians self-selected into the interview process, which was an option included in the surveys that were mailed out. Range of involvement for the interviewees at the school ran from one mother who was not involved at all and had no interest to a former member of school council. Five of the parents had no issues with their children at the school, while two parents had regular contact with administration about their children.

### *Importance of Involvement*

The first question asked, “Why do you think it is important to be involved in your children’s education?” Responses almost unanimously centralized on the theme that the school is an important part of the community and that it was essential to be involved to show their children that school was valued. Several parents also mentioned the importance of knowing what is going on in their sons and daughters lives, what courses they were taking, and helping them guide the direction they would go in life.

One parent offered that, “Education is an extremely crucial part of a child’s development and upbringing and everything you can do to contribute and make that the best possible experience ... so that your child and others can flourish is worth it. That’s my job.”

When asked, “What aspects of secondary education do you believe parents should be involved in?”, there were very divergent opinions from parents who believed they shouldn’t be involved (“I don’t have a lot of contact and that’s ok with me.”) all the way

to one parent who believed parents should be coming into the classroom as guest presenters and to run skills clubs in areas of expertise. The predominant belief, however, was “whatever your kids might let you be involved in.” Two parents suggested parents should work with their children to help manage their time efficiently.

### *Ways to Improve Involvement*

With some parents interested in ways to be more involved, parents were posed with the question, “What are your ideas about how secondary schools could more meaningfully involve parents?” To this, most parents were unsure of any ideas, although there was a belief that the school should invite parents out to more events, like the Welcome BBQ, and that it was important to check in with parents regularly as “[parents] might not know how they can get involved” as there are fewer opportunities for parents to be involved than there were at the elementary school level.

When asked, “Why do you think more parents are not more involved in their children’s secondary school education?” parents were quite clear – we don’t have enough time. Most believed that was due to parents working during the day and our society becoming over scheduled.

There was also a belief that their teenagers didn’t want them around or involved at school. For some parents that belief was actively voiced at home by their children, while inferred from their adolescents that there was an “uncool factor” to having your parents around. There was a hope that a change could happen though. One parent said, “With a little innovation, parents could be involved...[it would] require a change in the system so that the kids want their parents to be involved in some way and see value in that.”

In areas the school could potentially change, two parents voiced concerns that the school had made assumptions of their understanding when they had started there after grade 8. Others mentioned that teachers not responding to phone calls and e-mails was a turn off or that parents opinions weren't valued and some teachers became defensive when suggestions were made about how to best deal with their own children. Another parent suggested more advance warning for upcoming events as the website is never up to date. This sparked an idea from one parent that perhaps the daily announcements could be posted to the F.H. Collins Secondary website.

### *Parental Contact*

The next section of questions focused on parental contact. When asked, "What do you feel is an appropriate amount of parental contact?" most parents felt that currently they were only contacted with a performance or behaviour issue and that was fine. As one parent stated, "The only time I would need to have contact with my child's teacher is if there was a disconnect between my kid's performance and their relationship with the teacher."

Parents agreed that for minor issues such as absences or occasional missed assignments telephone or e-mail contact was sufficient, but face-to-face meetings would be beneficial if the issues escalated, to help come to a resolution.

Interviewees agreed that the parent teacher relationship was vital so that "It's not all about the teacher solving the problem, it's up to the parents to help and support too." Several parents suggested that Welcome Bar-B-Qs and check in phone calls early in the semester would be appreciated to help develop a relationship between parents and

teachers earlier than the mid-semester parent teacher conferences. As one parent said, “I think initially when a child comes into the system, it’s nice to meet the parents or the teachers, like when they have the open house, we always come to that, to see all the teachers, just to have a face and a name...”

An issue that came up was the lack of up-to-date homework pages with the belief that it was very “hit or miss” and lacked any sort of uniformity. Many parents appreciated the teachers who are starting to keep their grades online so that it’s easy to follow progress, but felt there were many other teachers who didn’t even bother to update their homework pages.

Compliments were given out to several teachers who were felt to be excellent at communicating home. Two parents appreciated that one grade eight teacher had called home to voice positives of their son/daughter. When asked if phone calls about positives would be appreciated, parents felt that they would but need to be authentic and not forced.

### *Parent Support Meetings*

Other school jurisdictions have had success with parent support meetings, and there was positive response to the idea from the survey results. Therefore, the question was asked, “If parental support meetings were to be held, would you attend and what topics would you like to see discussed?” While one parent interviewed said that they wouldn’t be interested in those kinds of meetings, the other parents felt they might, provided the information sessions were well done and current with practical ways to talk to your kids.

Multiple topics were suggested for potential information sessions, the most popular being an information session on social media, and talking to your kids about their digital footprint. Parents also thought a parent meeting before the annual Challenge Day would be beneficial to help alleviate concerns about it. Challenge Day is an annual event for Grade eight students at F.H. Collins Secondary that promotes anti-bullying and fosters empathy among students. While Challenge Day is usually viewed as a positive, it can be viewed as leaving students emotionally exposed, hence the suggestion. Two parents also suggested sexual health as a possible topic.

#### *Other Suggestions and Areas*

At the end of the interview sessions, parents were asked, “What suggestions do you have on ways Yukon high schools could involve and communicate with parents better?” This open ended question brought about a variety of comments, and some common themes did appear.

Repeatedly, parents talked about their disdain for the school website and how it was often out of date, difficult to navigate and hard to find the information that was being looked for. Suggestions ranged from adding the daily announcements, all the way getting rid of it and creating a Facebook page, but the most repeated suggestion was to simplify it and keep it current.

Multiple parents brought up the F.H. Collins Secondary School council. Many felt while this should be the avenue for parent voice; there is a belief in the community that the council was impotent and was not a positive meeting to attend. One parent wondered why a non-parent chaired the council and why there were not more parents on

the school council. While many of these beliefs are anecdotal word of mouth, one parent who did attend as a non-member passed on a story of being told they had to sit at a side table and made to feel like they weren't wanted in attendance.

F.H. Collins Secondary School is currently in the process of having a new building constructed. Several parents brought up the new school design as an example of the difficulty with trying to get input from multiple places, but also an example of how collaboration can be an important learning process. Unfortunately, since the time of the interviews, the collaborated design has been tabled and a new more economical design has gone forward.

The final common suggestion was that teachers focus on the positives of what students can do, versus the current system that seems to be parents are only contacted about the negatives.

In summary, the guardians interviewed felt the school and individual teachers did a good job of communicating and involving parents; however, they definitely felt like there was room for improvement. Two areas for improvement included a more welcoming school council and an improved website.



## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

### **Findings**

At the outset of this study, the hope was to have a clear vision of what parents of Yukon adolescents want their children to gain from their high school experience as well as what parental involvement strategies are currently working in Yukon and which are not. These recommendations were then to be presented to the Yukon Department of Education, Yukon high school principals, School Councils, and hopefully to the teacher professional learning communities.

These questions about parental involvement in the Yukon education system led to the research questions of this study, which were threefold:

- 1) What strategies is F.H. Collins Secondary School currently employing to ensure parents are engaged in their children's high school education?
- 2) What current strategies do parents find most effective?
- 3) What strategies would parents like to see to help them become more involved in their children's high school education?

Based on the research conducted, these research questions were answered. The strategies F.H. Collins Secondary School was using to ensure parents were engaged in their children's high school education included informal parent-teacher interactions, such as phone calls and emails home, a Welcome BBQ in September, and two parent-teacher-student conferences.

Based on the survey conducted it was clear that most parents participated in the Parent Teacher Interviews and some parents enjoyed the Welcome BBQ at the start of the school year. It was clear that teacher parent contact outside of the formal parent teacher

conferences varied widely, mostly based on the teacher. While just over half of parents were satisfied with this, a strong minority (47.8%) wished for more contact, even if it was an occasional call of praise.

Parents appeared unsure about strategies to improve parental involvement, although most indicated they would be willing to try parent information nights, provided they were on topics they felt were relevant to them.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the research conducted, it became clear from the quantitative analyses that the majority of parents are happy with their level of involvement and the school's attempts to engage parents. However there was a substantial minority (over 25%) who felt they were not involved enough at the school level.

While not all parents are looking to be actively involved at the high school level, all parents appreciate the ability to have access and open lines of communications with their classroom teachers. Almost half of parents (47.8%) wished for more contact, even if it's an occasional positive comment. This assertion is supported by research as deCastro and Castambis (2008) have written that contacting parents on a more casual, regular basis with positive comments about their son or daughter is a strong way to prevent minor behaviour issues from escalating, thus, reducing the number of disciplinary phone calls, as well as building strong school-parent relationships.

It became clear that the current website is frustrating for many parents. It is currently not kept up to date, with pictures that are over five years old on the front page. Additionally, many parents find it difficult to navigate with many superfluous tabs that

are not used by most parents. This is often the first place parents look for information if it is kept up to date (Hill & Chao, 2009). Currently this is not the case.

## **Limitations**

A major limitation to the study, as discussed in the data analysis section, was the unwillingness of the most alienated parents and guardians to participate in the study. As evidenced in the surveys, the majority of parents and guardians who responded were university educated. It's unclear if this is due to university-educated people having a compulsion to help with research or whether the lack of participation was apathy and a distrust that this research would amount to any change.

Another major challenge was trying to ensure that all groups and demographics were included in the qualitative phase of the study given that it was entirely voluntary. Due to Department of Education policy, I was not able to contact non-responders for the second, qualitative portion of the study. Due to the fact people who do not respond are qualitatively different than people who do, unfortunately these differences, for qualitative, and in comparison to the quantitative are unknowable.

Following my analyses, I noted that asking slightly different questions on the survey would have revealed more useful data from the survey. For example, rather than asking how many students parents had in the school, ask what grades their student(s) were in. This would allow me to filter the data based on grade allowing us to know if parents felt their experience diminished after the initial amount of contact in grade eight as their children enter high school.

At the outset one of the demographic questions asked about ethnicity of the respondents. Both the Department of Education and my original supervisor were uncomfortable with this being included and felt it could diminish the number of surveys I would receive back; as a result I removed it. Reflecting back, I feel this could have provided valuable insight into the feelings of First Nations parents in the school and see if they diverged from the general population. As well, it could have been insightful to look at our emerging Filipino population at the school and how their viewpoint may be different.

### **Future Research**

Future research in this area could focus on getting more input from parents who are disengaged from the school. As there was no way to follow up on guardians who didn't return the survey, their feelings are unknowable at this time. One assumes that their disinterest in filling out the survey can either be viewed as apathy to the topic or disbelief that any changes will actually occur.

Also, as mentioned previously, it would be interesting to study how different ethnicities and First Nations felt about their inclusion in the school. As Yukon is working to overcome the residual fallout from residential schools, it would be interesting to know the beliefs of First Nations parents on how well F.H. Collins Secondary is engaging them.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the research conducted, I have four recommendations to help with parental involvement and engagement.

At an upcoming Professional Development, possibly the next summer teacher academy, remind high school teachers of the importance of parental contact, even if it's just an occasional email of praise. This would not have to be a long drawn out process, perhaps just an hour relating research that shows the positives this can have on parents feelings about the school. While most teachers already know this, a friendly reminder would only serve to act as positive reinforcement.

It became clear that the current website is frustrating for many parents. It is not kept up to date and many parents find it difficult to navigate. A reduced, simple streamlined website with up to date information on the main page is essential.

It seems there is some concern over whether our current school council is actually serving as a voice for parents. A possible solution would be to allocate a specified number of seats on school council to parents, as well as ensuring the chair of the council is a parent at the school.

With some parents saying they would possibly be interested in parental meetings, F.H. Collins Secondary is looking at offering a parent book club in the upcoming year. This will serve as an informal way for parents to have interaction with the school while also opening the door for dialogue with parents about their concerns.

Additionally, it would be enlightening to know how Yukon First Nations parents felt about their inclusion, involvement, and engagement in Yukon high schools. Hopefully future research can explore that area further.

As we have a caring staff dedicated to our students and interactions, these simple recommendations could go a long way towards better involving and engaging parents, thus better implementing Article 18 of the Yukon Education Act.

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## **Appendixes**

### **Appendix A – Letter to Parents (Phase One Information Sheet)**

March 30, 2012

Dear parents and/or guardians of Yukon high school students,

I am writing to inform you of my research study Exploring Parental Involvement in Yukon High School Education. With your assistance, I will be conducting this study to complete my thesis for my Master of Education degree, through the University of Northern British Columbia under the supervision of Dr Linda Selby.

The purpose of my research project is to better understand the strategies Yukon high schools are currently employing to involve interested parents in their children's high school education, what current strategies parents find most effective, and finally, what strategies parents would like to see to help them become more involved in their children's high school education.

I am writing to you, to request your participation in this study because as a parent in Whitehorse you have valuable experience through your contact with the secondary school that your child(ren) attend(s). As a teacher at F.H. Collins Secondary, and, as a parent myself, I am very interested in finding out more about the views of parents and their relationships with Yukon secondary schools. I hope that this study will help inform and improve collaboration between parents, teachers, and the Department of Education both now and in the future.

The design of this study is in two phases; the first phase will be a survey to get an overview of how parents feel about their involvement in their adolescent's high school education. The second phase will be more in depth interviews with parents who would like to talk about their involvement with their child's high school education. You are invited to participate in one or both phases of this research project.

You will find enclosed with this information sheet a letter of consent should you wish to participate in the study, a survey, and a self-addressed return envelope. The survey should only take about ten minutes to complete and your participation is completely voluntary. There are no perceived risks involved in participating in this study. As a participant you have the right to decline answering questions, ask questions about the study and withdraw from the study at any time. Participation in the survey (Phase 1) does not mean that you are agreeing to or interested in being involved in the interview (Phase 2). Please note that only my supervisor and I will have access to the raw information.

A copy of the report will be made available to participants at the conclusion of the study.

Included with this letter is a consent form, a copy of the survey to fill out and a stamped



addressed envelope.

Should you be willing to participate please do the following:

1. Read and sign the two letters of consent
2. Complete the survey
3. Return the letter of consent and the survey to me in the self-addressed envelope by (insert date after receiving REB approval).

I will sign your letter of consent and send a copy back to you. Every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality and anonymity. When I receive your survey and letter of consent both will be issued identical numbers and then filed separately. Surveys will be stored in a locked facility for a maximum of two years and only my thesis supervisory committee and I will have access to the raw data. Following this all returned surveys will be destroyed by shredding. As a participant you have the right to decline answering questions, ask questions about the study, and withdraw your information and data from the study at any time.

If you would like to be involved in the interview phase of this study in Phase 2, please send me a direct e-mail at: [bradford@unbc.ca](mailto:bradford@unbc.ca) or call me at 667-8665.

If you have any questions regarding your participation in this study please contact me (667-8665 and [bradford@unbc.ca](mailto:bradford@unbc.ca)) or my supervisor Dr Linda Selby ([selby@unbc.ca](mailto:selby@unbc.ca) or 1-250-787 6243). Should you have concerns or complaints you are encouraged to contact the UNBC Office of Research at [reb@unbc.ca](mailto:reb@unbc.ca) or 1-250-960-6735.

Thank you for considering this request,

Tyler Bradford

## **Appendix B – Letter of Informed Consent for Phase One (Survey) / Researcher Copy**

March 30, 2012

### **Consent to Participate in Parental Involvement Survey**

This survey is part of Tyler Bradford's research project into Exploring Parental Involvement at a Yukon High School for the University of Northern British Columbia under the supervision of Dr. Linda Selby. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about parental involvement in Yukon high schools.

I have been given information about the survey and the research project described above and I am satisfied that I understand the requirements of this work. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers to these. I understand that I may, up until the project is completed, withdraw permission for the graduate student named below to use this information as part of a research project for the University of Northern British Columbia.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in the survey portion of Tyler Bradford's research entitled, Exploring Parental Involvement at a Yukon High School.

**Signature of interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Researcher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the findings in this study

If you have any questions regarding your participation in this study please contact me (667-8665 and [bradford@unbc.ca](mailto:bradford@unbc.ca)) or my supervisor Dr Linda Selby ([selby@unbc.ca](mailto:selby@unbc.ca) or 1-250-787 6243). Should you have concerns or complaints you are encouraged to contact the UNBC Office of Research at [reb@unbc.ca](mailto:reb@unbc.ca) or 1-250-960-6735.

*NOTE: All information gathered will be treated as confidential for the purpose of academic study only and not used for any other purpose. The names of all involved will remain anonymous.*

## **Appendix C – Letter of Informed Consent for Phase One (Survey) / Participant Copy**

March 30, 2012

### **Consent to Participate in Parental Involvement Survey**

This survey is part of Tyler Bradford's research project into Exploring Parental Involvement at a Yukon High School for the University of Northern British Columbia under the supervision of Dr. Linda Selby. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about parental involvement in Yukon high schools.

I have been given information on the survey and research project described above and I am satisfied that I understand the requirements of this work. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers to these. I understand that I may, up until the project is completed, withdraw permission for the graduate student named below to use this information as part of a research project for the University of Northern British Columbia.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in the survey portion of Tyler Bradford's research entitled, Exploring Parental Involvement at a Yukon High School.

**Signature of interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Researcher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the findings in this study

If you have any questions regarding your participation in this study please contact me (667-8665 and [bradford@unbc.ca](mailto:bradford@unbc.ca)) or my supervisor Dr Linda Selby ([selby@unbc.ca](mailto:selby@unbc.ca) or 1-250-787 6243). Should you have concerns or complaints you are encouraged to contact the UNBC Office of Research at [reb@unbc.ca](mailto:reb@unbc.ca) or 1-250-960-6735.

*NOTE: All information gathered will be treated as confidential for the purpose of academic study only and not used for any other purpose. The names of all involved will remain anonymous.*

## Appendix D – Phase One Survey

This survey is part of Tyler Bradford's research project into Exploring Parental Involvement at a Yukon High School for the University of Northern British Columbia under the supervision of Dr. Linda Selby. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about parental involvement in Yukon high schools.

**There are no correct or wrong answers to any of the statements or questions below. Your responses will be compiled with the rest of the participants to maintain your anonymity. All responses are confidential and any data collected will be used solely for the purposes of this study. I appreciate your willingness to take part in this survey.**

### Demographics

1. How many children do you have at the secondary level?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4 or more

2. What is your relationship to the student(s)?

- ☐ Father
- ☐ Mother
- ☐ Grandmother
- ☐ Grandfather
- ☐ Aunt
- ☐ Uncle
- ☐ Guardian
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the highest level of education you completed?

- ☐ Elementary school only
- ☐ Some high school, but did not finish
- ☐ Completed high school
- ☐ Some college, but did not finish
- ☐ Two-year college diploma
- ☐ Red-Seal Trades Certification
- ☐ Four-year college degree / B.A. / B.S.
- ☐ Some graduate work
- ☐ Completed Masters or professional degree
- ☐ Advanced Graduate work or Ph.D.

4. Which civic or community organizations do you volunteer with?

(Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Cultural Camps / Events
- ☐ Lion's Club / Rotary
- ☐ Non-Government Agencies
- ☐ Religious Organizations
- ☐ Sports Teams and Organizations
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Your opinion of Parental Involvement**

5. How included do you feel you are in your child(ren)'s high school education?

- ☐ Very included
- ☐ Somewhat included
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat not included
- ☐ Not very included

6. Are you satisfied with your level of involvement in your child(ren)'s high school?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

7. How supportive is your child(ren)'s high school of your involvement in their education?

- ☐ Very supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Unsupportive
- ☐ Very unsupportive

8. Which parent based school activities do you participate in?

(Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Welcome Barbeque
- ☐ Parent-Teacher Interviews
- ☐ Parent Advisory Council
- ☐ Coaching School Athletics
- ☐ Band Parent Council
- ☐ Chaperone school trips
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Which of the following do you check or read on a regular basis to get information about your child(ren)'s high school?

(Please check all that apply)

- ☐ School Newsletter
- ☐ School Newspaper
- ☐ School Website
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Other than report cards, how often do teachers contact you about your child(ren)?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Once a term
- ☐ Once a semester
- ☐ Once a year

11. Based on response to question 11, do you feel this is:

- ☐ Too much
- ☐ The correct amount
- ☐ Not enough

12. How well does your child(ren)'s high school talk to you, as a parent, about how you can promote and support education with your child(ren)?

- ☐ Very Well
- ☐ Well
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Poorly
- ☐ Very Poorly



13. Would you attend parent support meetings (on ways to promote and support high school education) if your child(ren)'s high school offered them?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ No

14. How aware are you of your rights as a parent in the Yukon Education Act?

- ☐ Very aware
- ☐ Somewhat aware
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat unaware
- ☐ Very unaware

Thank you, for taking the time to complete this survey.

If you would like to participate in Phase 2 of this study please email me at [bradford@unbc.ca](mailto:bradford@unbc.ca) or phone me on 667-8665.

## **Appendix E – Letter to Parents (Phase Two Information Sheet)**

March 30, 2012

Dear parents and/or guardians of Yukon high school students,

This is phase two of the research project Exploring Parental Involvement at a Yukon High School. As you know from phase one I am completing this study to complete my Master of Education degree, under the supervision of Dr. Linda Selby, through the University of Northern British Columbia.

The purpose of my research project is to better understand the strategies Yukon high schools are currently employing to involve interested parents in their children's high school education, what current strategies parents find most effective, and finally, what strategies parents would like to see to help them become more involved in their children's high school education.

You have been invited to participate in phase two of this study because of your experience as a parent of a Yukon high school student, and because you indicated a desire to participate in an interview when you completed the Phase 1 survey.

Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. This interview is intended to be approximately 45 minutes in duration. With your permission this interview will be digitally recorded to ensure accuracy of the information collected. The recording will then be transcribed and a pseudonym will be used to protect your confidentiality and anonymity. Any identifying information, such as the name of your school or community will be replaced with generic terms.

The data from this interview will be compiled with other interview data for analysis. Recordings and transcripts will be stored in a locked facility for a maximum of two years and only my supervisory committee and I will have access to the raw data. Following this study all interview data will be destroyed by shredding or file deletion. As a participant you have a right to decline answering questions, ask questions about the study and withdraw from the study at any time.

A copy of the report will be made available to participants at the conclusion of the study.

If you have any questions regarding your participation in this study please contact me (667-8665 and [bradford@unbc.ca](mailto:bradford@unbc.ca)) or my supervisor Dr Linda Selby ([selby@unbc.ca](mailto:selby@unbc.ca) or 1-250-787 6243). Should you have concerns or complaints you are encouraged to contact the UNBC Office of Research at [reb@unbc.ca](mailto:reb@unbc.ca) or 1-250-960-6735.

Thank you for considering this request,



Tyler Bradford

## **Appendix F – Letter of Informed Consent for Phase Two (Interviews) Researcher Copy**

March 30, 2012

### **Consent to Participate in Parental Involvement Interview**

This interview is part of Tyler Bradford's research project into Exploring Parental Involvement at a Yukon High School for the University of Northern British Columbia under the supervision of Dr. Linda Selby. The purpose of this interview is to gather information about parental involvement in Yukon high schools.

I have been given information on the interview and research project described above and I am satisfied that I understand the requirements of this work. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers to these. I understand that I may, up until the project is completed, withdraw permission for the graduate student named below to use this information as part of a research project for the University of Northern British Columbia.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in the interview portion of Tyler Bradford's research entitled, Exploring Parental Involvement in Yukon High School Education.

**Signature of interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Researcher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the findings in this study

If you have any questions regarding your participation in this study please contact me (667-8665 and [bradford@unbc.ca](mailto:bradford@unbc.ca)) or my supervisor Dr Linda Selby ([selby@unbc.ca](mailto:selby@unbc.ca) or 1-250-787 6243). Should you have concerns or complaints you are encouraged to contact the UNBC Office of Research at [reb@unbc.ca](mailto:reb@unbc.ca) or 1-250-960-6735.

*NOTE: All information gathered will be treated as confidential for the purpose of academic study only and not used for any other purpose. The names of all involved will remain anonymous.*

## **Appendix G – Letter of Informed Consent for Phase Two (Interviews) Participant Copy**

March 30, 2012

### **Consent to Participate in Parental Involvement Interview**

This interview is part of Tyler Bradford's research project into Exploring Parental Involvement in Yukon High School Education for the University of Northern British Columbia under the supervision of Dr. Linda Selby. The purpose of this interview is to gather information about parental involvement in Yukon high schools.

I have been given information on the interview and research project described above and I am satisfied that I understand the requirements of this work. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers to these. I understand that I may, up until the project is completed, withdraw permission for the graduate student named below to use this information as part of a research project for the University of Northern British Columbia.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in the interview portion of Tyler Bradford's research entitled, Exploring Parental Involvement in Yukon High School Education.

**Signature of interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Researcher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the findings in this study

If you have any questions regarding your participation in this study please contact me (667-8665 and [bradford@unbc.ca](mailto:bradford@unbc.ca)) or my supervisor Dr Linda Selby ([selby@unbc.ca](mailto:selby@unbc.ca) or 1-250-787 6243). Should you have concerns or complaints you are encouraged to contact the UNBC Office of Research at [reb@unbc.ca](mailto:reb@unbc.ca) or 1-250-960-6735.

*NOTE: All information gathered will be treated as confidential for the purpose of academic study only and not used for any other purpose. The names of all involved will remain anonymous.*

## **Appendix H – Qualitative Interviews**

The Interview Questions arose from the information received from the participants who complete the surveys. The questions are:

1. Why do you think it is important to be involved in your children's high school education?
2. Which aspects of secondary education do you believe parents should be involved in?
3. Do you have some innovative and interesting ideas about how secondary schools could more meaningfully involve parents?
4. Why do you think parents are not more involved in their children's secondary school education?
5. One activity that has been successful in other regions in supporting parental involvement has been parent support meetings. What topics would you be interested in being discussed?
6. One item that became apparent from the initial survey conducted was that every teacher is different in terms of parental contact – What do you feel is an appropriate amount of contact with the teacher?
7. Do you have any other suggestions on ways schools could involve and communicate with parents?

Interviews will be conducted at a time and place that suits the participants and the interviews will be recorded with the participants' permission. It is expected that interviews will take approximately 45 minutes.