



Supporting

Parents as Partners in Education

➤ E-newsletter from DDSB Parents Involvement Committee (PIC)



Message

from PIC Co-Chairs

To all parents and families, we want to thank you for your continued patience, understanding and support of your children and the educators that support your children during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We recognize and appreciate all of the hard work you do daily to help support your child(ren) as we flexibly respond to the ever-changing world of education, whether it be within bricks and mortar schools or DDSB@Home. We look forward to brighter days ahead. As we adjust to this time of change, please be sure to spend some time learning new things and encouraging your child(ren) to use their imagination to create great memories. Your teachers, SCC, PIC members, and principals are available to support you if you need anything. We are all partners in education. We hope that you continue to stay safe and be well.

PIC Co-Chairs

Valrie Estridge and Tiffany Sherwood

OVERLOADED?

STRATEGIES TO STAY HEALTHY IN A STRESSFUL WORLD

An eager audience of parents, panelists and friends of the Parent Involvement Committee of the Durham District School Board (DDSB) enjoyed and benefitted from a powerful and practical presentation by Diana Tikasz, MSW, RSW, of the Tend Academy on November 4, 2020 during the Parent Engagement Series.

youtu.be/JvUOmdK9mpY

Tikasz guided the audience through **“Overloaded: Strategies to stay healthy in a stressful world”**, focusing on the identification and recognition of stress, helping us to acknowledge the ways in which stress affects us, and then offering practical antidotes that we could implement immediately.

She said that there is no value in **“comparative suffering”**. When one compares another person’s suffering or the stress that a friend is under to the amount of stress that one is dealing with, then one often finds that one is paralysed with guilt, or an inability to care for oneself as one thinks that is it not fair that other people are suffering more. There is no value in this whatsoever!



She mentioned that we are now in the “muddy middle” of COVID-19; too far from the start of the pandemic to be new and too far away from a certain solution. The adrenaline that we all relied on to get us through this stressful situation has long been depleted and we all have to find ways of managing the stress of the pandemic which permeates our daily existence with all of its usual stresses too.

“The Tend Academy presentation was packed full of value. I found Diana Tikasz to be a particularly knowledgeable capturing her audience with ease,” said DDSB parent Christine Ostertag-Smellie. “Her slide show was easy to understand providing both stats, pictures and resources. I also feel that the information covered was timely in helping parents/teachers deal with the new stresses of a pandemic.”

Tikasz acknowledges that some stress is good for us. Listing three types of stress she noted that “calm” can be boring, “eustress” an ideal place where we perform at our best and “distress” a state that leads to exhaustion, burnout, illness and worse.

Physiologically, we can reduce the amount of stress in our bodies by following what we all know; getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy diet and, as important as all the others, having a good deep laugh as often as possible!

We were then offered “**FOUR PILLARS**” of support to help us navigate a way through stressful situations:

1. PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

We need to take care of our physical, mental and spiritual health. The four “Rs” can help as we “Refresh, Refuel, Regenerate and Restore”.

2. SOCIAL SUPPORT

We need the company of others, real or virtual!

3. A GOOD BOSS

It is essential to work with and for someone who we can respect and who respects us in turn. Ironically, this is as important if one is self-employed!

4. THE RIGHT JOB

We need a job that challenges us, that needs us, that inspires us and that allows us to grow.

Tikasz suggests that we should be kind to ourselves. “Sprinkle micro-practices throughout the day!” Laugh at a joke, do a random act of kindness, breathe, and reset yourself by taking a break, by pressing pause before jumping into action.

Most of the attendees commented that they enjoyed the presentation that it helped to decrease their stress levels.

For more information please visit www.tendacademy.ca/resources/



Learn about one-time funding for parents to help offset costs during the 2020-2021 school year. Find out if you are eligible and how to apply before January 15, 2021 at www.ontario.ca/page/get-support-learners



Safe Remote Learning Tips

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more students and parents/guardians are learning and working remotely and cyber security is more important than ever. We've compiled a list of best practices to help families to stay safe on their devices while still staying in touch with teachers, peers and colleagues.

- As we adapt to learning, teaching and working from home, it is even more important that we are cyber secure.
- Good security hygiene starts from the peripheral devices such as your home router all the way to personal electronic devices such as computers, mobile phones, tablets etc.
- A compromised home router can open you up to significant consequences such as information or identity theft, malicious sites and advertisements, fraud and more. An unsecured home network can also be used by cybercriminals for illicit purposes such as launching an attack on other networks and systems.

Here are some best practices to ask yourself and be aware about to help foster a safe remote learning environment:

- Is your computer set to automatically install software updates? Is your personal firewall enabled on your computer?
- Have you installed antivirus/anti-malware protection on your device? Have you changed all default passwords and logins on your home router?
- Have you changed the default SSID (also referred to as the "network name") to something unique and not tied to your identity or location?
- Do you have a strong password set on your Wi-Fi router? Recommended to use alpha numeric password with a minimum of eight characters.
- Is the firmware on your router up to date and with the latest Wi-Fi security settings?
- Have you covered all webcams when not in use?
- Do you make use of parental controls & privacy settings?
- Don't use/Use with caution public Wi-Fi networks since they might not be secured and hence an easy target for attackers.
- Do you follow best practices during video conferencing like keeping the mic and video turned off when not needed? Use chat for only relevant communication and respecting online etiquettes to ensure a safe and productive learning environment.

Additional resources on safety can be found online at:

<https://www.getcybersafe.gc.ca/en/home>

or contact your home service provider for more information.

Parent Voice ThoughtExchange

Parents of students enrolled in in-person classes were invited to participate in a Thoughtexchange at the end of October and share their experiences.



2,606
Participants



2,646
Thoughts



56,023
Ratings

Of those that participated:

How easy has it been to use the learning platform(s) and online resources (e.g. Google Classroom). Secondary School only?



%	Person Icon	Answer
3%	(60)	1 - Very difficult
7%	(152)	2 - Difficult
16%	(349)	3 - Neutral
23%	(495)	4 - Easy
12%	(266)	5 - Very easy
39%	(848)	N/A

How engaged were you (or child) in the month of September?



%	Person Icon	Answer
2%	(49)	1 - Not at all engaged
7%	(163)	2 - Slightly engaged
22%	(520)	3 - Somewhat engaged
48%	(1109)	4 - Very engaged
21%	(485)	5 - Extremely engaged

How safe did you (or your child) feel with the health & safety protocols put in place for in-person learning?



%	Person Icon	Answer
1%	(28)	1 - Not at all safe
7%	(163)	2 - Slightly safe
30%	(681)	3 - Somewhat safe
45%	(1010)	4 - Very safe
17%	(393)	5 - Extremely safe

Key Themes:

- High satisfaction rate for families with in-person learning
- Strong focus on engagement, social-emotional wellness and mental health
- Continue to focus on health and safety and wellness

Staff are compiling and analyzing the responses to the Thoughtexchange to help inform decision making and continue to identify opportunities to support students and families.



SEAC MEETING

December 17, 2020 @ 6:30 p.m.

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

January 4, 2021 @ 7:00 p.m.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

January 18, 2021 @ 7:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL PIC MEETING

February 21, 2021 @ 7:00 p.m.



Connect with us

Email: engagement@ddsb.ca

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