

MARCH 2024



SUPPORTING PARENTS as Partners in Education

E-newsletter from Durham District School Board (DDSB) Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)

Message from the Co-chairs




Happy New Year and welcome back to another PIC e-newsletter. We are excited to share the growth and development of the School Community Council's (SCC) as they roll-out their various initiatives for the remainder of the school year. As the Pro-Grant committee has reviewed and approved funding for approximately 40 applications from schools across the Board, we wish to feature the work of various SCC's in this newsletter, so keep an eye out for your school. We look forward to the programming that will result from these resources and hope for a positive impact on the intended audience.

Along with that, this month we hosted our first Regional SCC meeting at the Board office on February 26, 2024. The evening provided the opportunity for SCC representatives from different areas of the region to share and connect with each other. We also hosted our first Parent Engagement Series of the year, entitled "Parenting in the Age of Social Media." This was an online session to allow for increased accessibility and if you missed it; don't panic! A recorded version of the session is available on [YouTube](#).

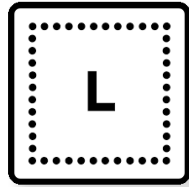
This edition of the newsletter also includes a variety of informative pieces from detailing Grade 8 information night to local events taking place during March Break. If there is a topic that you believe should be highlighted in a future edition, please reach out to us at engagement@ddsb.ca.



STAY CONNECTED

-  [DDSB Engagement](#)
-  engagement@ddsb.ca
-  [@ParentsDDSB](#)

Updated Grades 1 to 8 Ontario Language Curriculum



The Grades 1 to 8 Ontario Language Curriculum was updated and implemented this past September 2023.

The revised curriculum is part of Ontario's plan to modernize education to ensure all students have the foundational and transferable skills they need in a rapidly changing world, with early interventions in reading critical to future success. The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1 to 8: Language, 2023 outlines the knowledge and skills required for effective reading and writing, listening and speaking so students can succeed at school and beyond. The curriculum was revised partly in response to the recommendations outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read public inquiry report.

The new curriculum now includes:

- A. Foundational knowledge and skills
- B. Transferable skills
- C. Digital media literacy
- D. Applications, Connections and Contributions

The curriculum describes the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn. It is organized in four distinct but interrelated areas, with language and literacy skills being taught and assessed throughout learning.

The four areas are Literacy Connections and Applications, Foundations of Language, Comprehension: Understanding and Responding to Texts, Composition: Expressing Ideas and Creating Texts.

To learn more about Ontario's revised Grades 1 to 8 Language Curriculum and how to support your child at home, visit the [Government of Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum and Resources page](#).

Updated Grade 9 English Course



In September 2023, a new compulsory Grade 9 English course was implemented across Ontario. The Ontario Ministry of Education is continuing its efforts to de-stream, which means there will no longer be applied or academic course options for Grade 9 English. This change will provide all students with the same learning experience and prepare them for a variety of career pathways.

This new course is part of Ontario's plan to modernize the education curriculum to ensure all students have the foundational and transferable skills they need in a rapidly changing world.

Some key benefits include:

- having high expectations for all students
- providing students with a range of skills and interests as well as the opportunity to learn together
- increasing opportunities and helping to remove systemic barriers for Indigenous, Black and other racialized students, students who live in various socio-economic households, and students with differing abilities and special education needs
- keeping future options open for all students (for example, going to college, university or an apprenticeship)

The course builds on the new elementary language curriculum and aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills essential for them to become confident communicators. It is designed to help students further develop oral communication, reading, writing and digital media literacy skills to reach their full potential.

The Grade 9 English course includes Foundational Knowledge and Skills, Transferable Skills, Digital Media Literacy, Applications, Connections and Contributions. It will teach students foundational language and literacy concepts and skills to prepare them for success now and in the future. Throughout the course and its areas of learning, students learn to apply their understanding with increasing sophistication.

To learn more about Ontario's revised Grades 9 English course and how you can support your child at home, visit the Government of Ontario Ministry of Education [Curriculum and Resources page](#).

TRANSITION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL AND BEYOND!

DDSB secondary schools completed their Grade 8 information and orientation sessions for families throughout January and February of 2024. If you were unable to attend these sessions, speak to your child's teacher to help with the transition to secondary school.

The DDSB provides a variety of resources and transition guides to help students direct their learning. This allows them to receive relevant academic and practical experience regardless of the career pathway they choose. To view resources, visit the [DDSB website](#).



Grade 11 Students: Level 1 Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

Grade 11 student Level 1 OYAP applications open March 4 and close at midnight on April 5, 2024. Students will have approximately one week to submit their interview and successful applicants will be notified in June of their acceptance.

The following programs will be available:

- Automotive Service Technician (Durham College)
- Electrical (Durham College and Fleming College)
- Cook (Durham College)
- Industrial Mechanic Millwright (Durham College)
- Welding (Durham College)
- Hairstylist (Durham Hairstylist Academy)
- Plumbing (Durham College)
- Carpentry (Pereyma and Local 27)
- Carpentry (Fleming College)
- Construction Craft Worker (Liuna Cobourg)

For more information, visit the [DDSB website](#) or contact your school guidance department.

De-Streaming and Inclusive Grade 9

De-streaming means that students will no longer be separated into Academic and Applied Streams. Students will take a combination of courses made up of De-streamed, Academic and Open level courses. Locally developed courses will still be available for some students as well.

For more information, view the DDSB What Families Want To Know About De-Streaming and Inclusive Grade 9.



ACTIVITIES FOR HOME

[Fun Earth Day Crafts for Kids](#)

[How to Make a Paper Mache Planet Earth](#)

[Hands-On Ocean Oil Spill Clean Up Experiment](#)

[Winter Science Experiment for Kids](#)



MESSAGE FROM THE DDSB INDIGENOUS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Indigenous Education Department is excitedly working on a new Salmon Revitalization Project in partnership with Indigenous scholars and Ontario Fishers Anglers and Hunters (OFAH).

Through a variety of literacy, numeracy, STEM, and outdoor learning activities, students will be learning about the impacts of colonization on the Atlantic salmon population. Salmon eggs were delivered to the Indigenous Education Department incubator at Duffin's Creek on January 19. A series of experiential learning opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, will be provided to students to understand the Atlantic salmon life cycle, connections to understanding watersheds, including prioritizing student-led inquiries. The salmon will be monitored as they grow at Duffin's Creek and will be released by students in May and June.

Students at Uxbridge Secondary School made media headlines this month for their semester-long truth and reconciliation work in their NDW (Global Indigenous Perspectives) course. As part of this work, students drafted a petition with the goal of it being presented to the house of commons. [Uxbridge class wants feds to keep reconciliation promises](#) to view the news article and petition.

Outdoor learning opportunities continue to be enjoyed by Indigenous students participating in the Akinomagaaye/Akinomoshin Program facilitated by Beedahbin Peltier and Tammy and Bernard Nelson. Indigenous Student Circles from two elementary schools meet to engage in land and language-based learning. All learning activities have connections to the Ontario Science curriculum.

Secondary engagement opportunities continue through a partnership with Mississaugas of Scugog

Island First Nation, Durham Continuing Education, and DDSB Indigenous Education. Many adult students have been working with the Secondary Indigenous Engagement Coach to achieve credits as they work toward attaining their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

Students from various schools came together on January 23 to visit the University of Toronto campus and the First Nations House Indigenous Student Services. In addition to imagining future possibilities, the visit included a tour of the athletic facilities, the rare book library, and a view of the CN Tower.

We continue to work with central staff to create resources and professional development sessions for educators. Some projects include Grade 9 destreamed English, secondary Core French and French Immersion, secondary Science curricula, New Teacher Induction Program, Grove School, secondary Canadian and World Studies, secondary Social Sciences, K-8 Social Studies, and understanding the Right to Read recommendations for Indigenous and all students.

We are excited to welcome Michelle Alexander as Elementary Facilitator. Michelle has been a support teacher and coach within the Indigenous Education Department, and we are happy that she will continue to support students, families, and educators in this new role. Congratulations Michelle!

We also extend a warm welcome to Dawn White who will be joining the Indigenous Education department on February 1 as the System Lead for Indigenous Education and Outdoor Education. Welcome Dawn! We are saying baa maa pii to Denise Nickerson who will be joining the Math Strategy and continue her leadership work with the Multilingual Language Learning department.



Online Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Chromebook Family Information Session



On January 23, Inclusive Student Services hosted an online SEA Chromebook Information Session for families. During the session, families were introduced to some of the Google accessibility tools available to support students. For more information about tools available to support all students, view the [Inclusive Technology \(IT\) Supports video](#).

Viola Desmond P.S. Winter Raffle Basket fundraising event



E.B. Phin P.S. Knitting (K)night

The Vice Chair of our SCC, Ms Jennifer “Jenn” Sobec, recently ran a Knitting (K)night at E B Phin.



Rosemary Brown P.S.

This past December, Rosemary Brown P.S. hosted their first Pancake Breakfast fundraising event hosted by the SCC. Families were offered pancakes with maple syrup and a juice for \$7 with additional pancakes for \$1 each. We had donations from Tim Hortons and local grocery stores (Longos, Sobeys, No Frills, Real Canadian Superstore) which helped fund all the food and supplies for the event. This meant that 100% of the profits from the fundraiser went directly to the school. With the help of 11 parent volunteers, this event went smoothly and fun was had by all.



MARCH BREAK 2024 Community Events



[March Break Family Swim and Skate courtesy of Ontario Power Generation](#)

MARCH BREAK 2024 Public Library Programs

[Pickering Public Library Program Events Calendar](#)

[Ajax Public Library March Break Reading Contest and Programs for Kids](#)

[Whitby Public Library Program Events Calendar](#)

[Oshawa Public Library Program Events Calendar](#)

MARCH BREAK 2024 Local Programs

[Township of Brock March Break Camp](#)

[Township of Uxbridge March Break Variety Camp](#)

[Township of Port Perry Leisure and Activity Guide](#)