



# Supporting

# Parents as Partners in Education



E-newsletter from DDSB Parents Involvement Committee (PIC)



## Co-Chairs Welcome

Welcome from the co-chairs:

We would like to take the time to welcome back our school communities and hope you had the chance to rest, relax, and recharge over the summer break. The members of the 2022-2023 Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) have had the chance to meet and are quickly moving forward with new initiatives, forums, and events to allow for School Community Councils (SCC) to learn, grow, and serve their respective communities.

For instance, this year we hope to provide various board-wide training sessions to SCCs to support functional improvements. On November 24, PIC held its first virtual session which connected many SCC members with presentations, and a forum to have questions addressed live by experts. Additionally, the SCC handbook has been sent out to all respective schools so please do read and familiarize yourself with its contents. Feedback regarding the layout and content is welcome so please do send a note via email ([engagement@ddsb.ca](mailto:engagement@ddsb.ca)) with your thoughts.

The PIC subcommittees continue to lay the foundation for various programs and services intended for the school year. The hope is that the fruits of their labour will result in beneficial programming and services for everyone.

**PIC Co-Chairs**

*Huma Choudhary & Jim Van Allen*

## DECEMBER

### Activities in Durham Region

**1. Family New Year's Eve Party, Presented by Ontario Power Generation:**

On December 31 from 6 to 9 p.m. the Ajax Family New Year's Eve Party will deliver a fantastic event for the whole family. This free event taking place at the Ajax Community Centre (75 Centennial Road) features children's activities, games, live entertainment, interactive experiences, ice skating with a DJ and more. Party favours are included as participants gather on the ice rink for a special countdown and balloon drop at 9 p.m. It's a great way to ring in the New Year! Find out more on the [Ajax events webpage](#).

**2. Various Drop-in Programs for All Ages:**

[Ajax Public Library](#)  
[Pickering Public Library](#)  
[Oshawa Public Library](#)

**3. Fantasy of Lights in Uxbridge:**

Drive through the path of light displays at the beautiful Fantasy of Lights at Elgin Park. Join any night from December 3 to January 1, from 6 to 9:30 p.m. Donations are accepted at the exit. Find out more on the [Uxbridge Optimist webpage](#).

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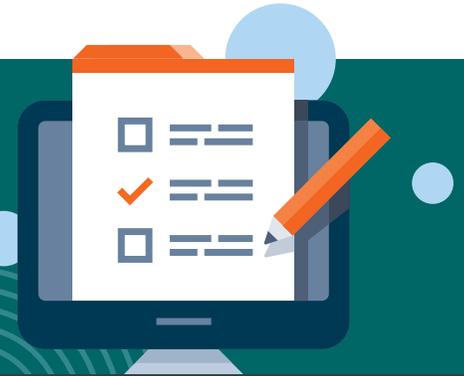
#### 4. Whitby Lights the Night and Holiday Festival

An annual event that marks the official start to the holiday season held over six weeks starting November 25 to January 4 at Whitby Civic Park, 575 Rossland Rd. E. Find out more on the [Whitby events webpage](#).

#### 5. Royal Ontario Museum's 'Third Tuesday Nights Free' is Back!

The Museum will be free for everyone on the third Tuesday night of each month from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. Includes free access to all galleries, plus the following special exhibitions: Fantastic Beasts™: The Wonder of Nature, Kent Monkman: Being Legendary and Wildlife Photographer of the Year. No advanced tickets. Find out more on the [ROM website](#).

# Preparing for Post-Secondary Studies



This overview has been compiled to provide a foundation for families to start preparing their children for post-secondary studies. As students start their journey into researching options, they will understand and prioritize their next steps. For the purpose of this analysis, we assumed that students will apply to post-secondary schools in Ontario. Students may also choose to apply to educational institutions in other provinces or consider international options.

We recommend that research and discussion should ideally start as early as Grade 9 to support decision making in Grade 12, but don't stress if you start later. Families can use these tips to discuss post-secondary options with their children and help keep track of how much is accomplished.

## Tips

- Focus on obtaining good marks or steadily improve year over year, starting as early as Grade 9.
- Try completing as many volunteer hours in Grade 9 as possible.
- Use summer breaks for volunteering, employment, or engaging in creative projects.
- Seek out leadership opportunities such as joining the Student Senate by Grade 11.
- Be aware of application deadlines and highly competitive programs.
- Continue discussing options with your school's guidance counsellor.

## Checklist

- Create a list of potential and preferred schools and programs.
- Attend campus tours (both virtual and in-person).
- For universities, apply through the [Ontario Universities' Application Centre \(OUAC\)](#). Note: OUAC processes applications for Ontario universities only.

- For colleges, apply to any of Ontario's public colleges through [ontariocolleges.ca](https://www.ontariocolleges.ca).
- For apprenticeships, apply to apprenticeship programs in Ontario through the [Skilled Trades Ontario website](#).
- Complete volunteer hours.

## Financial Assistance

- Government loans/grants include [Ontario Student Assistance Program \(OSAP\)](#) and the [Ontario Learn and Stay Grant](#).

## Scholarships, Bursaries & Awards

- Apply for scholarships (awarded based on merit) and bursaries (awarded based on financial need).
- Awards are offered by the school based on outstanding achievement. Some are automatically awarded upon admission and others require an application.
- Check the [DDSB scholarships webpage](#) often for updates to DDSB awards as well as external opportunities.

## > GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### What is the OUAC and what does it do?

“**OUAC**” is the acronym for the Ontario Universities’ Application Centre. OUAC is a centralized processing centre for applications for undergraduate admission to the universities of Ontario. Located in Guelph, Ontario, OUAC receives student applications, processes, and transfers information to the universities students have selected. OUAC does not make admission decisions. That is the universities’ responsibility.

### What is OSAP?

**The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP)** is a financial aid program that can help students pay for college or university.

OSAP offers funding through:

Grants: money you don’t have to pay back.

Student loan: money you need to repay once you’re finished school.

## > ADDITIONAL RESOURCE WEBSITES

- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/learn-about-osap>
- <https://www.ouac.on.ca/>
- <https://www.ontariouniversitiesinfo.ca/>
- <https://www.ontariocolleges.ca/en>
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-learn-and-stay-grant>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education.html>
- <https://www.univcan.ca/>
- <https://disabilityawards.ca/>
- <https://www.scholarshipscanada.com/>
- <https://yconic.com/>



# DDSB Parent Involvement Committee Sub-Committee Introductions

## **Durham Parents as Partners Conference Sub-Committee**

**Patrick Symister** ([patrick.symister@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.symister@gmail.com))

**Peter Ackie** ([bibletim217@gmail.com](mailto:bibletim217@gmail.com))

The Durham Parents as Partners Conference is an annual symposium presented by the DDSB in conjunction with the Parent Engagement Series Committee. Guest speakers are invited to discuss topics of interest, with the aim of increased capacity building, and to further empower our DDSB communities. The Durham Parents as Partners Conference will take place in April or May, 2023.

If there are any suggested topics of interest that you feel would be helpful for us to present to the DDSB community please feel free to contact your school SCC chair, Patrick Symister ([patrick.symister@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.symister@gmail.com)), and/or Peter Ackie ([bibletim217@gmail.com](mailto:bibletim217@gmail.com)).

We look forward to your input and to the upcoming conference in 2023.

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## **Newsletter Sub-Committee**

**Mitzi Hussett** ([mitzi.hussett@ddsb.ca](mailto:mitzi.hussett@ddsb.ca))

**Waseem Ali** ([wasenali@hotmail.com](mailto:wasenali@hotmail.com))

**Rupal** ([rupal2714@yahoo.ca](mailto:rupal2714@yahoo.ca))



The goal for the PIC Newsletter is to be an informative space where communities can find relevant and supportive resources that set families up for success. This may include, but is not limited to resources, information, and tips that might be useful for parents and guardians. Look out for the newsletter to be distributed throughout the year around breaks and holidays containing helpful information about engaging activities for your children.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of the committee members. Wishing you a wonderful holiday break!

## Parent Engagement Series Sub-Committee

**Frank Samuels** ([frank.samuels@ddsb.ca](mailto:frank.samuels@ddsb.ca))

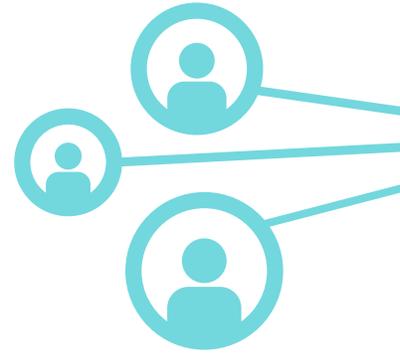
**Yugita Samuels** ([Yugi07@rogers.com](mailto:Yugi07@rogers.com))

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**Huma Chaudhary** ([huma.chaudhary@gmail.ca](mailto:huma.chaudhary@gmail.ca))

**Lori Dunn** ([lorlleannndun1@gmail.com](mailto:lorlleannndun1@gmail.com))

This sub-committee organizes forums two to three times during the school year which allows for parents/guardians/caregivers to learn about and explore various topics relating to their children and the educational sphere. Experts are invited to address a variety of subject areas based on the concerns or needs of the respective communities. Sessions can be held in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid fashion to allow for accessibility and inclusion.



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## Social Justice Human and Equity Rights Sub-Committee

**Huma Chaudhary** ([huma.chaudhary@gmail.ca](mailto:huma.chaudhary@gmail.ca))

**Peter Ackie** ([bibletim217@gmail.com](mailto:bibletim217@gmail.com))

**Patrick Symister** ([patrick.symister@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.symister@gmail.com))

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The goal of this sub-committee is to ensure that the diverse experiences and voices of the DDSB community are reflected in the local schools and the community programs that are sourced throughout the region. It is to create a positive and inclusive space and environment that is free from discrimination, stereotypes, and negative experiences.



## Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants Sub-Committee

**Gurleen Saggu** ([gurleensaggu@gmail.com](mailto:gurleensaggu@gmail.com))

**Carolynne Waters** ([carolynne.waters@ddsb.ca](mailto:carolynne.waters@ddsb.ca))

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The Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grants program provides funding to school boards to work with school councils to lead projects with a focus on the identification and removal of barriers that may prevent parents and families from participating and engaging in their child's education. This sub-committee will review applications for funding from schools across the district and provide the necessary funding for schools to complete approved projects.



# DDSB School Community Council Training Sessions

### **SESSION ONE: Running Effective SCC Meetings**

### **SESSION TWO: How to Attract and Engage Members of Your SCC**

On November 24, 2022, the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) held a virtual webinar training session for School Community Council (SCC) Members from local DDSB schools. 85 SCC members from around the region attended the two informative sessions titled *Running Effective SCC Meetings* and *How to Attract and Engage Members of Your SCC*.

*Running Effective SCC Meetings*, facilitated by Dawn White, Principal of G.L. Roberts CVI, highlighted the important functions of the council, such as advising principals on various education topics including the School Improvement Plan, code of conduct criteria, the process for selecting principals, communication plans, and the school/board calendar. It is important to remember that SCCs can consult with schools on special events, field trips, budget priorities, and Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants. This session also offered guidance on minute-taking, the official SCC correspondence, and a plan for resolving conflicts that may arise.

A parent member of PIC, Kristen McKinnon, facilitated the session *How to Attract and Engage Members of Your SCC*, drawing attendees' attention to how to make SCC meetings dynamic and addressing accessibility for community members, offering suggestions such as providing childcare, scheduling various meeting times and different formats (virtual/hybrid, breakfast meetings, walk and talk, etc.).

Each attendee received a DDSB School Community Handbook outlining the sessions' discussion. If you did not attend the session, you can access the recording on [YouTube](#). If you have any questions or require information, please email [engagement@ddsb.ca](mailto:engagement@ddsb.ca) with your request.

The third session, Finance 101 for School Community Councils (Date TBA), will give an overview of school budgets, bookkeeping for School Community Councils, fundraising best practices, and the importance of the Treasurer's monthly and yearly reports. This session will take place in the new year.

# DDSB Parental Involvement Committee Survey

2022-2023

*\*The survey was sent to all SCC Chairs the week of December 5, 2022*

## Working Together for Student Success!

Student success is improved when we all work together. We value your partnership and want your continued support in student achievement and well-being in the Durham District School Board.

Have your say through the [DDSB PIC Survey!](#) This survey is for the community to have an opportunity to make contributions to the well-being of our students by ensuring that the appropriate and valuable resources are available to our diverse populations.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to your participation in building a positive space and learning opportunities for our families.

*Sincerely,  
DDSB Parent Involvement Committee*

Connect with Us



[engagement@ddsb.ca](mailto:engagement@ddsb.ca)



[twitter.com/ParentsDDSB](https://twitter.com/ParentsDDSB)

