

**Ward 15, Toronto-Danforth**  
**Trustee Jennifer Story**  
**Ward Forum**  
**Topic: Supporting Our Kids in the Digital Age**  
**Tuesday May 29, 2018**  
**6:30-8:30pm**  
**Blake Street Junior PS/EAST**

### **Introductions**

Welcome from:

Jennifer Zurba, Principal Blake Street PS and EAST Alternative

-Self regulation focus in Blake through K-3; understanding zones of self-regulation

-EAST 7/8 school; new staff; focus is on equity and social justice

-Courageous Justice project - kids choose a hero and create a script; presented on two different nights

### **Film screening**

**Screenagers: Growing up in the Digital Age**

American context - - race, gender, class issues

Q&A Discussion with Saleem Haniff, Social Worker, TDSB Mental Health and Well-Being System Support

Addressing issues/concerns from parents

How can schools do a better job with technology? – ban or encourage self-regulation with technology; look at how technology can benefit us

Q: Is there structure around how much screen time kids get in school?

A: Varies from classroom from classroom; not tracked and monitored; principals work with staff to use tech as a learning tool rather than a reward

-student census data included questions for parents; data will come out in the fall from the board → Director has flagged isolation and impact of relationships through social media

Q: Is curriculum being developed around the use of technology?

A: Curriculum is being developed but there is an awareness of the need to discuss impact of technology on kids; attention spans are getting shorter

Q: Should the TDSB learn to adapt to the needs of ever changing technology?

A: School board's role includes: device usage in schools; what should we be teaching in terms of tech literacy; curriculum is written by province and implemented by school boards – most think there should be device policy and media literacy in classrooms (at forum)

Some useful strategies that limit screen time:

- bury apps in folders, log in manually, turn off notifications
- check phone once an hour-regulate your time

Concerns about violent video games – addictive nature of games; general thread is that our brains have not evolved as quickly as technology has; violent video games reduce quality of sleep – can't tell the difference between real and fake – triggered processes in our bodies, wanting to be awake and alert

Q: School board policies – tech in the classroom; why are we not limiting tech in the classroom?

A: teachers work in terms of comfort level; encourage technology for sake of learning; in Kindergarten tech is used to document students growth in order to share info with parents; using tech to connect with parents

→ want tech in classroom if it is deepening students learning

→ using online resources such as encyclopaedias; library learning resource centre; info is up to date through tech; updated immediately

→ use resource to enrich students' lives

→ technology does not replace good instruction; it is a tool used to enhance learning

-Set online restrictions to limit screen time; use tech to our advantage; come up with a family plan; have open conversations about the use of technology

Policy clarification

-process of policy implementation takes time through the board—major decisions on directions go through a long board process

-Trustee Story can add suggestion to policy roster on the use of devices and tech in schools; appropriate use of technology and how to balance the use of tech. Will explore with senior team

Q: How will teachers' skills be boosted around technology in the classroom?

A: This is a constant focus for professional teachers' learning; how teachers work with children who have been affected by technology; need good teaching strategies and work with individual students in class; look at how to increase attention span of students

Q: What apps are useful; how do teachers know/decide?

A: Special Education works on this in the board; there is structure within the board around digital lead learners to support evolution of apps and training of teachers; tech tools support good instruction and do not replace instruction

-Find balance with technology and daily living; eating well and sleeping well; reintroduce boredom

-allow children to learn to do things with what they have around them; support students at home and at school

-healthychildren.org included media usage plan suggestions