

Virtual Ward 8 Forum – Thursday, November 18, 2021

The Ward Forum featured a presentation about Combating Online Hate, as well as elections for PIAC (the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee of the Board) and FSLCAC (the French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee).

Elections

- PIAC Nominations were received from three Ward 8 parents
 - Anshu Grover
 - Terry Phan
 - Kaydeen Bankasingh
- Their bios were posted on the Trustee website - <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/ward8/>
- After Welcome, introductions and land acknowledgement, Wilmar Kortleever who assisting the meeting from Shared Services explained the election process.
- The candidates were given the opportunity to say a few words (as Terry was late to the meeting, his bio was read) – all three were confirmed to be in the meeting prior to voting
- Voting was done through ElectionBuddy - one vote, with the two top vote-getters being elected
- Although the results are to be confirmed through PIAC audit, Wilmar confirmed prior to the end of the meeting that Kaydeen and Anshu were elected.
- There was only one parent nominated for the FSLCAC Alternate – Cheryl Batty and she was acclaimed.
- Trustee Laskin thanked all candidates for volunteering to support parents and caregivers by representing Ward 8.

Superintendents

- Denise Humphreys, Andrew Howard and Roni Felsen provides preliminary comments on the ministry announcements <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001184/ontario-enhancing-covid-19-winter-testing>
 - School boards can return to regular 4-course semesters for secondary schools.
 - 5 take-home rapid antigen tests will be provided to each student to take home over the holidays
 - Virtual-only parent teacher conferences/interviews in elementary and secondary schools
 - Starting in January, virtual-only assemblies in elementary schools unless a local PHU/school board chooses to enforce this measure earlier
 - Restricting lunches/breaks to classroom cohorts when indoors, where distancing between cohorts cannot be maintained in elementary schools.

- More information will be shared ASAP.

Presentation – Combating Online Hate

- Trustee Laskin introduced Melissa Mikel, the Director of Education at Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center. Shelley attended a session for educators over the summer and contacted Melissa and was grateful the presentation could be adapted for parent/caregivers.
- Trustee Laskin then introduced Emily Thompson, the Associate Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Research Department. She came to the USA 8 years ago from the UK after receiving her bachelor's and master's degrees in History, with a focus on Holocaust denial. Her research focuses on the Digital Terrorism and Hate project, exploring how extremists utilize the internet and social media to spread hateful and harmful content and ideologies. She is the program director for Combat Hate, an interactive student workshop designed to introduce media literacy skills and provide tools for young people to deal with hate online.
- Emily then led the group through a presentation that included polls and an opportunity for questions.
- The presentation Guiding Questions
 - What is social media?!
 - Do young people encounter hate speech online?
 - What does hate online look like?
 - What can we do to support our young people?
 - Your questions and comments!
- After outlining the concerns, citing data and real examples, the presentation concluded with actions of how we can support our young people
 - familiarize yourself with social media
 - create space for open discussion
 - empower young people
 - media literacy and empathy building
 - spread positivity!
 - seek support when needed
- The attendees found it very impactful.
- As the slide deck needs the context, Emily provided a number of other resources
 - Action Plan (attachment)
 - Decoding Hate (attachment)
 - Parent & Caregivers Resources handout (attachment)
 - Common Sense Media - Coping with COVID-19 (attachment)
 - Simon Wiesenthal Center Digital Terrorism and Hate Project – www.digitalhate.net

- Children's Hospital of Chicago - Parenting Teens in the Age of Social Media:
<https://www.luriechildrens.org/en/blog/social-media-parenting-statistics/>

Grateful to Melissa and Emily for the presentation and to all who attended.

For additional information, please contact

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