

## Thoughtexchange™ Results


### **We asked students, parents/guardians, and community members:**


*As we continue with learning at home, what are your challenges, successes, questions, and/or suggestions?*

### **How it works:**

Participation in Thoughtexchange is a three-step process, where participants were asked to:

 **Share thoughts:** Participants responded to with their experiences. All thoughts were shared with other participants, exactly as they were entered.

 **Star points of view:** Participants were asked to review the thoughts of others and rate them based on how much they agree (5 stars) or disagree (1 star). This helped to identify the ideas that are most important to the group.

 **Discover what matters:** Participants have the opportunity to learn about the group's shared values and priorities. Even those who didn't participate in the previous steps can view the thoughts, sorted by overall rating, as well as 'hot topics' which capture different ideas that were rated highly by the group.

### **Participation Rate during Share and Star:**



7012 Participants



8902 Thoughts Shared



169,803 Star Ratings Assigned

	Students 7-8	Students 9-12	Parents K-8	Parents 9-12	Community
Participants	774	2304	3162	731	41
Thoughts Shared	635	1923	5061	1260	23
Ratings Assigned	11,416	41,354	92,770	24,211	52

The Discover phase is ongoing, where feedback can be explored using the links below:

- [Students in Grades 7-8](#)
- [Students in Grades 9-12](#)
- [Parents/Guardians of Students in Kindergarten-Grade 8](#)
- [Parents/Guardians of Students in Grades 9-12](#)
- [Community/Members of Advisory Committee Meetings](#)



### **Family Stress/Life Balance**

- Parents/guardians are finding it challenging to support their children while working from home or working essential jobs;
- Students are finding it challenging doing school work in a pandemic with part-time jobs and other responsibilities (i.e., helping with siblings);
- Both groups are busy caring for sick loved ones.

### **Hours/Volume of Work/Consistency**

- Reports that the workload is too heavy, beyond the recommended hours;
- Teachers are inconsistent in their approach, classes/meetings scheduled at conflicting times;
- Desire for work to be staggered with longer deadlines; multiple suggestions for work to be communicated on Fridays with the weekend to prepare and then one week to complete.

### **Need Teacher-Led Learning**

- Want video lessons with face-to-face teaching; if live, include the option to record for students who need flexibility;
- Requesting more interaction from teachers and/or virtual classroom;
- Reports of too much 'busy work' being assigned without enough teaching;
- Parents/guardians don't feel equipped to take on the role of the teacher.

### **Hard to Focus/Be Motivated**

- Students find it very difficult to stay focused, motivated, and productive while at home;
- Lack of routine and distractions at home are challenging;
- Hard to be productive with the delay in responses to questions;
- Seeking meaningful and engaging work.

### **Online Platforms/Resources**

- Multiple platforms/tools/accounts/passwords are creating significant frustration; requests for consistency and a single host platform;
- Frustration with the limited parent access to google classroom (parents want the student view);
- All online meetings should be recorded so students can watch again/at a different time;
- Too many online resources to navigate and determine what is useful.

### **Assignments/Evaluation**

- Looking for further clarity, with examples, on how marks will be calculated (and more reassurance that marks will not go down);
- Questions about what will happen with final exams/summatives; concern that exams would be unfair; requests to cancel exams;
- Requests for marks to be pass/fail was met with mixed ratings;
- Group work is particularly challenging.

### **Need Contact/Online is Difficult**

- Students miss being at school, seeing classmates and teachers; want to feel connected to school community;
- Concerns about too much screen time;
- Online learning is difficult; students are not truly learning by reading texts/slides; miss opportunities for clarification;
- It's motivating when teachers comment on work and give feedback.

### **Need Clear Instructions/Communication**

- Students and parents are seeking clarity on what students are supposed to be doing;
- Parents want to be copied in on communication to students so that they are in the loop, even for high school students;
- Communication needs to be streamlined, more consistent between teachers, in one place, and with concise, easy-to-follow instructions.

### **Stress/Anxiety**

- Challenging for those with pre-existing mental health issues;
- Impact on everyone's mental health;
- Feeling stressed, lost, paranoid, frustrated, anxious, depressed, etc.

### **Equity**

- Need help for students with Individual Education Plans;
- Concern for those in unsafe environments;
- Concern that the system rewards parents' abilities to teach and be organized, or a child's ability to access devices;
- Concern for English Language Learners.

### **Graduation/Post-Secondary**

- Grade 12s are happy with the decision that marks will not decrease, but are feeling anxious and uncertain about the future (acceptances, scholarships, summer work).
- Seeking support from guidance counselors;
- Concerns about lacking knowledge that is needed for university courses (or next grade);
- Looking for more communication specific to grade 12s.

### **Access to Technology**

- Allow flexibility in submitting work (e.g., photos of handwritten work);
- Some do not have wifi access, have unreliable wifi connection, or limited bandwidth for multiple people;
- Not all families have access to a computer, or must share a computer among multiple family members;
- Some are completing work on phones/mobile devices;
- Paper packages with worksheets would be great, but many lacking access to a printer.

### **French Immersion**

- Not all homes have French speakers, so it is difficult to support students in French;
- Students need more time speaking French with teachers and classmates;
- Video chats are needed for practice.

### **Positive/Successes**

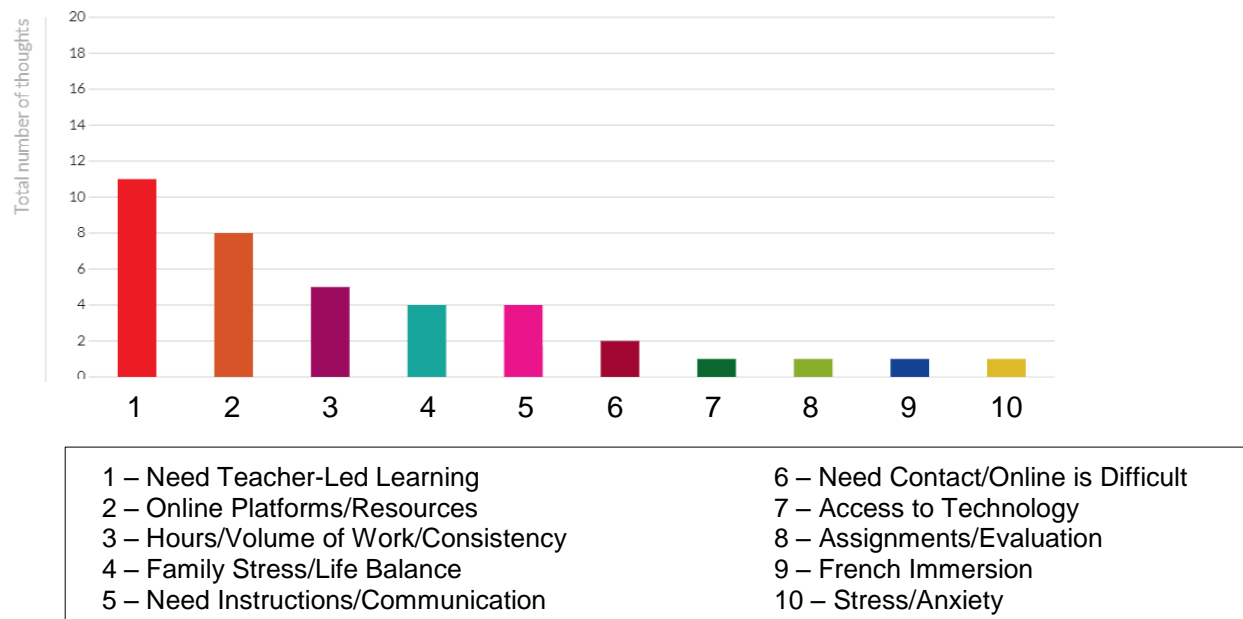
- Praise for specific teachers/principals;
- Appreciation for videos and check-ins;
- Parents appreciate the effort being put in.

### **Hands-On**

- Students miss hands-on learning, such as science labs but have questions about materials for courses such as science, art, shop, etc.
- Opportunity to learn skills at home: fix the sink, cook, clean, change tires, etc.;
- Opportunity to learn coping skills, practice social and human values

## Students - Grades 7 and 8

### Common Themes, among thoughts rated 4.0+:



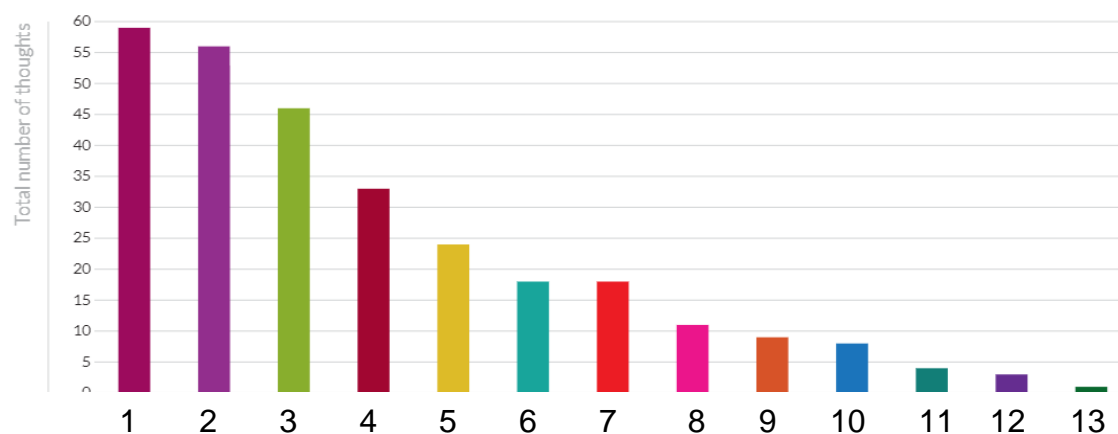
### Top Thoughts, exactly as they were shared:

- 1) "Given teachers are still full time there is no reason the technology is not being better utilized for face to face teaching Get an understanding of children's needs. Identifying early when concepts are not understood."
- 2) "There should be the same schedule each week To keep the routine."
- 3) "Need supports for math and science Parents don't have skill set to help and leads to frustration."
- 4) "Education process highly depends on the individual teacher enthusiasm. There are no uniformed materials available covering each course."
- 5) "I was just wondering if there was any way parents can be aware if the assignments given were received by the teachers. I was also wondering if novels or daily journals can be assigned. I am glad to do it myself, it just makes it more official if done by a teacher."
- 6) "It's hard for people to do online classes who does not have a computer at home. The kids should be provided with the computer."
- 7) "It's very difficult doing maths with my son things I don't remember back in the days , needs to understand the equations and needs someone to explain how do math problem,it's really important he keeps asking for help and I feel helpless."
- 8) "Either instruct teachers to sit in front of a camera in a "Zoom" meeting for 6 hours a day or end the school year. We are not equipped to teach our kids from home. We do not have the background, materials or time to do so. We rely on educators for that role."
- 9) "more teacher-led lessons via Google Meet not enough teacher-led lessons via Google Meet, kids not clear on what to do."
- 10) "It would be good to have a set time to hear/get tasks from teachers So parents can sit down with kids at the beginning of the day or week to set goals and timelines for the week and make sure kids stay on track."

*Note: Several thoughts in this exchange were evidently shared by parents, but unless removal was requested by a student, the thoughts were retained.*

## Students - Grades 9 to 12

### Common Themes, among thoughts rated 4.0+:



1 – Hours/Volume of Work/Consistency  
 2 – Hard to Focus/Be Motivated  
 3 – Assignments/Evaluation  
 4 – Need Contact/Online is Difficult  
 5 – Stress/Anxiety  
 6 – Family Stress/Life Balance  
 7 – Need Teacher-Led Learning

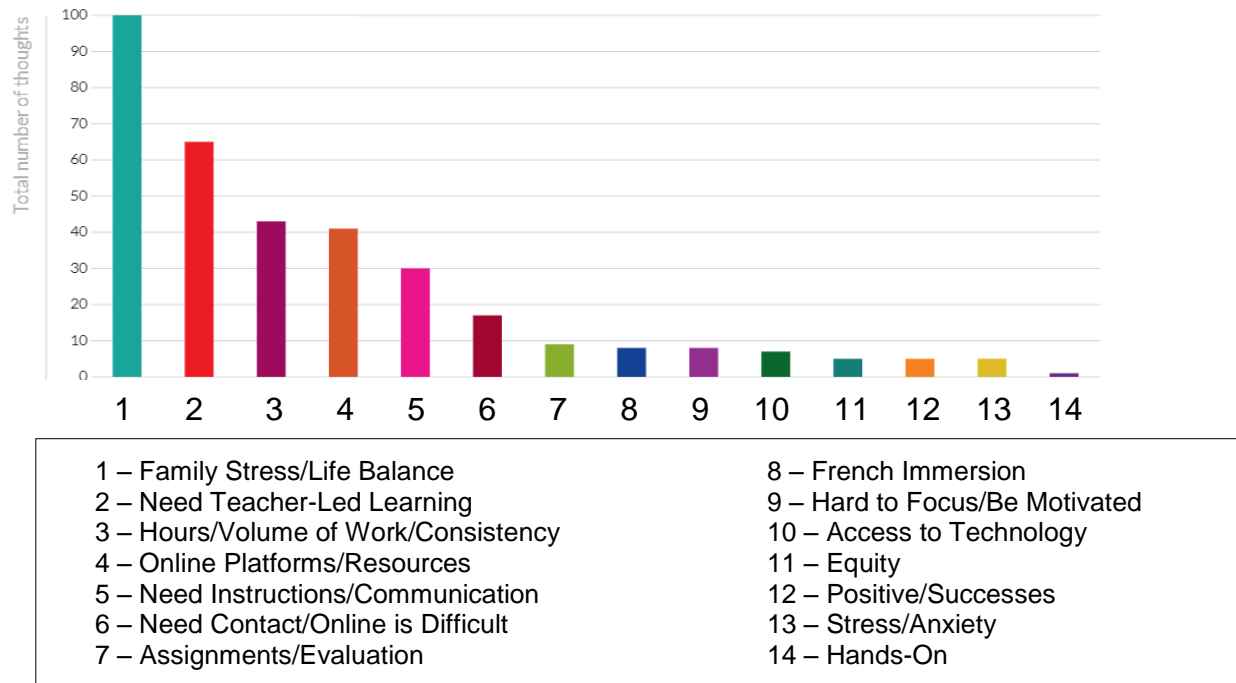
8 – Need Instructions/Communication  
 9 – Online Platforms/Resources  
 10 – Graduation/Post-Secondary  
 11 – Equity  
 12 – Access to Technology

### Top Thoughts, exactly as they were shared:

- 1) "I feel that students who are essential workers are not being considered/properly supported in regards to schoolwork and assignment due dates. Not always having time to complete all of my assignments on time makes me worry about my grades and whether I will be able to graduate."
- 2) "I find it very hard to stay focussed and motivated when I'm at home This makes it very hard to complete work that is of good quality."
- 3) "It is very difficult to find motivation to learn and get work done while not in a classroom environment This is making it difficult to learn new material, it is a constant struggle to keep up."
- 4) "Online school is more stressful. It's harder to navigate through due dates and homework/assignments. It's challenging to be motivated to work and learn when everyday feels like a weekend."
- 5) "I'm actually missing being in a building Sitting right in front of your teachers and friends feels so much more natural than what's going on now."
- 6) "One challenge I have is the homework assigned when there's a new unit. students don't Know what to do because they're teaching themselves the course. It's important because when there's a test, the students won't know what to do because the curriculum is everywhere right now and it's confusing."
- 7) "Please get teachers to push deadlines later in the day. It's important because some of us are still working and others tend to sleep in for morning deadlines."
- 8) "the main challenge im having at the moment is staying motivated and organized. some of my teachers are assigning more than 3 hours per week and the workload is more than i can mentally deal with right now. because were not in class i have no sense of routine anymore. i feel zero motivation or focus."
- 9) "Not letting Senior's grades drop was a good decision made by the board. These are stressful times. Students should not loose their acceptances or scholarships because of the unfortunate circumstances."
- 10) "Please explain in simple English how our final marks will be calculated There is a lot of speculation and confusion among the student body on how they will be calculated. The email sent explains it but not simple enough."

## Parents/Guardians – Kindergarten to Grade 8

### Common Themes, among thoughts rated 4.0+:

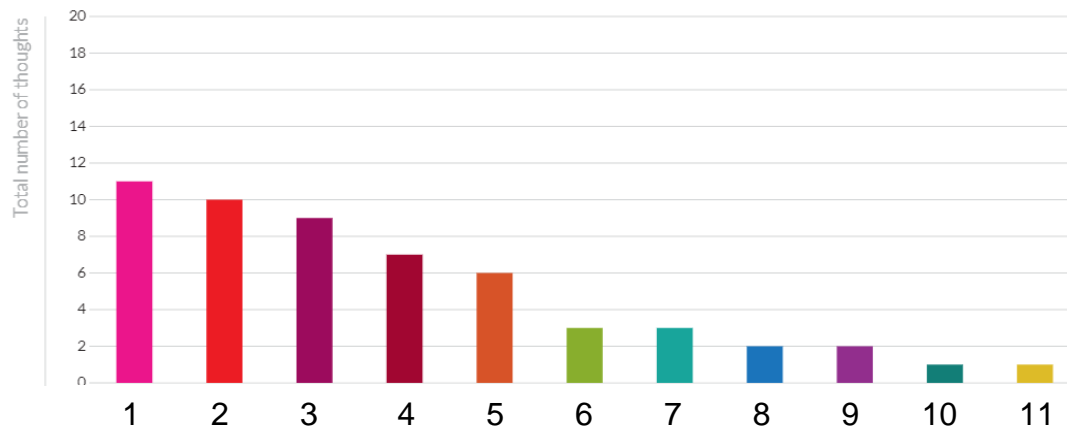


### Top Thoughts, exactly as they were shared:

- 1) "I find it challenging to be of much support to my kids during the school / work day because I'm also working full time, from home. I feel that there are many other parents who are in the same situation. Our full work day continues even though are children are at home."
- 2) "I would appreciate more interactions with the teachers. I enjoy receiving work and guidance from teachers, but I think my child would benefit from a virtual class room experience."
- 3) "Our main challenge is the struggle to work from home for our regular jobs while coordinating school lessons and associated technology for our kids For the younger grades, they are completely reliant on myself or my husband to logon to a computer, navigate google classroom and manage their work."
- 4) "It would be helpful if teachers could coordinate so that all work is in one place with at most one password Saves time and frustration."
- 5) "My partner and I both work full time from home. We do not have the time to navigate through hundreds of links to find learning content. School boards and teachers need to make this easier on parents, we are not teachers, we do not know what is critical and relevant. We need more help."
- 6) "Not every parent can dedicate time for their child's learning daily. It's important to be flexible on deadlines and demands."
- 7) "its great when the teachers comment on the kids work, they find it super motivating and want to send messages back Connection and motivation are important (and motivating can be extra hard at home)."
- 8) "5 hrs of teacher led instruction should be teacher led (make use of video technology) not just a list of suggestions for parent led teaching It is important because video continues the connection between my child and their teachers and peers. It also fosters the skills of communication."
- 9) "Allow flexibility in submitting work. Allow photos of handwritten work, or typed work at the student's option Some families only have a phone accessible for uploading work."
- 10) "I like the work that is assigned over a week, not a day It permits us to manage our own schedules and gets us mentally prepared for the week."

## Parents/Guardians - Grades 9 to 12

### Common Themes, among thoughts rated 4.0+:



1 – Need Instructions/Communication  
2 – Need Teacher-Led Learning  
3 – Hours/Volume of Work/Consistency  
4 – Need Contact/Online is Difficult  
5 – Online Platforms/Resources  
6 – Assignments/Evaluation

7 – Family Stress/Life Balance  
8 – Graduation/Post-Secondary  
9 – Hard to Focus/Be Motivated  
10 – Equity  
11 – Stress/Anxiety

### Top Thoughts, exactly as they were shared:

- 1) "All video class mtgs should be recorded so students can watch later if home computer is being used, or re-watch if they did not understand what was being taught can review the material."
- 2) "Not all teachers are as accessible as others. Consistency of communication is important."
- 3) "Having an on line appointment or class is good for the students in structuring their day. It's good to see the teacher for the class period. Seeing the teacher helps to encourage the student - the more direct contact online, the better."
- 4) "It would be nice if everyone used the same platform, which includes e-mail notifications for when a teacher posts new information."
- 5) "Teachers need to post videos or links on where to learn the subject matter. Posting only homework isn't helpful. These students need instruction on how to deal with the subjects in the homework."
- 6) "Weekly check ins with students and teachers are helpful This is a time that gives students and teachers to touch base and go over what is happening. It calms the feelings of "What am I supposed to do?"
- 7) "I thought with this e-learning there would be some teaching via google meet with the teacher. I am finding my daughter is just getting pages and pages of information and then a list of questions to answer. There is no learning and no help. Teachers should be using google meet to teach."
- 8) "Even though they are in high school, make sure parents are receiving all messaging. What homework do you have? Nothing. If parents received all messaging going to students, it would make it easier to communicate, get work done."
- 9) "Learning online poses a challenge for those who may need verbal interactions and feedback For students that are audio learners, without the additional support of video (or in person) teaching, it is made doubly difficult."
- 10) "My son is taking grade 12 chem, bio and calculus. Notes are provided online by the teachers but a lot of the material is simply not being taught. Gr 12s need the knowledge for university courses next year."



## Community - Members of Advisory Committees

### **Top Thoughts, exactly as they were shared:**

*Note: No thoughts in the Community Member exchange received a star rating of 4.0+*

*Other thoughts were shared within the exchange, but did not receive enough star ratings to rank.*

- 1) "May I suggest we do not give marks to Primary students."
- 2) "I worry about bandwidth and equitable access to technology. We have high expectations for immediate connectivity. Some families by finances, circumstance or geography do not have modern highly compatible tech."
- 3) "Special Education students need their specialized teaching Parents can only do so much for their special education students. They are not educators."
- 4) "Schooling at home is different then homeschooling These are exceptional times, people weren't expecting to do this /want to do this , parent or child! I think schooling at home should be voluntary!"
- 5) "I worry about boredom, sluggish routines and loss of momentum There is a rhythm of school that keeps students and staff engaged. Without bells or structure, most people lose track of time, and life slows down."

### What's Next?

#### **We are currently using this feedback in the following ways:**

- To inform decision-making about next steps for supporting students and families;
- Working with principals to bring clarity to our practices;
- Doing some research to better understand some of the issues raised;
- Updating our FAQs to ensure parents and students have the answers they are looking for; and
- Sharing the key themes and trends as we work with our education partners so that we all benefit from this collective insight.