



Recognition of Significant Observances Policy, Phase 2: New Policy - Status Update

To: Governance and Policy Committee

Date: 8 January, 2020

Report No.: 01-20-3800

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
- Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

Recommendation

It is recommended that the revised Work Plan for the development of the Recognition of Significant Observances Policy, as presented in this report, be approved.

Context

On 22 March 2016, the Board of Trustees approved a motion directing staff to report on the development of a policy on designating heritage months or days of significance and operational procedures to support the policy.

On June 7, 2016, staff presented to the Policy Review Committee (predecessor of the Governance and Policy Committee) a report with the work plan for development of the Recognition of Culturally Significant Observances Policy for review and input. During consideration of the report, Trustees expressed a variety of opinions and individual preferences with regard to the development of the new policy. The Committee did not formally identify its preferences through voting and, as a result, clear policy directions were not identified. The report was subsequently received by the Planning and Priorities Committee on June 15, 2016 and the Board of Trustees on June 22, 2016. An overview regarding designations of heritage months and days of significance and current practices at the TDSB is provided in Appendices A, D and E.

On May 23, 2018, the Board of Trustees made a decision that “that through to the end of the 2018 calendar year, a moratorium be placed on Trustee motions calling for the naming of heritage months, until the policy on the naming of heritage months is fully developed within the

framework laid out by the Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee and approved by the Board” (see Appendix B).

As part of the policy development process, staff conducted an environmental scan seeking relevant policies and procedures from other school boards and public organizations which could inform and support the development of the TDSB policy on the recognition of significant observances. However, the scan produced limited results.

Staff have updated the Policy Development Work Plan (Appendix C) and identified several key themes of the future policy, as outlined on pages 2- 3 of Appendix C, for the Committee’s consideration. The themes below are reminiscent of earlier conversations that took place at the Policy Review Committee:

1. **Equity:** Ensure that the new Policy adhere to the principles of equity as per the Equity Policy (P037).
2. **Continuation:** Consider whether to continue the recognition and proclamation of Heritage Months and/or Days of Significance.
3. **Centralized vs. De-centralized Approach:** Consider whether recognitions and celebrations should be system-wide and directed centrally or allow for local discretion at the learning centre or school level.
4. **Budget:** Consider ways to resource and fund Heritage Month and Days of Significance designations.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Subject to Committee’s directions, an information session will be organized for all Trustees on the development of the Recognition of Significant Observances Policy. Subsequently, staff will prepare provisions for the Policy, including alternative provisions related to the key policy themes, and will provide to the Governance and Policy Committee for consideration prior to initiating public consultations. The development of the Policy will be implemented in accordance with the revised Work Plan.

Resource Implications

Not applicable.

Communications Considerations

Following approval by the Board of Trustees, the newly developed Policy will be communicated to the system, posted on the Board’s public website, and communicated to the Board’s community advisory committees, the Student Senate, and unions/professional associations.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

- Equity Policy (P037)

Appendices

- Appendix A – Overview: TDSB Heritage Months and Days of Significance
- Appendix B – Moratorium on Naming of Heritage Months
- Appendix C – Policy Development Work Plan – Revised
- Appendix D – List of TDSB Heritage Months
- Appendix E – TDSB Days of Significance Calendar

From

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TDSB HERITAGE MONTHS AND DAYS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overview

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) recognizes the educational value of celebrating the many significance observances that are represented within its classrooms and communities (including various languages, histories, religions, regions, social causes, sexual orientation and gender identity). The two main objectives of recognizing significant observances are:

- *Teaching and Learning*: to support student learning, well-being and the development of equitable, inclusive learning environments by creating enriched opportunities for both students and teachers to build awareness, knowledge and understanding of the heritage, histories, achievements and contributions of the various cultures and groups that make up the diverse TDSB community; and
- *Recognition and Celebration*: to support the diverse TDSB community by recognizing, celebrating and honouring those occasions which hold unique cultural significance for them.

There are two distinct but related activities used by the Board to celebrate and embrace diversity of cultures and to promote awareness:

- designating heritage/history months, also referred to as “heritage months”; and
- designating days of significance.

Activities associated with the various heritage months and days of significance designations is an effective way to promote student engagement and learning through inclusive and diverse curriculums. The Board recognizes and celebrates the diversity of its student population in many ways over the course of the school year, under the guidance of the Board’s Equity Policy (P037), which calls for an anti-racist, anti-colonial equitable lens to be applied to classroom teaching so that multiple narratives, histories and traditional customs are recognized and engaged with culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy all year long.

Heritage Months and Days of Significance Designations

Heritage months designations are allotted time (typically a calendar month) to mark particular religious, historical or cultural occasions of special significance to the diverse TDSB community. Many of the designations are similar to Proclamations issued by the Province and its statutes, and most are celebrated concurrently. Designations are funded and resourced by the Board to provide educational opportunities for students to learn more about the history, heritages, cultures, and achievements of the Board’s many diverse communities and to bring awareness towards groups that have been systematically marginalized and/or excluded. There are currently seventeen (17) annual heritage months recognized, resourced, and/or funded by the Board (see Appendix D to the Report).

Heritage month designations are brought forward through Trustee motion and voted on by the Board of Trustees for approval. Once approved, designations are formally recognized and communicated system-wide. A volunteer committee is established and \$2500 is allocated to the committee to spend towards planning events related to a particular heritage month on central and/or school levels. The committee is supported by TDSB staff and consist of volunteers from the TDSB community. Additional funding can also be generated (through fundraising) to cover related outreach activities, including student transportation, school space permits, fees, student forums, guest speakers and refreshments.

Days of Significance are TDSB designated period of time (usually days, but may include weeks or months) that mark particular religious, historical, or social occasion of special cultural significance. The Board's Days of Significance Calendar ("the Calendar") identifies secular and creed-based observances, significant events, celebrations and public holidays. The Calendar is based on multiple sources and is generally consistent with designations and observances of the City of Toronto, the Government of Ontario, the Government of Canada, and the United Nations. The Calendar is updated by the Employment Equity Office at the TDSB.

The Days of Significance can be added to the Calendar by anyone as requested (e.g. trustee, staff, student, public) pending approval by the Employment Equity Office at the TDSB. The Calendar was developed as a resource to support central and school staff in planning educational or other curriculum related activities including planning educational events, tests, exams, scheduling meetings of the Board of Trustees and its committees, planning public engagement activities and conducting public consultations. The current practice is that staff are using the Calendar information at their discretion. The Calendar is also used as a reference material for processing employees' requests for accommodation. However, accommodation requests are determined on an individual case by case basis subject to multiple criteria outlined in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and applicable Board's policies and procedures. The Calendar is updated regularly and changes are made by staff throughout the year.

It is important to note, Days of Significance on the Calendar are not funded nor resourced by the Board. However, certain Days of Significance are chosen to be recognized by specific departments (e.g. orange shirt day – Human Rights and Indigenous Education Department) and/or locally at schools, in which case funding and resources are provided on an ad-hoc basis through individual department or school budgets.

Staff and Trustee Involvement

Committee membership is made up of interested individuals, including staff, students, trustees, and community members. Their mandate includes the following:

- a) Plan educational opportunities related to their heritage/history for our students, staff and the TDSB community in order to learn about their traditions, cultures, the richness of

diversity; and how each heritage/history contributes to the vibrant society that we currently live in;

- b) Enrich the curriculum currently available to teaching staff in both panels by sharing available resources that are available from TDSB Professional Library;
- c) Provide opportunities to learn about the culture through daily quotes and facts that may be shared through social media, and made available to school administrators to include through daily announcements at their schools; and
- d) Communicate through the public and internal websites messages on the heritage/history month being recognized and Trustees speak to the heritage/history publically at a regular board meeting.

In order to realize the above, the following staff members work in collaboration to execute decisions made by the volunteer planning committee:

Senior Team Member

- Provides guidance and direction to the volunteer planning committee – i.e. lead a discussion on how best the TDSB can recognize the heritage during the designated month; facilitate which activities will be organized within the framework of available funds; approve communication shared with community members.
- Respond to Trustee(s) inquiries related to heritage months.

Service Coordinator

- Works closely with the senior team member and committee members by sharing relevant information that's needed to execute an event or organize an educational opportunity for our students, staff and community members. This includes writing and sharing the communication through Trustee Weekly Update, Direct Line, and System Leaders' Weekly Update, booking of permits and contacting schools, guest speakers or organizations directly.
- Arranges to have selected poster designs printed for system-wide distribution and framed for official unveiling at events.
- Prepares programs for events (launches), speaking notes for the student MCs and arranges media technical support as required.
- Ensures that heritage month communication is written and forwarded to Communication staff for posting to public and internal website.
- Works closely with communication staff Web Team to post and maintain the Heritage/History Month internal website and the Creative Team to create programs, posters, graphics TV/Monitor, banners, etc. as required by individual heritage month planning committees.
- Maintain ongoing inclusive communication with all volunteer community members by creating a google base document, share summary notes and prepare agendas for meetings.
- Process and maintaining the budget expenditures and donations received for each heritage month.

Communication Staff

- Prepares speaking notes for Trustee recognizing the heritage at the Regular Board Meetings.
- Prepares speaking notes for the Chair and Director attending the heritage launches should one be organized.
- Reviews quotes/facts on the heritage prior to it be posted to review if any controversial materials is included.
- Reviews media releases prepared by Service Coordinator/committee members before submitting to media outlets.
- Web Team posts material to internal website Heritage/History Month
- Web Team assists at events with media support requirements.
- Creative Services prepares a heritage graphic (could be from a student submission) for the TV/Monitor at 5050 to display for the month being recognized.
- Creative Services prepares the poster design resulting from a student contest for printing.
- Creative Services prepares programs for events as required.

TDSB Professional Library

- Staff from the TDSB Professional Library compiles information (resources, books, videos) on each heritage that teachers may use in their classrooms.

Challenges

Currently, the TDSB has no policies or procedures guiding heritage months and days of significance designations. More specifically, there is an absence of clearly defined expectations and processes when it comes to recognizing, communicating, and allocating resources/funding related to days of significance designations. Moreover, some of the months within the school year share multiple heritage month designations; where as some heritage month designations are given their own individual month of recognition.

Lastly, issues of inequity also persists, as certain heritage month and days of significance designations are recognized, resourced, and/or funded by the Board while many other designations are not recognized due to the lack of support for and from local school communities. This causes many of the Boards diverse but underserved communities to continue to be marginalized and excluded in the education system related to recognizing their significant observances. This practice also does not account for the Board's Equity Policy which calls for an anti-racist and anti-colonial equitable lens to be applied to all student engagement activities and classroom teachings.

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12. Naming of Heritage Months: Moratorium

On motion of Trustee Gough, as amended by Trustee Glover, the Program and School Services Committee **RECOMMENDS:**

Whereas, Toronto District School Board schools recognize and celebrate the diversity of its student population in many ways over the course of the school year, under the guidance of the Board's equity framework, which calls for an anti-racist, anti-colonial equitable lens to be applied to classroom teaching so that multiple narratives, histories and traditional customs are recognized and engaged with culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy all year long; and

Whereas, the practice of trustees putting forth motions calling for the naming of particular months of the year for recognition of specific cultural or religious heritages has increased rapidly in recent years, with several months now containing significant events calling for commemoration and in addition, also being also named for multiple cultural heritages/religions, some of which have colonial roots; and

Whereas, at the moment there is no overall coordination or framework to guide the process of naming heritage months, nor is there a requirement for trustees to consult with a broad sector of the public or with system administrators prior to putting forth motions calling for the naming of heritage months; and

Whereas, in 2016, the Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee raised the issue of the celebration of heritage months, and called for the development of a policy involving a process of community involvement and outreach to all stakeholders, including the Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee; and

Whereas, in response, the Board passed a motion requiring the Director to present a report by the April 2016 cycle of meetings on:

- 1) the number of heritage months being celebrated in the TDSB;
- 2) the financial resources allocated to heritage months;
- 3) the staff time allocation for planning and executing the celebrations; and

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Whereas, a report was produced and received by the Board on June 22, 2016, however to date the policy is in the work plan stage of development;

Therefore, be it resolved:

That through to the end of the 2018 calendar year, a moratorium be placed on trustee motions calling for the naming of heritage months, until the policy on the naming of heritage months is fully developed within the framework laid out by the Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee and approved by the Board.

At the Committee meeting, on amendment of Trustee Glover, “through to the end of the 2018 calendar year” was added before “a moratorium”.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT WORK PLAN - REVISED

Date: [January 8, 2020](#)

All policies will be developed to ensure consistency with the TDSB's Mission, Values and Goals Policy (P002), the Equity Policy (P037) and the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

POLICY INFORMATION

Proposed Policy Title: [Recognition of Significant Observances Policy](#)

Director's Council member responsible for development of the new Policy:
[Associate Director, School Operations and Service Excellence](#)

Phase I. APPROVAL OF POLICY RATIONALE

The rationale for the new Policy:

[The Recognition of Significance Observances Policy \(the "Policy"\) sets out the expectations for recognizing Days of Significance and Heritage Month designations at the Toronto District School Board \(TDSB\).](#)

[The TDSB recognizes the educational value of celebrating the many significance observances that are represented within its classrooms and communities \(including various languages, histories, religions, regions, social causes, sexual orientation and gender identity\). The two main objectives of recognizing significant observances are:](#)

- [Teaching and Learning: to support student learning, well-being and the development of equitable, inclusive learning environments by creating enriched opportunities for both students and teachers to build awareness, knowledge and understanding of the heritage, histories, achievements and contributions of the various cultures and groups that make up the diverse TDSB community; and](#)
- [Recognition and Celebration: to support the diverse TDSB community by recognizing, celebrating and honouring those occasions which hold unique cultural significance.](#)

[The development of the new Policy was authorized by the Board of Trustees on June 22, 2016](#)

This Policy Development Work Plan has been discussed with the Policy Coordinator:

- Yes
 No

Phase II. OBTAINING TRUSTEES' DIRECTIONS AND DRAFTING POLICY

This revised Policy Development Work Plan will be discussed at the Governance and Policy Committee meeting held on: [January 8, 2020](#)

Creating the Draft Policy

The draft Policy will be created and aligned with the current Policy Template (see Operational Procedure PR501, Policy Development and Management, Appendix A):

- Yes
 No

Detailed information on the proposed policy provisions, including findings of the policy equity assessment:

[As part of the Policy development process, the following themes are proposed for consideration:](#)

1. **Equity:** Ensure that the new Policy adhere to the principles of equity as per the Equity Policy (P037).
2. **Continuation:** Consider whether to continue the recognition and proclamation of Heritage Months and/or Days of Significance.
 - 2.1. If continued, consider the ways in which new Heritage Month and Days of Significance designations can be introduced, renewed and/or sunset.
3. **Methods of Recognition:** consider alternative ways to celebrate and recognize the Heritage Months and the Days of Significance.
 - 3.1. Consider ways to communicate Heritage Month and Days of Significance designations within the TDSB system.
4. **Centralized vs. De-centralized Approach:** Consider whether recognitions and celebrations should be system-wide and directed centrally or allow for local discretion at the school level.
5. **Budget:** Consider ways to resource and fund Heritage Month and Days of

Significance designations.

5.1. Fundraising

5.2. Volunteers

5.3. Staff resources

A review of leading practices for similar policies across jurisdictions has been completed.

Phase III. INTERNAL REVIEWS AND SIGN-OFFS

The draft Policy will include input from TDSB departments affected by the Policy:

- Business Operations and Service Excellence
- Equity, Well-Being and School Improvement
- Human Rights and Indigenous Education
- Leadership, Learning and School Improvement
- School Operations and Service Excellence

In addition, the following departments will be required to sign-off on the proposed draft Policy:

- Legal Services
- Governance and Board Services
- Government, Public and Community Relations

Following internal reviews and TDSB departments' sign-offs, the draft Policy will be submitted to Executive Council on: [Winter 2020](#)

A sign-off from the Director of Education will be obtained before proceeding with external consultations and/or Committee/Board approval.

- Director of Education

Phase IV. EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

Are external consultations applicable to this Policy?

- Yes
- No (*Ministry of Education mandated policy or corporate policy without external stakeholders*)

Mandatory external consultations will include, at minimum:

1. Posting of the working draft Policy on the TDSB website for public feedback for [45 days \(Spring 2020\)](#)
2. Extending invitations for consultation to:

Student Senate

and

all Community Advisory Committees of the Board and conducting consultations with the Community Advisory Committees that expressed interest (either individually with each interested committee or collectively with representatives of all interested committees): [Spring 2020](#)

- Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee
- Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee
- Community Use of Schools Community Advisory Committee
- Early Years Community Advisory Committee
- Environmental Sustainability Community Advisory Committee
- Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee
- French-as-a-Second-Language Community Advisory Committee
- Inner City Community Advisory Committee
- LGBTQ2S Community Advisory Committee
- Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC)
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee

In addition to mandatory consultations, other external participants and projected dates of consultation(s) include:

- School Councils
- Professional Associations and Unions
- Other:

The following methods will be applied in the external consultations:

- Public meeting
- Facilitated focus group
- Call for public delegations

- Expert panel discussion
- Survey
- Posting on the TDSB website
- Other:

Phase V. COMMITTEE/BOARD APPROVALS

Following external consultations and revisions, the working draft Policy will be presented to the Governance and Policy Committee on the following date: [Summer – Fall 2020](#)

Following recommendation by the Governance and Policy Committee, the new Policy will be presented to the Board on the following date: [Fall 2020](#)

Once approved, the new Policy will be added to the TDSB website.

Phase VI. IMPLEMENTATION

Following Board approval, the new Policy will be communicated through:

- Posting of the new Policy on the TDSB website through the Policy Coordinator
- Sharing with staff through the System Leaders' Bulletin
- Informing departments at staff meetings and channeling information to the school principals through respective superintendents
- Implementation of a broad communication plan for internal and external audiences, include summary of policy provisions and expected outcomes

Policy implementation will include:

- Conducting information/training sessions to TDSB staff affected by the Policy

The projected time period for conducting information/training sessions to staff will be: [Fall 2020](#)

- Initiate development of new procedures or review of associated procedures
 - [Initiate development of Recognition of Significance Observances Procedure](#)

HERITAGE MONTHS 2019-2020

	Heritage Month	Months	Motion Passed Through Board of Trustees
1	Islamic Heritage	October	June 22, 2016
2	Somali Heritage	October	June 22, 2016
3	*Indigenous Education	November	
4	Hindu Heritage	November	April 18, 2018
5	Tamil Heritage	January	October 28, 2015
6	African Heritage	February	January 16, 2002 and again on January 28, 2004
7	Chinese Heritage	February	August 24, 2019
8	Greek Heritage	March	March 5, 2014
9	Hispanic Heritage	April	March 10, 2010
10	Latin-America History	April	April 20, 2016
11	Sikh Heritage	April	March 22, 2016
12	Asian Heritage	May	
13	Jewish Heritage	May	
14	Italian Heritage	June	May 16, 2012
15	Portuguese Speaking Heritage	June	May 18, 2011
16	*National Indigenous History	June	
17	*Pride Month	June	

*Note: Plans to recognize and organize activities for these months are expedited through an assigned central department.



Days of Significance
Calendar Dates May 2019 - December 2020

This calendar highlights secular and creed-based observances and holidays, significant events and celebrations, public holidays and other important dates. These should be considered when planning educational events, tests, exams and other activities.

This calendar should not be used as a list of dates for creed-based accommodations; accommodation requests must be made formally and determined on an individual case by case basis subject to the operational procedures of the Board regarding creed beliefs, practices and observances.

Note: Information contained in this document has been sourced from several dozen websites. Please see *Days of Significance Resource Guide* for further information through <http://tdsbweb/equity>.

This calendar is not meant to be comprehensive or exhaustive and every attempt has been made to ensure its accuracy. Please note this is a fluid calendar and updates and changes are made throughout the year. If you discover any errors, required updates or omissions or, have any other inquiries regarding this document, forward your correspondence via email to:

Toronto District School Board,
Employment Equity Office

Email Contact: peter.langford@tdsb.on.ca

May 2019 Asian Heritage Month Jewish Heritage Month Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month	1	Beltane	Wicca/Pagan
	2	Ridván (Holiday Ends: Starts on 20 April '19)	Baha'i
	5	International Family Equality Day (1 st Sun. in May)	Family Equality Council
	5	Nisfu Shaban* (Holiday Ends: Starts on 06 April '19)	Islam
	12	Vaisakhi Puja (Buddha's Birthday)	Buddhism (South Korean)
	15	International Day of Families	United Nations
	6- June 4	Ramadan*	Islam
	171	International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia	IDAHOTB
	19	Vesak Day	Buddhism
	20	Queen Victoria Day	Canadian Government Public Holiday
	24	Declaration of the Bá'b*	Baha'i
	25	Africa Day	Member States of the African Union
	27-31	Bike to School Week	Ontario Active School Travel
	29	The Ascension of Baha'u'llah*	Baha'i
	30	Ascension Day	Christianity - Western
	31	Jumu'ah-tul Wida*	Islam
	31	Laylat al Qadr*	Islam
31	World No Tobacco Day	World Health Organization	

June 2019 Italian Heritage Month National Indigenous History Month Portuguese Speaking Heritage Month PRIDE Month (City of Toronto)	1	Intergenerational Day	Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
	Jun 1-July 1	Pride Festival ¹	Toronto Pride
	5	Eid al Fitr* (3 Day Festival)	Islam
	5	World Environment Day (WED)	United Nations
	6	Ascension Day	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox
	9	Pentecost	Christianity – Eastern Orthodox and Western
	9-10	Shavuot*	Judaism
	12	World Day Against Child Labour	United Nations
	16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji	Sikhism
	17	Saga Dawa Festival	Buddhism - Tibetan
	17	World Day to Combat Desertification & Drought	United Nations
	19	World Sickle Cell Awareness Day	United Nations
	20	World Refugee Day	United Nations
	21	National Aboriginal Day (Canada)	First Nations, Métis, Inuit
	21	Litha/Summer Solstice	Wicca/Pagan
	21	World Humanist Day	International Humanist and Ethical Union
	24	Nativity of St. John the Baptist	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and Western
24	St. Jean Baptiste Day	Quebec and Francophone Culture	
26	International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking	United Nations	
26	International Day in Support of Victims of Torture	United Nations	

September 2018 – June 2019 School Year Ends

July 2019	1	Canada Day	Canadian Government
	6	14 th Dalai Lama's Birthday	Buddhism - Tibetan
	6	Chokhor Ducchën Festival	Buddhism - Tibetan
	5-7	Jalsa Salana (Canada)	Islam
	10	Martyrdom of the Bá'b	Baha'i
	11	Imamat Day	Islam

¹ Toronto Pride Parade will take place on 23 June 2019

* Denotes Days of Significance/Holy Days that begin *the evening before* the indicated date

NOTE: Days of Significance/Holy Days may vary a few days before or after the indicated date due to incompatibility of calendars from the Western Gregorian calendar, moon sightings, time zones, etc.

	16	Asalha Puja Day (Dharma Day)	Buddhism
	16	Ethiopian Constitution Day	Rastafarian Holy Day
	16	Guru Purnima Day	Buddhism/Jainism
	18	Nelson Mandela International Day	United Nations
	23	Birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie	Rastafarian Holy Day

Aug 2019			
	1	Lughnassadh/Lammas	Wicca/Pagan
	5	Lord Simcoe Day/Founder's Day	Toronto Municipal Government
	6	Transfiguration of Christ	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and Western
	9	International Day of the World's Indigenous People	United Nations
	10-14	Waqf al Arafa (Hajj)*	Islam
	11	Tishah B'av*	Judaism
	12	International Youth Day	United Nations
	13-15	Obon	Buddhism - Shinto
	15	Feast of the Dormition	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox
	17	Marcus Garvey's Birthday	Rastafarian Holy Day
	19	Transfiguration of Jesus	Christianity - Russian Orthodox
	12-15	Eid al Adha*	Islam
	23	International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition	United Nations
	15	Raksha Bandhan	Hinduism
	15	Ullumbana Ghost Festival	Buddhism/Taoism
	24	Krishna Janmashtami	Hinduism
	27-Sep 3	Paryushan Parva	Jainism
	28	The Dormition of the Mother of God	Christianity - Russian Orthodox
	31	Al-Hijra New Year*	Islam

September 2019 – June 2020 School Year Begins

Sept 2019			
	1	Installation of the Holy Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib Ji	Sikhism
	2-12	Daslakshan - Parva	Jainism
	2	Ganesh Chaturthi	Hinduism
	2	Labour Day	Canadian Government
	3	Samvatsari Parva (Forgiveness Day)	Jainism
	8	International Literacy Day	United Nations
	10	Ashura*	Islam
	11	Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist (also memorialized 29 August by some Christian Orthodox Denominations)	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and Western
	12	Anant Chaturdashi	Jainism
	12	Coptic New Year	Christianity - Coptic Eastern Orthodox
	11	Ethiopian New Year	Rastafarian Holy Day
	14	Holy Cross Day (Feast of the Cross)	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and Western
	15	International Day of Democracy	United Nations
	19	Powley Day	First Nation, Métis
	21	International Day of Peace	United Nations
	21	Mabon (Autumn Equinox)	Wicca/Pagan
	21	Nativity of Mary	Christianity - Russian Orthodox
	23	Ohigan (Fall Equinox)	Japanese National Holiday
	23-27	Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network Ally Week	GLSEN
	27	Elevation of the Holy Cross	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox
	27	Feast of the Cross	Christianity - Russian Orthodox
	29	Mahalaya (Durga Puja Festival)	Hinduism
	29-Oct 7	Navratri (Autumn)	Hinduism
	30	Orange Shirt Day	First Nation, Métis, Inuit
	30-Oct 1	Rosh Hashanah*	Judaism

* Denotes Days of Significance/Holy Days that begin *the evening before* the indicated date

NOTE: Days of Significance/Holy Days may vary a few days before or after the indicated date due to incompatibility of calendars from the Western Gregorian calendar, moon sightings, time zones, etc.

Oct 2019	1	International Day of Older Persons	United Nations
	5	World Teachers' Day	United Nations
Hispanic Heritage Month (City of Toronto)	3	Maha Panchami (Durga Puja Festival)	Hinduism
Islamic Heritage Month	4	Maha Sasthi (Durga Puja Festival)	Hinduism
Somali Heritage Month	5	Maha Saptami (Durga Puja Festival)	Hinduism
Women's History Month	6	Maha Ashtami (Durga Puja Festival)	Hinduism
	7	Maha Nabami (Durga Puja Festival)	Hinduism
	8	Bijaya Dashami (Durga Puja Festival)	Hinduism
	9	Yom Kippur*	Judaism
	7-11	Body Confidence Awareness Week (2 nd Week Oct.)	Toronto District School Board (TDSB)
	9	International Walk to School Day	Highway Safety Research Centre (University of North Carolina, USA)
	10	World Mental Health Day	World Health Organization
	14-18	Week Without Violence	YMCA
	11	International Day of the Girl	United Nations
	14	Thanksgiving Day	Canadian Government
	14-20	Sukkot*	Judaism
	16	World Food Day	United Nations
	17	International Day of the Eradication of Poverty	United Nations
	17	Karva Chauth	Hinduism
	20	Gurgadi of the Holy Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib Ji as Guru	Sikhism
	21-22	Shemini Atzeret*	Judaism
	22	Simchat Torah*	Judaism
	27	Bandi Chhor Divas	Sikhism
	27	Diwali	Hinduism/Jainism/Sikhism
	27	Kathina Ceremony/Paváraná Day	Buddhism
	28	New Year (Enlightenment of Gautamswami)	Jainism
	29	Birth of the Bá'b*	Bahá'i
	30	Birth of Bahá'u'lláh*	Bahá'i

Nov 2019	1	All Saints Day	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and Western
	1	Gyana Panchami	Jainism
Hindu Heritage Month	1	Samhain*	Wicca/Pagan
	2	Crowning of Emperor Haile Selassie I	Rastafarian Holy Day
	10	Mawlid-al-Nabi*	Islam
	11	Remembrance Day	Canadian Government
	14	World Diabetes Day	United Nations
	16	Louis Riel Day (Toronto)	First Nations, Métis
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	<i>Lokasha Jayanti</i>	<i>Jainism</i>
	17-23	Anti-Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week	Ontario Government
	19	Buddha's Descent from Tushita Heaven	Buddhism -Tibetan
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	<i>Maun Agiyaras (Ekadashi)</i>	<i>Jainism</i>
	20	Universal Children's Day	United Nations
	20	International Transgender Day of Remembrance	Gwendolyn Ann Smith, US Trans Advocate
	24	Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur	Sikhism
	23	National Holodomor Memorial Day ²	Ukrainian Canadian Congress
	25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women	United Nations
	26	Day of the Covenant*	Baha'i

² Recognized on the 4th Saturday each November – TDSB recognition is on the preceding Friday

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NOTE: Days of Significance/Holy Days may vary a few days before or after the indicated date due to incompatibility of calendars from the Western Gregorian calendar, moon sightings, time zones, etc.

Dec 2019	1	World AIDS Day	United Nations
	2	International Day of the Abolition of Slavery	United Nations
	1-24	Advent	Christianity
	3	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	United Nations
	4	Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Christianity - Russian Orthodox
	6	National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women	Canadian Government
	8	Bodhi Day (Buddha Enlightenment)	Buddhism
	8	St. Clements of Ohrid Patrons Day	Christianity - Macedonian Orthodox
	10	Human Rights Day	United Nations
	23-30	Hanukkah*	Judaism
	13	Birthday of Imam Aga Khan	Islam
	18	International Migrants Day	United Nations
	21	Yule - Winter Solstice	Wicca/Pagan
	25	Christmas Day	Canadian Government and Christianity
	26	Zarathosht Diso Death	Zoroastrian
	26	Boxing Day	Canadian Government
		Dec 26-Jan 1	Kwanzaa

Jan 2020	1	Gantan-sai New Year	Buddhism - Shinto	
	Tamil Heritage Month	1	New Year's Day	Canadian Government
	5	Prakash Guru Gobind Singh Ji	Sikhism	
	5	Twelfth Night	Christianity	
	6	Feast of the Epiphany/Dia de los Reyes	Christianity Eastern Orthodox and Western	
	6-7	Pasha Putrada Ekadashi	Hinduism	
	7	Ethiopian Christmas	Rastafarian Holy Day	
	7	Feast of the Nativity/Orthodox Christmas	Christianity - Russian/Eastern Orthodox	
	See Footnote	Theravada Days of Mindfulness ³	Buddhism	
	10	Mehergan ⁴	Zoroastrian	
	12	Baptism of Jesus	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and Western	
	14	New Year (Gregorian Calendar)	Christianity Eastern Orthodox	
	14	Punjabi Lohri	Hinduism/Sikhism	
	15	Maghi	Sikhism	
	15	Makar Sankranti	Hinduism	
	15-18	Thai Pongal	Hinduism/Tamil	
	19	Baptism of Jesus	Christianity - Coptic Orthodox	
	19	World Religion Day	Baha'i	
	20	Buddhist New Year	Buddhism - Mahayana	
	21	Feast of the Wedding of Cana	Christianity - Ethiopian Orthodox	
	21	Martin Luther King Jr. Day	USA Federal Holiday	
	20-24	No Name Calling Week	Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)	
	24-30	Chinese New Year (Spring Festival)	Chinese Cultural	
	25	Chinese New Year	Buddhism	
	26	St. Sava Devine Service	Christianity - Serbian Orthodox	
	27	International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust	United Nations	
	29	Vasant Panchami	Hinduism	
	30	Jashn-e-Sadeh	Zoroastrian	

Feb 2020	1	Imbolc	Wicca/Pagan
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³ There are several Buddhist **Days of Mindfulness** throughout the year – (consult a Buddhist website for further information)

⁴ Mehergan is celebrated on the 1st Full Moon of the year.

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African Heritage Month	3	Setsubun	Buddhism - Shinto
Chinese Heritage Month See Also Asian Heritage (May)	6	Bob Marley Day	Jamaican Canadian Association
Black Queering Month	6	International Day of Zero Tolerance on Female Genital Cutting/Mutilation	World Health Organization
	10-14	Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Week	Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights
	15 (NOTE: Some observe this day on Feb 8 th)	Buddha's Death – (Nirvana Day)	Buddhism – Various Sects
	15	Meeting of Our Lord	Christianity - Russian Orthodox
	17	Family Day	Ontario Government
	20	World Day of Social Justice	United Nations
	21	International Mother Language Day	United Nations
	21	Maha Shivaratri	Hinduism
	25-27	Losar New Year	Buddhism - Tibetan, Nepal, Bhutan
	26	Ash Wednesday (1 st Day of Lent)	Christianity
	Feb 26-29	Ayyám-i-Há	Baha'i

March 2020	2	Clean Monday	Christianity – Eastern Orthodox
Greek Heritage Month	8	International Women's and United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace	United Nations
	9-10	Holi*	Hinduism
	10-12	Holla Mohalla	Sikhism
	10	Purim*	Judaism
	12	Kuan Yin Birthday (Guan Yin)	Buddhism - Taiwanese
	13	L. Ron Hubbard's Birthday	Church of Scientology
	14	Sikh New Year	Sikhism
	20	Ohigan (Spring Equinox)	Japanese National Holiday
	21	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	United Nations
	Does Not Occur in 2020	Magha Puja Day/Lantern Festival	Buddhism
	20	Persian New Year (Eid-e-Navroz)	Baha'i/Zoroastrian
	21	Ostara (Spring Equinox)	Wicca/Pagan
	21-22	Persian New Year (National Holiday)	Iranian Government
	22	Isra'a Wal Miraj*	Islam
	22	World Water Day	United Nations
	24	Saka New Year (Nyepi)	Hinduism
	25	Feast of the Annunciation	Christianity – Eastern Orthodox and Western
	21 April	Mid Sha'ban*	Islam
	25	Ugandi (New Year)	Hinduism
	26	Prophet Asho Zartosht's Birthday	Zoroastrian

April 2020	2	Sri Rama Navami	Hinduism
Genocide Awareness Month	7	Laudation of the Mother of God	Christianity - Russian Orthodox
Latin American History Month (see also October Hispanic Heritage Month)	7	Memorial to Christ's Death	Jehovah's Witness
	7	Rwanda (Tutsi) Genocide Memorial Day	Canadian Government
	7	World Health Day	World Health Organization
	8	International Day of Pink (2 nd Wed. in April)	Nova Scotia, High School (Unnamed)
	9-16	Pesach/Passover*	Judaism
	10	Good Friday	Canadian Government Holiday and Christianity - Western
	12	Easter Sunday	Canadian Government Holiday and Christianity - Western
	13	Easter Monday	Canadian Government Holiday and

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			Christianity - Western
13	Vaisakhi		Sikhism
14	Puthandu (Tamil New Year)		Buddhism/Taoism
13	Solar New Year (Mesha Sankranta)		Hinduism
15	Birthday of Guru Nanak (1 st Guru)		Sikhism
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	<i>International Day of Silence</i>	<i>Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN)</i>
19	Easter (Pascha)		Christianity - Russian Orthodox
21	Groundation Day		Rastafarian Holy Day
22	Earth Day (International Mother Earth Day)		United Nations
23	Day of Remembrance – Toronto Van Attack ^b		Toronto District School Board
24	Armenian Genocide Memorial Day		Canadian Government
24 Apr – 23 May	Ramadan*		Islam
17	Holy Friday		Christianity - Eastern Orthodox
19	Easter (Pascha)		Christianity - Eastern Orthodox
21	Yom HaShoah* (Holocaust Remembrance Day)		Judaism
25	Feast of St. Mark		Christianity – East Orthodox and Western
26	Akshaya Tritya		Hinduism
28	National Day of Mourning		Canadian Government
30	Vaisakhi Puja: (Buddha's Birthday)		Buddhism

May 2020	1	Beltane	Wicca/Pagan
Asian Heritage Month	1	Ridván (Holiday Ends: Holiday Begins 19 April '20)	Baha'i
Jewish Heritage Month	3	International Family Equality Day (1 st Sun. in May)	Family Equality Council
Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month	7	Vesak Day	Buddhism
	15	International Day of Families	United Nations
	17	International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia	IDAHOTB
	18	Queen Victoria Day	Canadian Government Public Holiday
	19	Jumu'ah-tul Wida*	Islam
	19	Laylat al-Qadr*	Islam
	21	Ascension Day	Christianity - Western
	23	Declaration of the Bá'b*	Baha'i
	24	Eid al Fitr* (3 Day Holy Day)	Islam
	25	Africa Day	Member States of the African Union
	25-29	Bike to School Week	Ontario Active School Travel
	28	Ascension Day	Christianity – Eastern Orthodox
	29-30	Shavuot*	Judaism
	29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah*	Baha'i
	31	Pentacost	Judaism, Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and Western
	31	World No Tobacco Day	World Health Organization

June 2020	1	Intergenerational Day	Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
Italian Heritage Month	<i>To Be Announced</i>	<i>Pride Festival</i>	<i>Toronto Pride</i>
National Indigenous History Month	5	World Environment Day (WED)	United Nations
Portuguese Speaking Heritage Month	12	World Day Against Child Labour	United Nations
PRIDE Month (Toronto)	<i>To Be Announced</i>	<i>Saga Dawa Festival</i>	<i>Buddhism - Tibetan</i>
	16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji	Sikhism
	17	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought	United Nations
	19	World Sickle Cell Awareness Day	TDSB
	20	World Refugee Day	United Nations

⁵ This remembrance will take place on the 23rd of April each year (or closest weekday to this date)

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Days of Significance
May 2019 - December 2020

	21	Litha/Summer Solstice	Wicca/Pagan
	21	National Aboriginal Day (Canada)	First Nations, Métis, Inuit
	21	World Humanist Day	International Humanist and Ethical Union
	24	Nativity of St. John the Baptist	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and Western
	24	St. Jean Baptiste Day	Quebec and Francophone Culture
	26	International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking	United Nations
	26	International Day in Support of Victims of Torture	United Nations
September 2019 June 2020 School Year Ends			

July 2020	1	Canada Day	Canadian Government
	5	Asalha Puja Day (Dharma Day)	Buddhism
	5	Guru Purnima Day	Buddhism/Jainism
	6	Guru Purnima Day	Buddhism - Tibetan
	10	Martyrdom of the Bá'b*	Baha'i
	11	Imamat Day	Islam
	16	Ethiopian Constitution Day	Rastafarian Holy Day
	18	Nelson Mandela International Day	United Nations
	23	Birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie	Rastafarian Holy Day
	24	Chokhor Ducchën Festival	Buddhism - Tibetan
	July 29-Aug 2	Waqf al Arafa (Hajj)*	Islam
	July 31-Aug 3	Eid al Adha*	Islam
	30	Tishah B'av*	Judaism
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	<i>Jalsa Salana*</i>	<i>Islam</i>

Aug 2020	1	Lughnassadh/Lammas	Wicca/Pagan
	3	Raksha Bandhan	Hinduism
	6	Lord Simcoe Day/Founder's Day	Toronto Municipal Government
	6	Transfiguration of Christ	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and Western
	9	International Day of the World's Indigenous People	United Nations
	11	Krishna Janmashtami	Hinduism
	12	International Youth Day	United Nations
	13-15	Obon Festival	Buddhism - Shinto
	15	The Dormition of the Mother of God	Christianity – Russian Orthodox
	15	Feast of the Dormition	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox
	16-23	Paryushan Parva	Jainism
	17	Marcus Garvey's Birthday	Rastafarian Holy Day
	19	The Transfiguration of Jesus	Christianity - Russian Orthodox
	20	Al-Hijra New Year*	Islam
	22	Ganesh Chaturthi	Hinduism
	Aug 23 – Sep 1	Daslakshan - Parva	Hinduism
	23	International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition	United Nations
	23	Samvatsari Parva (Forgiveness Day)	Jainism
	29	Ashura*	Islam

September 2020 – June 2021 School Year Begins			
Sept 2020	1	Anant Chaturdashi	Jainism
	1	Installation of the Holy Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib Ji	Sikhism
	7	Labour Day	Canadian Government
	8	International Literacy Day	United Nations
	8	Nativity of Mary	Christianity - Russian Orthodox
	11	Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist (also memorialized)	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and

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		29 August by some Christian Orthodox Denominations)	Western
	11	Coptic New Year	Christianity - Coptic Eastern Orthodox
	11	Ethiopian New Year	Rastafarian Holy Day
	14	Holy Cross Day (Feast of the Cross)	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and Western
	15	International Day of Democracy	United Nations
	17-25	Navratri (Autumn)	Hinduism
	19-20	Rosh Hashanah*	Judaism
	19	Powley Day	First Nation, Métis
	21	International Day of Peace	United Nations
	21-29	Mabon (Autumn Equinox)	Wicca/Pagan
	22	Ohigan (Fall Equinox)	Japanese National Holiday
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network Ally Week	GLSEN
	27	Elevation of the Holy Cross	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox
	30	Orange Shirt Day	First Nation, Métis, Inuit

Oct 2020	1	International Day of Older Persons	United Nations
Hispanic Heritage Month (City of Toronto)	5	World Teachers' Day	United Nations
Islamic Heritage Month	3-9	Sukkot*	Judaism
Somali Heritage Month	4-10	Body Confidence Awareness Week (2 nd Week Oct.)	Toronto District School Board (TDSB)
Women's History Month	7	International Walk to School Day	Highway Safety Research Centre (University of North Carolina, USA)
	10-11	Shemini Atzeret*	Judaism
	10	World Mental Health Day	World Health Organization
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	Week Without Violence	YMCA
	11	International Day of the Girl	United Nations
	11	Simchat Torah*	Judaism
	12	Thanksgiving Day	Canadian Government
	16	World Food Day	United Nations
	17	International Day of the Eradication of Poverty	United Nations
	18	Birth of Bahá'u'lláh*	Bahá'i
	18	Birth of the Bá'b*	Bahá'i
	20	Gurgadi of the Holy Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib Ji as Guru	Sikhism
	22-26	Mahalaya (Durga Puja Festival)	Hinduism
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	Kathina Ceremony/Paváraná Day	Buddhism
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	New Year (Enlightenment of Gautamswami)	Jainism
	28	Yom Kippur*	Judaism
	29	Mawlid-al-Nabi*	Islam

Nov 2020	1	All Saints Day	Christianity - Eastern Orthodox and Western
Hindu Heritage Month	1	Samhain*	Wicca/Pagan
	2	Crowning of Emperor Haile Selassie I	Rastafarian Holy Day
	4	Karva Chauth	Hinduism
	7	Buddha's Descent from Tushita Heaven	Buddhism -Tibetan
	11	Remembrance Day	Canadian Government
	14	Bandi Chhor Divas	Sikhism
	14	Diwali	Hinduism/Jainism/Sikhism
	14	World Diabetes Day	World Health Organization
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	Louis Riel Day (Toronto)	First Nations, Métis
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	Lokasha Jayanti	Jainism
	15-21	Anti-Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week	Ontario Government
	19	Gyana Panchami	Jainism
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	Maun Agiyaras (Ekadashi)	Jainism
	20	Universal Children's Day	United Nations

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Days of Significance

May 2019 - December 2020

	20	International Transgender Day of Remembrance	Gwendolyn Ann Smith, US Trans Advocate
	21	Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Christianity – Russian Orthodox
	24	Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur	Sikhism
	25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women	United Nations
	26	Day of the Covenant*	Baha'i
	28	National Holodomor Memorial Day ⁶	Ukrainian Canadian Congress
	Nov 29-Dec 24	Advent	Christianity

Dec 2020	1	World AIDS Day	United Nations
	2	International Day of the Abolition of Slavery	United Nations
	3	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	United Nations
	6	National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women	Canadian Government
	8	St. Clements of Ohrid Patrons Day	Christianity - Macedonian Orthodox
	10	Human Rights Day	United Nations
	11-18	Hanukkah*	Judaism
	13	Birthday of Imam Aga Khan	Islam
	18	International Migrants Day	United Nations
	21	Yule - Winter Solstice	Wicca/Pagan
	25	Christmas Day	Canadian Government and Christianity
	<i>To Be Announced</i>	Zarathosht Diso Death	Zoroastrian
	26	Boxing Day	Canadian Government
	Dec 26-Jan 1	Kwanzaa	African Canadian and American Celebration

⁶ Recognized on the 4th Saturday each November - TDSB recognition is on the preceding Friday

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