

Trustee Update

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Elementary Class Reorganization

On Monday, October 5 the Board had a special meeting to receive an update from staff on elementary school reorganization.

Each year, school boards, including the TDSB, undergo a reorganization of classes in the opening weeks of school to balance classes and staffing based on the actual number of students that are in a class versus the projected number of students. While this is typically a routine process, this year will be significantly different as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Why do we need to reorganize?

- In-person classes size averages are significantly lower than the projected class averages and the in-person schools are overstaffed.
- The current percentage of elementary students in Virtual School is 35% compared to the 30% on which staffing allocations were based. The virtual schools are currently understaffed and have had to depend heavily on Occasional Teachers.
- The first deadline to request a switch between the in-person and virtual models was on September 30th. The results of those requests were: 7,882 Students moving to virtual schools and 2,921 students moving to In-person schools.
- Balancing the teacher-pupil ratio is absolutely necessary to ensure more equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The TDSB is making every effort to better balance our schools with as little disruption to your child's learning as possible. However, for some students this may mean being assigned to a new teacher, a different class or, in some cases, a mixed grade.

REORGANIZATION WILL BEGIN ON OCTOBER 13, 2020

Please note:

- There will be adjustments to class sizes, in many cases an increase. However, they will remain within our targeted class caps so that health and safety standards relating to classroom size and social distancing can be maintained.
- We will continue with our commitment to provide lower class sizes in schools serving communities identified by Toronto Public Health as higher risk for contracting COVID-19.
- As has been the case already this year, this will also result in a greater number of combined grade classes ('splits').
- In the Virtual School, students currently without a teacher will be prioritized.

[More information can be found in the Elementary Reorganization Letter sent to parents on October 6, 2020.](#)

Targeted Class Size Caps

School	JK/SK	Grades 1 to 3	Grades 4 to 8
Virtual School	29	20	35
TDSB Identified High Priority Schools(based on TPH and other criteria)	15	20	20
All Other Schools	24	20	27

Elementary Reorganization Q&A

Q: Why are some in-person classes being combined or collapsed?

A: The TDSB has set targeted class size limits as follows: JK/SK classes – 24 students, Grades 1 to 3 – 20 students, and Grades 4 to 8 – 27 students. Currently, we have a large number of classes significantly below these targets, meaning that we have more teachers than are needed at in-person schools and we have nearly 63,000 students learning in the Elementary Virtual School. We need to ensure that our teachers are deployed to where students are learning and balance class sizes.

Q: My child attends in-person school. Why is my child getting a different teacher?

A: Since we have more teachers than we need for in-person schools, we are moving them to the Virtual School. This means we have to reorganize some classes, which in some cases will mean students will have a different teacher.

Q: My child attends in-person school and is getting a new teacher. How will they know where my child is in terms of the curriculum?

A: The start of elementary school was phased in the week of September 15, with all grades starting by Monday, September 21. Students will have been in their current classes for approximately 3 weeks before these changes take effect. Teachers are very experienced in understanding where students are in terms of the curriculum, and they will use teaching and learning strategies to support students during this transition.

Q: How many students switched between in-person learning and the Virtual School at the first key date?

A: There were originally 58,271 elementary students in the Virtual School. After the first key date for switching, an additional 7,882 students switched to the Virtual School and 2,921 switched to in-person school.

Q: My child is in the Virtual School. Why is my child getting a new teacher?

A: More students than anticipated opted for the Virtual School. We used temporary/occasional

teachers to fill the classes. Now that we have more permanent teachers than we need for in-person schools, we are replacing some of temporary/occasional teachers in the Virtual School with permanent teachers from in-person schools.

Q: My child is in the Virtual School and has yet to be assigned a teacher or a class. Will my child have priority to have a teacher as a result of these changes?

A: Yes. Students who originally opted for Virtual School will have first priority for a teacher/class.

Q: My child just switched to the Virtual School. Will they be waiting for a teacher?

A: Possibly. As a result of reorganization and moving teachers from in-person schools to the Virtual School, we expect to have enough teachers during the week of October 13. However, should there be a delay, we will be providing additional asynchronous (independent) learning resources for students until a teacher has been assigned.

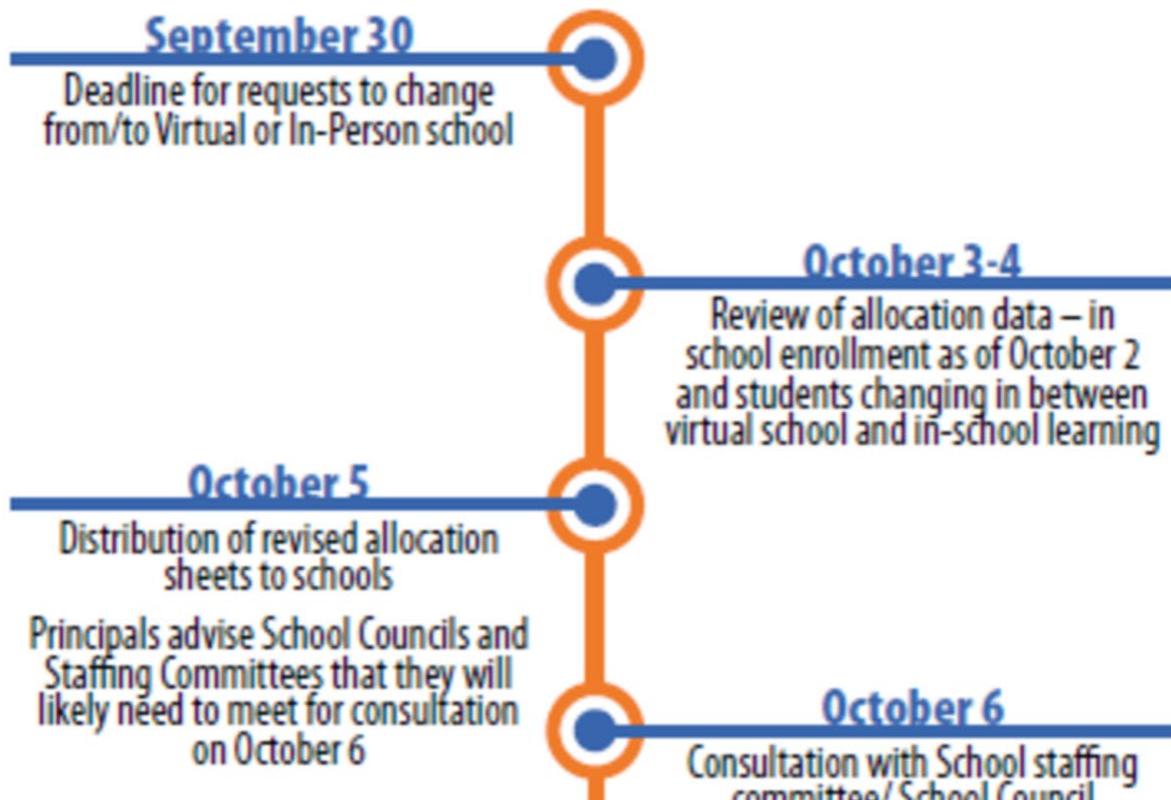
Q: My child is in French Immersion/Extended French in the Virtual School and has been waiting for a French-language teacher. Will the changes described above and the movement of teachers from in-person to the Virtual School result in more French Language teachers?

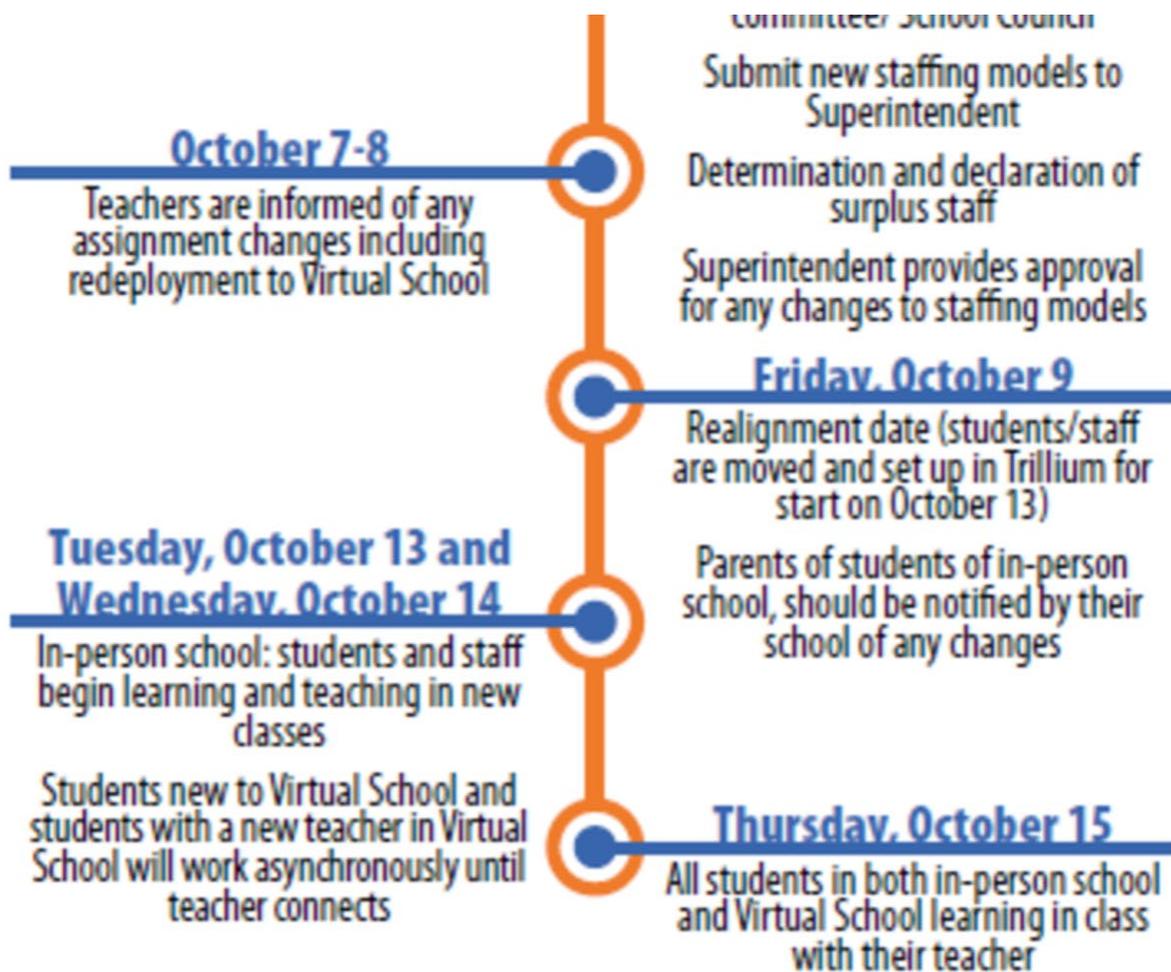
A: Yes. The changes will result in more French Languages teachers.

Q: My child is in the Virtual School. If I have a new teacher how will they know where the class is in terms of the curriculum?

A: The current occasional/temporary teacher will be teamed up with the new permanent teacher to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible for students.

Elementary Reorganization Timelines Updated: October 5, 2020





Download COVID Alert Today

As you know, a new Bluetooth-based COVID-19 contact tracing app developed in Canada was rolled out for testing in Ontario on July 31. Although the app is strictly voluntary, I urge everyone to download it. Privacy is respected.

For more information, please visit the [Government of Canada COVID Alert website](#).

COVID-19: Reduce Virus Spread

The best way to keep our kids in school right now is to ensure everyone is following public health guidelines to prevent community spread. This is the most critical thing we can do. Let's all do what we can. **Watch your distance. Wear**

**Public health remains a top priority.
Continue to:**



physical distance



wear a face covering if physical distancing is a challenge



wash hands frequently and thoroughly



follow gathering limits and rules.



your mask. Wash your hands.

Ontario Revises COVID-19 Screening Guidance for Schools and Child Care

The TDSB takes its health direction from Toronto Public Health.

On Thursday, the Ministry of Education announced that it has updated its COVID-19 school and child care screening guidance. The TDSB takes its lead from Toronto Public Health, who has also revised their guidance based on the provincial direction.

According to the revised guidelines, students and children with symptoms such as fever and cough will still be advised to stay home until they are able to consult with a health care provider and receive an alternate diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 test. A second set of questions now deals with symptoms that are commonly associated with other illnesses, such as runny nose or headache, and provides the following direction:

Students and children with only one of these symptoms will be advised to stay home for 24 hours, after which they can return to school or child care if their symptoms are improving.

Students and children with two or more of these symptoms will be advised to stay home until they are able to consult with a health care provider and receive an alternative diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 test.

In addition, based on the latest public health guidance, the symptom list for children in school and child care no longer includes abdominal pain or conjunctivitis (pink eye).

Based on this update, here is the [new student screening tool](#) from Toronto Public Health, as well as the [revised TDSB's Health Pass](#). The [TDSB Daily Health Screening App](#) has also been updated to reflect these changes. Check [here](#) for more information.

Ensuring the health and safety of our staff and students is our priority and we all play a role. Again, one of the most important things families can do to help slow the spread of COVID-19 is to screen their children daily for COVID-19 symptoms and keep them home from school if they are sick or have had close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19.

Thank you for your continued efforts to help keep our school environments safe and healthy.

- Read the [Guidance for Re-opening Schools JK to Grade 12 COVID-19 Prevention Checklist](#)
- Read the [School Decision Guide](#)

Learn more at [Toronto Public Health](#)

Please note - because of a timelag between a notification and receiving communication to share

with families from TPH, Principals will have the discretion to communicate to families of the affected cohorts to self-isolate while waiting for TPH to complete their investigation/contact tracing.

COVID-19 Advisories - We are continuing to work closely with Toronto Public Health (TPH) on all cases, including any necessary communications to families and school communities. This webpage - <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Return-to-School/covid-19-advisories> - provides a list of the active confirmed cases of COVID-19 among students and/or staff in TDSB schools. Please note that all schools where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 who was contagious while at school will receive a letter from TPH to inform them about the possible exposure. For more information on the TDSB Response Plan with regard to COVID-19 case management for schools and administrative sites, click [here](#).

MY CHILD HAS 1 OR MORE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Was your child a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19?

YES

- Everyone, including household members, should stay home & self-isolate. Get your child tested.
- If positive, notify your child's school. Toronto Public Health will follow up with further instructions.
- If negative, the child still has to self-isolate until cleared by Toronto Public Health. Household members can return to work/school as long as they do not have symptoms.

NO

- Notify your child's school that they have symptoms.
- Your child should stay home, self-isolate & get tested.
- Household members should self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days & can attend school or work as long as they do not have symptoms, including while waiting for your child's test results.
- If household members develop symptoms they need to stay home, self-isolate & get tested.

What was the result of your child's COVID-19 test?

POSITIVE

- Let your child's school know that they tested positive for COVID-19.
- Your child must stay home & self-isolate for 14 days from the day symptoms started.
- Household members & close contacts must also self-isolate for 14 days.
- Toronto Public Health will contact you to do an investigation & will provide further instructions.

NEGATIVE

- Your child may return to school after it has been 24 hours since their symptoms started improving.
- Young children may have ongoing mild symptoms, such as a runny nose. If it is not new or worse, they may go back to school if they don't have other symptoms.

NOT TESTED

- Your child must stay home & self-isolate for 14 days from the day the symptoms started.
- After 14 days, they can go back to school if their symptoms are improving.
- Household members should self-monitor & continue attending school or work if they do not have symptoms.
- If a health care provider has diagnosed a condition that isn't related to COVID-19, your child can return to school 24 hours after their symptoms improve.

TORONTO.CA/COVID19

 TORONTO Public Health

Returning to School

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Return-to-School>.

For more details, please click on the links below that will bring you right



to the information

[In-Person Elementary](#)

[Elementary Virtual School](#)

[In-Person Secondary](#)

[Secondary Virtual School](#)

[Exemptions - Request to be Exempt from the Minimum Requirements of Synchronous Learning](#)

[Switching Between In-Person Learning and the Virtual School](#)

[Daily Health Screening](#)

[Mask/Face Coverings Required](#)

[Daily Checklist - Elementary](#)

[Daily Checklist - Secondary](#)

[Resources for Preparing for Back to School](#)

[Mental Health and Well-Being Resources](#)

[Questions and Answers](#)

[Response Plans for Covid-19 Cases](#)

[TDSB Return to School Video](#)

[Learning and Instruction](#)

[Health and Safety](#)

[Operations - Transportation and Before and After School Programs](#)

Virtual School

Update as of Friday, October 2

Elementary School Families

Earlier this week, we were optimistic that all classes would be assigned a teacher by today and that has not happened. As of today, more than 94 percent (approximately 56,000) Elementary Virtual School students are in classes and receiving teacher instruction. For those students and families without a teacher since Virtual School began on September 22, we know how disappointing this has been. While there are a number of factors making this task incredibly challenging, we also want to recognize and acknowledge the impact this delay has had on students and families. We are sorry that it has taken so long to get students set up in a classroom with a



teacher and are doing everything possible to continue to place teachers so that learning can begin.

French Immersion (FI) and Extended French (EF) Teachers and Classrooms

There continues to be a shortage of French language teachers and a number of FI and EF classrooms remain without a teacher. We have taken immediate action to ensure that students have a connection with a teacher and classmates by offering placements to English-speaking Occasional Teachers for the 80+ remaining vacancies until we can confirm a French teacher. Once a teacher accepts the position, they will connect with students and get set up in Brightspace. We will continue to monitor the acceptances over the weekend. In addition, we continue to recruit new French teachers from out-of-province — although this is a longer-term solution.

English Teachers and Classrooms

Earlier this week, all English classrooms had been assigned a teacher. Unfortunately, a small number of classrooms are once again without a teacher in place due to resignations. In these cases, we are working to replace the teacher.

Next Steps for FI/EF and English Programs - In order to achieve our goal of having all FI/EF and English students with a teacher for the upcoming week, we are:

- Reviewing each and every class list and teacher assignment to ensure every outstanding student has been placed in the appropriate class
- Providing every newly hired teacher access to an online learning classroom and training
- Increasing class sizes to accommodate more students
- Contacting every teacher to ensure they have their class lists and are clear about the expectation of reaching out to students as soon as possible (including email, phone or Brightspace)
- Adding administrative support to improve communication with parents/guardians.

Our entire Virtual School team knows how important connection is for students and their families, and that is why we continue to work through the weekend to get these tasks done.

Tech Support: We continue to provide support to those families having difficulty with login information and/or accessing Brightspace. **IT has set up a designated parent phone support line at 416-396-9100 that is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

Independent Learning Activities: Please continue to access the independent learning resources web page where more resources, activities and live teacher-led videos have been added for the second week - <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Virtual-School/Virtual-School-Elementary/Asynchronous-Learning-Activities>.

System Superintendent - Jane Phillips-Long (Jane.Phillips-Long@tdsb.on.ca)

Assistant - Kathy Clydesdale (kathy.clydesdale@tdsb.on.ca)

*If you are a parent or staff member with a question or concern about a child or student in **grades K-3**, please contact:

Principal: Susan Yun (susan.yun@tdsb.on.ca)

Vice Principal: Tera Dabner (tera.dabner@tdsb.on.ca)

Vice Principal: Paola Farina (paola.farina@tdsb.on.ca)

Office Administrator: Kimberly Sorokiwsky

*If you are a parent or staff member with a question or concern about a child or student

in **grades 4-8**, please contact:

Principal: Mary Salvarinas (Mary.Salvarinas@tdsb.on.ca)

Vice Principal: (Sandra.Li@tdsb.on.ca)

Office Administrator: Annette Bridglall

Exemptions to Synchronous (Live, Interactive) Learning <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Return-to-School/Learning-and-Instruction/Exemption-from-Synchronous-Learning>

- The deadline date for families to request an exemption from synchronous (live, interactive) learning has been extended to Tuesday, October 20 at 4:00 p.m. to accommodate the late start for some students in Elementary Virtual School.

If you are a parent with questions about Brightspace please go here:

- <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Virtual-School/Virtual-School-Elementary>

If you are a teacher with questions about Brightspace

- please visit KEY to Learn, under Course Registration and the Virtual School Staff section.

For TDSB Brightspace support

- visit: <https://sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/tdsbvle/home>

For urgent Early Years matters

- please email paula.campbell@tdsb.on.ca

For urgent French as a Second Language matters

- please contact Kirsten Johnston, FSL Program Coordinator at kirsten.johnston@tdsb.on.ca

For Secondary Contact Information

- please see <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Virtual-School/Virtual-School-Secondary/More-Information>

As of October 2 - TDSB Virtual Elementary School - 58,526 students and 2,266 teachers

- LC1 – 12,274
- LC2 – 16,285
- LC3 – 18,816
- LC4 – 11,151

TDSB Virtual Secondary School - 17,970 students and 770 teachers



Somali Heritage Month at TDSB in October

The Toronto District School Board is proud to recognize important days of significance throughout the school year. As part of that, the TDSB recognizes a number of heritage and history months, many of which are organized by a number of interested individuals including

Trustees, staff and community members. These dedicated individuals offer their time and energy to plan activities that celebrate the month and our diverse TDSB community.

On June 22, 2016, the TDSB passed a motion to recognize **Islamic Heritage Month** in October. Subsequently, in 2016, the province of Ontario established October as Islamic History Month (IHM) through the *Islamic Heritage Month Act*, “proclaiming a month to be Islamic Heritage Month in Ontario will provide all Ontarians, both today and in future generations, with an opportunity to reflect, celebrate and learn about the rich and longstanding Islamic history in the Province and the diverse roles and contributions of Muslim people in communities across Ontario. This new understanding will in turn help combat anti-Islamic sentiment.”

Since June 2016, the TDSB has had the privilege to recognize **Somali Heritage Month**. The TDSB affirms our commitment to celebrating Somali Heritage Month and encourages students and staff to take this opportunity to learn about the history, heritage and diversity of the Somali community. The theme “Educate. Elevate. Excel.” continues to be explored this year.

School Council Update

The following protocols are effective immediately for School Councils:

Virtual School and Home School Parent/Caregiver Engagement:

- All efforts will be made to ensure that Virtual parent/caregivers receive communications from the home school, particularly about school council elections. All schools now have access to their Virtual parent/caregiver list;
- A plan is underway to facilitate communication between Virtual School principals and parent/caregivers;
- Virtual parent/caregivers will be provided with the Parent Concern Protocol and information for connecting with staff and Principal;
- Connection between Virtual School families and home school will continue to be emphasized both at the elementary and secondary levels;
- Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) and the Parent and Community Engagement Office (PCEO) will be developing best practices for Virtual School parent/caregiver engagement.

Communication:

- ZOOM has been provided for School Councils to enable School Council Chairs/Co-Chairs to meet and operate working group meetings and networking with parent/caregivers, including virtual;
- Principals have been asked to activate the TDSB’s School Council Chairs/Co-Chairs email account to ensure Council’s access to ZOOM and School Messenger;

- Principals will continue to facilitate School Council meetings using Google or ZOOM. Councils will use the School Council ZOOM account to facilitate executive, working group meetings as well as for community networking;
- School Messenger for School Council Chairs/Co-Chairs will be rolled out soon.

Meetings:

- School Council meetings should be held virtually given the new protocols on numbers allowed to meet in person;
- School Council executive and working group meetings may be held using ZOOM;
- The existing school council membership remains in office until the date of the first meeting of the School Council after the elections (under Education Act, O. Reg. 612/00: School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees).

Elections:

The start date of September 22nd for Virtual School required the first day of school to be changed from September 15th to September 22nd. With 14 days' notice, elections of parent members of School Councils will be held within 30 days after school re-opening, will now be the week of November 1, 2020 where feasible;

Virtual parents/caregivers are eligible to be members of their home school council. They are eligible to be voting members of the School Council and hold executive positions (e.g. chair, etc.);

All other election/appointment of School Council non-parent/caregiver members may be held in the same timeline;

Notifications for Council elections and nominations process may now begin;

Schools are required to ensure that all families are informed of the School Council elections. Notice may be provided via School Messenger (phone/e-mail, virtual newsletters, posting on website, flyers posted on school door or fence etc.). All efforts possible to notify parent/caregivers must be made though the challenges of the current COVID context may preclude paper distributions to students/families/caregivers;

Election notification must include a nomination form (Virtual) or email/call-in nomination process with a set date and time for the opening and closing of nominations, date and time of the elections and process for casting ballots;

Election day may include advance polling at the local school (where feasible) and/or online voting in a virtual election meeting held on ZOOM, where the anonymous polling function should be used;

It is important that the parents/caregivers have the opportunity to cast a private ballot when voting for School Council representatives.

Save the Date for the Virtual Parents as Partners Conference!

Join us on October 24 and 25 for our first-ever virtual parent conference. This

online version offers all the same exciting, inspiring and informative content as our in-person



conference but allows you to participate all from the comfort of your own home.

This year's conference includes two amazing keynotes as well as a host of breakout sessions that you can choose to tailor to your own interests and needs. Some of the sessions offered include special education, mental health and well-being, anti-Black racism and virtual engagement. In the breakout sessions – led by both TDSB experts and panelists from outside organizations – you also get a chance to connect in a more intimate way with other parents, ask questions and participate in discussions.

We hope you find this new format as useful and engaging as we do! **Registration opens on Tuesday, October 13. Learn more at www.parentsaspartners.ca.**



Start-of-Year Forms Can Now Be Completed Online

How does it work?

- After your child's first day of school, an email will automatically be sent to the parent/guardian that is the primary or secondary contact with an email address on file with the school. The email will come from TDSB Online Form (noreply@tdsb.on.ca) and will take you to a secure site to complete and submit your child's forms.
- Watch the [online tutorial!](#)

Am I required to complete an online form?

- Completing the form online streamlines the process not only for parents/guardians, it also helps save resources in schools. While you're not required to complete it online, we hope as many parents/guardians as possible use this opportunity.

I received a paper copy and an online copy. Which one should I complete?

- The online copy is preferred.

How safe is it to submit this information online?

- The tool TDSB selected for the online forms, Permission Click, has undergone a detailed security assessment by our IT Services staff. TDSB is confident Permission Click is a safe and secure method for completing online forms. The Toronto District School Board privacy obligations originate from the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), which permits the Toronto District School Board to collect, use and disclose personal information necessary for the purposes of planning, administering, and delivering its educational programs and services.

I have multiple children in the TDSB; will I receive more than one link?

- Yes. Please complete a form for each child.

I am in Virtual School. Do I still need to complete the Excursion Form?

Yes. We do this at the start of each year and much of it is due diligence. We hope students will be going back to the school eventually.

Committee Meetings This Week

The Toronto District School Board is committed to developing opportunities for our wider school community to connect and engage in conversations about education issues. Meetings will be broadcasted live to the public. Click here at the start time to view - <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Live-Webcast-of-Meetings>.

Program and School Services Committee - Wednesday, October 7, 2020 4:30 p.m. Electronic Meeting

- 5. Opportunity for Oral Updates From Co-Chairs of Community Advisory Committees
 - 5.1 Parent Involvement Advisory Committee Reports, June 16 and September 22, 2020 (For receipt)
 - 5.2 Special Education Advisory Committee Report, September 14, 2020 (For receipt)
- 6. 2020 Summer Programs
- 7. Written Notices of Motion
 - 7.1 Dismantling Systemic Barriers to Inclusion in Discipline Procedures (Trustees Chernos Lin and MacLean)

2020/21 ILE Fall Programs

This fall, the International Languages – Elementary / African Heritage Program will be offering language classes to students (TDSB and non TDSB) Kindergarten to Grade 8. Students will take part in a remote/at home learning. One day each week, they will have live face-to-face interactive lessons with their instructor and other students for approximately 30 minutes. Activities will be focused on building student's abilities in oral communication, reading and writing.

Please note that a minimum of 23 students is required to open a language class. For more information, please click <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Elementary-School/Beyond-the-Classroom/International-Languages-Elementary-and-African-Heritage/Fall-2020-2021>

African Heritage
2020 - 2021
Fall Program Remote Learning

In an increasingly globalized world, it is important to set our students on the path to being active global citizens. This fall, the International Languages – Elementary / African Heritage Program will be offering African Heritage classes to students (TDSB and non TDSB) in Kindergarten to Grade 8.

Students will take part in a remote/at home learning and will learn about Black culture and the contributions of people of African descent. Classes run 2.5 hours, one day a week. Students will have live face-to-face interactive lessons with their instructor and other students for approximately 30 minutes. Remaining time will be spent on independent work.

Classes start October 2020.
Cost is free while the program is offered remotely.
Please note that a minimum of 23 students is required to open a class.

For more information/registration, please visit www.ileprograms.ca.

The official school year calendar for the Toronto District School Board runs from September 1 to June 30, inclusive and has now been approved by the Ministry.

- The last day of class for elementary students is June 29
- **Secondary Quadmester Calendar**
- **Quad 1: Sept. 17 - Nov 17 + exams Nov 18 & 19**
- **Quad 2: Nov. 23 - Feb 2 + exams Feb 3 & 4**
- **Quad 3: Feb 8 - April 20 + exams April 21 & 22**
- **Quad 4: April 23 - June 23 + exams June 24, 25 & 28**

PA Days & Holidays Remaining

Thanksgiving	October 12, 2020
Board-wide PA Day	November 20, 2020
Winter Break	Dec 21, 2020 - January 1, 2021
Elementary PA Day	January 15, 2021
Secondary PA Day (Semestered Schools Only)	February 5, 2021
Board-wide PA Day	February 12, 2021
Family Day	February 15, 2021
March Break	March 15 – 19, 2021
Good Friday	April 2, 2021
Easter Monday	April 5, 2021
Victoria Day	May 24, 2021
Elementary School PA Day	June 4, 2021
Secondary School PA Day	June 29, 2021



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