

Trustee Update

Stephanie Donaldson

Ward 9: Davenport & Spadina - Fort York

Toronto District School Board

416-395-8787 • Stephanie.Donaldson@tdsb.on.ca



Hi Everyone,

I really hope that this newsletter finds you all well and healthy.

As we move through February and many of our students and staff return to in-person learning next week, I've got lots of information to share in this newsletter. I also want to let you know that on February 9th, I was proud to move a motion calling on the provincial government to guarantee paid sick leave for all workers. TDSB trustees passed it unanimously. We cannot fully fight this virus if we cannot ensure that workers who are sick can stay at home to help stop the spread of the virus in the community. We cannot keep our schools open if we cannot contain community spread. I am grateful that the TDSB will now add our voice to the chorus of voices advocating for this important public health measure.

Thanks in advance for reading this newsletter and please be well, stay safe, and take care of each other.

In community,
Stephanie

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In-Person Learning Reopens Feb 16, 2021

The Minister of Education announced that in-person learning will resume for schools in Toronto on **Tuesday, February 16, 2021**. Until that time, schools will remain closed to most students and staff and remote learning will continue. For students in the virtual learning model, classes will continue as normal during the closure and when in-person learning resumes.

It is important to reiterate that learning has continued since the Christmas Holidays ended. Virtual School continued as usual and in-person school 'pivoted' to remote learning. And the pivot to remote learning was no small feat - deep gratitude to all teachers and education workers and administrators in both Virtual School and via Remote Learning who continue to do their best to support student academic achievement and mental well-being.

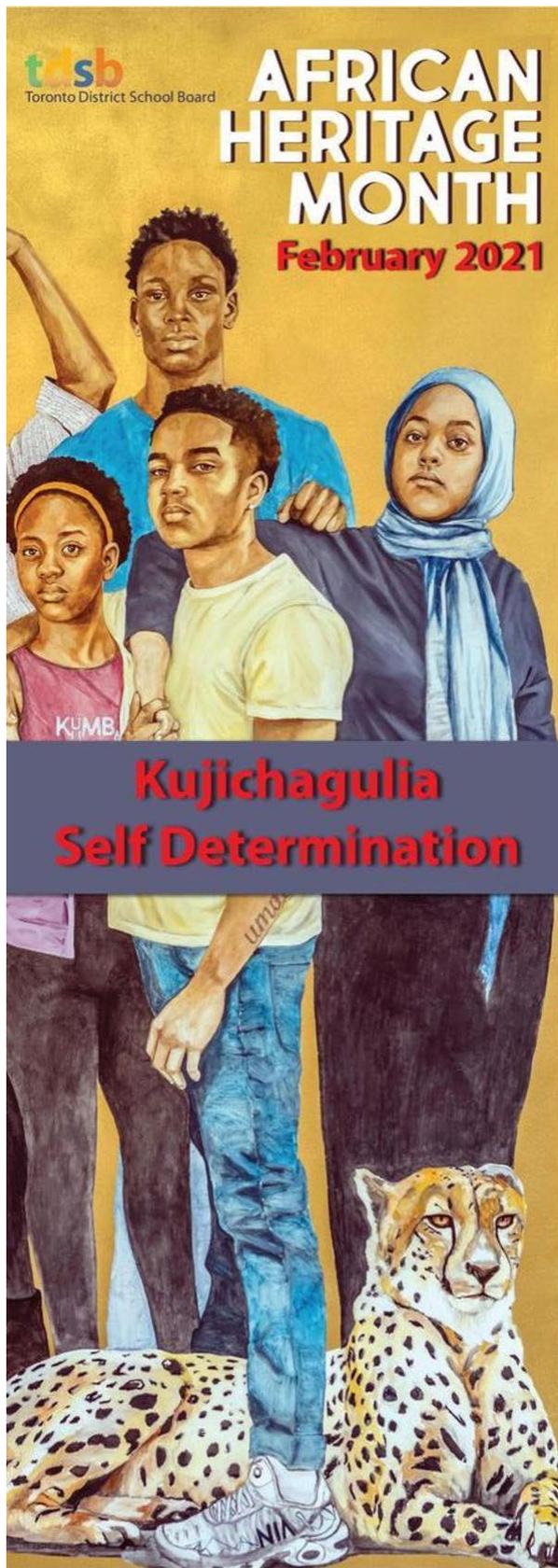
In the days ahead, we will be sharing additional information with families with regard to health and safety measures at all TDSB schools — both those that are already in place and those that will be implemented when students return.

From [Toronto Public Health](#) - Toronto is subject to a province-wide state of emergency. Stay home except for essential reasons to [slow virus spread](#) and follow the [Dos and Don'ts guide](#).

The pandemic has been difficult in so many ways for so many people. Access free [mental health supports](#) or call or text 211 to be connected to mental health or other social services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please also check Mental Health and Well-Being Resources During Covid-19 on the TDSB Website.

Switching Schools - In-Person and Virtual

We are committed to completing as many requests as possible, with priority given to students who live in neighbourhoods which are at higher risk for COVID-19 based on recent data from Toronto Public Health. Schools will be working to find appropriate classroom spaces for students who requested a switch, however it is important for families to understand that it will not be possible to accommodate all requests. Additionally, we know that families need stability and we want to ensure as little disruption to learning as possible, including for those students who have not requested a switch. Please visit the [Switching Webpage](#) for more information



African Heritage Month in February

The Toronto District School Board is the largest and one of the most diverse school boards in Canada. Nearly one-quarter of our students were born outside of Canada, and collectively, we speak more than 120 languages. Understanding all cultures is essential to the success of our young students today as they transform and transition to be our future leaders of tomorrow.

During the month of February, the Toronto District School Board is proud to recognize and celebrate African Heritage Month. It is an occasion to celebrate the many achievements and contributions of peoples of African descent to Canada and the world. The chosen theme for 2020-2021 is ***Kujichagulia: Self Determination***.

We are thrilled to be sharing this poster with our updated theme. The artwork for the poster was created by students from Downsview Secondary School in 2020 under the leadership of their teacher, Matthew Chapman. Five principles of Kwanzaa are presented in this painting including the theme for 2021, ***Kujichagulia (Self Determination)***, which can be found in the fabric of one of the shirts. The other four principles present in this image are: Umoja (unity) the tattoo

Nia (purpose) the logo on the shoe

Kuumba (creativity) the logo on the shirt

Imani (faith) the brand tag on the hijab

Black people in Canada have diverse grounds and experiences – while some can trace their roots in Canada for many generations, others have immigrated in recent decades.

Black Canadians are connected by a common African history and ancestry. The African-Canadian population is made up of individuals from a range of places across the globe including, but not limited to, the United States, South America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and Canada.

There were almost 1.2 million Black people living in Canada in 2016. The Black population is diverse and has a long and rich history in Canada. Among the Black population born outside of Canada, the

source countries of immigration have changed over time. More than half of this population who immigrated before 1981 were born in Jamaica and Haiti. Black newcomers now come from about 125 different countries, mainly from Africa.

The African Heritage Month Volunteer Planning Committee continues to name, notice, and disrupt anti-Black racism through their organized initiatives shared throughout the TDSB and commitment to hold space for Black students, staff, parents, families, and elders to heal, to celebrate and to thrive.

During the month of February, several activities are being planned and they include; a launch to kick-off African Heritage Month, Know Your Worth Conference: Black Resistance in collaboration with Black Law Students Association of Osgoode Hall Law School (York University) for secondary students; and the expansion of the Black Student Alliance. We are especially proud of the establishment of the Know Your Worth Scholarship fund and Black Leadership Council at the Toronto District School Board.

Follow us on Twitter @tdsbAFricanHM and Instagram @ @tdsb_african_hm. We are excited to share [more information about African Heritage Month](#).

February is Chinese Heritage Month in the TDSB

Toronto District School Board is proud to recognize Chinese Heritage Month (CHM) during the month of February 2021. This year is the Year of the Ox: Loyal, Honest,

Responsible, Hard-Working and Logical. Many Chinese Canadians will celebrate Lunar New Year on Friday, February 12. Lunar New Year is also known as the spring festival and begins with the first moon of the lunar calendar and ends on the first full moon of the lunar calendar 15 days later.

Though celebrations will be altered this year because of the pandemic, the spirit and joyfulness will remain the same through virtual events and in-home family-based festivities.

Copies of the winning posters from our poster challenge with students from all grade levels across the Toronto District School Board will be posted soon. We are also pleased to share a brief slide deck on Chinese Heritage Month.

Follow us at Twitter(@tdsbChineseHM). More information about these initiatives on our official [Chinese Heritage Month site](#).



Parent and Caregiver Engagement Initiatives

During this challenging period for students, staff and



parents/caregivers connecting with and supporting parents and caregivers continues to be a priority in the TDSB. The Parent and Community Engagement Office (PCEO), Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) and the Community Support Workers (CSWs) have been engaged in a variety of activities to offer support, build capacity and make connections for

parents/caregivers. A few examples include responding to food insecurity, organizing virtual information sessions, collaborating with 211 Toronto to ensure access to community-based services and helping parents navigate the system for assistance.

TDSB Community Support Workers have also created a Community Support Hub, a one stop shop program and service hub for parents/caregivers. The Hub features not only full access to CSWs and their work, but also a series of information and presentation on navigating TDSB and professional development for families through the Parent Academy, including a number of other events under three themes: Anti-Racism Series, Know Your Rights Series, and Well-Being Resources and Support Series.

Each of these initiatives offers so many options to our varied parents/caregivers across our district. Please check each site regularly for new additions as well as login information - <https://sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/csws/home>.

Information Brochures

these brochures provide supports available for students that parents may not be fully aware of - this page has brochures on:

- [Individual Education Plan \(IEP\)](#)
- [School Support Team \(SST\)](#)
- [Identification, Placement & Review Committee \(IPRC\)](#)
- [Parent Concern Protocol](#)

For additional information, please click here - <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership-Learning-and-School-Improvement/Special-Education/Brochures>



[Individual Education Plan](#)
[Accessible Version](#)



[School Support Team](#)
[Accessible Version](#)



[Identification, Placement & Review Committee](#)
[Accessible Version](#)



[Parent Concern Protocol](#)
[Accessible Version](#)



Survey: 2021 Budget Consultations

Survey: 2021 Budget consultations

Complete the Survey -

<https://www.ontario.ca/form/survey-2021-budget-consultations>

Please use this opportunity to let the province know your priorities - the survey has 11 questions and should take about 20 minutes. It closes on February 12, 2021.

From the website - *The government's 2020 Budget laid out the government's \$45 billion response to COVID-19. The 2021 Budget will build on this plan – but we need your feedback. How has COVID-19 affected your priorities? How can the Ontario government support your family or business? What can we do to ensure a strong recovery?*

Coping Through COVID

Join us for a webinar on: Thursday, February 11, 2021 From 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Parents and caregivers are invited to join our TDSB mental health professionals to learn and discuss coping strategies to support mental health and well-being through the pandemic.

Thursday, February 11, 2021

6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Alexander Brown, Chair

Curtis Ennis, Associate Director, Equity, Well-Being and School Improvement

Shameen Sandhu, System Leader for Mental Health and Professional Support Services and Adolph Williams, Manager, Social Work and Attendance Services provide insight and practical strategies to help you and your family continue to cope through the pandemic

Ask your questions directly to our mental health professionals in our online chat and join the conversation with other parents and caregivers. Access link to Zoom and YouTube to be provided in advance of the web cast - <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/In-Person-Learning/Resources-During-Covid-19/Coping-through-Covid>.

211 Day is February 11

The purpose of 211 Day is to let people know what 211 is and how the service can support people looking for help. 211 is a free, confidential helpline that is available 24/7, 365 days year (including holidays) in 150+ languages.

When someone calls 2-1-1, they reach a 211 Service



Navigator who will help them navigate the complexities of the human services system quickly and easily, equipping them with the information and referral they need to access programs and services in their communities. In Central Ontario, the 211 service is available by phone and online via [211Central.ca](https://211central.ca), as well as by text, chat and email. It might not be a surprise that, with the country dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and efforts to flatten the curve, calls to 211 have increased by 30 per cent. To learn more, please click <https://211central.ca/211-day/>.



Happy Lunar New Year - February 12!

2021 is a year of the Ox, starting from **February 12th, 2021** (Chinese lunar New Year Day) and lasting until January 31st, 2022.

To all celebrating, 心想事成 Xīn xiǎng shì chéng. May

all your wishes come true!

Are you celebrating the Lunar New Year? We would love to hear from you! We are looking for parents of TDSB students to interview for a podcast series on celebrating cultural holidays during #COVID19. For more info, please contact welcoming@tdsb.on.ca.

Stronger than Hate: Live, Virtual Program – February 25, 2021

A presentation by the Toronto District School Board's African Heritage Committee, Jewish Heritage Committee, Liberation75, USC Shoah Foundation and Peel District School Board.

February 25, 2021 from 1 – 2 p.m. Link will be provided at a later date.

Moderator: Dr. Stephen D. Smith, Executive Director Chair, USC Shoah Foundation

Special Guests:

- Max Eisen, Toronto-based Holocaust Survivor, author of the award-winning “By Chance Alone”
- Joe Wilson Jr., Author of “The 761st “Black Panther” Tank Battalion in World War II, Son of Joe Wilson Sr, a member of the 761st Tank Battalion
- John L. Withers II, Author of “Balm in Gilead”, former UN Ambassador to Albania and son of Lieutenant John L. Withers, a WWII soldier who befriended and saved two Jewish Holocaust Survivors

STRONGER THAN HATE

Stories are Stronger Than Hate: A Call to Action

Live, Virtual Program

A presentation by the Toronto District School Board's African Heritage Committee, Jewish Heritage Committee, Liberation75, USC Shoah Foundation, and Peel District School Board.

SAVE THE DATE

February 25th, 2021, 1-2 pm



The 761st Tank Battalion was the first all African-American Tank Battalion in World War II. They were instrumental in helping defeat the Nazis as well as liberating several concentration camps. Holocaust survivor Max Eisen was in one of the camps they liberated. Student participants in this program (Grades 6-12) will explore how stories create the possibility to learn about ourselves and others, and how we can affect change right now. Our world has seen an increase in Anti-Black racism and Antisemitism. This conversation will help us consider what we have learned from history and witnesses to genocide, and reflect on how that knowledge can help us take action to counteract hate.

For teacher resources: <https://sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/the761stbattalion/the-black-messiah>



Podcast: TDSB Human Library

TDSB Human Library: Conversations around Equitable, Anti-Racist, and Anti-Oppressive Practice is a podcast series comprising a collection of audio episodes on topics related to Equity, Anti-Racism, and Anti-Oppression in education. This podcast invites listeners to critically reflect on their pedagogy, reimagine engagement, and partner with community to improve

student well-being and achievement.

Episode 1: NATASHA HENRY - African Canadian Experiences and the Curriculum

Episodes are open to everyone and push educators to critically reflect on their pedagogy, as well as reimagine meaningful ways to deepen student engagement and community partnerships. Each episode is up to 15 minutes and is an introduction of insightful topics and speakers, discussions guided by critical questions and a call to action where audience members are provoked to re-envision their practice.

PRO Grant Applications Now Open

School Councils may submit one request for supports up to \$1,500 to support initiatives/activities that engage parents/caregivers (including virtual), and builds School Councils' capacity around Human Rights, Equity, Anti-Racism, Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism. School Councils may collaborate and submit one application, however allocation will remain at a maximum of \$1,500 per school. **Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 1, 2021.** Applications must be submitted virtually using the application and submission form and platform. No hard copies will be accepted. **Applications will be reviewed and will be approved upon a first come first served basis. Please apply early, funds are limited.** Click here for details and the application form - <https://tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/School-Councils/Parents-Reaching-Out-Grants>.



Welcome to Kindergarten

Registration opens in February



February is Kindergarten Registration Month

Come Learn With Us!

Registration for all TDSB Kindergarten programs begins on Monday, February 1, 2021. Children who will be four by December 31, 2021, can start Junior Kindergarten in September 2021.

If you have questions or are unable to complete the online registration independently, please contact your child's home school to make a virtual face-to-face appointment (via Zoom or Google Meet) to complete the online registration process. If you know a parent whose child will be coming to JK in September, please forward this information to them.

Read more

here <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/EarlyYears/KindergartenMonth>

Black Student Alliance Webinar

Black Student Alliance Webinar: How to Start a Black Student Alliance on Wednesday, February 10, 5 p.m. – 6 p.m. BSAs are student groups that increase student voice, build capacity in student leadership and are supported by a TDSB staff member. Through ongoing meetings and discussions, school assemblies, guest speakers, presentations, and other initiatives students support each other, challenge anti-Black racism and contribute to ensuring the TDSB meets its commitments to equity, inclusion, and Black student success. Virtual Link: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/stream/LiveWebcast-African-Heritage-Month.html>

Worth Repeating

[Learning Centre 4 Virtual Elementary School Contact List](#)

[Virtual Secondary School Contact List](#)

[Supports for Virtual Learning](#)

[Support for Your Mental Health and Well-Being During COVID-19](#)

School Year Calendar 2020-2021

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 3: Feb 8 - April 20 + exams April 21 & 22**
- **Quad 4: April 23 - June 23 + exams June 24, 25 & 28**

[Days of Significance Calendar](#) - **please check before scheduling events.**

PA Days & Holidays Remaining

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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