

# Trustee Update

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Greetings,

I hope this email finds you well and that the students in your life are enjoying their school experience. It's also my hope that your family is getting the support you need to continue building a thriving school community where student achievement, well-being and equity are at the heart of everything we all do.

A large part of my work is ensuring that you are able to be involved in your child's education and school life in any way you can. There are many ways to get involved to share your views, your vision, and your ideas. In the newsletter below, I have shared some of these opportunities with you. Please also contact me anytime if you have any questions or comments.

Below you will also find updates on important local news here in Ward 9: Davenport and Spadina-Fort York, as well as some city-wide TDSB news and some provincial updates.

Take care,  
Stephanie

## **Ward 9 News:**

**Report on January 31<sup>st</sup> Ward 9 Forum:** Kudos to all who braved the cold and traveled to our first Ward 9 Forum of the term! Parents, Superintendents, Principals and Community Members got to know each other, share community updates and discuss School Improvement Planning and Ward-level learning goals and action plans in the areas of student achievement, equity and well-being. [Meeting minutes and presentations can be found on the Ward 9 website.](#)

**PIAC Election Results:** Congratulations to our newly elected Ward 9 PIAC

representatives! Proud to announce that D. Williams (Dewson P.S.) is our PIAC representative and Chetna Dickerson (FH Miller P.S.) is our PIAC (alt) representative. PIAC is an important voice at the TDSB and is engaged in truly excellent parent engagement work. Grateful for your contribution D. and Chetna!

**FSLAC Election Results:** Congratulations to our newly elected Ward 9 FSLAC representative Matt Forrest. FSLAC consults with and advises the Board on French as a Second Language matters and contributes to the work of trustees and staff. This partnership of trustees, staff and parents fosters excellence and growth in FSL programs at the Board. Please let me know if you'd like to hear more about the FSLAC, or get involved. Thanks in advance for representing Ward 9 on our behalf Matt!

**Call for Ward 9 Steering Committee Members:** At the January 31<sup>st</sup> Ward 9 Forum, interested parents suggested the creation of a Ward 9 Steering Committee to help provide leadership and guidance to the Trustee, PIAC, FSLAC, and Ward 9 school councils. If you are interested in joining the Ward 9 Steering Committee, please contact [Christy.Heath@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Christy.Heath@tdsb.on.ca) by February 23rd. Time commitment is one meeting per month with periodic email communication. This is a great opportunity to help set the agenda and share resources across Ward 9. For more information, please ask [Stephanie.Donaldson@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Stephanie.Donaldson@tdsb.on.ca).

**Call for Ward 9 Equity Committee Members:** At the January 31<sup>st</sup> Ward 9 Forum, parents suggested exploring the creation of a Ward 9 Equity Committee. If you are interested in joining the conversation to explore the creation, mandate and goals of this committee, please reach out to [Stephanie.Donaldson@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Stephanie.Donaldson@tdsb.on.ca) for information and next steps.

### **Coming up in Ward 9:**

Please hold these dates and spread the word in your communities

**March 21<sup>st</sup> Ward 7 +9 Budget Forum:** As part of the TDSB's development of the [2019-20 Budget](#) TDSB Trustees and staff are holding Ward level Budget Forums during the month of March. Please join me and Chair, Robin Pilkey (Ward 7) on March 21<sup>st</sup> at Fern Avenue Junior and Senior Public School for this important meeting. Associate Director Craig Snyder will present the Board's draft budget priorities in line with the multi-year strategic plan, which

will guide budget development. Bring your questions, share your ideas, and learn more about the TDSB's budget.

**PIAC Appreciation Dinner:** A friendly reminder for all School Council Chairs/Co-Chairs (or their designates) to register for the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) Appreciation and Information Dinner on Thursday, February 21 at the Montecassino Hotel and Convention Centre, 3710 Chesswood Dr - from 6pm-9pm (registration opens at 5:30). Please join us in celebrating the work and contribution of school councils/parents to the education system. Register at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/School-Councils>. I look forward to seeing you there.

**Parents as Partners Conference 2019:** This all-inclusive conference is organized by TDSB parents for TDSB parents, guardians and caregivers. Participate in workshops, network with parents and community agencies and learn new strategies to support your child's success. Registration opens mid-February. Register early as there is limited space in each workshop.

**When:** Saturday, March 30

**Where:** Beanfield Centre (formerly named Allstream Centre) 105 Princes' Blvd, Toronto

For more information, visit <https://www.parentsaspartners.ca/> .

## **TDSB News**

### **February is Kindergarten Registration Month!**

Registration for all TDSB Kindergarten programs begin in February. We look forward to welcoming you and your child at our school in September!

To attend Junior Kindergarten in September, children must turn four-years-old by December 31. To register for Senior Kindergarten, children must be five-years-old by December 31. You may choose to register in person at the school or begin the process online.

For more information about the Kindergarten program and registration requirements, please visit [www.tdsb.on.ca/kindergarten](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/kindergarten) .

## **2019-20 Budget**

Each year, TDSB Trustees and staff work together to pass a balanced budget

that best supports the achievement and well-being of all students. The TDSB's annual operating budget is approximately \$3.4 billion and we are committed to using these resources responsibly and effectively.

Key discussions regarding the annual budget are scheduled for our Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee (FBEC). Below you will find links to the proposed Committee Schedule, Timelines and Milestones. FBEC's budget meetings are open to the public and take place in the Toronto District School Board Boardroom. Please note that these budget discussions will be videotaped and posted to our public website for those who may not be able to attend meetings in person but wish to review those meetings.

Learn more about the TDSB's 2019-20 Operating Budget:

- [TDSB Priority Schools](#)
- [Three-Year Enrolment and Financial Projections](#)
- [Investments in Student Education](#)
- [2019-20 Proposed Dates for Trustee Ward Forum Presentation of Budget Principles/Drivers](#)

### **February is African Heritage Month at the TDSB**

February is African Heritage Month at the Toronto District School Board and we're proud to recognize the experiences, contributions and achievements of African Canadians. This year's theme is Out of many we are one: Across differences our commonalities uplift our African heritage, culture and people.

Throughout the month of February, we will highlight the many contributions that the African Canadian community has made by offering several educational opportunities to our students, staff and the TDSB community. These opportunities include students attending the Know Your Worth: Black Youth Empowerment Conference which is a joint collaboration with the TDSB and the Black Law Students' Association at York University; visiting the Royal Ontario Museum; learning about coding at Apple Stores and visiting the Ibada Market Place exhibit. Further, a parent session is being organized by the Parent and Community Engagement Office on How to Speak to Your Children About Racism. Learn more at [www.tdsb.on.ca](http://www.tdsb.on.ca).

Upcoming events:

**Feb 28:** Know Your Worth: Black Student Empowerment Conference

**February:** Royal Ontario Museum Elementary Day "Of Africa" Tours

**February-April:** STEM Coding at Apple Stores

**March 27:** Ibada Marketplace at Lawrence Heights MS

### **February is Chinese Heritage Month at the TDSB**

The Toronto District School Board is proud to recognize Chinese Heritage Month during the month of February and the theme this year is *“Year of the Pig: Happy, Easy Going, Honest, Trusting, Sincere, Optimistic & Sociable.”*

During this month, we celebrate the energetic culture and traditions of the Chinese community with students, staff and community members of the Toronto District School Board and the City of Toronto.

Chinese community is integral to the growth and success of the City of Toronto and Canada. Members of the Chinese community represent approximately 10 percent of the total GTA population and form its second largest visible minority group. Canadians remember and appreciate the Chinese workers who helped build the Canadian Pacific Railway that united our country.

Chinese-Canadians recognize Lunar New Year on Tuesday, February 5, 2019. 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!

### **Let’s Talk: Mental Health and Well-Being**

Dunlace PS has a Kindness Club. Newtonbrook SS has a Mental Health Committee. At Lambton-Kingsway JMS, staff connect about improving student engagement. At George B. Little PS, the youth wellness committee created a wellness mural to raise awareness about emotions and the right to express them.

These are just some of the ways schools are focusing on student mental health and well-being.

Good mental health and well-being are central to student success. It includes our emotions, our thoughts and feelings, our ability to solve problems and overcome difficulties, our social connections, and our understanding of the world around us. Students feel a greater sense of well-being when they are engaged and feel that they belong, feel safe and feel included.

Students need our collective support to be healthy individuals and, the

relationship that students have with each other and adults is an important part of that. Every student needs peers and a caring adult they can connect with, feel accepted by and talk to when dealing with life's challenges. And, research tells us that as students age, their emotional well-being declines.

Students' voices need to be at the centre of the discussion about how to improve their well-being. When students and parents become involved in this process they are more likely to develop a sense of agency, build positive relationships and connection with staff as they become active participants in their own schooling experiences.

TDSB staff are committed to providing welcoming, safe and inclusive learning environments where every student feels they belong. We are working hard to strengthen the adult-student connection and make meaningful decisions that support student achievement and well-being.

Read more about students' well-being through our [2017 Student and Parent Census](#).

Learn more about [mental health and well-being initiatives](#) in the TDSB.

### **Three TDSB Educators Recognized as Canada's Outstanding Principals for 2019**

Three Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Principals have been recognized by The Learning Partnership as being among [Canada's Outstanding Principals of 2019](#).

I am thrilled to share that one of Ward 9's own, Scott Woolford from the [Island Public/Natural Science School](#) is one of this year's recipients.

The winning TDSB Principals are:

- Harpreet Ghuman, [Crescent Town ES](#)
- Georgia Gallagher, [Ursula Franklin Academy](#)
- Scott Woolford, [Island Public/Natural Science School](#)

Now celebrating its 15th year, The Learning Partnership's [Outstanding Principals program](#) recognizes the unique and vital contribution of Principals in publicly funded schools. Nominated by parents, colleagues and community members, and chosen by a national selection committee, 30 Principals from across Canada are being celebrated for demonstrating innovation, having an entrepreneurial spirit and for employing creativity in finding solutions and opportunities.

The 2019 winners will join the ranks of the National Academy of Canada's Outstanding Principals, which now boasts over 400 members. Throughout the year, these outstanding principals will continue to act as champions of the program and will actively collaborate in developing and communicating about issues important to publicly funded education.

The Learning Partnership is a national charity dedicated to building stakeholder partnerships to support, promote and advance publicly funded education in Canada. The Principals will be awarded for their accomplishments at the annual Canada's Outstanding Principals gala on February 26, 2019.

### **Adult High Schools – 2019 Adult Census**

From **February 25-28, 2019**, students from the TDSB's five adult high schools will be able to make their voice heard through the 2019 Adult Student Census. The Census results will help inform adult education programming and planning across the TDSB and support the province in developing evidence-based policies for adult students. The TDSB's adult high schools support students in achieving their academic goals, applying to post-secondary education, and entering chosen career fields. [www.adultschoolstoronto.ca](http://www.adultschoolstoronto.ca)

### **Adult ESL**

Gaining proficiency in English is a critical skill for newcomers to our city, especially for many parents of children in our schools to connect with the community. Every year, over 18,000 adults benefit from the TDSB's English as a Second Language classes in 75 locations across the city. We offer free ESL classes to adults who are residents of Canada. We also offer classes for visitors on a fee per hour basis. Registration is ongoing. Visit [www.ESLToronto.ca](http://www.ESLToronto.ca) for more information.

### **Learn4Life**

Registration for the Spring 2019 term starts **February 13, 2019** with classes starting **March 30, 2019**. Learn4Life offers general interest courses to anyone over 18 who want to learn a new skill, meet new people in their community, or take up an interesting hobby. Interested in learning how to weld? How about learning Spanish for your upcoming trip? Our courses include Art, Fitness, Languages, Business, Handiwork, Food and Sports. Visit [www.learn4life.ca](http://www.learn4life.ca) for

more information.

### **Information Re: Weather-Related Cancellations/Closures**

We have received a number of questions from members of our school communities about how the TDSB makes the decision to cancel buses and/or close all schools and we wanted to provide some important information that will explain the process.

A number of factors are taken into consideration when deciding on the cancellation of school buses, programs and/or closure of schools. The decision to cancel buses is not typically made due to unsafe road conditions, but because we want to avoid having students wait for unusually long periods of time in inclement weather for a bus or remain on that bus for hours due to weather-related traffic delays.

It's also important to keep in mind that, unlike other schools boards across the Greater Toronto Area, a vast majority of TDSB students — more than 90 percent — do not use school buses. That means, if school buses are cancelled, it is still possible for students to get to school by walking, public transit or other means — although it may be slower than normal. We do understand, however, that for our congregated sites or where we bus all students to the school, the majority of students are affected. On Wednesday, February 6, school buses were cancelled, however approximately 170,000 students attended school despite the inclement weather.

Further, since different areas within the Greater Toronto Area have different weather patterns and geography, the decision made for one school board will differ from another. For example, recently the public and Catholic school boards in Toronto, York and Durham remained open, while other boards, including Peel, were closed.

As we hope you can appreciate, the decision concerning whether to keep schools open or closed has a major impact on the lives of many families in Toronto. Those families depend on us to provide educational opportunities for their children each and every day.

Should all schools be closed, it causes significant hardship for many families. For a number of them, there are no other options readily available for their children. The decision to keep schools open allows families who are able, to keep their children at home, but also provides another option for families, who are not able to do the same. As always, we emphasize that parents/guardians

make the final decision about whether to send their children to school. The TDSB supports whatever decisions parents/guardians make on days of severe weather. With regards to staff, we also understand that some may have difficulty in making into work or may experience delays. In those cases, we understand and encourage staff to speak with their Principal/Manager as there are Miscellaneous Days that may be able to be applied depending on circumstances.

### **Celebration Of Reclaiming The Name Of Wandering Spirit School**

At the Board meeting on February 6th, 2019, Trustees approved a motion reclaiming Wandering Spirit School (Kâpapâmahcahkwêw; Indigenous language to be confirmed) as the name of the school at 16 Phin Avenue (formerly known as First Nations School of Toronto). This decision recognizes the original name given to the school by its Indigenous founders, Elders Vern Harper and Pauline Shirt, and honours the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action (2015) as they relate to education and a path towards reconciliation.

We invite all Trustees to join us as we honour the founders and celebrate:

**Date:** Thursday, February 28, 2019

**Time:** 5:30 – 7:30 pm

**Location:** 16 Phin Avenue, Auditorium

Please see the [invitation](#) for details, and RSVP Bonnie Johnston at [bonnie.johnston@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:bonnie.johnston@tdsb.on.ca) or 416-393-9600.

### **Policy Consultations**

**From the TDSB [Website](#) - We Want to Hear From You** - The objective of consultation is to gather public input regarding options, alternative courses of action, as well as to identify unintended effects for various participants and to find solutions. We would like to know your thoughts about our policy decisions by inviting you to our policy consultations. Please click on the policy of your interest to see the current draft. You are welcome to provide your comments, including suggestions on the wording and provisions of the draft policies, questions or recommendations using the contact information below.

**Home Instruction Policy (P060)** - To establish the Board's commitment to providing home instruction services for all eligible pupils in accordance with the requirements of Ontario Regulation 298, Operation of Schools – General under the *Education Act*. **Closes February 22, 2019**

**Student Dress Code Policy (P042)** - To establish standards and fair and

equitable practices for student dress in schools; centered on student engagement and student voice. To recognize that students need the freedom to express themselves and experience school as an important social environment, not a professional work environment, and that dress plays a fundamental role in how students build healthy relationships and express themselves. Click for [Draft Policy](#) (save as word document) [Student Dress Code Policy Survey - Closes February 28, 2019](#)  
**Contact** [Kenneth.Jeffers@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Kenneth.Jeffers@tdsb.on.ca)

### **Public Education Advocacy/Provincial News:**

#### **TDSB pre-budget submission to Ontario's Standing Committee on**

**Finance and Economic Affairs:** On January 29<sup>th</sup> TDSB Chair Robin Pilkey appeared before the Ontario Legislature's Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and presented a submission as part of the pre-budget consultations. The Chair's remarks can be found at the following link:  
[https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/aboutus/docs/Pre-Budget-Consultation-Presentation\(2\).pdf](https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/aboutus/docs/Pre-Budget-Consultation-Presentation(2).pdf)

**Priority School Initiatives:** The Priority Schools Initiative (PSI) **used to be** a joint project between the TDSB and the Ministry of Education aimed at making 77 TDSB school spaces more accessible by providing not-for-profit organizations and community groups, free after-hours access to school facilities in communities that need it most.

Chair Pilkey wrote to all Toronto MPPs to express the Board's concerns for the reduction in provincial funding for the Community Use of Schools - Priority Schools Initiative EPO, as well as the cancellations and reductions of other grants that help our most at-risk communities and youth. The announced change was a reduction of the grant from \$2.6 million to \$1.6 million, a net change of \$1 million. Given the importance of this grant to the city's priority neighbourhoods, the Board recently voted to proceed with no cost permits for schools serving these communities without a subsidy from the province to fulfill our commitments for this year.

When the Community Use of Schools grant reduction of \$1 million is added to the list of grant cancellations and reductions that directly impact our students in priority neighbourhoods, the TDSB will experience a \$1.7 million cut in funding for programs, most of which would benefit our poorest and most disadvantaged communities and young people. In addition, the Ministry has

made no decision as to whether funding will continue for the **Summer Focus on Youth Program**. Last year, funding from this program allowed the TDSB to hire and train more than 600 youth to work alongside community partners – from all across the city – to help serve over 11,000 underserved young people. This program has documented evidence of helping children living in Toronto’s most marginalized communities, and has sought to respond to the high rates of youth violence and poverty, and lack of opportunities for youth.

### **Update: EDC Regulation and Legal Challenge**

Last year, TDSB Legal Services started legal proceedings challenging Section 10 of Ontario Reg. 20/98 under the *Education Act*. This provision prevents certain school boards such as the TDSB from collecting Education Development Charges (EDCs). EDCs are funds that school boards can charge on new developments. The TDSB does not qualify to collect EDCs because it has excess capacity when assessed on a district-wide basis, regardless of significant pressures and challenges faced in many neighborhood schools. For more information on EDCs and our legal challenge, please visit [TDSB’s EDC website](#).

The TDSB is now preparing its written argument and will amend its materials to address recent changes to the regulation which temporarily froze all school boards to their EDC status quo (i.e., boards that do not have EDCs cannot collect them, and boards that do have EDC by-laws remain at the current rate and scope). The freeze was put in place while the Province undertakes a detailed review of EDCs. The Council of Senior Business Officials (COSBO) of school boards in Ontario has set up a subcommittee to review EDC legislation and make recommendations to the Province. The TDSB Senior Planning Officer represents the TDSB on that subcommittee.

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