

# Trustee Update

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## COUNTING DOWN TO MARCH BREAK!

Wishing you a restful break full of family fun! Here's hoping that when school starts back on March 18th that spring will also decide to arrive and grace us with some warmth and sun. If you're looking for activities this March Break, here are some options:



<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/programs-and-classes/featured/march-break.jsp>

<https://www.seetorontonow.com/annual-events/march-break-in-toronto/#sm.00001r701iykb0fmjxls1gmdoqcm4>



## International Women's Day

I always look forward to celebrating International Women's Day 2019, and this year, I am thrilled to join the TDSB celebrations on March 6th as we work alongside all learners who identify as girls to expand existing learning opportunities, chart new pathways and take an inward look. This year's IWD theme is #BalanceforBetter as we continue to strive for a gender-balanced world. Olympic Medalist Shelley-Ann Brown will share her story of channeling her inner power. Students will participate in a variety of activities that will focus on their inner power by continuing to uncover their personal strengths and further mobilizing their innate agency. For more on International Women's Day 2019, including great resources for students, teachers and families, see <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>

Ward 9 News + Events:

**Ward 9 Steering Committee Members:** Thanks to everyone who has reached out to form our Ward 9 Steering Committee to help provide leadership and guidance to the Trustee, PIAC, FSLAC, and Ward 9 school councils. It's my great pleasure to introduce you to your Steering Committee – Darlene Giroux (Charles G Fraser PS), Nero Persaud (Waterfront School), Alexis Dawson (Rawlinson PS), Laura-Maria Nikolarizi (Island Public School), and D. Williams (PIAC and Dewson PS). If you haven't had a chance to get in touch with me but would still like to participate as a Steering Committee member, please let me know at [stephanie.donaldson@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:stephanie.donaldson@tdsb.on.ca).

**Ward 9 Equity Committee Members:** At the January 31st Ward 9 Forum, parents suggested exploring the creation of a Ward 9 Equity Committee and Alexis Dawson (Rawlinson PS) volunteered to Chair the first meeting. I have heard from a few interested parents who would like to join the conversation to explore the creation, mandate and goals of this committee. We will be in touch soon and report back in a future newsletter or ward meeting.

## Joint Ward Forum March 21st

At our upcoming Joint Ward Forum for Wards 9 and 7 (with Trustee and Chair, Robin Pilkey) we will present an overview of this year's TDSB budget process and each of our proposed Budget Drivers with Associate Director Craig Snider. We will also make available the 2019-20 Budget Public Discussion Guide and Community Survey for you to provide the Board of Trustees with your valued input.

Please note that the Ministry of Education does not traditionally provide the board with the amount of funding it will receive for its annual budget until late March or early April. As we can't develop the budget until we know the funding, the Ward Forum will discuss the principles behind the budget. The TDSB has a rich diversity of programs and services and the budget drivers help the Board guide investments to align with our Multi-Year Strategic Plan and set priorities in the event of provincial funding reductions which are anticipated. Our Multi-Year Strategic Plan has already made it clear that the status quo is not possible, in terms of funding everything that we currently do. Any funding reductions from the Ministry will make our budget decisions more challenging. Your input will really help the Board develop this direction and these "drivers", once approved, will provide this direction.

Information collected from the Ward Forums and the survey will be used in the final Strategic Driver document that will go to the Board for approval in April. As noted, these drivers will then be used by staff to create a draft Operating Budget when the funding is known, which will be presented to the Board in May. Once we have developed our "draft" Operating Budget, you will have another opportunity to provide additional comments by making a presentation to our Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee - Delegations Process – or you can submit your comments online to our General Inquiries email address at [GeneralInquiries@TDSB.on.ca](mailto:GeneralInquiries@TDSB.on.ca). After feedback has been received from the public, a final draft of the Operating Budget will be developed by staff and go to the Board for approval in June.

On the TDSB public website, you will find a webpage – 2019-20-Budget Webpage – dedicated to providing you with additional information including a number of financial documents including:

- Description of our Budget Process including a schedule of Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee meetings (these meetings are videotaped to ensure members of the public can review the committee's budget discussions)
- List of TDSB Priority Schools – schools where we provide additional funding and/or staffing to mitigate the impacts of poverty
- School-Based Staff Allocation
- Financial Facts
- Reports presented to the Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee

- TDSB Fixed vs Flexible Costs – our budget is made up of fixed costs and flexible costs. The fixed costs have restrictions placed on their use based on Ministry Regulations, contractual obligations with all staffing groups, or board policy and motions. The flexible costs are those that the Board has some discretion on how these costs are used. It is the flexible costs that will be impacted as the Board works through the budget process.

About 94% of the TDSB's funding comes from the Ministry of Education. The other 6% represents such things as visa students, bank interest, cafeteria sales, leasing revenue and permits.

*Please note that the TDSB has a \$3.9 billion backlog of school repairs. While making those repairs is a key priority for the TDSB, the repairs are part of our Capital Budget, not the Operating Budget. That is why the backlog does not appear in the Operating Budget Drivers.*



# Ward Forum

## 2019-20 Budget

Thursday March 21, 2019

7:00 to 9:00pm

Fern Avenue Junior and Senior Public School, 128 Fern Ave



2019-20 Budget presentation with Craig Snider, Associate Director, Business Operations and Service Excellence. Learn more about the TDSB budget process and share your priorities.



**Robin Pilkey**  
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**Stephanie Donaldson**  
Trustee, Ward 9,  
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Childcare will be provided. To request interpretation services please email [Maxeen.Paabo@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Maxeen.Paabo@tdsb.on.ca)

## Public Education Advocacy/Provincial News + Events:

### Update re School Board Staffing

Late Thursday, the Director received a Memo from the Deputy Minister of Education which stated... *I am writing to you today to recommend that school boards exercise prudence in making hiring*

*decisions in light of the upcoming Ontario Budget and the recent consultation on class size and hiring practices. The government will be carefully reviewing the feedback received in the coming weeks and will continue to engage boards and labour partners on any plans and next steps. School boards are advised to defer the annual processes of filling vacancies for retirements and other leaves related to teachers and other staff until the Minister of Education provides an update to the sector on or before March 15th...*

Our Chair Robin Pilkey was on [CBC radio](#) Friday morning and quoted in the Globe voicing concerns. The TDSB, and all School Boards across Ontario are anxiously awaiting more news from the province on March 15th.

## Provincial Changes to Autism Program Funding

On February 19th, joined [Davenport MPP and Education Critic for the Official Opposition, Marit Stiles](#) as we co-hosted an Emergency Town Hall on Autism Program Funding. We were grateful to be joined by MPP Monique Taylor, Children and Youth Critic for the Official Opposition and Lisa Kirby-McIntosh from the [Ontario Autism Coalition](#). We heard from parents, grandparents, therapists, educators and community members who are deeply concerned about the impacts these funding cuts will have on families with children with autism. My concern as a trustee is also the impact these changes will have on public schools in our province. I am pleased that the Ontario Public School Boards Association, through President Cathy Abraham, has written to the Ministry regarding the autism program and asking for more information for school boards.

*From OPSBA's letter of February 26, 2019 to Minister Lisa Thompson Minister of Education and Minister Lisa MacLeod Minister of Children, Community and Social Services -express our concerns about the planned changes to the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) and the potential impact of those changes on the supports that school boards will be able to provide for autistic students... There is concern regarding the impact of this transitional change for these children from a clinical service model to an integrated school setting, which does not provide this type of specialized service. For students, this type of change can be unsettling. Having sufficient numbers of qualified school staff to ensure safety and support for students is essential. Special education continues to be an area in which boards request more supports and resources given the complexities of student needs. Year after year, most school boards exceed their Ministry allocated special education budget in an effort to try to provide the best possible learning experiences for students, regardless of exceptionality. We continue to advocate for sufficient funding to meet the needs of all of our students.*

On March 4th, Principals and Vice-Principals across the province also joined together to write to Minister Lisa MacLeod to delay the program changes until schools can obtain more information and put plans in place to meet their obligations to serve students. For more on this please see [this article](#) in The Star, and [this article](#) in the Globe and Mail.

Needless to say we are all very troubled that children on the autism spectrum will not get the supports they deserve and anxious to understand what this means for our schools.



## Court Dismisses Charter Challenge to Sex-Ed Curriculum Change

On February 28, 2019, the Ontario Divisional Court dismissed the challenges brought by ETFO and other parties who alleged the recent changes to the sex-ed curriculum violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms' freedom of expression, right to life, liberty, and security, and equality rights. The Court determined that teachers had the freedom to teach the additional topics covered in the 2015 curriculum (e.g., consent, cyber bullying, sexual identity, etc.) as long as the 2010 curriculum learning objectives were met. The Court added that the legislative and Ministry policy context, and the curriculum itself, already required teachers to teach the curriculum in an inclusive, diverse, and non-discriminatory manner. A copy of the decision is available [online](#).

As reported in the papers, ETFO president Sam Hammond said in a statement that the court's decision was a "victory" for educators because the government made clear in the hearing that teachers could use their professional judgment in teaching the curriculum. "The government's explicit concession on this point in court makes this case a victory for ETFO and others. I have no doubt that such a concession would never have occurred without litigation," he said.

A [guideline](#) was prepared earlier this fall the TDSB to help alleviate confusion among parents over controversial changes to the sex-ed curriculum and make it clear that teachers can still address "critically important topics". At this point, we all wait for the release of the new curriculum that is to be ready for September 2019.

## TDSB News + Events:

### 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.

Safe Schools Policy (P051) - To ensure that all students feel that they belong, are heard, accepted, safe, supported and cared for through the creation of positive school climates that reflect themselves, value their voices and foster a culture of mutual respect and healthy relationships; and to enhance and maintain working and learning environments that embed principles of equity, anti-oppression, anti-racism, acceptance and inclusion in procedures, practices and programs that support the safety, dignity, health and well-being of all. [Draft Policy](#) Share your feedback using the survey here: [Survey Link](#) Closes March 4, 2019 Contact: [ted.libera@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:ted.libera@tdsb.on.ca)

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. [Draft Policy](#) Closes March 15, 2019 Contact [ron.felsen@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:ron.felsen@tdsb.on.ca)

## School Council – Learning Opportunities

The TDSB Parent and Community Engagement Office is hosting webinars to help parents/guardians learn more about how school councils work, bylaws, and effectiveness. Click on the links below at the specific times to join in.

- Tuesday, March 26, 2019, 7:00 p.m.: [School Council Bylaws](#) To be an effective School Council, you need a firm foundation. This webinar will take participants through the writing School Council Bylaws.
- Wednesday, April 10, 2019, 7:00 p.m.: [School Council Effectiveness](#) This webinar examines how communication, committees and volunteers will connect with your community and will ease your workload.

For more information on School Councils, I recommend a visit to the [Parent Involvement Advisory Committee's](#) website for incredible resources that are so helpful and easy to use.

## Parents as Partners Conference

Parents as Partners Conference 2019 – March 30, 2019 You're invited to our annual [Parents as Partners Conference](#)! The Parents as Partners Conference 2019 is on Saturday, March 30 and all parents are welcome. This free conference – planned by parents, for parents – includes a variety of workshops and resources that will help any parent support their child in their achievement and well-being at school and at home. This year's keynote speaker is Karl Subban, a former TDSB principal and the father of five children, including three NHL hockey players. Transportation, food and translators are all provided, as well as free day camp for children ages 4-12 to support participants attending the conference. Registration is open. Please click here <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/parents-as-partners-conference-2019-tickets-50703596823>.

To see the workshops, please click here <https://www.parentsaspartners.ca/Workshops>

Students can enroll in the Extended Day Program at the school where they are registered as a pupil. Registration for the EDP is completed through a [secure online registration system \(e-Reg\)](#). Families will enter required information about their child, as well as contact information for parents/guardians. A one-time non-refundable registration fee of \$50 will be required at the time of registration (\$75 for 2 children or \$100 for 3 or more children). This fee may be waived for families receiving child care fee subsidies. Interested in Before and After School Programming?

Registration for the 2019-20 school year is now open.

For more information, please visit the [tdsb webpage](#).



## March is Greek Heritage Month at the TDSB

March is Greek Heritage Month at the TDSB. This year's theme is "Wisdom, Hope, Love" – "Sofia, Elpida, Agape."

Parents, students, educators, and community members are invited to come to celebrate with us! Join us on Saturday, March 2 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Greek Community of Toronto, 30 Thorncliffe Park Drive for the Opening Celebration.

And on Saturday, March 30 from 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for the Closing Event at East York CI, 650 Cosburn Avenue.

Both of these events will feature music, dance, art, food, cultural displays and special presentations from TDSB elementary and secondary student and community members.

## TDSB Earth Hour 2019

On Friday, March 29, schools across the TDSB are recognizing Earth Hour from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. Schools are asked to reduce their electricity usage for one hour.

During Earth Hour, our school will be using as little electricity as possible in the office, halls, classrooms, library, gym, cafeteria. Where possible, schools will also be reducing their electricity usage over the weekend.

More information is available on the EcoSchools [website](#).

## Into Orbit

Four TDSB schools are preparing to go "into orbit" at FIRST Robotics Canada's [Ontario Innovation Celebration \(OIC\)](#). [Glen Ames PS](#), [Clinton Street PS](#), and [Armour Heights PS](#) all qualified for the OIC by virtue of their strong performances at the FIRST LEGO League Provincial Championships held in Oshawa in January, while [Bessborough PS](#) earned a spot from a previous qualifier tournament..

"[Into Orbit](#)" is the theme for this year's FIRST competitions, in which teams are tasked with identifying and solving a problem related to space exploration. Four of the eighteen squads participating at the OIC will have an opportunity to apply to represent Ontario at the [Global](#)

Innovation Award in San Jose, California this summer, and a chance to win \$20,000 to support development of their project.

The team from Glen Ames PS, dubbed the Guardians of the Galaxsee, have already qualified for another international competition after taking the Second Place Champions Award in Oshawa. The team will participate at the US Open Championship in Carlsbad, California in May. It will be third consecutive year, and the fifth time overall, that the Beach-area school will be representing Canada on the world stage. "I was blown away when I realized that," said proud Glen Ames teacher and coach Luke Martin.

The Guardians' project this year focuses on creating an autonomous robot to capture key moments from home and then send these memories to space for an astronaut to enjoy in Virtual Reality. "This would help with the mental wellness of astronauts," explained Martin, adding that the idea is already being explored for other fields such as the military. Canadian astronaut Robert Thirsk called the project innovative. He said that the "Home Away From Home solution including 360 videos recorded by family members will certainly help the deep space astronauts feel more connected with loved ones."

Sixteen TDSB robotics teams competed at the Ontario East Provincial Championship in Oshawa. In addition to the Second Place Champions Award for Glen Ames, the Clinton Street PS Cyber Cougars and the Runnymede PS Cyberbolts won the Research Award and Teamwork Award, respectively.

For the teams advancing to the OIC, the season has already been a huge success, no matter what happens next. "Each year you start over with a new group of talented students who all have skills individually," said Martin. "Watching them grow as a team is the most amazing aspect of the FIRST experience."

That process has been a life-changing one for the students on the Clinton Street Cyber Cougars team, according to coaches Stephanie Guay, Ashley Weger, and Angel Wu. "Through our ups and downs, our successes and challenges, we have seen our kids grow so much in such a short time. The degree to which they reflect on their strengths, areas to improve and ways to share their experiences with others is nothing short of amazing."

For coach Paul Offor from Armour Heights PS, robotics brings together "math, science, technology, art, language, history, geography, the future and the past." It gives students on the Armourites robotics team an opportunity to turn into leaders, said Offor. "The passions run so deep, that former team members are present mentors and volunteers."

The Rubik's Cube is the most popular puzzle on the World. Learn [how to solve it](#) with the easiest method.



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