

Week of December 8, 2013

Items of Interest from Trustee Shelley Laskin, Ward 11

Website click on [Trustee Shelley Laskin](#)

www.tdsb.on.ca/laskin

Twitter [@shelleylaskin](#)

Ward Forum – December 12 @Hodgson Sr, PS 7-9pm

Are you interested in making your school website more dynamic? Would you like to learn how to embed a twitter feed or show your school spirit through adding more pictures to your website? Do you have questions about how school councils can help improve the web and social media presence for your school? On December 12, the TDSB's Executive Communications Officer and Web Manager will be at the ward forum to answer your questions and show you the exciting new changes that have been made to TDSB's web and social media platforms. Topics to be covered will include website templates, training and support, working with your school administration, external links, regulations and rules governing school sites, and social media. **We'll also take an opportunity to celebrate! Hope to see you there.**

Nelson Mandela

An inspiring and joyous celebration of the life of Nelson Mandela took place on Friday morning at TDSB Nelson Mandela Public School. Newly elected Vice-Chair Mari Rutka brought greetings from Chair Chris Bolton and from the ward's trustee, Sheila Ward and thanked Principal Kandankery, Vice Principal Morgan and the staff students and community of the school for so swiftly and beautifully bringing everyone together in tribute to such a great world leader. Director Donna Quan spoke to the students about the message of hope and kindness and Nelson Mandela's assertion that education is (and it is) a force for change the world. Mari told us that this was the message of all speakers and could be heard as well in the music of the drums and voices as well as the words of Mr. Mandela himself in a video made on the occasion 12 years ago when he visited the school. I had the privilege of meeting Mr Mandela on his visit in 1998... I will never forget it. Below is the system message from the Director and Chair.

Statement on the passing of Nelson Mandela

Thursday, December 05, 2013

It is with a profound sense of loss that we in the Toronto District School Board mourn the passing of former South African President Nelson Mandela — a tireless champion for the rights of the people of South Africa and a remarkable man who was an inspiration to millions of people in Canada and around the world.

Nelson Mandela had a special relationship with the children of Toronto and with the Toronto District School Board. On his first visit to Canada, in June 1990, Nelson Mandela addressed a large gathering of high school students from across Toronto at Central Technical School.

Eight years later, more than 45,000 students and their teachers filled the SkyDome as President Mandela told the emotional story of his life and of the struggle of the people of South Africa to achieve freedom and justice in their lives.

During his last visit to Canada, in November 2001, the Toronto District School Board was honoured to have President Mandela on hand for the official renaming of one of our schools as Nelson Mandela Park Public School, which will forever represent his strength and character.

On behalf of the Trustees, staff and students of the Toronto District School Board, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the family of Nelson Mandela and to the people of South Africa on this sad occasion. We will miss the unforgettable moments of inspiration when he was among us.

Organizational Committee, December 2, 2013

As I mentioned, Chris Bolton, trustee for Trinity-Spadina (Ward 10) was re-elected as the chair of the board, and Mari Rutka, trustee for Willowdale (Ward 12) was elected Vice Chair. Five trustees were chosen to sit on each of our four standing committees and trustees were appointed as well to a variety of other work groups, and Committees as well as representing the Board at outside organizations.

I am proud to be a member of the following:

- Program and School Services Committee
- Audit Committee
- Code of Conduct Workgroup
- Governance Review Workgroup
- Code of Conduct and Ethics Committee
- House Committee
- Director Performance Appraisal Measures Workgroup
- Director representing TDSB on the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)

We have a Board meeting on Wednesday where we will be discussing, among other things:

- Governance Review
- Review of Toronto Lands Corporation Shareholder's Direction (Trustees Goodman and Gough)
- Impact of Proposed Cuts to the Canada Job Grant (Trustees Tonks and Bolton)

Kindness and Caring at the TDSB (from the TDSB Website)

Incredible acts of kindness happen across the TDSB in our schools and communities every day. Kindness and caring are at the centre of everything we do and are the foundation for positive relationships between staff, students, parents and the community. Schools across the board recognize kindness and caring in many ways, including assemblies, special events, fundraisers and many other initiatives.

What is kindness and caring?

- Showing understanding and treating others with compassion, generosity, and a forgiving spirit
- Being gentle, friendly, considerate, and willing to help
- Showing concern or sympathy for others and being sensitive to the needs of others
- Offering support and giving your time, talents, and resources to help others
- Talking positively about others
- Considering the needs of others, not just your own

What does kindness/caring look like and sound like?

- Doing something nice for somebody—a random act of kindness
- Smiling at those you know and those you don't know
- Saying "Good Morning"
- Reminding someone how special he or she is
- Volunteering time to help others in need or donating to a charity
- Asking "*How can I help?*" or "*How are you?*"

What can families do at home?

Parents, guardians, caregivers and family members are the first and most important character educators of children. Working together with the school and community, we can guide our children towards common beliefs. When families reinforce kindness and caring at home, it becomes a way of life for children.

Tips for Supporting Character Development and Reinforcing Kindness and Caring

- Use kind and caring language at home with family members and friends
- Model and teach respectful manners

- Listen to your children and be clear about your ideals
- As a family, take part in community service projects or civic activities
- Establish family traditions and enjoy family celebrations together
- Identify and talk to your children when you witness a random act of kindness
- Teach your children to be responsible and discerning with their choices in media, entertainment and online interactions
- Teach your children how to resolve conflict in a respectful and caring way
- Encourage kindness, caring and empathy by asking: "*How would you feel if...?*"

For more information click on: [Kindness and Caring in the TDSB – Parent/Guardian Resources](#)

2013-14 Premier's Awards for Accepting Schools

The Premier's Awards for Accepting Schools recognize exceptional and innovative work being done in schools to create a safe and accepting school environment. The Premier's Awards for Accepting Schools recognize those teams across the province that have done exceptional and innovative work in creating a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment. Learn more about the [characteristics](#) of a positive school climate. **Nominations are now open!** [Nomination Form](#) Deadline: February 21, 2014, 5 pm EST

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- **“Social Media Fitness”, Lawrence Park Collegiate Auditorium, Mon, Dec 9 at 7pm**
- **“Identify Theft and Internet Safety”, Forest Hill Collegiate, Tue, Dec 10 at 7pm**

Tentative Dates for Future Ward Forums – Please Mark Your Calendars

- **February 13**
- **April 24**
- **June 10**

The Trustees meet as a Board on a regular basis and also participate on [organized standing committees](#).

Click on [Meeting Schedule](#) for a listing of public meetings.