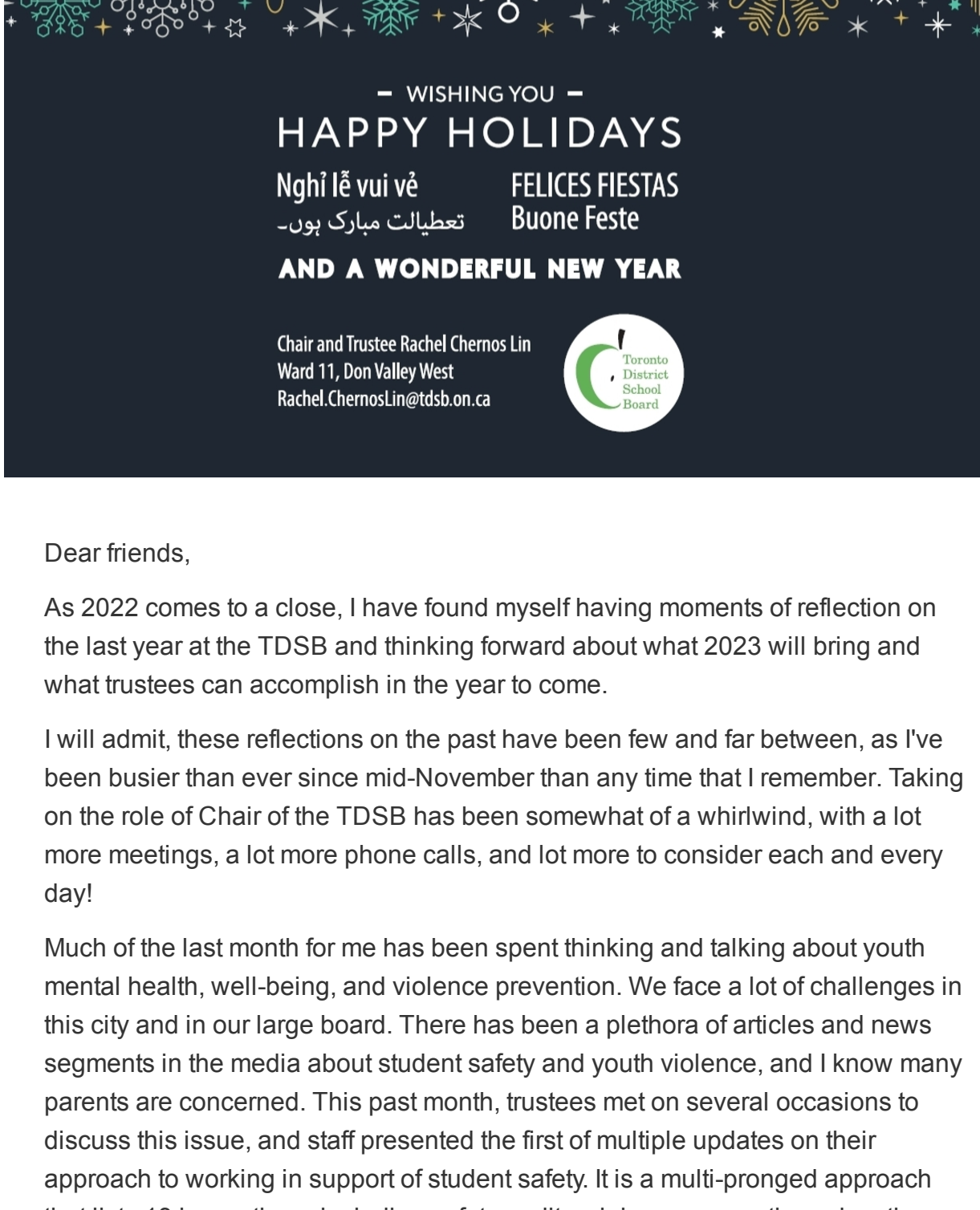


Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin

Ward 11 - Don Valley West
Toronto District School Board
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Dear friends,

As 2022 comes to a close, I have found myself having moments of reflection on the last year at the TDSB and thinking forward about what 2023 will bring and what trustees can accomplish in the year to come.

I will admit, these reflections on the past have been few and far between, as I've been busier than ever since mid-November than any time that I remember. Taking on the role of Chair of the TDSB has been somewhat of a whirlwind, with a lot more meetings, a lot more phone calls, and lot more to consider each and every day!

Much of the last month for me has been spent thinking and talking about youth mental health, well-being, and violence prevention. We face a lot of challenges in this city and in our large board. There has been a plethora of articles and news segments in the media about student safety and youth violence, and I know many parents are concerned. This past month, trustees met on several occasions to discuss this issue, and staff presented the first of multiple updates on their approach to working in support of student safety. It is a multi-pronged approach that lists 13 key actions, including safety audits, violence prevention education, and enhanced school supports such as additional child and youth workers, particularly in priority neighbourhoods. You can read about it and listen to two presentations, including one by SafeTO, by clicking [here](#). The Board also adopted a [motion](#) to issue an urgent request to the government about reinstating Priority Schools Initiative (PSI) funding - a valuable and needed opportunity for investing in youth engagement and well-being.

A key ingredient to the success of this approach is partnership with outside agencies and other levels of government. To that end, over the last few weeks, the TDSB's Director of Education and I have begun a series of meetings with the Mayor, Toronto Police Services, and the city manager of SafeTO. By putting our heads together and leveraging all of our assets, we are committing to building bridges and programming that will better support our youth. And, to date, these meetings with the Mayor, TPS and city staff at SafeTO have been productive, and many items are actively being developed. Below is the joint statement the Mayor and I released after our most recent meeting on Tuesday:

Joint Statement from Mayor John Tory and Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Chair Rachel Chernos Lin, following today's meeting with Mayor Tony, Chair Rachel Chernos Lin, TDSB Director of Education Colleen Russell-Rawlins, representatives from the Office of the Chief of Police, and senior City staff:

Today, we continued critical discussions around improving safety in our schools and communities and how the City of Toronto, Toronto District School Board and Toronto Police can work together to take concrete steps towards that goal. These meetings have been extremely constructive, focused as they are on actual visible steps we can take together to make our schools safer.

We are in active discussions on everything from summer jobs for young people, to connecting parents through community leaders with greater support, to crime prevention initiatives in neighbourhoods most in need, to greater sharing of data between the City and TDSB. We are also making progress in identifying strategies to prevent and intervene early through youth programming in priority areas.

We are confident students, teachers, and parents will see meaningful results in the coming weeks and months.

In addition, last week I also met with the Minister of Education to discuss this issue (and a few more items!), and he too expressed concern and committed to working with us and all Boards experiencing these challenges we are seeing across the province. I look forward to future conversations with the Minister, and am hopeful we will see concrete actions from the Province on this issue.

It should be noted that the Board of Trustees reached out to all levels of government in March of last year, and received no significant response. That said, I do feel our municipal and provincial partners are now coming to the table with strong commitment. The issue of rising violence is truly something we here at the TDSB cannot solve on our own -- we need the support of community agencies and all levels of government -- and the steps taken this past month give me confidence that in early 2023 we will start to see concrete actions being taken by all levels of government in the form of funding commitments and program initialization. I will endeavour to keep you all updated as this work unfolds.

On a more upbeat note, this past month has been unlike the last couple of Decembers in our schools. Holiday concerts and events are back! These meaningful events have unfolded with joy, and it has been wonderful to see communities gathering once again in our buildings (too many to mention!), on our fields (Bedford Park!), and even in the community. One of our schools -- Maurice Cody -- took their show on the road to the local Starbucks where they were joined by Don Valley West's MPP, Stephanie Bowman! And this afternoon I am looking forward to joining York Mills High School students at the Thorncliffe TNO Food Bank as they donate the proceeds of their student-led food drive. As we all get ready to say goodbye to 2022, it fills my heart to know all of our schools in Don Valley West have found fun, joyful and thoughtful ways to end the year, wrapping themselves in their school communities and thinking about how to make this time of year better for all.

As I say goodbye to 2023, I want to take a moment to say thank you to all of our staff. It is their commitment to our students that truly makes a difference. It has not been an easy past couple of years, but their hard work, adaptability and care for our students and each other has truly made an impact in our schools. By working in partnership with our families, our staff ensure our schools make our communities stronger, supporting students in reaching their goals and having strong successful outcomes, and it is important to acknowledge and thank everyone for their part as it really does take a village!

In closing, I look forward to seeing you all in 2023, whether it is on a school visit, event, or one of my community coffees! Below you will find information on upcoming coffees, dates to remember and much more. And with that, I wish all Don Valley West school communities, staff, families, and students happy holidays -- may you have a relaxing, safe and fun-filled break! And as always, feel free to reach out to me by email at Rachel.Chernoslin@tdsb.on.ca.

Warm regards,

Rachel

Rachel Chernos Lin
Chair and TDSB Trustee, Ward 11, Don Valley West
Rachel.Chernoslin@tdsb.on.ca

Coffee Mornings: January 25 & more

Looking ahead at the new year, I am happy to announce the dates for further Coffee Mornings this school year.

As we alternate between in-person and virtual meetings, the first next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 25, 9:30 - 11:00 am, virtually!

Please click for the [Flyer](#) and [Registration](#).

Future dates:

- March 8 (in person)
- April 26 (virtual Zoom meeting)
- June 14 (in person)

Meeting notes on upcoming Coffee Meetings will be available on the ward website www.tdsb.on.ca/ward11



Index

- [Inclement Weather](#)
- [Middle French Immersion](#) (starting grade 4): information & application (Jan.9-Feb.3)
- [FSLCAC December Newsletter](#)
- [TDSB System-wide Virtual Tutoring Support for Students](#)
- [Elementary Alternative Schools - New Online Application Process & Form](#)
- [Mental Health and Well Being](#)
- [Save the Date: EnVision Conference](#)
- [Tamil Heritage Month at the TDSB - January 2023](#)
- [2022-2023 School Year Calendar](#)
- [Stay Connected](#)

Worth repeating

- [Support for Families - by Community Support Workers.](#)
- [Preparing for High School - Information](#)
- [TDSB Winter Outerwear Drive](#): Donations very much needed

Inclement Weather

Winter is here! With our cold Canadian winter comes snow, ice, and severe weather. It is occasionally necessary to cancel student transportation, classes and/or programs. Occasionally, severe weather forces the closure of our schools and administrative offices.

Visit the website to learn more about
- [Snow/Cold Weather](#) and
- the [Procedure for Severe Weather](#)

Middle French Immersion Application Process

The online point to the Middle French Immersion program for September 2023 is Grade 4. The entry application process for Middle French Immersion will take place between **January 9 and February 3, 2023**. An offer of placement in the program (not a specific school) is guaranteed to all on-time applicants.

Families with an older sibling currently enrolled in a French program and who will be in attendance next year are still required to complete an online application for the new student. Please select the "sibling option" within the online application

Visit the TDSB website for more information about
- [Middle French Immersion](#).
- [Virtual & In-Person Information Sessions](#), and/or
- [the Application Process](#).

[check out a summarizing presentation](#).

FSLCAC newsletter

Speaking of French Programming: check out the December news from the FSLCAC: the French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee: [here](#).

TDSB System-wide Virtual Tutoring Support for Students

The TDSB is continuing to support students with unfinished learning. Through the Ministry's funding for Tutoring programs, we are pleased to announce that TDSB students will now have free, unlimited online tutoring available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We are working with Paper and Brainfuse, who will be providing online Tutoring services. All tutoring services are voluntary. There is no obligation for any student to participate in tutoring.

Information about Tutoring @ the TDSB will be available on the www.tdsb.on.ca website .
More information about What's New and Online Tutoring opportunities is available in this [Parents/Caregivers/Guardians & Students Tutoring Fact Sheet](#).

Community-based agencies

Tutoring at the school level continues, and our partnerships with community-based agencies have expanded. Parents/Guardians/Caregivers can contact these organizations directly for tutoring.

- [Arab Community Centre](#)
- [BridgeTO Youth](#)
- [BGC East Scarborough](#)
- [Parents Engaged in Education](#)
- [Rexdale Community Health Centre](#)
- [TAIRU](#)
- [TROPICANA](#)
- [Trust 15](#)
- [YAAACE](#)

If you are aware of community-based organizations that may already have tutoring or wish to provide tutoring services to TDSB students, please contact [Diana Panagiotopoulos](mailto:Diana.Panagiotopoulos@tdsb.on.ca), System Superintendent, Virtual Learning and Re-Engagement, who will reach out to the organizations.

Elementary Alternative Schools - New Online Application Process & Form

On October 26, 2022, the Board approved revisions to the Elementary Schools Policy. As part of the TDSB's commitment to ensure equitable access, admissions, and opportunities for all students and to support implementation of the Board decision regarding elementary alternative schools (May 26, 2021) and the revised [Alternative Schools Policy \(P062\)](#), the TDSB has developed a new centralized application process and online application form for elementary alternative schools. The accompanying procedure to the policy will be shared with the Board in the spring 2023

The centralized application process and online application form will be in place for students and families to request admission for September 2023. Families will be able to access information related to [elementary alternative schools](#) on the TDSB website in the coming weeks and the application period will open starting January 16, 2023.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The TDSB's Professional Support Staff (PSS) are here to help with anything you need to support your mental health and well-being and to help you navigate the tools and resources you may need. During these times it is especially important.

[Click for more information](#).

Winter Well-Being Guide

The [Winter Well-being Guide for 2022/23](#) is created by the Mental Health and Well-Being Committee with System Leader for Mental Health and PSS, Shameen Sandhu. The guide has been updated to provide ongoing resources and ideas for Families/Guardians to promote mental and physical wellness during the winter months. Resources are culturally relevant and responsive with resources for students with Complex Needs.

[The Guide is translated into the top 21 TDSB languages spoken.](#)

Kids Help Phone is available 24/7 for ages 5-29 for anonymous care from professional counsellors. Call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868.

Save the Date: EnVision Conference

The annual EnVision Conference (in-person) will be from Tuesday, February 28 to Wednesday, March 1. The focus of this year's conference is 2SLGBTQIAP+ Indigenous, Black and Racialized Joy, Intersections, and Futurity. All 2SLGBTQIAP+ elementary and secondary students, as well as their allies/co-conspirators are invited come together in collective care to address biphobia, homophobia and transphobia. There will be keynote speakers, workshops on a continuum for those beginning their journey in allyship and those who would like more support in student action. The entire conference will be an opportunity for students to share the multiple ways gender and sexual diversity can be celebrated within the Toronto District School Board.

Tamil Heritage Month at the TDSB - January 2023

Tamil Heritage Month is proudly recognized during the month of January at the Toronto District School Board since January 2016. It has also been marked across the province of Ontario since March 2004 with the implementation of the [Tamil Heritage Month Act, 2014](#), as well as nationally since January 2016.

This year our theme for Tamil Heritage Month is: Community. Belonging. Joy
- சமூகம் சேர்ச்சி சந்தோஷம்
Belonging comes with a sense of acceptance and inclusion for who you are, and there is great joy that comes from knowing you belong within any given community. This year's Tamil Heritage Month theme was selected to highlight that joy and belonging and is intentionally aligned with one of the TDSB's priorities - Joy, Engagement and Belonging.

Toronto has the largest Tamil population outside of the South Asian subcontinent with thousands of TDSB students and staff members who identify as Tamil. The importance of building awareness, creating a strong self and collective identities, and understanding one's own roots and rights are important objectives of the Tamil Heritage Month volunteer planning committee. To mark Tamil Heritage Month at the Toronto District School Board in January, various educational opportunities will be offered to students to learn about the history, culture, and traditions.

For further information about Tamil Heritage Month, please follow [@TDSB_Tamil](#) on Twitter to learn interesting facts on Tamil customs and traditions.

2022-2023 School Year Calendar

Mark your calendars! Upcoming Professional Activity and Professional Development days are January 13 (elementary only), February 2 (high schools only) and then February 17 (both elementary and high schools).

There are no classes for students on the dates listed above (also check out the [Days of Significance Calendar](#) and the key school calendar dates listed below).

KEY DATES - SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR 2022-2023

The official school year calendar for the Toronto District School Board runs from September 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, inclusive.

Professional Activity Days	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	June
Elementary Schools	6	7	18	2	13	17,	2
Secondary Schools						2, 17	29, 30

Designation of Professional Activity Days	
Elementary	Secondary
1. September 6, 2022 – Professional Development	1. September 6, 2022 – Professional Development
2. October 7, 2022 – Professional Development	2. October 7, 2022 – Professional Development
3. November 18, 2022 – Parent Teacher Conferences	3. November 18, 2022 – Professional Development
4. December 2, 2022 – Professional Development	4. February 2, 2023 – Professional Development
5. January 13, 2023 – Assessment and Reporting	5. February 17, 2023 – Professional Development
6. February 17, 2023 – Parent Teacher Conferences	6. June 29, 2023 – Professional Development
7. June 2, 2023 – Assessment and Reporting	7. June 30, 2023 – Professional Development

EQAO: --The following dates have been established:
Gr. 9 Math: TBD
Gr. 9 Math: TBD
OSSLT: TBD
Primary/Junior EQAO: TBD

Dates to Remember - School Year Holidays (as per Ministry of Education)	
Labour Day:	September 5, 2022
Thanksgiving:	October 10, 2022
Winter Break:	December 26, 2022 – January 6, 2023
Family Day:	February 20, 2023
Mid-Winter Break:	March 13 - 17, 2023
Good Friday:	April 7, 2023
Easter Monday:	April 10, 2023
Victoria Day:	May 22, 2023

Stay Connected with your School

The TDSB is offering two new ways to stay connected with your school and the TDSB. Learn about opting in for text messages and using the School Messenger app, which provides a faster and easier way to report absences. [Learn more](#).

TDSB Update

Sign-up for [TDSB Update](#) and stay informed about recent Board decisions and district-wide news.

Upcoming Meetings

The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 1, 2023. For a list of upcoming meetings, please click on the [calendar](#) on the main webpage of www.tdsb.on.ca.

Follow the TDSB

Join the conversations happening on TDSB's social media communities. You'll find the most up-to-date information about us on our Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts.

[Twitter @TDSB](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram @TorontoDsb](#)

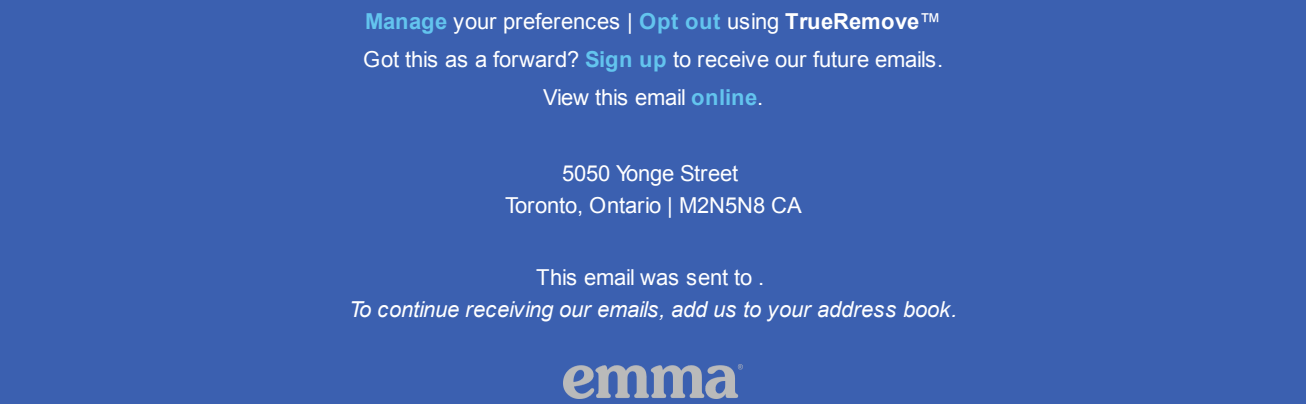
As always, feel free to reach out to me with any questions, comments or concerns!
~Rachel

Rachel Chernos Lin, Chair, Toronto District School Board and Ward 11 Trustee,
Don Valley West

Rachel.Chernoslin@tdsb.on.ca

If you notice anything at a school that concerns you, please call the TDSB 24-hour Call Centre (416) 395-4620, 311 Toronto, and/or Toronto Police Services Dispatch (non-emergencies via 416-808-2222).

If you or a family member is in crisis, please contact Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or get support right now by texting CONNECT to 686868.



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