

Bessborough E & MS Newsletter



Bessborough Elementary & Middle School

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LN5 Superintendent:
Andrew Howard

Ward 11 Trustee:
Rachel Chernos Lin

Principal:
Dima Nijmeh-Mantia
Vice Principal:
Frances Themeliopoulos

Office Administrator:
Renee Cronier
Secretary: Toyin Bere

Upcoming Events:

- Dec. 10-18 – Hannukah
- Dec. 25 – Christmas
- Dec. 21, 2020 – Jan. 1, 2021
– Winter Break
- January 7 – Eastern
Orthodox Christmas
- January 11, 12 – IPRC
Meetings
- January 15 – P.A. Day



Health & Safety

Toronto Public Health Holiday Guidance is available [HERE](#).

When we return to school, please continue to refer to the **updated** Toronto Public Health COVID-19 [Student Screening Tool](#) that took effect on Monday December 4th.

TPH School Information is available [HERE](#) with [WHO IS A CLOSE CONTACT AT SCHOOL?](#)

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

To all families celebrating on December 25th, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a joy-filled celebration.

To our entire Bessborough community, we wish you a Happy New Year! May 2021 dawn bright and full of possibilities.



Holiday Cheer

We would like to thank all students and our Bessborough staff for their good cheer, creative flair and teamwork! It has been an incredibly busy last couple of weeks leading up to winter break and yet everyone jumped on board to participate in the Door Decorating Contest and Spirit Week fun! Way to go, Bessborough!

Let's carry this positive energy into the new year when we will be together again. We will remember these past couple of weeks fondly when we look back on the 2020-2021 school year.

First, Second and Third Place winners of the Door Decorating Contest in each category are:

Category #1: Most Eco Friendly

1st – Grades 4/5 (Mr. Day)

2nd – Kindergarten (Ms. Vatsraj, Ms. Miller)

3rd – Grades 4/5 (Ms. Jain)

Category #2: Funniest

1st – Grades 5-8 (Mr. Tzavaras, Ms. Nia, Ms. Paraskevopoulos)

2nd – Grade 8 (Mr. Casey)

3rd – Grade 1 (Ms. Leishman)

Category #3: Theme

1st – Grade 8 (Ms. Ciobanu)

2nd – Grades 6/7 (Mr. Ivan)

3rd – Kindergarten (Ms. Willoughby, Ms. Klasnja)

Thank you once again to Ms. Buksner and Ms. Backus for organizing the Door Decorating Contest. We join Ms. Chow in congratulating her students for their work organizing and advertising Spirit Week. Please check for photos on the School Council Instagram account this weekend!

Bessborough in the News

We were so pleased to see our Grade 7 students and Ms. Standing on CTV News on Tuesday December 15, sharing their good news story about writing to residents at an assisted living facility in Orleans, Ontario. We are all proud of the students for participating in the letter writing campaign, and we are sure the news coverage must also have been a proud moment for families. You can view the story at 22:24 via this [LINK](#).

“The COVID-19 pandemic is forcing everyone to make sacrifices. For students learning online, to elders not seeing loved ones. But a Toronto schoolteacher is using an unfortunate situation to bring the two groups together, using a nostalgic way of keeping in touch. The Grade 7 class at Bessborough Elementary and Middle School is learning in self-isolation after one of their classmates tested positive for COVID-19. With spirits down, their teacher saw pictures posted by an assisted living facility in Orleans, Ontario asking for pen pals for residents who aren't able to see their loved ones due to the pandemic.”

Covenant House Gift Cards Delivered!



We extend our sincere thanks to all families who supported our Low Denomination Gift Card Collection drive for Covenant House Toronto. Many young people at Covenant House will receive 'Gift Card Packages' for Christmas as a result of your kindness and generosity. Thank you to Ms. Cronier and Ms. Backus for delivering the cards in person on Thursday December 17.

Thank you for Charlotte Fleming and our Bessborough School Council for helping to promote school events on Instagram [@bessboroughschoolcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/bessboroughschoolcouncil)

Availability of Free Menstruation Products

Hi parents and families! My name is Bani, I'm in Grade 5 and I have recently developed an interest in supporting girls who are going through the process of menstruation. Menstruation can be scary and awkward for a lot of girls.

With Ms. Mantia's, Ms. Jain's and Ms. Themeliopoulos' cooperation, soon there will be an anonymous survey for girls, grade 5 and up, to inform us on the best ideas to improve access to menstrual products in school and to make the idea of menstruation more comfortable.

Ms. Themeliopoulos and I will also host a virtual meeting for any girls who have suggestions on how they can help the process. We will announce the date of the virtual meeting when we return to school after the winter break. Please share this with your daughter(s). Thanks, Bani.

Interesting Facts About Periods

- In Canada, menstruation typically begins between the ages of 11 and 14.
- Studies have found that women feel that their period prevents them from fully participating in social activities and up to 70% say they have missed school or work because of their period.
- Menstruation is sometimes considered a taboo topic.
- There can be health consequences for women who use the same tampon for a long time. For example, toxic shock syndrome or infections.

D'sa, Vanora "Period Poverty in Canada and Around the Globe" (June 2019)

Leaside Toy Drive, Virtual Comedy Night – A Resounding Success

The appreciation below was shared by the Leaside Toy Drive organizers:

We are thrilled to announce that we far exceeded our target, raising over **\$36,000**, which is absolutely **ASTONISHING!** We are humbled by the incredible generosity of our Leaside, Davisville Village & Bennington Heights Community, as well as our extended family and friends, for contributing to our charity when children in need, need us most! Please accept our heartfelt thank you!

This was our first attempt at hosting a Virtual Comedy Night and based on your feedback it was a great success

Leaside Toy Drive Organizers

(Daryn Everett, Jeff Hohner, Michael Zivot, Edward Wong, Lisa Lefebvre & David Skelly)

Kindergarten Registration for 2021-2022

Registration for all TDSB Kindergarten programs begins in February. Families have the option of registering their child online using the Online Registration System (OLR) at www.tdsb.on.ca/kindergarten or via a virtual (Zoom/Google Meet) face-to-face meeting with their school (**by appointment**).

Regardless of which process caregivers select, a virtual meeting with the school (via Zoom or Google Meet) will be required to validate registration information. More details about Kindergarten Registration will be shared with families in January.

Answers to Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions are available [HERE](#).



NEW French Immersion Program [Grade 4 Entry]

For families of Grade 3 students interested in the Toronto District School Board's system-wide **NEW** Middle French Immersion Program (begins in Grade 4), we offer an online process to apply.

To apply for the Middle French Immersion Program (Grade 4 entry) for September 2021, applications must be completed online between January 4 and January 29, 2021.

Please see this important [INFORMATION PACKAGE](#) and details about the online application process [HERE](#).

An offer of placement in the program (not a specific school) is guaranteed to all on-time applicants and will be made in the weeks following the close of the application window.

Please note: 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.

For more information about the Middle French Immersion (Grade 4) application process, please join us for a Virtual Information Session on one of the following dates:

- January 14, 2021 – 10 am
- January 21, 2021 – 7 pm
- January 27, 2021 – 7 pm

For more information about Middle French Immersion Program, available in multiple languages, please visit <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Elementary-School/School-Choices/French-Programs/French-as-a-Second-Language-FSL-Programs>.

For more information about French as a Second Language programs, the application process and important dates, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/french.

Tamil Heritage Month at the TDSB

Tamil Heritage Month is recognized nationally since October 2016, provincially since March 2004 and by the Toronto District School Board since January 2016. The month of January was chosen as it coincides with one of the most important celebrations for Canadians of Tamil heritage, the Thai Pongal harvest festival. Millions of Tamil people around the world irrespective of their religion celebrate Thai Pongal and offer thanks for an abundant harvest.

This year, the chosen theme selected by the volunteer planning committee is உண்மை - உரிமை - ஒற்றுமை: Truth - Rights - Unity. Unmai (உண்மை) recognizes that our lived experiences are our truths and these truths shape our understanding of the world around us. Urimai (உரிமை) examines our right to flourish and shine. Otrumai (ஒற்றுமை) emphasizes our shared lived experiences with other marginalized communities and our shared humanity.

Toronto has the largest Tamil population outside of the South Asian subcontinent with thousands of TDSB students and staff members heritage identified as Tamil. The importance of building awareness, creating a strong self-identity and understanding one's own roots and rights are important objectives of the Tamil Heritage Month volunteer planning committee. A poster challenge is currently underway, and we will be posting the two winning designs that reflect this year's theme in early January.

Please visit the heritage/history month website (<http://tdsbweb.tdsb.on.ca/equity/HeritageHistory-Months/2020-2021>) under Tamil Heritage Month for additional learning resources, Daily quotes/facts that may be shared through daily announcements, a powerpoint on interesting facts on Tamil customs and traditions, and resources from the TDSB Professional Library.

Recognizing Tamil Heritage Month through Creative Writing

The month of January is recognized by the TDSB as Tamil Heritage Month. This year's theme is உண்மை - உரிமை - ஒற்றுமை/ Truth - Rights - Unity. This coincides with one of the most important festivals celebrated by Tamils in South Asia and all over the world. Traditionally, during this month, Tamils, irrespective of their religion, celebrate Thai Pongal, a harvest festival that offers prayers of thanks to the sun and nature for giving bountiful crops.

All TDSB students are invited to submit a creative writing piece (poem, short story, essay) related to this year's theme of உண்மை - உரிமை - ஒற்றுமை / Truth - Rights - Unity.

Please see this [document](#) for FULL details.

deadline: All entries must be received by Friday, January 22, 2021 to tdsbamilheritagemonth@gmail.com

Chinese Heritage Month at the TDSB

The Toronto District School Board is proud to recognize Chinese Heritage Month (CHM) during the month of February 2021. This year the selected theme is Year of the Ox: Loyal, Honest, Responsible, Hard-Working and Logical.

We are excited to share with you that two of our initiatives will be a poster competition and a one-minute video talent showcase with prizes to be won. All TDSB students and staff are welcome to participate. Further information about these initiatives are currently available on our official CHM site <https://bit.ly/2021CHM>

Deadline for Poster Challenge: January 17, 2021 by 11:59 pm

Deadline for One-Minute Video Talent Showcase: January 17, 2021 by 11:59 pm

Other exciting events/news will be shared through our official CHM site <https://bit.ly/2021CHM> and Twitter (@tdsbChineseHM) ~ 2021 Chinese Heritage Month Committee

Greek Heritage Month at the TDSB

March is Greek Heritage Month. It is an occasion to recognize and celebrate the many achievements and contributions of Greek Canadians to Canada, an occasion to mark and enjoy the history of Greek culture.

One of the highlights for Greek Heritage Month 2021 this coming March will be the TDSB Greek Heritage Month Multi-Media Contest, featuring original student & staff work in three creative categories:

- 1) Be graphic! Design a poster!
- 2) Sharpen your pencil! Write something!
- 3) Let's get digital!

The focus of this year's media campaign is: 1821-2021

Freedom and Unity – Ελευθερία και Ενότητα, Learning From Our Roots...Shaping Our Future
This year marks the 200th year of Independence for Greece.

Four groups qualify: K to Grade 3, Grade 4 to 8; and Grade 9 to 12; and TDSB staff. A winning submission will be selected from each of the qualifying groups. The deadline for submitting entries is Friday, January 29, 2021.

For more information, contest entry and submission guidelines, please see attached file or visit http://bit.ly/GHM_MediaContest See also: [POSTER TEMPLATE](#)

For information and resources about Greek Heritage Month visit: https://bit.ly/GHM_TDSB

Communication for Grade 8 Families

TDSB secondary schools are hosting virtual open houses and information sessions (live or pre-recorded) for parents/guardians and students between November and January. All families are invited to join on the scheduled dates and the complete list is available [HERE](#).

Please also take some time to explore the valuable interactive resources available at the [Beyond8](#) TDSB website.

Some key dates to keep in mind:

- January 11, 2021 – Course Selection Opens (using myBlueprint)
- January 13, 2021 – Virtual Open House at Northern Secondary School
- January 29, 2021 – Optional attendance forms due at secondary schools. **Download [HERE](#).**
- February 12, 2021 – Deadline for parents/guardians of students to be informed of the status of the Optional Attendance application

Please review the 2020-2021 **TDSB Secondary School Information Guide** [HERE](#).

Wexford Collegiate School for the Arts

While the deadline for submission of Optional Attendance forms are due at secondary schools on January 29, 2020, applications to **specialized programs** may require the forms earlier than that date.

For students interested in applying to Wexford's Visual & Media Arts or Performing Arts specialized programs, information about the application process as well as the digital portfolio/audition submission can be found here:

[Visual & Media Arts Admissions](#)

[Performing Arts Admissions](#)

Wexford CI's deadline for applying and submission of forms is December 14, 2020 and the deadline for submission of the digital portfolio/audition is January 11, 2021.





Appreciation Corner

A big thank you to **Kozue Kawasaki** for organizing coffee and panettone for staff appreciation on behalf of the School Council this week!

A HUGE thank you to all of the teachers and staff at Bessborough from all of the parents. You kept our kids safe and engaged and, most importantly, in school until December. Enjoy your well-deserved break!

Safe and happy holidays to all!

Bessborough E & MS School Council is on Insta



Follow [@bessboroughschoolcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/bessboroughschoolcouncil)

- Dec. 21, 2020 – Jan. 1, 2021 – Winter Break



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