

Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin

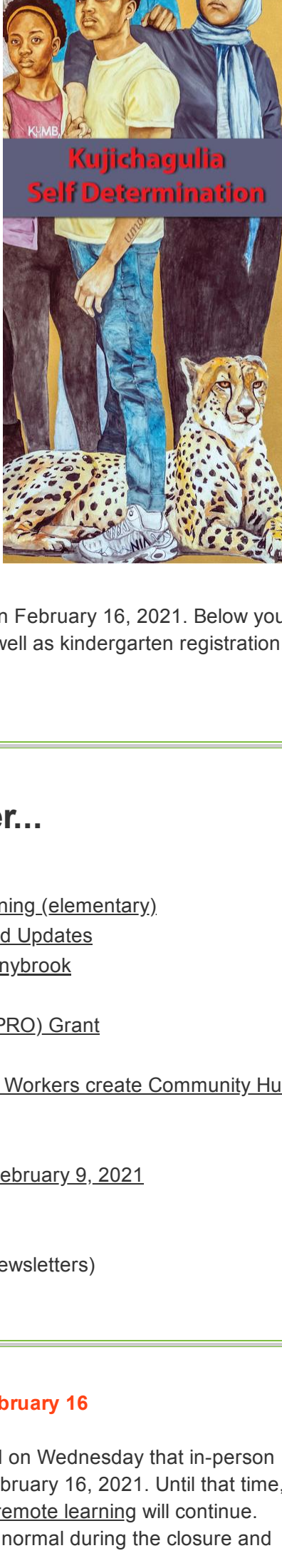
Ward 11 • Don Valley West
Toronto District School Board
416-395-8787 • Rachel.ChernosLin@tdsb.on.ca

Dear friends,

Despite the lockdown, here at the TDSB we've been busier than ever! In Ward 11, students have been engaged in so many different opportunities. Some highlights from the last two weeks include: lots of virtual field trips (Bedford Park students, for example, went to the ROM!); last week, Junior and Intermediate classes at various schools watched "The Tattooed Torah" in honour of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27th; and, last week I had the absolute pleasure of visiting with grade 12 design and tech students at Marc Garneau who shared their designs for a "re-imagined" Overlea Bridge. These inspiring students have worked hard to address a real-life problem in their neighbourhood, one that the community has been concerned about for years now. In just over a month, they will be presenting their designs to the City of Toronto's Infrastructure and Planning Committee. We can't wait to follow them on this exciting journey!

A huge thank you to all who attended my virtual Ward Forum on elementary online learning back on January 25th, as well as my first virtual Ward 11 Coffee Morning this past Wednesday. Both events were really well received, and despite my initial hesitation, the virtual space worked well for a casual coffee morning conversation. As a result, we will be doing it again on March 10th, and additional dates will soon be announced for the spring. Stay tuned!

Perhaps the biggest news, though, is that the Minister of Education announced this week that the TDSB will return to in-person learning following the Family Day weekend, on February 16, 2021. Below you will find more information regarding school reopening, as well as kindergarten registration, upcoming TDSB events, and much much more!



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Back to School: Reopening In-Person Learning on February 16

As mentioned above, the Minister of Education announced on Wednesday that in-person learning will resume for schools in Toronto on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. Until that time, schools will remain closed to most students and staff and **remote learning** will continue. For students in the **Virtual School**, classes will continue as normal during the closure and when in-person learning resumes.

For information about switching between in-school and the Virtual School, see [below](#).

As well, in the days ahead, the TDSB will be sharing additional information with families about health and safety measures at all TDSB schools when we return.

Read more about the Ministry of Education announcement in the [February 3 News Release](#). Among the newer measures announced by the Ministry were:

- Access, in consultation with [Toronto Public Health], to targeted asymptomatic testing for students and staff -- please keep in mind we do not have parameters or specifics on this as of yet;
 - Masking requirement for Grades 1-12 outdoors where physical distancing cannot be maintained;
 - High quality cloth masks to schools as back-up supply for Grade 1-12 students;
 - Enhanced screening for secondary students and staff;
 - Temporary certification of eligible teacher candidates who are set to graduate in 2021 to stabilize staffing levels. We hope this may help with filling placements for occasional teachers when the regular classroom teacher is away.
- Ventilation**
- Ventilation of every school and instructional space has been reviewed. TDSB has taken a number of important steps since the beginning of the school year to maximize the amount of fresh air in our schools. The TDSB has already maximized the efficiency of existing ventilation systems, while ensuring that all classrooms that don't have mechanical ventilation have a HEPA filter present. As indicated, mechanical system upgrades as part of our school renewal program continue. Given the time associated with planning and designing these upgrades, it is not possible to complete this work in a single month.

For more information check out the [HEPA Q&A](#) on the TDSB website.

February 3 Board Meeting -- Advocacy Work & Covid Updates

Advocacy work:

As discussed in my last newsletter, 104 of our schools are currently open, serving our students with complex needs who cannot learn remotely at home. Many of these students are medically fragile, unable to wear masks, and require physical up close and personal support, with physical distancing not being a feasible option. This is a serious concern for Ward 11, as TDSB staff of all levels support two of our wonderful schools here in Ward 11 at Sunnyview School and Park Lane School. It is crucial that these schools are able to stay open, and that staff and students who come in each and every day are protected. On February 3rd, I brought forward the motion below, and it passed was passed unanimously by our Board of Trustees. The text of the motion is posted below for your reference:

That the Chair write a letter to the Minister of Education, the Minister of Health, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Officer of Toronto Public Health asking:

- for the immediate implementation of voluntary asymptomatic testing of staff and students in congregated settings and Intensive Support Programs that are exempted from the closure order;*
- that all education workers and teachers working in congregated settings and Intensive Support Program classrooms exempted from the closure order have access to vaccinations immediately, so as to allow these sites to remain open in the safest manner possible and protect both the students and staff in these settings from COVID-19;*
- that the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and all chairs of Ontario's public school boards be copied on the correspondence at Part (a).*

N95 Masks for Staff in 2 Ward 11 schools who work closely with students with Complex Medical Needs:

Aside from the strong outward advocacy noted above, the TDSB has also been looking at every opportunity to improve our approach. Together with SickKids Hospital, TDSB staff are developing a process to identify specific school-based staff who work closely with students with complex medical needs who may benefit from the wearing of an N95 mask. N95 masks are respiratory protective devices designed to achieve a very close facial fit and efficient filtration of airborne particles. As leading experts in this area, SickKids has produced [Guidelines on the Delivery of Home and Community Care Services for Children with Medical Complexity at School](#).

To help SickKids and the TDSB develop this process, staff are starting with three congregated special education schools that serve students with complex medical needs, and we are very happy to announce that two of those selected sites include two ward 11 schools. The pilots projects will begin with Sunny View Junior and Senior Public School, Park Lane Public School, and Lucy McCormick Senior School (as indicated, both Park Lane and Sunny View are in Don Valley West). SickKids has arranged for the staff to receive fit testing from Safe Haven. Once these three schools have been provided with the N95 masks, the masks will be offered to the other nine congregated special education schools who have staff that meet the criteria.

Results of the Province's 2020 Targeted Testing Pilot

From November 23 to December 18, 2020, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health conducted a pilot program in schools to support disease control and develop testing strategies. Schools in the province's 4 regions with high incidence of active cases (Toronto, Peel, York, and Ottawa) were offered voluntary school-wide COVID-19 testing for asymptomatic students and staff. Toronto Public Health identified the schools based on the school having multiple cases of COVID-19 for which there were no epidemiological links and/or where multiple cohorts had been dismissed. Eleven schools in the TDSB participated in the pilot program.

For the results of the Pilot, check out the [Summary](#).

Switching between Virtual School and in-school learning (elementary)

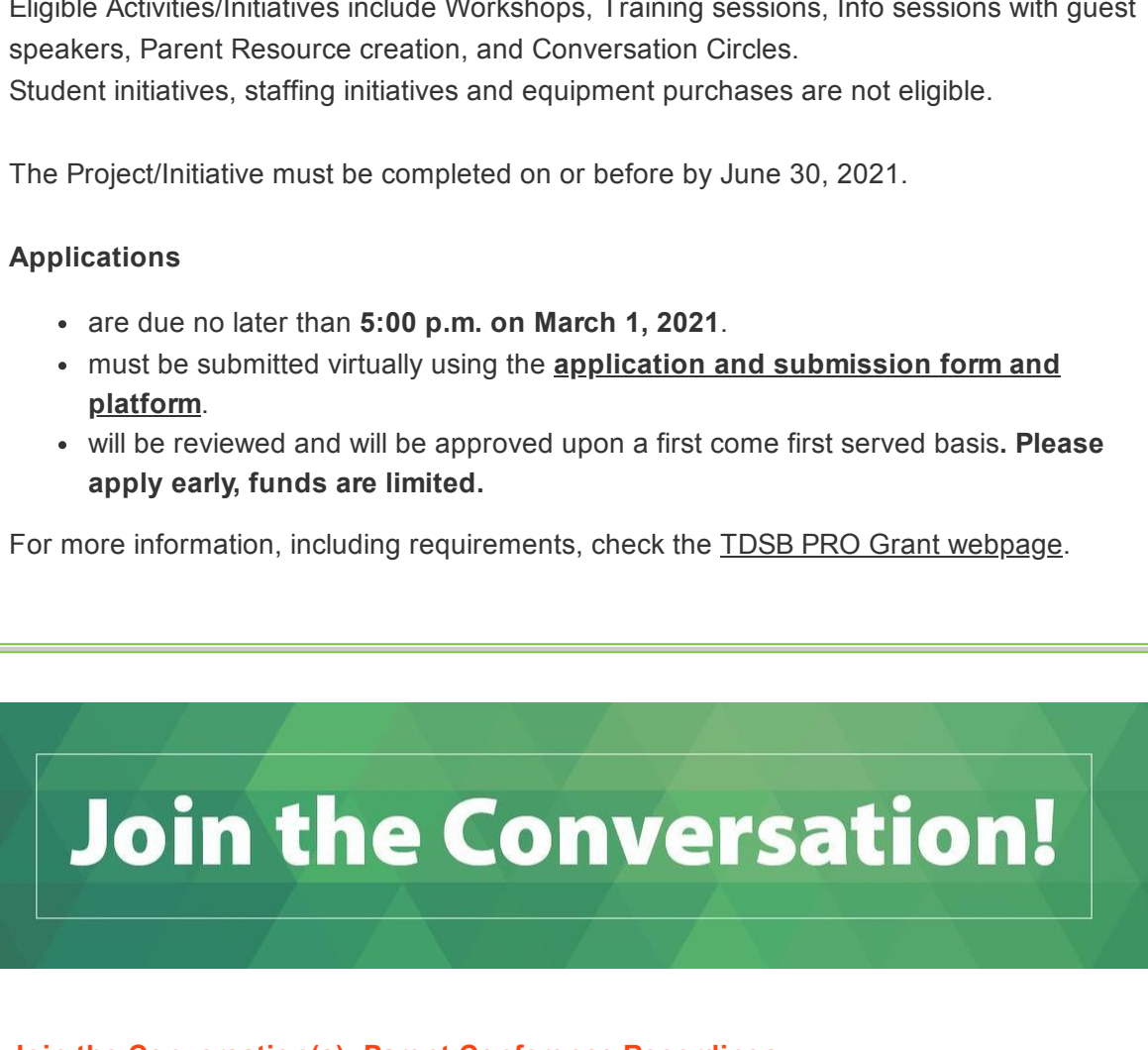
For families of elementary students who indicated an interest in switching learning models in the December switching survey (results pictured below), students will have a final opportunity to switch in February 2021, **where space is available**. The TDSB is committed to completing as many requests as possible, but please note that it is not likely that all requests can be accommodated.

More information will be emailed soon to families who indicated an interest to switch in December, and/or the home school will contact you.

A most recent update was posted yesterday on the TDSB [switching webpage](#).

Number of Elementary Students Who Wish To Switch Schools by the Neighbourhood Quintile of their Home Address

Neighbourhood Quintile (January 2021)	In Person to Virtual	Virtual to In Person	Total	% of Total
Q1 – low risk	348	380	728	8.4%
Q2	580	444	1,024	11.8%
Q3	737	533	1,270	14.7%
Q4	1,607	625	2,232	25.8%
Q5 – high risk	2,343	1,013	3,356	38.8%
No Address Provided	28	7	35	0.4%
Total	5,643	3,002	8,645	



Covid-testing sites: Thorncliffe, Flemingdon, and Sunnybrook

In and near Ward 11, there are several places to get a Covid-test, including:

Sunnybrook Hospital (LOCATION MOVED):
Vaughan Estate - 80 Armistice Dr.
Open daily 9 am to 7:30pm
Info (including pre-booking your appointment): [here](#).

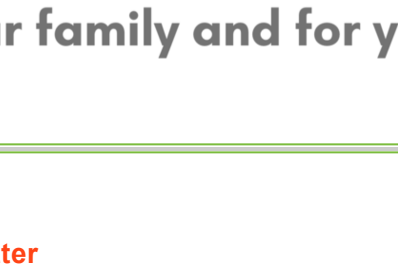
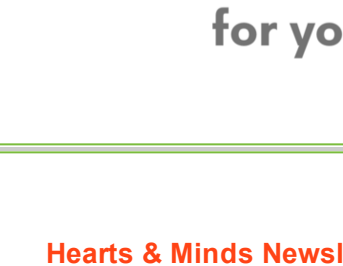
Thorncliffe: TNO Youth Centre (45 Overlea Blvd., Unit 108A)
Open every day for the month of February (including Family Day).
Hours: 1 – 7 p.m.
You may also book an appointment in advance at this site by calling 647-477-1640. Last test at 6:45 p.m.; to ensure you receive a test, please arrive before 6:45 p.m.

Thorncliffe: Jenner Jean-Marie Community Centre (48 Thorncliffe Drive)
Open February 5-7, 8-12, 15-19, 22-26 (every Monday to Friday, including Family Day).
Hours: 1 – 7 p.m.
You may also book an appointment in advance at this site by calling 647-477-1640. Last test at 6:45 p.m.; to ensure you receive a test, please arrive before 6:45 p.m.

Flemingdon Park: Dennis R. Timbrell Resource Centre (29 St Dennis Dr.)
Open February 5-7, 12-14, 19-21, 26-28 (every Friday to Sunday).
Hours: 1 to 7 p.m.
You may also book an appointment in advance at this site by calling 647-477-1640. Last test at 6:45 p.m.; to ensure you receive a test, please arrive before 6:45 p.m.

Flemingdon Park: Angela James Arena (165 Grenoble Dr.)
Open February 8-10, 15-17, 22-24 (every Monday to Wednesday, including Family Day).
Hours: 1 to 7 p.m.
You may also book an appointment in advance at this site by calling 647-477-1640. Last test at 6:45 p.m.; to ensure you receive a test, please arrive before 6:45 p.m.

In addition, various pharmacies offer free testing, by appointment, only to people meeting certain criteria. More information: [here](#) (full info) and [here](#) (for the locations).



Stay at Home

IMPORTANT Stay Home

ASK YOURSELF Is this trip really essential?

- Buy Groceries 1x per week
- Go to the Doctor or Pharmacy
- Outdoor Exercise
- Get a Caretaker for Loved Ones
- Go to an Essential Job

Staying home now will help restore our communities as soon as possible.

DON'T Gather in Groups

ALWAYS maintain six feet between you and others when outside your home.

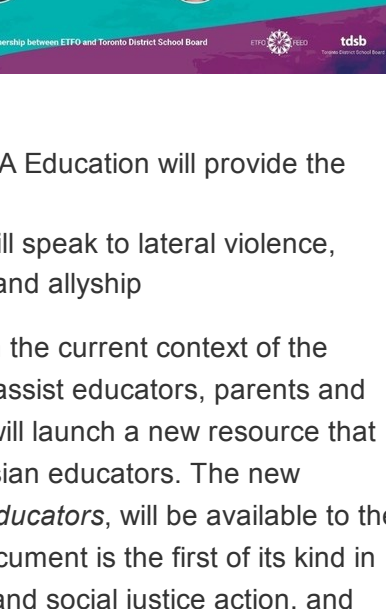
Kindergarten registration has begun!

Children who will be four by December 31, 2021, can start Junior Kindergarten in September 2021.

In the Kindergarten program, your child will develop their skills and abilities through inquiry and intentional play-based learning that includes math, science and literacy. Teachers and early childhood educators plan learning experiences where children are actively engaged in learning and thinking creatively.

Do you know somebody else whose child was born in 2017? Let them know!

- [Learn more about Kindergarten at the TDSB](#)
- [Kindergarten Booklet](#)



School Councils: Apply for the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant!

School Councils may submit one request for up to \$1,500 to support initiatives/activities that engage parents/caregivers (including virtual), and builds School Councils' capacity around Human Rights, Equity, Anti-Racism, Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism. School Councils may collaborate and submit one application, however allocation will remain at a maximum of \$1,500 per school.

Eligible Activities/Initiatives include Workshops, Training sessions, info sessions with guest speakers, Parent Resource creation, and Conversation Circles. Student initiatives, staffing initiatives and equipment purchases are not eligible.

The Project/Initiative must be completed on or before June 30, 2021.

Applications

- are due no later than **5:00 p.m. on March 1, 2021**.
- must be submitted virtually using the [application and submission form and platform](#).
- will be reviewed and will be approved upon a first come first served basis. **Please apply early, funds are limited.**

For more information, including requirements, check the [TDSB PRO Grant webpage](#).

Join the Conversation!

Join the Conversation(s): Parent Conference Recordings

TDSB families are invited to join the TDSB for a series of engaging and informative Conversations on topics we heard you want to learn more about. Hear from leading experts and participate in question and answer sessions online.

These conversations are jointly hosted by the TDSB's Parent and Community Engagement Office (PCEO) and the [Parent Involvement Advisory Committee](#).

In the past week, two Conversations were held, on [How Children Understand Race and How Adults Can Help](#) (with Erin Winkler, January 30), and [Families Amidst Racial Traumas](#) (with Charmaine Hale, M.Sc, RP, February 4).

The [Conversations web page](#) will have announcements of all upcoming Conversations, as well as links to past Conversations so everybody can (re)watch them. The Conversations are also streamed (and archived) on the [PCEO YouTube Channel](#).

Conference Workshops

Speaking of Conversations, did you know that almost all sessions and workshops of the two Fair Parent Conferences are now available online? You can find them here:

- Parents as Partners Conference (in October)
- PIAC Conference (in November)

Parent/Caregiver Engagement: Community Support Workers create Community Hub

During this challenging period for students, staff and parents/caregivers connecting with and supporting parents and caregivers continues to be a priority in the TDSB.

The Parent and Community Engagement Office (PCEO), Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (EIAC) and the Community Support Workers (CSWs) have been engaged in a variety of activities to offer support, build capacity and make connections for parents/caregivers. A few examples include responding to food insecurity, organizing virtual information sessions, collaborating with 211 Toronto to ensure access to community-based services and helping parents navigate the system for assistance.



TDSB Community Support Workers have also created a [Community Support Hub](#), a one-stop-shop program and service hub for parents/caregivers. The Hub features not only full access to CSWs and their work, but also a series of information and presentation on navigating, understanding TDSB and professional development for families through the Parent Academy.

This includes a number of other events under three themes: **Anti-Racism Series**, **Know Your Rights Series**, and **Well-Being Resources and Support Series**. Each of these initiatives offer many options to our varied parents/caregivers across our district.

Among the upcoming events: a February 9 [Parent Academy](#) Webinar on [Talking with your Kids about Race & Racism](#).

This new website is an amazing resource and it is very easy to navigate. I really encourage families to check it out, and check back regularly for new additions. It is linked here: [sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/cswws](#).

Lastly, the Community Support Workers will be holding **CSWs Live** sessions every week on Tuesday mornings 9-11am - please join them with any questions a about school or TDSB information & resources you may have!

Toronto District School Board

CSWs Live

DROP IN TUESDAYS - 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Gain access to information and resources for your family and for your school

Hearts & Minds Newsletter

Click on the links below to see current and previous issues of the TDSB's Psychological Services newsletter Hearts & Minds -- which aims to provide TDSB's parents and caregivers with information, tips, and ideas to use at home with their children.

- NEW: January Newsletter
- Past Newsletters

Addressing Anti-Asian Racism Resource Launch - February 9, 2021

Next week, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) will proudly co-host the event: [Addressing Anti-Asian Racism in Schools and Communities to unpack the impact of racism in our communities](#).

This initiative happens at an opportune time to both acknowledge and celebrate African Heritage Month, and to highlight Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese New Year. Keynote speakers are:

- Gen Lin Chang, Deputy Executive Director of ALPHA Education will provide the historical and current context of anti-Asian racism
- Vidya Shah, Assistant Professor at York University will speak to lateral violence, centring on Black and Indigenous voices, complicity and allyship

While speakers discuss the increase of anti-Asian racism in the current context of the pandemic, it is also placed within a historical backdrop. To assist educators, parents and community members to unlearn racism, ETFO and TDSB will launch a new resource that was developed in partnership and with the assistance of Asian educators. The new resource, [Addressing Anti-Asian Racism: A Resource for Educators](#), will be available to the public for free download after the launch. This educator document is the first of its kind in Canada. It provides a foundation for reflection, discussion and social justice action, and centres Indigeneity and Black lives within the document.

The launch event recently filled up to capacity, but a recording will be available through [www.tdsb.on.ca](#).

African Heritage Month & Chinese Heritage Month

As you may know, each month at the TDSB, we celebrate various heritage months. In February, we are marking [African Heritage Month](#) and [Chinese Heritage Month](#).

- African History Month** was kicked off with a virtual event on February 1st, and the broadcast can be re-watch the [Celebration Launch](#). Other events include:
 - Feb. 10 - Webinar: [How to start a Black Student Alliance](#);
 - Feb. 25 - Stronger than Hate: Recognizing the Black Panthers Battalion (together with the Jewish Heritage Month Planning Committee);
 - Feb 27 - [Know Your Worth Conference](#);
 - May 29 - Know Your Worth Conference for Educators.

- Chinese Heritage Month** (CHM) is this year celebrated in the Year of the Ox: Loyal, Honest, Responsible, Hard-Working and Logical. Many Chinese Canadians will celebrate Lunar New Year. On Friday, February 12, 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. Though celebrations will be altered this year because of the pandemic, the spirit and joyfulness will remain the same through virtual events and in-home family-based festivities. TDSB's Chinese Heritage Month can be followed on [Twitter](#), with more information on the official [Chinese Heritage Month site](#).

TDSB Meeting Schedule

All TDSB Trustee Committee meetings are publicly broadcast and public delegations are welcomed. On the TDSB/Boardroom Website you can find the live [webcast schedule](#), as well as the [calendar with all Agendas, Minutes and documents](#) (posted each Friday before the upcoming meetings).

The schedule for the upcoming weeks is as follows:

- February 10 - 4:30pm - Governance & Policy Committee
- February 17 - 4:30pm - Program and School Services Committee
- February 24th - 4:30pm - Finance, Budget & Enrolment Committee

All previous meetings are available for viewing in the [webcast archive](#).

All Committee meetings allow any member of the public to submit a delegation either in writing or in person (currently virtually). More information about the process is on the [Delegation Process web page](#).

School Year Calendar 2020-2021

Note: Virtual Schools follow the same calendar as in-person schools unless otherwise noted.

The [official School year calendar](#) for the Toronto District School Board runs from September to June 30.

The last day of class for elementary students is June 29, the last day of class for secondary students is June 28.

Secondary Quadmaster Calendar

- Quad 3: Feb 8 - April 20 + exams April 21 & 22
- Quad 4: April 23 - June 23 + exams June 24, 25 & 28

PA Days & Holidays Remaining

Elementary PA Day	January 15, 2021
Secondary PA Day (Semestered Schools Only)	February 5, 2021
Board-wide PA Day	February 12, 2021
Family Day	February 15, 2021
March Break	March 15 – 19, 2021
Good Friday	April 2, 2021
Easter Monday	April 5, 2021
Victoria Day	May 24, 2021
Elementary School PA Day	June 4, 2021
Secondary School PA Day	June 29, 2021

TDSB Brightspace

Brightspace for Parents

Student Virtual Learning IT Support

Worth Repeating...

(still-current links from previous newsletter)

Programming:

- Virtual School Staff Directories
 - Applying for Optional Attendance
 - TDSB Alternative & Specialty Schools Information
 - Grade 3 Universal Screening (CCAT7) update
 - 2021-22 Before-and After-School Programs (BASP) Interest Survey
 - Transition to High School Parent Information Sessions (recordings)
 - Post-Secondary Information Session (recording)
- Covid & Safety:**
- Reduce the Spread!
 - Winter Well-Being
 - Covid: Stay Healthy during Flu Season
- Other:**
- Support for Learners Grant - Application Deadline February 8

I encourage everyone to keep checking the [TDSB's website](#) (tdsb.on.ca) and social media ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)) regularly as more information is released and updated.

As always, should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

And until the next time, stay healthy, stay safe!

Warmest wishes,

Rachel

Rachel Chernos Lin

TDSB Trustee, Ward 11, Don Valley West, Rachel.ChernosLin@tdsb.on.ca

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