
Blake News

The Newsletter of
Blake Street Public School
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Blake Street Public School
21 Boulton Avenue, Toronto, ON M4J 1A7
Jennifer Zurba, Principal **Jackilyn Wallace**, Vice Principal
Mary Jane McNamara, Superintendent of Education **Jennifer Story**, School Trustee

I sincerely hope this newsletter finds you and your family well. We will be doing our best to recreate some established routines as we move ahead, and you can count on me to be sending out our weekly newsletter's every Friday.

I recognize what strange and surreal times we are living in, and I don't think I actually process the situation on most days, just like you I get up, and try my best to get through the day and the challenges and opportunities it brings. During these times, it is normal to feel all kinds of emotions: to feel sad that we can't see our friends and loved ones, to feel bored of the monotony, frustrated that we can't engage in our every lives and the freedoms we took for granted.....all these are legitimate feelings so let's all be KIND to OURSELVES! I also find that in my moments of quiet, I try to find gratitude. There are so many things to be grateful for. For those of us lucky to have health, that is a BIG one. I am also grateful that this has been a gorgeous week, and that we are in the spring season. I am grateful for the birds I hear singing in the morning as I drink my coffee, and I am thankful for the longer days of sunlight, and the warmer weather and the blooming of nature in the coming week. Mostly, I am thankful to be part of such an incredibly AMAZING and supportive community.

By now, you should have all heard from your children's teacher as they have been busy planning for what week one of virtual learning will look like. Jackilyn and I are also reaching out to all of our families. I am starting to contact English families while Jackilyn is reaching out to the French. You will have heard from one of us by the end of the month. That said, please don't wait for us. Please email us immediately if there is anything we can do to support or help, that is why we are here!! We are making up list of needs as we hope to have some food gift cards coming to us shortly, and we are awaiting instructions from the TDSB about how to ensure all students have access to technology – we are working on it!!! If this means that you cannot begin virtual learning next week, not to worry. Our teachers are highly creative and they will engage your child regardless.

I know you have lots of questions, and we don't have all the answers yet, please be patient with us and let's take it one day at a time, together. Virtual learning will look different for all ages of children, but our teachers are planning with your child's needs in mind. It is not our expectation that children will be working on or in need of a computer for many hours a day. Rather, assignments will be provided, and children will be able to work on them at their leisure off the computer.

As I have also shared, your child's school work is not something that we want added to your stress load, which is already great enough. We are not expecting you to duplicate our role, and we are working to minimize all necessary parent involvement in this learning as possible and to the best of our abilities. There may be some level of support that your child may need from you as we begin this process, but we do anticipate it with lessen each week and children will become more independent as this phase of learning continues.

I would also like to acknowledge the many of you that are front line workers, and we are indebted to you as you continue to work to support our everyday needs. Please know how much we appreciate your selfless acts, and that we think of you and thank you daily.

Attached is a short video clip we hope will bring a smile to your child's face.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HqvA5EcRJwcVj\\$1gWYqu5v0_gG-rnewa/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HqvA5EcRJwcVj$1gWYqu5v0_gG-rnewa/view?usp=sharing)

Please let them know how much we miss them!!!! To start, I will offer up some homework – if possible, please share a video of your child dancing to a short video clip and send it off to their teachers – that way they can smile too!

Finally, I am sharing a great resource for families in need of technology. I haven't used it directly but it has been forwarded to me by one of our families. Feel free to check it out. The devices are around \$100 (no tax), and you can opt for a desktop or a laptop. You can access the website at http://rcto.ca/packages_lowincome.asp

Should you have any questions or concerns with the content of this newsletter, or any other school related issues, please email me directly at jennifer.zurba@tdsb.on.ca

Be well and have a great weekend.

Jenn and Jackilyn

New; from Parent Council

Blake School Council held a special online meeting on March 25, where members voted to re-allocate funds from our previously scheduled Family Wellness Night to Eastview Community Centre's Food Bank.

Council members felt this was the best way to support our community right now. You can read minutes from the meeting

here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wFMLOyx_9LhHZrtovhNC6bInz254SW9G/view?usp=sharing

Purpose of urgent mtg: Vote to donate Council funds to Eastview Food Bank

During the Covid-19 Quarantine, the purpose of the urgent Blake School Council Meeting was to vote on the proposal to make a lump sum donation to the Eastview Food Bank, using funds originally allocated to Blake's Family Wellness Night (now postponed until our next school year) and remaining, unallocated Council funds. We had shared our proposal via the Blake Street PS School Council Facebook page and posted it to the Blake Street PS Families Facebook group.

Here is the post:

"We need to hold a formal vote on this item with sufficient participation from School Council voting members. Realizing that the need is urgent, we are proposing to hold a virtual meeting (via Zoom video chat) tomorrow evening, Wednesday, March 25 at 7:00pm. We expect the meeting will only take a few minutes, and are hoping that as many of you as possible will participate..."

Finance discussion – Dean Kotwal:

-We had \$1300 of available funds to donate to Eastview
-We discussed what an incredible service Eastview provides to our community and to our school - they are always so generous and they serve and help so many people.

Vote to donate funds:

-The council unanimously approved the indirect donation of \$1300 to Eastview Food Bank immediately
-The council considered the fact that it is a non-tax paying entity and therefore wouldn't benefit from a charitable tax credit that a tax paying entity would otherwise be able to use. In an effort to increase the donation to Eastview it was decided that a donation of \$2,100 would be made by a parent to Eastview and that the parent would then be reimbursed \$1,300 by the Council, with the expectation that the parent would receive a \$800 charitable tax credit.

[Blake School Council meeting minutes
March 25 2020.docx - Google Drive](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wFMLOyx_9LhHZrtovhNC6bInz254SW9G/view?usp=sharing)

drive.google.com

East for East connects vulnerable members of our community with volunteers who can help with external tasks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can sign up *for support* or *to volunteer* at the link below.

<https://www.eastforeast.com/>

Wondering what kinds of benefits you might be eligible for during the COVID-19 crisis? Here is a plain language summary of emergency financial support available through the federal and provincial governments, compiled by a Carleton University professor:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Yo1k4T4PnbJJL2qzleVj9WtW5IWuuyKcqGW9P32WqPQ/edit?usp=sharing>

Community News

211 Toronto

Do you need information about financial assistance, mental health support, employment support, childcare, housing, food, clothing and shelter?

Find help at 211central.ca or call/chat/text/email 2-1-1.

- 211 Toronto connects people to community and social services quickly and easily so they can get the help they need. For example: a person searching for financial assistance, employment assistance, childcare or food, clothing and shelter.
- We offer a 24/7 confidential service in 150 languages
- We connect people to over 4,000 programs and services in Toronto
- 211 reduces the call burden on other municipal phone services (311, 911) as well as city staff, councillors, trustees and their offices.

211 Toronto is operated by Findhelp and funded by the City of Toronto, Government of Ontario and United Way Greater Toronto.

Eastview Community Centre

Eastview food bank is an important part of our community, offering many families food security. This is an increasingly challenging time for many, and the need for food is a real concern. The food bank is not accepting food at this time, but financial donations can be made on their face book page: Eastview Community Neighbourhood Centre.