



DUKE OF CONNAUGHT



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

Message from the Admin Team: **Carol, Chris and Robb**

Greetings Duke of Connaught school community and welcome to February. The days are getting longer and hopefully, spring weather is just around the corner.

February 2 was Groundhog Day. Two of the three plump prognosticators, Wiarton Willie and Shubenacadie Sam, emerged from their winter holes to see no shadow, predicting an early spring. Bring on the sunshine and warmer temperatures!

We are excited and looking forward to the return of 'In-Person' Learning, which is scheduled to begin on Tuesday, February 16. Until that time, schools will remain closed to most students and staff, and remote learning will continue. For students in the Virtual School Learning model, classes will continue as normal during the closure and when In-Person Learning resumes. In the days ahead, the TDSB will be sharing additional information with families about health and safety measures at all TDSB schools.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the staff, students and families for their incredible perseverance and resilience in adapting so well to Virtual School and remote learning. It has been a steep learning curve for all, and we should be kind to ourselves as we find our way, charting this new path of learning.

Please join us in welcoming Andrew Roberts in our Grade 1/2 class and Chung-Mi Jang in our Grade 4/5 class, who will be officially joining our staff as Long Term Occasional (LTO) Teachers until further notice. We are thrilled to have them join us this school year.

The TDSB character trait for the month of February is Fairness. Here are a couple of fairness quotes to think about as we continue our journey through this global pandemic.

- "In giving rights to others which belong to them, we give rights to ourselves and to our country." (John F. Kennedy)
- "Beware as long as you live, of judging people by appearance." (Jean de la Fontaine)

The TDSB and our school are just beginning the staffing process for the 2021-2022 school year. Please stay tuned for staffing updates as we begin to plan for September.

Yours in Education,

Carol, Robb and Chris

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P.S. In anticipation of In-Person Learning and a post-Covid return to school, please enjoy below an interesting viewpoint from Teresa Thayer Snyder, former Superintendent of Education for the Voorheesville District in upstate New York.

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I am writing today about the children of this pandemic. After a lifetime of working among the young, I feel compelled to address the concerns that are being expressed by so many of my peers about the deficits the children will demonstrate when they finally return to school. My goodness, what a disconcerting thing to be concerned about in the face of a pandemic which is affecting millions of people around the country and the world. It speaks to one of my biggest

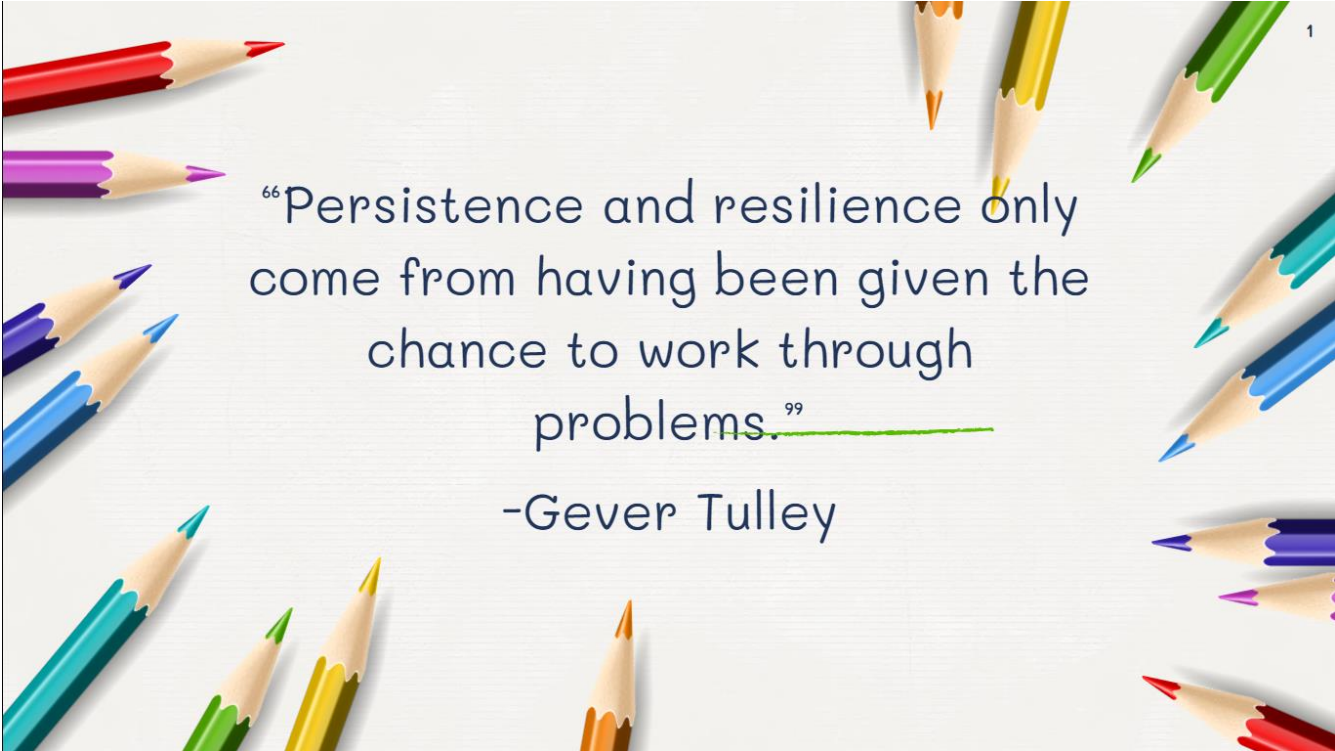
fears for the children when they return. In our determination to “catch them up,” I fear that we will lose who they are and what they have learned during this unprecedented era. What on earth are we trying to catch them up on? The models no longer apply, the benchmarks are no longer valid, the trend analyses have been interrupted. We must not forget that those arbitrary measures were established by people, not ordained by God. We can make those invalid measures as obsolete as a crank up telephone! They simply do not apply.

When the children return to school, they will have returned with a new history that we will need to help them identify and make sense of. When the children return to school, we will need to listen to them. Let their stories be told. They have endured a year that has no parallel in modern times. There is no assessment that applies to who they are or what they have learned. Remember, their brains did not go into hibernation during this year. Their brains may not have been focused on traditional school material, but they did not stop either. Their brains may have been focused on where their next meal is coming from, or how to care for a younger sibling, or how to deal with missing grandma, or how it feels to have to surrender a beloved pet, or how to deal with death. Our job is to welcome them back and help them write that history.

I sincerely plead with my colleagues, to surrender the artificial constructs that measure achievement and greet the children where they are, not where we think they “should be.” Greet them with art supplies and writing materials, and music and dance and so many other avenues to help them express what has happened to them in their lives during this horrific year. Greet them with stories and books that will help them make sense of an upside-down world. They missed you. They did not miss the test prep. They did not miss the worksheets. They did not miss the reading groups. They did not miss the homework. They missed you.

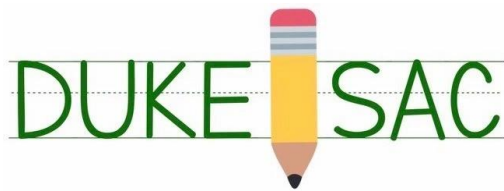
Resist the pressure from whatever ‘powers that be’ who are in a hurry to “fix” kids and make up for the “lost” time. The time was not lost, it was invested in surviving an historic period of time in their lives—in our lives. The children do not need to be fixed. They are not broken. They need to be heard. They need to be given as many tools as we can provide to nurture resilience and help them adjust to a post pandemic world.

Being a teacher is an essential connection between what is and what can be. Please, let what can be demonstrate that our children have so much to share about the world they live in and in helping them make sense of what, for all of us has been unimaginable. This will help them—and us—achieve a lot more than can be measured by any assessment tool ever devised. Peace to all who work with the children!

A collection of colorful pencils in various colors (red, purple, blue, teal, green, yellow, orange) arranged around the text on a light gray background. The pencils are scattered, with some pointing towards the center and others pointing outwards. A small number '1' is visible in the top right corner of the image area.

⁶⁶Persistence and resilience only come from having been given the chance to work through problems.⁹⁹

-Gever Tulley



With the news of our upcoming return to the classrooms on February 16th, the SAC is aware that this can raise questions on what that will look like. If you have questions or concerns please email us at info@dukesac.ca and we'll see if we can help.

Minutes from the Jan. 25 SAC Meeting Now Available

Thank you to everyone who attended and welcome again to Mr. O'Shaughnessy! The [minutes are here](#) and please save the date for our next meeting on Monday, February 22! Visit the [Duke SAC website](#) to learn more.

Attending a SAC meeting has never been easier and we hope to see you online at the next one. **Our next meeting is Monday, February 22, 2021** – a link to join the meeting will be provided in future communications.

Free Cooking Workshop Series

We are pleased to be partnering with the Neighbourhood Food Hub in presenting a series of engaging and exciting digital workshops for kids age 6-11 focused on delicious fruits and vegetables! Each workshop will feature a simple recipe, a craft with the featured food item, and a fun activity that engages kids in learning about the food they eat. Workshops are hosted by Tim Machin of Sing-A-Long Tim and take place at 1pm every Saturday from Mar 5 to Apr 2. The workshops are free and a limited number of free ingredient and supply kits will be available for home delivery. If interested, [click here](#) .

TDSB Recognizes African Heritage Month in February

During the month of February, the Toronto District School Board is proud to recognize and celebrate African Heritage Month. It is an occasion to celebrate the many achievements and contributions of peoples of African descent to Canada and the world. The chosen theme for 2020-2021 is Kujichagulia: Self Determination. Learn more [here](#).

Joint Ward 15/16 Workshop - February 18th

Save the Date! On February 18th from 6:30 - 8:30 pm, Trustees Aarts and Story will host part two of their anti-racism and anti-oppression workshop series - 'How to Become an Anti-racist School Council'. Please watch for updates on workshop details and registration links. Workshop Part 1 Notes & Presentation are [here](#).

Each week we distribute information via email in the "Need to Read" (NTR) to keep you tuned in to the goings-on at Duke. If you have not done so already, you can sign up on the DukeSAC.ca home page. If you are a parent or caregiver of a Duke student and would like to be involved, please email us at info@dukesac.ca.

February is African Heritage Month at the TSDB

The Toronto District School Board is the largest and one of the most diverse school boards in Canada. Nearly one-quarter of our students were born outside of Canada, and collectively, we speak more than 120 languages. Understanding all cultures is essential to the success of our young students today as they transform and transition to be our future leaders of tomorrow.

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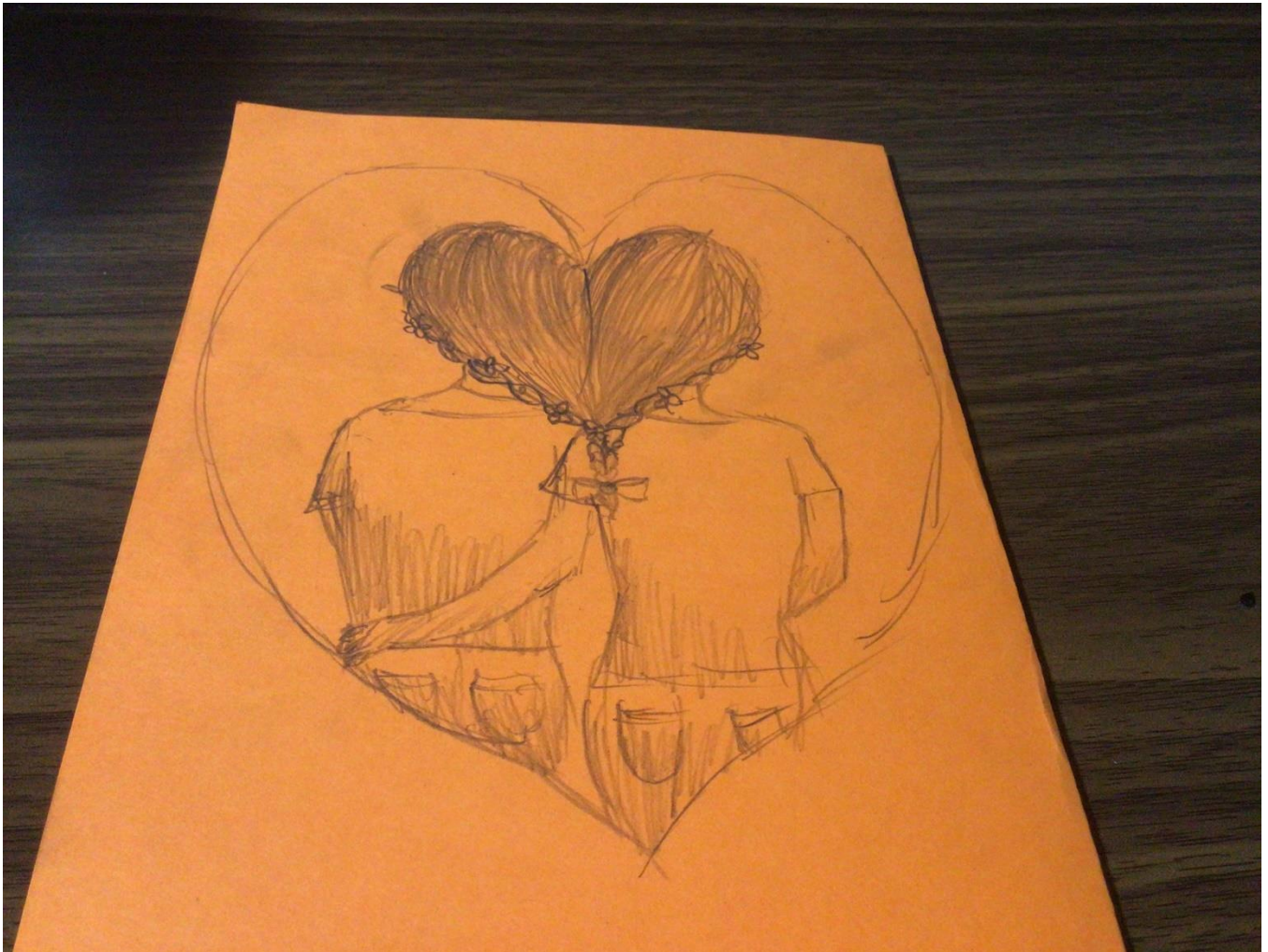
February is Chinese Heritage Month at the TDSB

The Toronto District School Board is proud to recognize Chinese Heritage Month (CHM) during the month of February 2021. This year is 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 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.



Student Work Gallery

"2 Friends Joined Together By Braids" by Sydney



Ani Anastasi's Grade 7/8 French Immersion Class:

Sophie – “2020 Reflection”

The fact that the year of 2020 felt as if it lasted for a decade makes it difficult to reflect. It was worse than any off year, it seemed jinxed. But what should you forget, and what should you remember?

I trust that people will remember the good things that came of 2020, like how it brought us together even when we were apart. So, the first thing that I trust that all people learned was togetherness. As human beings, we depend on others to survive, and throughout 2020, I feel like our dependence became more important, we could lean on each other for comfort, and join hands in protest, in all togetherness was incredibly important.

Maybe this year was full of controversy, or maybe I've just never noticed it before. Watching the news was upsetting in 2020, it seemed to always be reporting more deaths or unfortunate events. Personally, this year, I had to adapt and digest some reality of the world. When the virus first started, I had some fake, happy expectation that everything would be fixed in a month. So, when things in the world kept getting worse, I was forced to adapt.

In the last second of 2020, I made a wish for the world, I needed things to be better in the new year. At this time, it has only been 11 days since I made that wish, and nothing has happened. The world is just as horrible. But I have found unexpected happiness this year. The word I've promised to live by is ~ **Serendipity** ~ it happens to be one of the rarest words in the English language, but I admire it's meaning. The word Serendipity means a series of events that leads to Unexpected happiness or something beneficial. I've promised to live by this word because it's very important, it states that even when things feel horrible, it can lead to you finding happiness.

Thousands of protests were held in 2020, the biggest ones include: (Virtual climate strikes, Anti-lockdown protests, Juneteenth protests, Global protests for racial justice, Black trans lives matter protests, September climate strikes, End SARS protests, Election results protests, Biden/Harris celebrations.) Our world can't agree on anything. One thing that I hope the world will accomplish in 2021 is that people will accept that people are equal and therefore deserve equal rights.

Also, an accomplishment that I have for myself is less/no procrastination. Putting things off is a failure that I do multiple times a day, the new year is an excuse to abolish that habit.

Most dreams don't come true, but dreaming is one the best feelings in the world. In 2020 all I dreamed about was making it to the end of the year, but now that we're in 2021 my dream has come true. Now, my dream is a selfish one, I dream of dancing on a stage again, it's been a long time and that is something that makes me happy.

Without a doubt, 2020 was the worst year of my life, but some good things came of it and we should embrace them. Although the world is in wrecks, we made it through 2020 together, and we can only hope that 2021 will go easy on us.

Leah – “2020 Reflection”

When people look back on 2020, what will they remember? I bet they remember all the hard times, the struggles, the fear, and the disagreements based on race and ideals. I hope people also remember the things we learned in 2020. Like the importance of family and togetherness, even when we were in a global pandemic causing us to stay apart.

At the beginning of the year 2020, the virus of Covid 19 hit China really hard but had little effect on other parts of the world. I remember first hearing about Covid and not thinking much of it at first because it wasn't really something anyone thought would grow into a worldwide Pandemic. A few months or so later it did. It got so bad to the point where we all had to stay home from school and work.

We were unable to see people, and it really got hard for everyone. For me it was difficult because I have two sisters, one who I shared a room with. Since we were all at home there was not really space to be alone. But we learned to get along and the importance of caring for each other. These lessons were things that made my experience at home feel less like a jail and more like a home with family who cared about me.

During the times of Covid, there was much more going on in the world, including protests against race-based violence. On May 25th, 2020, George Floyd, a black male from Minneapolis, was accused of passing a counterfeit twenty dollar bill. Though he did not resist against the police, they continued to hold him down until they eventually killed him. This murder set off a spark among the black community. People all around the world were participating in protests because of the unfair, unjust treatment towards all black people. The protests caused the police to use more force which caused more uproar. For 2021, one hope I have is that we can remember why and what we have been fighting for. I hope people can remember that change takes a lot of time, but also a lot of perseverance. I hope people will keep fighting for equality.

Going into 2021, I think that people were really relieved that the year was over. A word I will live by this year is “**recover**”. In 2020, it didn't seem like it would get better. The months can seem to turn into years, the years into a decade. It felt like a never-ending swirl of bad news. But you just have to remember that things do get better. We may need to put some more effort into this year, so that it won't stay this bad forever.

Two accomplishments I hope to have for 2021 are ones I would assume most people feel as well. My first one is that I hope we can finish our protests and establish that though we are different, we are all human. All humans deserve to be treated equally with respect. My second accomplishment I would like to happen is for us all to be liberated of this virus, and free from our masks. If we can accomplish that, I think it would make life much easier for everyone.

All in all, looking back on 2020 gives mixed feelings. There were some things we would definitely like to forget, but those are the things that make us stronger. Covid taught us to appreciate each other and the importance of staying connected. Though 2020 was a year most people wished would go away as soon as it came, it was also a year that taught us lots of important lessons.

Issac – “Reflecting on 2020”

For most of us, 2020 has been the strangest year of our lives. We all hated it, but as the saying goes, there is value in suffering.

One of the most interesting things that 2020 taught me is how much people rely on human interaction. At the very beginning of the pandemic, I was getting used to seeing less of people, but I still went on bike rides with neighbourhood friends and played basketball at the high school. But then things started to tighten up. I was no longer allowed to be close to these people and it got to me. I began to feel tired more often, and I didn't want to do anything. As an extrovert, human interaction is my lifeblood. When I got a cell phone at the end of the summer, that definitely helped me connect with people more. Connecting with others is one of the best parts of being a human.

I also learned that almost any inconvenience will anger many people. Having to stay home to protect others isn't the most ginormous sacrifice. Think of the frontline workers, for whom it's impossible not to make human contact every day. They are risking the safety of themselves and their families to provide for society. Compared to people like that, most people have very little to complain about.

I have decided that the one word that I will live by this year is hope. After 2020, it looked as if the world was doomed. People ignoring the virus, people losing their jobs, and what is possibly the most important election of the century. But we're getting through it, no matter how slowly. And the human race will once again prevail. People have made it through worse than this. Think about the black plague, the world wars. We will always have hope.

One of my goals for 2021 is to get accepted into Rosedale Heights, School of the Arts. It is an amazing school and I think I can do well there. I would like to go there because I have a strong interest in music. I can learn a lot from the many arts teachers there. I'm not sure if I have any other goals so far. I know that I will have further ideas as the year progresses.

My dream for the world at the moment is for Joe Biden to be able to set the United States of America on a better path. There are too many events that have been going on and I am wishing with all of my might that when Joe becomes the President he can control them all. For the sake of the world, he needs to be one of the best leaders that the country has had. We all know that if America erupts into chaos then that would mean trouble for the rest of the world. The U.S is one of the most major militaries in the world. We need a better America than what has been going on in the past four years. We need peace.

The world has changed a lot in the past year. But not all of it has been for the worse. We need to treat 2020 not as a dark time, but as a well needed reminder. A reminder that anything can happen, but it's how we react to it that counts the most.

Coco – “Reflecting on Year 2020”

This year I have learnt so much and became a better, more appreciative person. I learnt that we need to have a better perspective on ourselves and our lives, the importance of learning from our mistakes and how to set more positive goals for ourselves.

2020 was probably the most eventful year of my life. It's crazy to look back on the year and be able to think that we were literally part of history. We have gone through so much this year and never in my life did I think we would end it at home, quarantining because there is a global pandemic. I remember back in March, I thought this would be over by about July and now it's January 2021 yet we're still in quarantine. I feel like there are two ways to look at it. You can either think about how terrible the politics, protests, and all the stuff going on in the news was, and still is. Or you can think about what we can do in the future, the projects you have accomplished and the hobbies you picked up that you would have never visited if it weren't for the pandemic. I feel we should use this as a learning experience so that we can implement some of these “precautions” in our daily lives after Covid.

One thing I learned was that everything comes full circle and will be relevant no matter how long ago it happened. For example, with The Great Dictator Speech you can still make connections to right now. Like how in the U.S. the people are completely divided like in the world wars but really there are much more important things going on, so we need to come together and focus. I now feel like I know the importance of history class a bit more. Before this I always found history boring and didn't really understand why we needed to know all of it because I never really thought there would be another world war or like a huge plague.

But now I know it's important so that we not only learn from our mistakes but also learn from what we did right so that we are more prepared in the future.

In the future, especially this year, I'm going to try and find what really matters to me and focus on that. Because if there's one thing that I learned in 2020 it's that nothing lasts forever, and things change. So, I need to take opportunities when I get them and live in the moment. I have always been the type of person to daydream a lot, and probably 90% of the time I'm thinking about the past. I'm thinking about what I could have said or should have done, or how embarrassing or awkward I was. But what I should really be thinking about is the present and plan for the future.

In this reflection I talked about the year in general but mostly the virus. I feel like I probably focused on that because it's been happening for so long. In addition to that I've also noticed that as the year went on and new things popped up I kind of forgot about the old things for a little while. For instance, the Greta Thunberg marches and at the beginning of the year, the teacher strikes. Overall throughout this whole year I've realised I need to be more appreciative of what I have, especially my family, friends, education and what they all provide me with and I'm ready to see what's in store for 2021. One thing I would love to happen is that I graduate from grade 8 and go into high school with no more viruses to worry about. In 2021 I think the best word to live by is True. As in to be true to yourself and not forget your values in life in all the mess of the world, but also, we need to remember that all of this stuff is really going on and it's not just a bad dream.

Maude Patry's Grade 8 French Immersion Class:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1GWli0HMqkbvhoM1R7LM2tGPY8V4cStpbTGI1NglDfe8/edit?usp=sharing>

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Upcoming Important Dates

February 9 – Term 1 Report Card sent home

February 11/12 – Parent Teacher Interviews

February 12 – Professional Activity Day

February 15 – Provincial Family Day

February 16 – Return to 'In-Person" Learning

February 22 – SAC Meeting (6:30 – 7:30 pm)

March 15-19 – Mid-Winter March Break

April 2 – Good Friday

April 5 – Easter Monday

May 24 – Victoria Day

June 4 – Professional Activity Day

June 29 – Last Day of School (for students)