

**Vanier Community Newsletter – Week 23 (February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024)**

Dear Vanier Family,

I hope you've enjoyed the balmy temperatures from this past week. As usual, it was another exciting week at Vanier. Our Cafetorium was buzzing each day with spirit week activities. Huge thanks to Ms. Manji and our Student Advisory Council (SAC), who spearheaded all these activities. While there are always lots of extracurricular activities outside the classroom, some amazing things are also taking place inside our classrooms. I want to take this opportunity to recognize Mr. Bodden and some of the students in his Photography class whose work was showcased at **Gallery 44** this past week. We are so proud of these budding photographers.



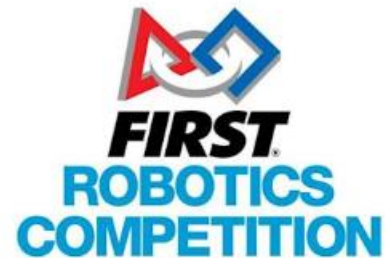
I also want to thank our Guidance staff, who have been working diligently with students as they engaged in course selection in **MyBluePrint**. Thank you also to you, our parents and caregivers, who helped guide our students during this process. This is a reminder that all course selections must be completed by Monday, February 26.

Next week will be a very special one at Vanier. As you know, February is Black History Month in the TDSB and across Canada. Over the month, students in our Black Student Collective (BCU) club have been working hard on a dramatic performance with the aid of poet and writer Greg Birkett and other staff members. **Next Friday, March 1**, we will hold a special assembly day schedule for students to showcase their performance; there will be drama, music, dance, and most importantly, a whole lot of learning. We can't wait!



There will also be another important learning session, which caters to you, our beloved parents, and caregivers. I already sent out a special message about this, but in case you did not receive it, next **Wednesday, February 28th**, we'll be hosting a very important workshop on **Human Trafficking** and how to safeguard our children against it at our school. The workshop will be held in our school library (Learning Hub) on the first floor from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm and will be given by Victim Services Toronto. I hope to see many of you there as we engage in this critical learning to keep our kids safe. Click [here](#) for a flyer about this workshop.

One last thing before I end this weekly letter. This year, for the first time, we have a Robotics Team at Vanier, consisting of over 40 students from grades 9 – 12. The team has been busy since the start of the school year, preparing for the First Robotics Competition, a world-renowned competition dubbed the **The Ultimate Sport for the Mind™**. In this competition, teams of high school students are challenged to build industrial-size robots to play a difficult field game in alliance with other teams, under strict rules and limited time and resources, while also fundraising to meet their goals, designing a team “brand,” and advancing respect and appreciation for STEM within the local community. As you can imagine, this is a costly venture, so the students need your help. They have prepared the following sponsorship request [letter](#) (click on the live link) and have been sending it out to local businesses. Hopefully, they will get some support. If you can support the team with a financial gift, please get in touch with me for details on how you can do so. Thank you!



Have a fantastic weekend Vanier!

**Karen Johnson**

Principal, Georges Vanier SS  
416-395-3250 Ext. 20010

<https://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/georgesvanier>

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## News from our Trustees' Office

Please click on the hyperlink below to access the Ward 13 Trustee's (James Li) Update for February 2024. [Ward 13 – Trustee February 2024 Newsletter](#)

## Achievement

### **COURSE SELECTION TIME – REMINDER!!!**

February is myBlueprint (MBP) course selection month! Guidance will be working with all students to help support their understanding of course selection, choose courses for next year, and assist with pathways planning. All students in TDSB use [myBlueprint](#) to choose courses. For information on all the courses offered at Vanier, please click on the link below.

[Vanier Course Charts February 2024](#)

**DUE DATE for ALL MBP Course selections: Monday February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024!!**

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### Peer-Tutoring

Peer tutoring is available for grades 9-11 students who want help with their Math, English, and Science courses. Simply **complete [THIS FORM](#) to request a tutor.** Students can sign up at any point in the semester!



### After-School Literacy/Math Tutoring

IT'S BACK! The program will start the week of Feb 26 and end, the week of June 3.

This is NOT a drop-in session! Students will need to register to attend. They may do so by coming to the main office. Classes will run from 3:30 to 4:40pm. Below are the teachers who will be providing the tutoring, along with their day and location.

**Mr. Husain** (Tues/Thurs) – LITERACY Room 203

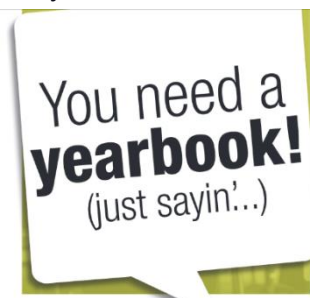
**Ms. Gersternova** (Mon/Wed) – LITERACY Room 211

**Mr. Hui** (Mon/Thur) – MATH Room 320

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### Student Activity Fee - REMINDER!!

This year's student activity fee (SAF) will be \$35 per student OR \$60.00 if you have two children in our school. This SAF fee pays for a Yearbook, student ID card, and Student Council activities. **By the end of this month, we will have to submit to our publishers the number of yearbooks to produce for our school. As such, parents are encouraged to use School Cash Online to pay their child's student activity fee, so they won't miss out on the yearbook, as soon as possible.** If needed, financial assistance is available to offset the activity fee. You may contact the principal to provide/obtain more information.



## Equity

**African-Heritage Month at the TDSB - February 2023.** During the month of February, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) proudly recognizes African Heritage (Black History) Month. African Heritage (Black History) Month is recognized across Canada, thanks to The Honourable MP Jean Augustine, who introduced the motion in the House of Commons in December 1995; it officially took effect in February in 1996.

The [Black History Month Act](#) was also passed in Ontario in 2016 and has been formally recognized since. African Heritage (Black History) Month is an occasion to commemorate present and past individuals who helped shape the path of our future student leaders, while also celebrating the many achievements and contributions of numerous individuals with this heritage! Their voices and actions impact our society, and work to continuously improve the world we live in.

This year's chosen theme is: **Our Black Is...Our Black Is Resilient, Community, Beautiful, Unity, Joy, Self-Determination, Excellence, Empowering, Purpose, Brilliance, Engaging, Creative, Belonging, Tenacious, Powerful, Faith, Audacious, Powerful, Me...**

In recognition of February 2024 African Heritage/Black History Month, the TDSB's **Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement** has collaborated with a variety of community partners, leaders, and TDSB departments to celebrate the wonderful and undeniable achievements of Black people, their histories, and their cultures. As TDSB celebrates African Heritage/Black History Month with the theme Our Black Is...We invite you to join us for the many opportunities planned for this month. Click [here](#) for a flyer of some of the events scheduled.

Here at Vanier, our BCU Club (Black Collective Union) is busy working on a dramatic performance, which they will be presenting to our entire school community as part of our local African Heritage Month celebrations. Stay tuned for further information about this.



### Webinar Wednesdays

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement is hosting its second session of the 2023 - 2024 Webinar Wednesdays series. The aim of this **virtual series** is to provide space for Black parents and caregivers, and families raising Black children to support their children's success, academic achievement, and overall well-being as they transition from high school. Through collaborations with various post-secondary institutions, the Webinar Wednesdays series shares information and resources on

various topics, including, but not limited to, graduation and post-secondary pathways. This session, we focus on Pathways to Skilled Trades. Join us as we learn more about the various pathways and apprenticeship programs.

**Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 | Time: 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.**

Location: Virtual | Registration link: [bit.ly/42zc7sY](https://bit.ly/42zc7sY)

For more information contact, [jeffrey.caton@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:jeffrey.caton@tdsb.on.ca), Centrally Assigned Principal, or [lindsey.marshall@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:lindsey.marshall@tdsb.on.ca), Program Co-ordinator, Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement.

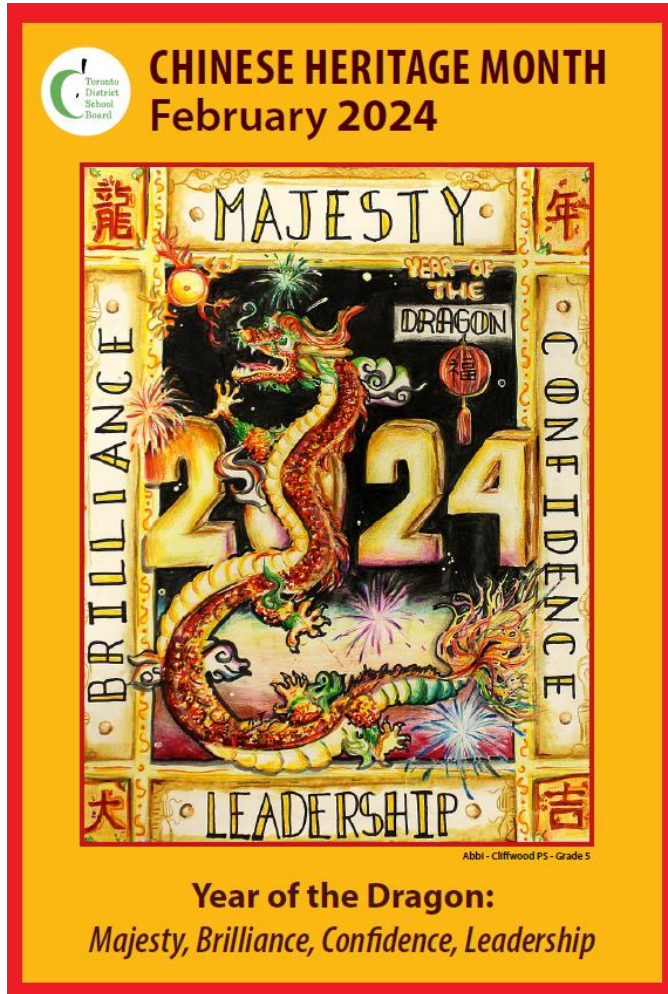
**Chinese Heritage Month at the TDSB - February 2024.** TDSB Chinese Heritage Month is proudly recognized in February each year. During this month, several learning resources and educational opportunities will be provided to our students and staff to further enhance their knowledge of the Chinese heritage. This year we celebrate the **Year of the Dragon: Majesty, Brilliance, Confidence, Leadership.**

This February we will also celebrate the Lunar New Year. Lunar New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, is one of the most important celebrations for Chinese communities around the world. Lunar New Year is celebrated annually, and its dates are based on the lunar calendar. For 2024, it starts Saturday, **February 10 and ends Saturday, February 24.** The festivities include family gatherings, decorations, and of course a feast!

**TDSB celebrations.** To mark Chinese Heritage Month, all TDSB students were invited to participate in the CHM's popular annual poster contest. Below are the links to the nine winning entries.

- [Chinese Heritage Month Posters 01](#)
- [Chinese Heritage Month Posters 02](#)
- [Chinese Heritage Month Posters 03](#)
- [Chinese Heritage Month Posters 04](#)
- [Chinese Heritage Month Posters 05](#)
- [Chinese Heritage Month Posters 06](#)
- [Chinese Heritage Month Posters 07](#)
- [Chinese Heritage Month Posters 08](#)
- [Chinese Heritage Month Posters 09](#)

## Health and Well-Being



The TDSB Special Education & Inclusion Team will be hosting a **virtual** session for parents/caregivers of students with special needs to learn about the following:

- *Transitions for Students with an IEP*
- *Elementary to Secondary Transitions*
- *Post-Secondary Transitions*
- *School/Home Partnerships*
- *Resources*

Information on how to sign up can be found by clicking on the following links:

**Morning Session – March 5<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am – 11:00 am**

[FLYER Parent Session March 5th AM Session.pptx - Google Slides](#)

**Evening Session – March 6<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 pm – 7: 30 pm**

[FLYER Parent Session March 6th PM Session.pptx - Google Slides](#)

## Health and Well-Being (con't)

### Protecting Yourself Against Scams...**NEW!!!**

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has led to a rapid increase in scamming activities using AI, which almost perfectly reproduces a person's voice. An "impersonation scam" occurs when criminals make use of AI created voices to read pre-prepared scripts in order to trick people into giving the scammers money. These scenarios can include:

- A young individual was arrested and needs cash to make bail.
- A family member has been kidnapped and they require a ransom for release.
- A friend, claiming to be stranded, urgently needs money for travel expenses.

Scammers will often use pressure tactics like the emergency situations listed above to make you feel like you have no choice but to give them money. These calls are, by design, very stressful, and AI makes it practically impossible to tell reality from fiction. Therefore, it is very important to follow the tips below to better react to and prevent fraud:

- Contact the friend or family member, or someone who can confirm their condition, to ascertain whether or not the original call was genuine.
- Be cautious about what you post online, as scammers will gather voice clips from social media and through other means to create the clone.
- Consider setting a code word for phone calls with close ones as authentication.

Please review the following resources which will deepen your understanding and better protect yourself and the people around you from voice cloning scams.

- [Police believe AI voice cloning used to scam seniors](#) (Video)
- [Ontario man out \\$8K in scam that uses AI to mimic voices of friends and family](#) (Article)

As times change, so too do fraudsters. It is important to keep yourself safe, so please remember these cyber tips and stay vigilant about new and dangerous scams.

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### Lets Connect About Mental Health and Well Being Webinar Series

The TDSB Professional Support Services will be running a "*Lets Connect About Mental Health and Well Being Webinar Series: Parent Voices-Creating fun opportunities to connect and boost positive mental health, joy, and happiness.* ([flyer](#)).

**Date & Time:** First session will be on **February 22, 2024, from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm**

**Audience:** Students, families, parents, guardians, caregivers, and staff are all welcome!

Members from our Mental Health and Well-being Parent Partnership Committee will add their voices on the importance of exploring fun activities for positive mental health and wellness. In addition, there will be breakout rooms, which will be co-led by Professional Support Staff and community partners, sharing different ways we can enhance overall mental health and wellness.

### [2023-2024 Winter Well-Being Guide.](#)

The [Winter Well-Being Guide](#) (click on the live link to access it) is filled with activities, games, wellness tips, resources and community agencies to support wellness for all students, parents/guardians/caregivers, and school communities.



The Guide provides accessible resources and is available in the top 20 TDSB spoken languages. Visit this site to access the guide in other languages:

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Elementary-School/Supporting-You/Mental-Health-and-Well-Being-Professional-Support-Staff-PSS/Well-Being-Guide>

### **\*NEW\* Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Helpline 9-8-8...NEW!!!**

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) through the Canadian Radio and Television Corporation (CRTC) has announced on November 30th, 2023, a national three-digit Mental Health and Suicide Prevention hotline number, 988, will be in effect.

CMH's new role in leading the development of 988 service delivery in Canada builds on their experience delivering Talk Suicide Canada, previously known as the Canada Suicide Prevention Service. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) has been selected as the organization to lead the coordination of service delivery for the national three-digit number.

In the face of increased demand for crisis services, **9-8-8** provides:

- A number that's easy to remember in a crisis.
- Support in English and in French, by phone and text.
- Quick access to support from trained responders, available 24/7/365.
- High quality, evidence-based, equitable suicide prevention and crisis support for everyone in Canada.



For more information about 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline, visit <https://988.ca>.

More information is also available at [9-8-8 | CAMH](#) and [9-8-8 number for mental health and suicide prevention | CRTC](#)

## **Kids' Helplines:**

**Kids Help Phone Line** is a 24 hour/7 days per week crisis line that youth can contact for support:  
Online Chat: [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca) Phone: 1-800-668-6868 Text: 686868

**Black Youth Help Line** – available 9 AM – 10 PM [www.blackyouth.ca](http://www.blackyouth.ca) 416-285-9944

**LGBT Youth Line** – Sunday – Friday 4 PM – 9:30 PM – PEER SUPPORT\*

Live chat: [www.youthline.ca](http://www.youthline.ca) Text: 647-694-4275 Call: 1-800-268-9688

**Naseeha - Muslim Mental Health Help Phone – 1-866-Naseeha (627-3342)**

Call: 1-866-627-3342 (7 days/week 12-9 PM) Text: 1-866-627-3342 (Mon-Fri 12-9 PM)

**Hope for Wellness Help Chat** – offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention to all Indigenous peoples across Canada

Live chat: [www.hopeforwellness.ca](http://www.hopeforwellness.ca) Call: 1-855-242-3310 (24/7)

## **Other Resources:**

**Help Ahead** is the centralized resource and intake phone line for multiple trusted community-based mental health organizations in Toronto. Help Ahead has up-to-date information about the available programs and services and can find local supports to address the needs of your child and family.  
<https://www.helpahead.ca/> 1-866-585-6486

**What's Up Walk-In Clinic** provides free mental health counselling for children, youth, young adults and their families, and family with infants. <https://www.whatsupwalkin.ca/resources/>

**One Stop Talk** is a free, confidential service that lets children and youth aged 0-17 years call or connect online from anywhere in Ontario to get brief mental health services. Parents seeking services are encouraged to visit *One Stop Talk* with their child to ensure access to a session.  
<https://onestoptalk.ca/> 1-855-416-8255

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## **Upcoming Dates & Events**

Feb. 26	Literacy/Numeracy Tutoring Starts (Afterschool)
Feb. 28	Late Start – Classes Start at 9:55 am
Feb. 28	School Council Meeting 6:30 - 8:00pm
Feb. 29	2 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Black Excellence Career Panel Pd. 2
Mar. 1	Black History Month Assembly
Mar. 11-15	March Break



## Parent Concern Protocol

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### Classroom Teacher

Step One

If you have any questions or concerns, the first person to go to is your classroom teacher. The classroom teacher can help with:

- Any questions about the classroom
- Classroom rules and consequences
- Homework and assignments

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### School Principal

Step Two

If you would like more information or you have questions that are beyond the classroom, the school principal can help.

- Concerns about an individual school
- Student registration
- Student schedules
- Student suspensions
- Report card concerns
- Classroom concerns
- Code of Conduct
- Safety and security
- Budget and fundraising
- School Council

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### School Superintendents

Step Three

Superintendents are responsible for a Network of Schools. They support school staff and can be contacted if you have questions that have not been answered or for help with:

- Alternate attendance request
- Suspension appeals

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### Trustees

Step Four

Trustees are your elected community officials. They are available to help you with the following areas of the TDSB:

- Concerns about your community
- Ideas and suggestions for the Board
- Items on Board Agenda
- Board policies under review
- Board budget
- Collective bargaining

#### Board Office

You can contact the Board Office directly for any questions or concerns related to:

- Continuing Education
- Night and summer school
- Adult education
- ESL
- Board documents

Phone: 416-397-3000 • Email: [GeneralInquiries@TDSB.on.ca](mailto:GeneralInquiries@TDSB.on.ca)

## School Information

School Phone #: (416) 395 – 3250

School's Twitter: @GeorgesVanierSS

School's Website:

<https://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/georgesvanier>

### Our Student Support Team:

#### Guidance:

Jennifer Hayward (Assistant Curriculum Leader)

Supporting Students with surnames N - Z

[jennifer.hayward@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:jennifer.hayward@tdsb.on.ca)

Margarita Leventis

Supporting Students with Surnames G - M

[margarite.leventis@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:margarite.leventis@tdsb.on.ca)

Loraine Chichester

Supporting Students with Surnames A - F

[loraine.chichester@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:loraine.chichester@tdsb.on.ca)

#### Special Education:

Steven Maurer (Assistant Curriculum Leader)

[steven.maurer@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:steven.maurer@tdsb.on.ca)

#### Student Success:

Paula Burgess (Assistant Curriculum Leader)

[paula.burgess@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:paula.burgess@tdsb.on.ca)

**Superintendent:** Kurt McIntosh (LC2|LN11)

416-395-8808 • [Kurt.McIntosh@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Kurt.McIntosh@tdsb.on.ca)

**Trustee:** James Li • Ward 13

416-395-8787 • [James.Li@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:James.Li@tdsb.on.ca)