

Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin

Chair • Trustee, Ward 11 • Don Valley West

Toronto District School Board

416-395-8787 • Rachel.ChernosLin@tdsb.on.ca

Dear friends,

As I write to you today, it is hard to believe March Break is only a week away. Even though the break is coming, our schools are definitely not winding down! Be it a food drive at Ralph Road, the annual "Carnaval" at John Fisher or the inaugural speech arts contest held at Denlow, featuring students from 5 local elementary schools, there are so many fun, student-centred events happening in our Ward 11 schools.

At the Board level, trustees have been busy advocating on behalf of students and families in a variety of ways. Over the last month, our board wrote to all levels of government to advocate on the issue of food insecurity, calling for a [National School Nutrition Program](#). And, as we are in the midst of budget season, our board also [wrote to all levels of government outlining the importance of consistent, sustainable funding that meets the needs of our students](#). As well, in early February, as chair of our board, I delegated to the Provincial Minister of Finance so that our needs were recorded and made clear to those who shape the Provincial budget.

As you may be aware, one of the roles of school board trustees, as set out in the *Education Act*, is to pass a balanced budget by June 30th of each year. As Chair of the Board, I am particularly concerned about this year's budget season. Passing a balanced budget is never an easy task – the TDSB and public education as a whole have faced significant funding shortages relative to need for many years now. This year, however, may prove particularly difficult due to a confluence of several factors. Specifically, there were two streams of funding provided during the pandemic that enabled school boards to hire additional staff. When the Ministry of Education (EDU) provided those grants, the detailed memorandums that accompanied these grants indicated these funding sources would expire at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. In addition, due to the particular challenges faced by the TDSB during the pandemic, we also used a large amount of our reserves to pay for covid costs. Based on the best advice of Toronto Public Health, decisions were made that had significant financial impact on the TDSB, such as reducing class sizes in Covid-19 hotspot areas. **It should be noted that the EDU directed the TDSB to use reserves in order to cover these additional costs.** And while the Province has reimbursed the City of Toronto for 1/3 of these types of costs, they have not, as of yet, indicated a similar plan for school boards (i.e. we have yet to hear back from them on our request), leaving the TDSB with a significant deficit and little in the way of reserves left to help us balance. Finally, the significant safety concerns in the City of Toronto have led TDSB to make additional investments in our schools in recent months to the tune of approximately \$6 million dollars in order to support student safety, which has, unfortunately, once again, had to come out of our bottom line.

As we await announcement regarding our funding for next school year (called the "Grants for Student Needs", or GSN's for short) – due out, we hope, in the next couple of weeks – staff have advised a slightly different approach than in previous years to our budget and staffing process. As approximately 65% of our budget rests in school-based staffing, and as our collective agreements have timelines that are fast approaching for particular categories of school-based allocations, we are only releasing school-based staffing guided by what we do know for sure at this time based on enrolment projections and that meet our collective agreement requirements. There will be forthcoming decisions on these numbers and other staffing categories once we understand the GSN's – and that is why there are columns in the staffing allocation currently listed as to be determined, or TBD. **Again, these are not the final numbers of staffing that will be allocated to our schools for 2023-2024. School-based staffing will be updated once the GSN's come out and once TDSB Trustees prioritize budget decisions.**

You can read more about the current budget plans and the 2023-2024 Staffing Report coming to the Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee [here](#).

This may seem like a lot of information to digest! I will endeavour to keep you notified as this process unfolds over the coming weeks and months.

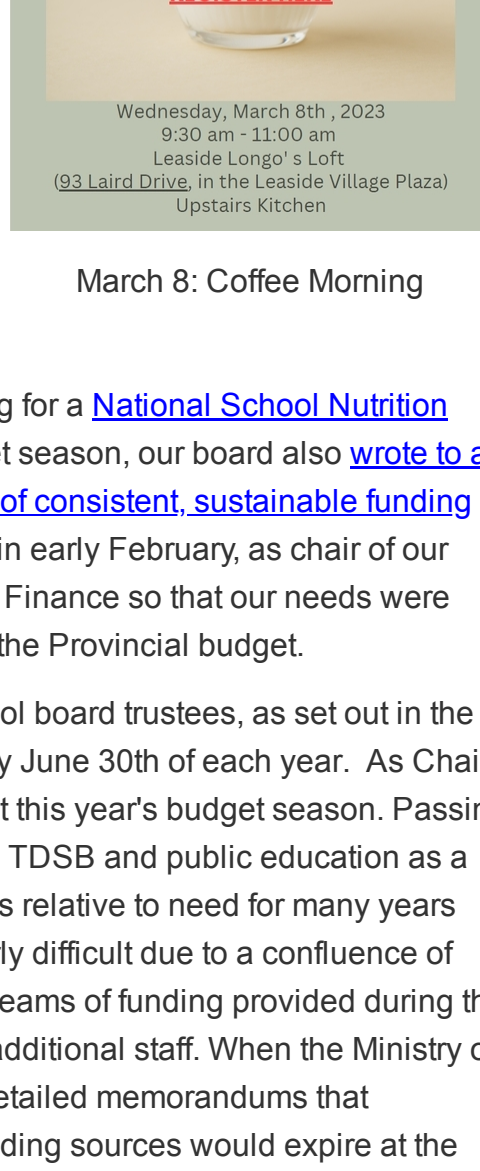
While I know this is a busy time of year for many, I hope some of you will find time to join me in the kitchen at Longo's next Wednesday for a Ward 11 Coffee morning (details and registration can be found in the flyer at the top of this newsletter). We will be joined by our Ward 11 Superintendents, and this promises to be a morning of interesting conversation on all things education, including, I expect, the budget!

Below you will find additional information regarding updates and events that I hope will be of use. As always, feel free to reach out to me with any questions, comments or concerns, and I look forward to seeing many of you at Longo's next Wednesday morning!

~Rachel

Rachel Chernos Lin, Chair, Toronto District School Board, Chair and Ward 11 Trustee, Don Valley West

Rachel.ChernosLin@tdsb.on.ca



March 8: Coffee Morning

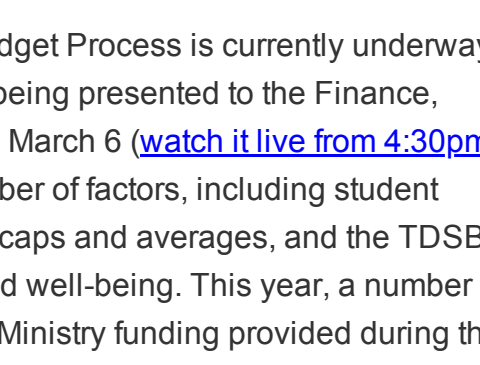
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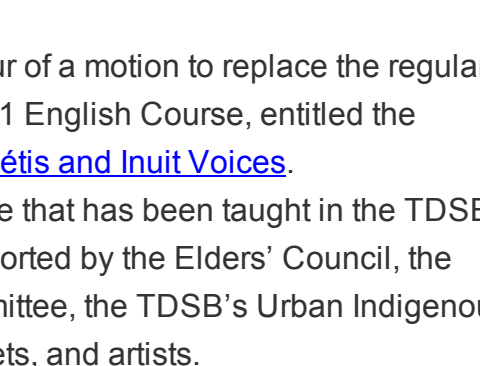
Earthquake in Türkiye and Syria



The people of Türkiye and Syria continue to be in our thoughts following an earthquake last month that has tragically claimed tens of thousands of lives and injured many more. The TDSB has launched a board-wide campaign to raise funds for earthquake relief. To learn more and/or to donate, please visit the [Canadian Red Cross website](#).

TDSB Professional Support Services staff have created [resources](#) to help support students & families who may be experiencing a range of emotions. Please reach out to your school principal should you require additional support.

Kindergarten Registration



Registration for English Kindergarten programs began in February. The TDSB is looking forward to welcoming you and your child at school in September!

To attend Junior Kindergarten in September, children must turn four-years-old by December 31. To register for Senior Kindergarten, children must be five-years-old by December 31.

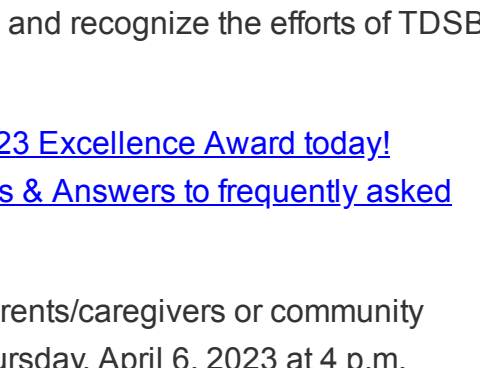
For more information about the Kindergarten program and registration requirements, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/kindergarten.

2023-2024 Budget

As mentioned above, the TDSB's 2023-24 Budget Process is currently underway, with the School-Based Staff Allocation report being presented to the Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee on Monday, March 6 ([watch it live from 4:30pm](#)). Every year, staff allocation is guided by a number of factors, including student enrolment, collective agreements, class sizes caps and averages, and the TDSB's commitment to equity, student achievement and well-being. This year, a number of additional factors, including the elimination of Ministry funding provided during the COVID-19 pandemic, have impacted staff allocation.

[Learn more](#) (including about the forecasted deficit of 61 million dollars)

Tutoring Update



We are excited that schools continue to add or expand Continuing Education After-School programs.

TUTORING SUPPORTS!

In addition, we continue to work with community organizations to create March Break tutoring camps across the city.

We continue to communicate all Tutoring options to students, parents/caregivers/guardians. You can learn more through [this flyer](#) which highlights free unlimited, no on-demand, 24/7 tutoring services to all TDSB students (K to Grade 12) in all subjects through two companies: [Paper](#) and [Brainfuse](#).

Mandatory Indigenous Education to be Gradually Implemented in Grade 11

A couple of weeks ago, trustees voted in favour of a motion to replace the regular Grade 11 English course with another Grade 11 English course, entitled the [Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis and Inuit Voices](#).

This is a Ministry of Education Grade 11 course that has been taught in the TDSB with great success for many years and is supported by the Elders' Council, the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee, the TDSB's Urban Indigenous Education Centre, and Indigenous writers, poets, and artists.

The motion asked for a report to be presented to the Board in June, outlining a gradual implementation plan for the course including timelines on when students and staff can expect this course to be made available across the system.

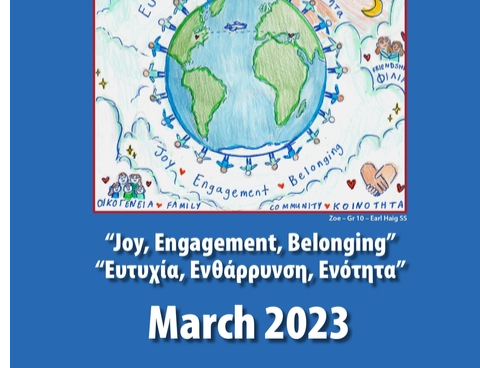
Quick Facts - [The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies](#) (2019) stipulates: "The Grade 11 course 'English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices' may be used to meet the Grade 11 English compulsory credit requirement."

This is an important step in fulfilling our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and will provide students with a more nuanced understanding of the history of our country and the Indigenous experience, all while developing critical thinking and communication skills. We know this has been a popular course in many of our schools and look forward to bringing it system-wide in the years to come.

Multi-Year Strategic Plan - Have Your Say!

The Toronto District School Board is beginning the process to renew its Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYP) and we invite the entire TDSB community to get involved and Have Your Say! The renewal process will build on the foundation of our current MYP and throughout the next several months there will be a variety of opportunities to share your thoughts and ideas. Please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/MYSPRenewal to learn more and for ongoing updates.

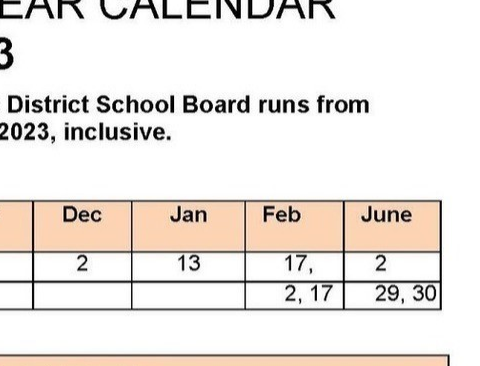
TDSB Student Census



The TDSB Student Census was first administered in 2006 and this year will mark the fourth instalment. This work has been recognized by the Ministry of Education and other organizations for the comprehensive and evidence-informed approach to improvement. The TDSB Student Census has been designed to gather information about students' perceptions and identities including participation in school activities, safety, well-being, mental health, outdoor learning, etc. When students share their experiences, staff are then able to better develop school and system programs to better support them and eliminate the barriers to learning and positive school experiences.

As you may recall, the Student Census was paused in November to complete a review. This review is nearing completion and staff are currently working to finalize materials. Currently, the Student Census is tentatively planned to be launched at the end of March, with information shared with families immediately following March Break and students expected to complete the surveys throughout the month of April. Stay tuned - your support is appreciated.

2023 Excellence Awards: nominations now open!



TDSB staff make our schools and workplaces incredible spaces to learn, work and play. We all know stories of staff who go above and beyond for students, colleagues and the broader community, and every year, the [TDSB Excellence Awards](#) are a chance to spotlight these stories and recognize the efforts of TDSB staff.

- [Nominate a TDSB staff member for a 2023 Excellence Award today!](#)
- [Learn more about the Excellence Awards & Answers to frequently asked questions.](#)

Nominations can come from staff, students, parents/caregivers or community members. The deadline for nominations is Thursday, April 6, 2023 at 4 p.m.

Pride T-Shirt Design Competition

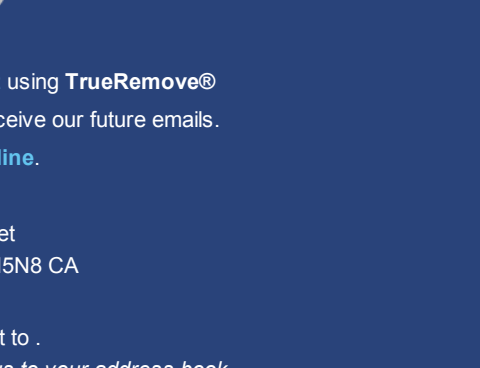
Pride Month 2023 is just around the corner, and the TDSB Pride Planning Committee is holding a T-Shirt Design Competition. Open to all TDSB students, we're looking for two unique designs that celebrate 2SLGBTQ+ Pride across TDSB. The winning designs will be printed on hundreds of TDSB Pride 2023 T-shirts and worn by all members of the TDSB contingent during 2023 Pride Parade on Sunday, June 25.

The TDSB Pride 2023 T-shirt Design Competition is open to all ages. Deadline for design submissions is March 23rd, 2023 at midnight.

For more information and to submit an entry, please email tdsbpride@tdsb.on.ca attaching an image of the design (e.g., .jpeg, .gif, .png, .pdf, etc.). Be sure to include the student's name, grade and school, as well as the name of a staff member for communication.

For more information and submission criteria, check out [the TDSB website](#).

Parent Conferences



Exciting news about TWO Parent Conferences!

- **PIAC Conference: Save the Date of May 6!**
Join the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) as it returns to the first post-pandemic, in-person conference, with speakers and workshops focused on bridging gaps in Parent Engagement and School Councils. Mark your calendar for Saturday, May 6, 2023 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Earl Haig SS. [Learn more.](#)
- **Parents and Caregivers as Partners: Call for Workshop Proposal**
The Parents and Caregivers as Partners Conference (PCasP), happening on October 21 and 22, 2023 is seeking proposals for virtual and hybrid (in-person or streaming) workshops, micro-sessions, and panel presentations. PCasP provides an opportunity to highlight innovation and high-impact strategies for partnering, collaborating, and nurturing parent/caregiver partnerships and alliances. [Submit your proposal now!](#) Due by April 11, 2023. Visit www.parentspartners.ca for further information.

Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement offers a variety of programming for students, staff and families. Join for our upcoming events: [Webinar Wednesdays - Academic Pathways - myBluePrint](#) on March 8 at 6:30 p.m., and a film screening of [Scarborough](#), in collaboration with UICB and the Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression team on March 7 at 6 p.m.

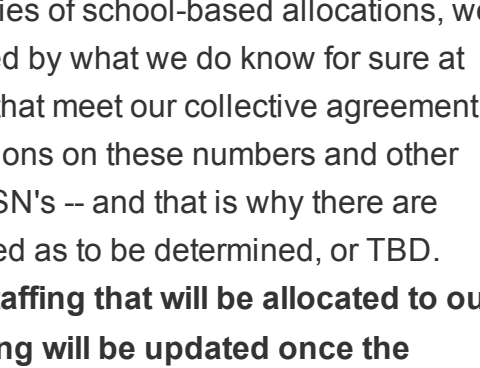
To learn more, visit the CEBSA [website](#) and follow @tdsb_cebsa on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Apply for the Know Your Worth Scholarship

The African Heritage Month Volunteer Planning Committee is pleased to announce that graduating students of African heritage will be able to apply for the Know Your Worth Scholarship. There are three scholarships available worth \$2,000 each.

[Learn More](#)

School Year Calendar 2023-2024



Each year, the Ministry of Education provides direction to school boards in determining their calendar for the following school year.

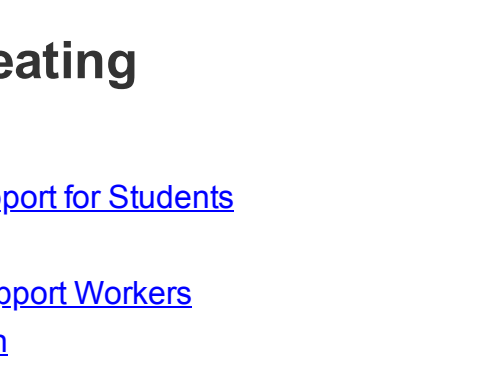
This month, a [School Year Calendar committee with representative membership](#) convened to develop recommendations around the 2023-2024 School Year Calendar.

Proposed School Year Calendar 2023-2024

In consultation with the School Year Calendar Committee, Toronto Catholic District School Board and other neighbouring Boards it was recommended that Winter Break will be scheduled from December 25, 2023 – January 5, 2024.

On February 27th, Trustees approved the School Year Calendar. It has now been sent to the Minister of Education for final approval. Assuming no changes, we expect the first day of school for students will be Tuesday, September 5, 2023. Please note, the key dates have been reviewed by the Board's Equity Team.

Heritage & History Months



The Toronto District School Board proudly celebrates Greek Heritage Month (GHM) during the month of March.

Several activities will be shared to mark GHM. A poster contest was held and all students from the Toronto District School Board were invited to submit images that best reflected this year's theme. One of the selected images is included here.

The theme for this year is based on TDSB's priorities "Joy, Engagement, Belonging" (Ευτυχία, Εμπέγγυση, Ενότητα).

Visit the [GHM website](#) for information and resources. It includes "Daily Announcements" along with featured focussed days with activities. "Musical Mondays", "Traditional Tuesdays", "Wonder Wednesdays", "Theatrical Thursdays", and "Foodie Fridays".

[Greek Heritage Month - Calendar of Activities \(google.com\)](#)

Join us on Friday, March 24th for a Social Event at Floga Restaurant – [see flyer to RSVP](#)

Join us on Sunday, March 26th at 1:30pm for the Greek Independence Day Parade on the Danforth (meet at 15 Phin Avenue at 1pm).

2022-2023 School Year Calendar

Mark your calendars! The first next school year holidays are April 7 & April 10.

There are no classes for students on the dates listed below (also check out the [Days of Significance Calendar](#)).

KEY DATES - SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR 2022-2023

The official school year calendar for the Toronto District School Board runs from September 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, inclusive.

Professional Activity Days	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	June
Elementary Schools	6	7	18	2	13	17	2
Secondary Schools	8	7	18			2, 17	28, 30

Designation of Professional Activity Days	
Elementary	Secondary
1. September 6, 2022 – Professional Development 2. October 7, 2022 – Professional Development 3. November 18, 2022 – Parent Teacher Conferences 4. December 2, 2022 – Professional Development 5. January 13, 2023 – Assessment and Reporting 6. February 17, 2023 – Parent Teacher Conferences 7. June 2, 2023 – Assessment and Reporting	1. September 8, 2022 – Professional Development 2. October 7, 2022 – Professional Development 3. November 18, 2022 – Professional Development 4. February 2, 2023 – Professional Development 5. February 17, 2023 – Professional Development 6. June 28, 2023 – Professional Development 7. June 30, 2023 – Professional Development

EQAO – The following dates have been established:

Gr. 9 Math: TBD

Gr. 9 Math: TBD

OSLT: TBD

Primary/Junior EQAO: TBD

Dates to Remember - School Year Holidays (as per Ministry of Education)	
Labour Day:	September 5, 2022
Thanksgiving:	October 10, 2022
Winter Break:	December 28, 2022 – January 6, 2023
Family Day:	February 26, 2023
Mid-Winter Break:	March 13 – 17, 2023
Good Friday:	April 7, 2023
Easter Monday:	April 10, 2023
Victoria Day:	May 22, 2023

Stay Connected with your school and the board

The TDSB is offering two new ways to stay connected with your school and the TDSB. Learn about opting in for text messages and using the School Messenger app, which provides a faster and easier way to report absences. [Learn more.](#)

TDSB Update

Sign-up for [TDSB Update](#) and stay informed about recent Board decisions and district-wide news.

Upcoming Meetings

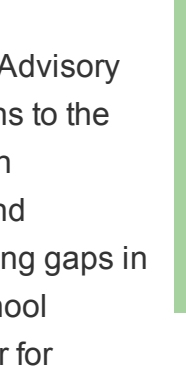
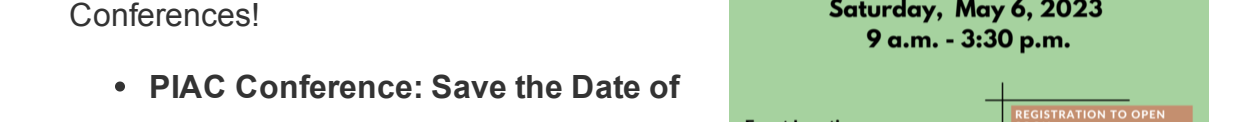
The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 8, 2023. For a list of upcoming meetings, please click on the [calendar](#) on the main webpage of www.tdsb.on.ca. Board and Committee Meetings can be [watched online](#).

Follow the TDSB

Join the conversations happening on TDSB's social media communities. You'll find the most up-to-date information about us on our Twitter ([@TDSB](#)), Facebook ([@toronto.dsb](#)) and Instagram ([@Torontodsbs](#)) accounts.

If you notice anything at a school that concerns you, please call the TDSB 24-hour Call Centre (416) 395-4620, Toronto Police Services Dispatch (non-emergencies via 416-808-2222), and/or Toronto 311.

If you or a family member is in crisis, please contact Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or get support right now by texting CONNECT to 686868.



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