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January 2020 Newsletter

TDSB Expands Itinerant Music Instructors (IMIs) to More Schools

Starting this school year, the TDSB has expanded its IMI enrichment program to include 17 new schools. As a result of this expansion, more than 1,200 new students will have access to the program through 1,600 new IMI hours.

The expansion of the program is the result of a review of the distribution of IMI hours which found that some schools had a disproportionately high allocation of hours, while others had none.

More information, including a list of schools, is available [online](#).

Junior Extended French Parent/Guardian Information Sessions

This year, there will be two virtual (online webchat) information sessions for parents/guardians interested in the Junior Extended French (Gr. 4 entry) application process. For more information on dates/times for each virtual online webchat session, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/French website or click on [Information Sessions](#).

TDSB Appoints First Indigenous Student Trustee

Clarity M. Smoke, a Grade 9 Anishnaabe student from Monarch Park Collegiate Institute, has taken her seat as the first ever Toronto District School Board [Indigenous Student Trustee](#).

This position will provide Indigenous students, families and communities with additional representation at the highest level of the TDSB; help improve the Board's decision-making process; and increase understanding about Indigenous ways of knowing and being, as well as the issues that matter most to Indigenous students and their families.

For more information, please read the [news release](#).

Director's Annual Report 2019

The Director's Annual Report for the Toronto District School Board was released on December 11, 2019. The report is a ministerial requirement that highlights some of the important work that is happening across the system and accomplishments from the past year.

The [report](#) is now available online.

Letter: Toronto's Construction Hub Coordination Pilot

The Chair of the Board Robin Pilkey wrote to the General Manager of Transportation Services at the City of Toronto to request that local principals and trustees, and Toronto Lands Corporation and Board staff be invited to participate in the Toronto's Construction Hub Coordination Pilot as stakeholders.

Read the [letter](#).

Parents Reaching Out Grants: Letter to Minister of Education

The Chair of the Board Robin Pilkey wrote to the Minister of Education to express the Board's concerns with the new funding model for the Parents Reaching Out Grants and the reduction in funding for the 2019-20 school year.

Read the [letter](#).

Student, Staff and School Achievements

The Toronto District School Board is always proud to acknowledge the achievements of our students, staff and school communities. Below are a few highlights from December:

- [LGBTQI2S+ students and allies connect at EnVision Conference](#)
- [Black Brilliance Conference Provides Sense of Belonging to Students](#)
- [Students Have Grand Time at the 9th Annual Caring & Sharing Christmas Gala](#)
- [Gracedale PS Raises Funds for Local Shelter for the Elderly](#)

Early French Immersion Parent/Guardian Information Sessions

This year, there will be two virtual (online webchat) information sessions for parents/guardians interested in the Early French Immersion (SK entry) application process. For more information on dates/times for each virtual online webchat session, please visit [www.tdsb.on.ca/French](#) website or click on [Information Sessions](#).

Winter Weather and Student Transportation

From time to time, it may be necessary to cancel student transportation, classes and/or programs due to severe weather. On rare occasions, severe weather makes it necessary to close schools, administrative offices or sites.

With approximately 246,000 students in 582 schools, any decision to cancel buses, classes and/or programs or to close sites can have a significant impact on thousands of families across Toronto. This decision is not taken lightly. When schools remain open on days with inclement weather, parents/guardians make the final decision on whether to send their children to school and they can keep children home from school if they so choose.

Should a cancellation or closure be necessary, information will be posted on the TDSB web site, TDSB social media and provided to local media by 6 a.m. For more information, please see the TDSB's Procedure for Severe Weather: <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Detail/docId/242>

Traffic Safety Tips: Help Make this a Safe Winter Season

As winter approaches, we know that severe weather will be part of our daily lives for the next several months. While traffic safety is an important matter all year long, this is a particularly good time to review what we can do to keep students safe.

The need to be aware and alert at all times, on any road, and even in the most routine circumstances is key to traffic safety. This applies to students and drivers alike. Road

conditions can be challenging in the winter months. So to those of us who drive, please take extra care on the roads and in parking lots, especially in areas where children might be present.

School staff periodically review street and traffic safety with students. Parents can help reinforce these safety messages with children at home. Below are some tips that might be helpful to review.

- Stop, look, and listen for traffic.
- Only cross at corners and crosswalks.
- Make eye contact with drivers.
- Walk on the right side of the crosswalk.
- Wear appropriate footwear to reduce the chances of slipping.
- Never run into the street.
- Obey crossing signals.
- Cross only if clear.
- Walk on sidewalks.
- Where there are no sidewalks, walk as far away from traffic as possible, facing traffic.

The safety of our students is always a top priority. Let's work together to make the winter season safe so we can enjoy all it has to offer.

Stay Healthy During Flu Season

Flu season is here again. In Canada, flu season tends to run between October and April. The Ontario government is encouraging Ontarians to avoid getting sick this flu season by getting their annual flu shot.

Toronto Public Health is recommending that whenever students and staff experience flu-like symptoms, they are sent home and do not return to school until they are no longer infectious to others. Therefore, ill students and staff should be symptom-free (especially from vomiting and diarrhea) for at least 48 hours before returning to school.

The primary concern is for the health and safety of all students and staff. Please note that no special measures are required when there is a case of influenza in a school or daycare. However, everyone should do their part to stop the spread of the flu. As parents, you can also assist by:

- Reminding children to wash their hands often especially after using the washroom and before and after eating;
- Reminding children to cover their sneeze and cough;
- Watching for symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, and/or high fever;
- Informing the school if your child is ill;
- Keeping your child at home when he/she is ill.

For more information, please visit the Toronto Public Health website www.toronto.ca/health, contact your family doctor, or Telehealth Ontario. 1-866-797- 0000.

Reminder: Call School if Your Child Will be Late or Absent

One measure of keeping our students safe is to ensure we can account for any absences or reasons for being late to school. We would like to remind you that if your child is going to be absent or late for any reason, we ask that you contact the school immediately and report the reason for the absence. If we are not informed about the absence, we will make attempts to contact you through our automated call-out system to determine the reason for the absence. To find out how this automated system works

please visit

<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/HighSchool/CaringSafeSchools/SafeArrivalProgram.aspxb>

Please let the office know by calling the school if your contact information, including phone number, changes at any time throughout the school year.

Thank you for your continued cooperation to keep your children safe and accounted for.

High School Information Nights

To help you make an informed decision when choosing a high school, TDSB schools host information nights for parents and grade 8 students each year between October and January. Learn everything you need to know about our incredible variety of schools, programs and courses.

The dates and times for all High School Information Nights are available online at
<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Going-to-High-School/Open-Houses-and-Information-Nights>

TDSB Celebrates Tamil Heritage Month in January

During the month of January, the Toronto District School Board is excited to be starting off the New Year by celebrating [Tamil Heritage Month](#). This year, the chosen theme selected by the volunteer planning committee is, Vision 2020: Yengal Kathaigal - Our Stories / Vision 2020: எங்கள் கதைகள் - Our Stories.

Toronto has the largest Tamil population outside of the South Asian subcontinent with thousands of TDSB students and staff members heritage identified as Tamil. All have stories of their journey of how they or their families arrived in Canada, and how they continue to embrace this country as their home. The attached poster reflecting the theme is being shared with all schools. Our intent is that it will be used as an educational tool to examine stories within and across cultures of students in the TDSB and how they shape our individual and collective identities.

TDSB Update

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

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, Facebook and Instagram accounts

- [Twitter @TDSB](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram @Torontodsb](#)