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October 2017 Newsletter

School Resource Officer Update

The Board voted to review the School Resource Officer (SRO) program beginning this September 2017. The SRO program sees officers from the Toronto Police Service (TPS) assigned to 45 of the TDSB's 584 schools. To allow for open and unbiased input, the Board [decided to suspend the program](#) during the course of the review.

The review includes a survey, to gather the input of staff and students at the 45 schools that have had an SRO, and [community consultations](#). While honouring the input of all stakeholders, the consultations will reflect the Board's commitment equity and inclusion with a focus on engaging those voices that have traditionally been marginalized or discounted. Once this review is complete, a decision about the continuation of the program will be made. The outcome of the consultations and the review are expected to be presented at the November Board Meeting.

TDSB schools continue to be caring and safe places in which to learn. Each school has a comprehensive safe schools plan that includes a variety of elements, such as secure access systems, bullying prevention and conflict resolution programs, community partnerships, cameras, school-based safety monitors, and more. The Community School Liaison Officer program, which serves elementary schools in Toronto, is not affected by the review and continues.

New School Traffic Management Program to Improve Safety in School Zones

The TDSB and the City of Toronto are working together to improve traffic management, and make school zones safer, to encourage more students and families to walk and bike to school. Compared to previous generations, fewer students are walking and cycling to school. With more children being driven, there are rising environmental concerns, due to pollution from cars, and health and safety concerns, as children have less physical activity in their daily lives.

[Learn more](#) about how the TDSB's traffic management program and the City's [Vision Zero Road Safety Plan](#) are supporting active and safe routes to school.

EQAO and OSSLT Results

On September 20, the TDSB released its Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) 2016-17 achievement results.

This included results for:

- Grades 3 and 6 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics
- Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics
- Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test.

Following the release of EQAO and OSSLT results, TDSB staff, administrators and teachers analyze the data to determine appropriate strategies, programs and initiatives aimed at improving student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics. [Learn more](#)

Message About Events in Las Vegas, Nevada

In the aftermath of mass shooting in Las Vegas, Chair Robin Pilkey and Director of Education John Malloy released a statement and shared information to aid discussions with children about this tragic and shocking act of violence. [Learn more](#).

Severe Weather

Regardless of the season, weather can have an impact on system-wide school board operations or individual schools, staff and students. Whether it's cold and snow or extreme heat, the Toronto District School Board has a number of practices and policies in place to manage the impact of this weather on the school board. For more information about snow/cold weather and extreme heat, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Severe-Weather.

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 www.tdsb.on.ca/HighSchool/GoingtoHighSchool/OpenHousesandInformationNights.

French Programs Application Deadline

For families interested in the Toronto District School Board's French Immersion or Extended French programs, we offer an online process for applying to:

- Early French Immersion (EFI) which begins in Senior Kindergarten
- Junior Extended French (JEF) which begins in Grade 4

We guarantee an offer of placement in the program (not a specific school) to all on-time applicants. Transportation is provided as per the Board's Transportation policy.

The timelines for applying for these programs for September 2018 are:

- Applications for Early French Immersion (for a Junior Kindergarten aged child), must be completed online between October 30, 2017 and November 30, 2017.
- Applications for Junior Extended French must be completed online between January 8, 2018 and February 8, 2018.

Offers of placement within your chosen program will be made to all on-time applicants in the weeks following the close of the application window.

Please note: families with an older sibling currently in a French program are still required to complete an online application for the new student.

For further information about French as a Second Language programs, the application process and dates for information evenings, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/french.

Trustee Ward Boundary Review

The Toronto District School Board is undertaking a Trustee Ward Boundary Review in order to align with the new City of Toronto wards recently enacted by Toronto City Council. Members of the public are invited to provide feedback on the proposed options through public meetings and an online survey. To learn more and provide input, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Trustees/WardBoundaryReview.

Join us to celebrate Islamic Heritage Month

October is Islamic Heritage Month 2017 at the TDSB and this year's theme is "Reflect. Celebrate. Learn." There are many exciting events planned throughout October to give students, parents and community members opportunities to learn about the rich culture and traditions of people of Islamic Heritage. Please see the [IHM Calendar of Events](#) for event details and follow us on Twitter [@TDSB_IHM](#) for updates and pictures. [Learn more](#).

October is Somali Heritage Month

Somali Heritage Month is recognized at the TDSB in October, as students and staff take this opportunity to learn about the history, heritage and diversity of the Somali community. This year, especially with Canada's 150th birthday, we honour Canadians of Somali descent who have made and continue to make significant contributions to the City of Toronto, Province of Ontario and Canadian society at large. [Learn more](#).

TDSB Marks Women's History Month

In October, Canadians mark Women's History Month in celebration of the 1929 "Person's Case," which declared women "persons under the law" and meant women were eligible to be appointed to the senate. It must also be acknowledged that women's participation in politics has been limited by race as well as by

sex. The TDSB also marks the International Day of the Girl on October 11, which aims to make a difference in the lives of girls and young women as citizens and to become powerful voices for change within their families, their communities and their nations. [Learn more.](#)

Body Confidence Awareness Week

The TDSB is recognizing its first annual Body Confidence Awareness Week in the second week of October. Speaking openly with students about body image and confidence is important to help build self-esteem. The Board's student census reports offer some concerning statistics that discrimination on the basis of body image was the highest form of harassment reported in grades 7 and 8. All students have the right to learn and thrive socially, emotionally and academically in a safe and caring school environment that is conducive to optimal performance and student success without fear of discrimination based on their appearance. [Learn more.](#)

Ministry of Education Announces New Programs and Funds

The provincial government has recently made a number of education-related announcements. This included new funding to support student well-being through active transportation programs, violence prevention and more. [Learn more.](#)

The Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum and assessment will be modernized, which will include new report cards for the 2018-19 school year. The process will also incorporate public consultations. [Learn more.](#)

Finally, the Ministry of Education released its three-year [Education Equity Action Plan](#) which, much like the TDSB's [equity work](#), highlights the importance of identifying and reducing barriers to student success. Other areas of focus include pathways to work and post-secondary education after high school, disparities in suspension and expulsion rates and expanding culturally relevant resources. [Learn more.](#)

Hallowe'en Safety Tips

Hallowe'en provides an opportunity for parents and children to spend time together creating costumes, carving pumpkins, planning trick or treat activities and participating in family parties. Hallowe'en is a big event at schools and provides opportunities for parties, creative activities, art programs and impromptu history lessons. Hallowe'en is also a time for students, parents, and schools to take extra care to ensure safety and security.

Trick or Treat Safety

If parents are concerned about trick or treating, here are some basic safety rules to follow:

- Children should NEVER eat any treats until parents have had a chance to go through them and inspect them. Parents should look for tampering of packages and discard any they believe to be unsafe or unknown.
- Have your child carry a flashlight.
- NEVER go into a stranger's house.
- NEVER trick or treat with people you do not know.

- Trick or treat only at homes you know.
- Children should always stay in groups if no parent is present.
- Younger children should ALWAYS be accompanied by an older person.
- Accompany your child when trick or treating.
- If you cannot accompany your child then know the route your child will take.
- Flame resistant (retardant) costumes are in order. Keep costumes short and remind children to stay away from pumpkins with candles in them.
- Remind children to stay away from pets they do not know.
- Remind children of road safety rules. Cross only at corners. Do not criss-cross the road. Go up one side of the road and down the other side. Never cross between parked cars. Walk facing on-coming traffic if there is no sidewalk
- If adults are driving their children, drive slowly, with lights on and be cautious when pulling to the side of the road.
- Children should wear their own shoes when trick or treating. Wearing costume shoes/boots can be dangerous and uncomfortable.
- Remind children that not everyone celebrates Hallowe'en, and to avoid any homes that have no lights on. Also remind children not to run through neighbours yards or gardens.
- With older children, be sure to know what other events (such as parties) they plan on attending.
- Set time limits when children should return home.

Keeping Kids Safe

Drivers are reminded to do their part to keep children safe near school buses.

Drivers should follow these tips:

- Stop and never pass a school bus when its red lights are flashing.
- Leave space around school buses and avoid blocking school bus loading zones so children can enter and exit safely.
- Be prepared to stop for a school bus at any time, not just during school hours.
- Always obey the rules of the road and watch for children, especially in school zones.
- Stop for pedestrians at crosswalks and school crossings.

Parents can also help keep their children safe by reminding them to be aware of their surroundings when they are on or near school buses.

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