



AMHS Parent Bulletin

Week of June 8, 2020

Message from Admin

During the course of our journey through the school closure circumstance, we have collectively gone through stages of wondering and observing – wondering about what life will look like post-pandemic, and observing how schools, and society in general, have responded to the crisis. The next big, collective wondering on the horizon is around what schooling will look like in September. The adults in the world tend to exist fleetingly in the current moment, because we are always so busy thinking about the future, as we find comfort in actively planning for what comes next. But what if we could exist comfortably in the moment, and teach our children to do the same?

In a typical school year, June is the month in which students' bodies sit in classrooms, but their minds are frequently elsewhere. "Why am I sitting in this classroom, when the weather outside is so nice?" "I wonder where my friends are, and what we are going to do tonight..." "I can't wait to just finish my exams and let summer start, already!" This year, that instinct to "just be done with school" is even stronger, and enabled further by school-year completion being carried out remotely. In even the most dedicated of students, motivation might be waning, and parents might be struggling to find ways to encourage their children along. And while there is no magic solution to reversing this teen tendency to mentally "check out" from school, there is value in guiding our children to find one big positive in our current circumstance. As a society, we have been given permission to pause, and as families, we have agency in finding purpose in that pause.

If there is a silver lining on the pandemic cloud, it would have to be that this pause has given families a chance to slow down, and to put our previously frantic lives on a bit of a hiatus. Between traveling to work and school, coordinating schedules, running to after-school/work activities, and trying to squeeze the most out of a day, undivided time was scarce before; now, we have an abundance of it. This frenzied pace has also conditioned our children: to rush through their course assignments, to juggle and multi-task to prepare for the next set of tests or projects. And the stress that was attached to all this was just a given, just a "part of life". But now, our children too have been given permission to pause, reflect, and to take the time to give attention to the things that matter. Critical thinking, problem solving, paying attention to details, how one presents themselves; these aren't just educational buzz-phrases, they are life skills – and so, they matter. Our teens should not be feeling that past sense of urgency towards hurried completion and ticking-off checkboxes that they did before – they can still meet their learning obligations while taking the time to slow down, finding one thing to be grateful for each day, and being good to themselves.

We have all learned along this pandemic journey that the gift of ample time does not necessarily correlate with increased motivation. But what we can do is find relief in the idea that pausing can be purposeful. We can encourage our children to pause, to think about what means most to them, to plan out goals and next steps, and to find self-awareness in accomplishment. They should know that there is great value in crossing the finish line. But remember that unlike other years, it is less of a race. They can pace themselves a bit.



Admin Team Changes

At this past week's board meeting, administrator appointments and transfers were announced. One of our Vice Principals, Yula Nouragas, will be starting a full-year leave in the upcoming school year. We extend our best wishes to Ms. Nouragas on her leave.

Erika Pridie will be joining AMHS in September 2020 as our incoming Vice Principal. She is coming to us from Milliken Mills High School, where she is currently Interim Vice Principal. We welcome Ms. Pridie as the newest member of our AMHS school community.

Greetings and Message from Our Trustee – June 2020

Dear families,

I hope that you and your loved ones are keeping well and are healthy. The past few months have been full of change and uncertainty as we respond to the global pandemic and try to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As a Board of Trustees, we know that our families have experienced this pandemic and the school closures in different ways, and we want you to know that our thoughts have been with you all.

Our school board moved quickly to introduce our [Learning and Caring Plan](#) through an intentionally phased approach. Our plan focused on both supporting student well-being and providing continuation of learning for more than 127,000 students. A plan was developed that respected each family's unique situations and focused on maintaining a caring, safe and inclusive learning environment. To support this, over 20,000 pieces of technology were distributed to ensure that all of our students could access the learning opportunities available to them, and resources and plans were put in place to support all of our learners, including students with special education needs and English language learners.

More information about the Learning and Caring plan as well as tips, resources and supports for students and families to support well-being and online learning can be found at www.yrdsb.ca/covid19.

We are all part of a larger community and I am inspired to see the many different ways schools, families and students maintained their connections with one another. It was also moving to see the many inspiring ways our school board, students, staff and families acknowledged our frontline workers and made contributions to the fight against COVID-19. As a school board, for example, we [donated over 145,000 pieces of personal protective equipment](#), including gloves, masks and more.

Each and every one of us has made a difference - in staying home as much as possible and following [public health guidelines](#). I know that this has meant making sacrifices.

To our graduating class of 2020, I know this is not the graduating year you had hoped for. I appreciate that the school closures will not affect your ability to graduate, however this unique situation and the need to postpone graduations has been disappointing. I remain tremendously proud of all of our graduates and look forward to celebrating this important milestone with you as soon as we are able to reschedule the graduation ceremonies.

In addition, I know that you have missed out on field trips, awards events, athletic banquets, spirit days, assemblies, our annual [Celebrating Student Success awards](#) and the many other ways we extend learning, connect as a community and celebrate the achievements of our students.

We have also been unable to gather together as we normally would in our schools and communities to celebrate or recognize important dates, including Sikh Heritage Month, Pesach, Good Friday, Easter (Western), Vaisakhi, Holy Friday, Orthodox Easter (Eastern), Ridvan, Jewish Heritage Month, Asian/South Asian Heritage Month, Ramadan, Pride, National Indigenous History Month, Italian Heritage Month and Portuguese Heritage Month. As a Board, these dates of significance are important for us to acknowledge and we will continue to celebrate and value the wealth of diversity in our community.

As the school year comes to a close, I want to wish you and your families a safe, healthy and happy summer. I look forward to a time when we can welcome your children back into our schools again. We know that families have questions about what the return to school will look like. We will continue to share information with you as it becomes available. In the meantime, we encourage you to continue following public health guidelines and to stay connected.

A [message from the Chair of the Board of Trustees](#) is also available on the Board website at www.yrdsb.ca.

Corrie McBain
Trustee, Richmond Hill, Wards 1, 2 and 4

Message from the Director and Board Chair

Please use the link below to access our Director's and Board Chair's message to our YRDSB schools community, regarding our Board's commitment to anti-Black Racism:

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/Repository/NewsEvents/Pages/BoardNews/Message-From-The-Director.aspx>

Message from the Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education has asked all school boards to share information about Ontario's new COVID-19 testing plan, including the availability of free testing for any Ontarian who would like it. Tests are free and do not require an OHIP card. Referrals are no longer required to visit an assessment centre and no Ontarian will be declined a test.

To learn more about this plan, including when you should get tested and the process, please visit our website to see a [message from the Ministry of Education regarding COVID-19 testing](#).

International Pride Month

June is Pride Month around the globe. This month was chosen to commemorate the Stonewall Riots which took place in New York City at the end of June 1969. In YRDSB, we committed to recognizing and celebrating Pride Month by way of a number of initiatives, including the opportunity for schools to fly the Pride Flag at their school sites below the Canadian Flag. The Pride Flag is internationally recognized as a symbol of pride, hope and diversity. Gilbert Baker, a San Francisco artist, designed the Pride Flag in 1978 as a response to the need for a symbol to support the LGBT rights movement. Flying the Pride Flag affirms our Board's commitment to eliminating harmful biases and prejudice that lead to discrimination and exclusion, it signals our commitment to upholding the principles outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which are reflective of Canadian values, and it aligns with the YRDSB Director's Annual Plan, identifying Equity and Inclusivity as a priority area in our Board.

Supporting Online Learning in YRDSB

While schools will remain closed for the rest of the school year, we will continue to support your child's learning and well-being. We know that learning at home looks different for each family. We have developed a number of resources and tips to help students and families, including:

- [How to log in and use online learning platforms](#), including Google, Edsby and D2L. Short videos are also available.
- [Tips for families to support online learning](#).
- [Student Tech Help form](#) for support with student technology provided by the Board and accessing online learning platforms.
- [Mental health](#) and [community resources](#) for students and families.
- [Resources for students with special education needs](#).

To learn more about our [Learning and Caring Plan](#), access these resources and more, please visit www.yrdsb.ca/covid19. Google Translate is available on our Board's website.

Literacy Tip

Using a popular song which illustrates a global/current/relatable issue can be an effective motivator for writing. Your child might write about how the style of music matches the message of the piece, or otherwise might write a response to the piece – perhaps how the song makes them feel, or what they interpreted the message of the song to be. Using a song such as “If I Had A Million Dollars” by The Barenaked Ladies, for instance, opens up doors for writing pieces on how your child would use the money to help the world, or even to express their own personal goals.

Mental Health Tip of the Week

A global outbreak of COVID-19 is beyond anyone's control, but what is within your control is to practice self-care. Our mental health tip of this week is regarding sleep, as many of us may have experienced disrupted sleep schedules during the last few weeks. We recommend that during the month of June, students begin, or continue to, going to sleep and waking up at the same time every day, as they would when they were on their regular school schedule. This will help establish restfulness, routine, and personal wellness.

Volunteer Opportunity

This is a great opportunity for any student who has a few hours to spare during these challenging times. Please check out this organization: <https://impactwithoutcontact.ca/>

Graduation Awards

We are in the process of determining our Graduation Awards for the "Class of 2020". All graduating, non-international students can self-nominate, for up to two graduation monetary awards. To complete a nomination, please cut and paste the following link into a new window: bit.ly/AMHSAwardsApplication2020. Please note, each self-nomination requires a new application. The nomination process will close Wednesday, June 10 at 4:00 p.m. Students will also find this information posted in the Graduation Google Classroom.

Valedictorian Nomination

This year, a self-nomination process will be used. The Valedictorian is a student who will represent the Class of 2020, and who will deliver a farewell address at the Graduation Ceremony in the fall of 2020 to all those in attendance. In order to be considered, a student must fill this form: bit.ly/AMHS_Valedictorian. Please be aware that a student also is required to have three (3) teachers endorse their nomination. The nomination process will close on Wednesday, June 10 at 4:00 p.m.

Following the nomination process, three finalists will be determined. The student voting process will open on Friday, June 12, and close on Wednesday, June 17 at 4:00 p.m.

YRDSB Youth Innovation by Design – IDC4U1 or IDC4O1: [Innovation Course at Yspace: IDC4U/4O](#)

A unique opportunity for current Grade 11 students to engage in a credit-bearing summer course, in collaboration with York University's Yspace. For more information, please visit: <http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/Repository/NewsEvents/Pages/BoardNews/Youth-Innovation-By-Design.aspx>. Space for this opportunity is limited. Click on the link above for more information and registration. Please connect with our Guidance Department for any additional questions.

Clarification Regarding Summer School

YRDSB will be holding two programs: Summer School e-Learning, and Secondary Summer School. Note that the traditional, in class face-to-face model for Secondary Summer School will move to a remote learning delivery model, as per Ministry direction. Teachers will be providing a synchronous model for all programs. The most up-to-date information regarding Secondary Summer School is linked here: <http://www.yrdsb.ca/Programs/ConEd/Pages/Secondary-School-Summer.aspx>

As a reminder for those students who are planning on taking a Secondary Summer School course, registrations continue to take place through My Pathway Planner, up until June 26. Summer School e-learning course registration remains open as well, until June 25, and can be found on the Board's website, <http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/e-learning/Pages/default.aspx>. All Summer School registration needs to be confirmed with Guidance.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to connect by email at ana.fisher@yrdsb.ca

Student Retrieval of Personal Items / Return of School Items

We know many of you have been wondering about when students might be able to access the school, for the purpose of retrieving personal items that have remained in lockers since before the school closure took effect. Families have also reached out to ask when and how school items might be returned to the school.

The Board has been working with Public Health guidelines to develop a safe process to facilitate the purposes of items retrieval and drop-off. **A Letter to Families will be shared shortly regarding instructions to follow in supporting this process, which is planned to begin the week of June 15, 2020.** We appreciate your patience.

AEBS Scholarships

The Alliance of Educators for Black Students (AEBS) is dedicated to the success of Black students African Canadian heritage in schools in the YRDSB. Unfortunately, AEBS had to cancel the 2020 Achievement Awards Ceremony due to COVID-19.

However, AEBS believes it is important for students to have access to funds to help pay for their post-secondary education. AEBS invites Black students from YRDSB schools who are graduating to apply for a scholarship online. The deadline to apply is Monday, June 15, 2020. To access, please use this link: <https://sites.google.com/gapps.yrdsb.ca/aebsscholarships/home>

Ontario Principals Council (OPC) – Webinar For Parents/Guardians

The Ontario Principals' Council is offering this 1-hour webinar to parents/guardians of Grades 7 – 12 students, on the topic of online and cyber-safety. It will feature guest speakers from these fields, to help advise parents and guardians on navigating the risks of cyberbullying and cyberviolence, building healthy online relationships and safe spaces for students, and on and using the internet for positive purposes.

Dates: Tuesday, June 9 - 2:00-3:00 p.m. or Thursday, June 11 - 7:00-8:00 p.m.

If interested, you can register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZvtjFJ2jQR-u2J-dPEMhnA

YRDSB School Closure-Related Updates

May 27th – Learning and Caring At Home Survey, and

May 19th - Letter to Families from the Board Chair and the Director of Education:

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/Repository/NewsEvents/Pages/BoardNews/Coronavirus.aspx>

FAQs for Families Regarding Student Learning, Mental Health Supports:

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/Repository/NewsEvents/Pages/BoardNews/Coronavirus-FAQ.aspx#CommunityandMentalHealthSupport>

York Region Public Health Updates: www.york.ca/covid19

Community Events and Upcoming Opportunities

Citizenship and Adult ESL Classes

For updated information regarding Citizenship Classes during the school closure period, please go to:

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/Programs/ConEd/Pages/Specialized-Programs-Citizenship.aspx?from=DigestNotification&e=brOKtaMmOU-L4d8mM1Xmeg&at=9>

Community Events and Upcoming Opportunities (Cont'd)

Beit Hatfutsot Live Tour – Open to Families

You are invited to join a unique and [FREE live tour from Beit Hatfutsot, The Museum of the Jewish People](#), on **June 16th from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM**.

Please see the flyer for more information. The tour explores synagogues from diverse Jewish communities around the world including from the Caribbean, Egypt, Ukraine, Germany, India, Ancient Greece, Italy, and Poland. You will have the opportunity to view Beit Hatfutsot's world-renowned collection of synagogue models and their associated original artifacts.

This opportunity was coordinated for mid-June, following the month of May designated as Jewish Heritage Month, as a way for interested YRDSB families and parents to take part in learning about Jewish culture and heritage.

If you are interested in this opportunity, **please register using the [online registration form](#) by June 12th** to book your spot for the live tour on June 16th. This opportunity is made available for free to YRDSB students and their families. If you would like additional information about the tour and have any questions, please email YRDSB's Community Partnership Developer leonora.buskin@yrdsb.ca, or you may leave her a voicemail at **905-727-0022 x 4101** and your call will be returned.



The flyer features logos for York Region, NESJL (Network of Educators Supporting Jewish Learners), CCSYR, and the Star of David. The main title reads "VISIT THE MUSEUM OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME!". Below this is a photograph of a museum interior with various synagogue models on display. The text continues: "FREE REGIONAL YRDSB FAMILY ENGAGEMENT: BEIT HATFUTSOT LIVE TOUR June 16th, 2020 | 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM FREE | REGISTER BY JUNE 12". It states "All ages and people of all backgrounds welcome! This opportunity is for YRDSB students and their families. The whole family is welcome to join!". Registration instructions: "TO REGISTER EMAIL LEONORA.BUSKIN@YRDSB.CA, ALTERNATIVELY, LEAVE A VOICEMAIL WITH YOUR NAME AND NUMBER AT 905-727-0022 x 4101, AND YOUR CALL WILL BE RETURNED. After registering, you will receive information on how to access the live tour with a link." A small globe graphic is in the bottom right corner.

After completing the registration, you will be sent an email receipt with information on how to access the live tour with a link to the live tour, made available through the ZOOM video platform.

You do not need to download ZOOM to participate. To ensure privacy, the primary video footage presented during the live tour will be of the tour guide and the tour itself, and participants' videos will be disabled and muted. This set up is to ensure privacy of our participants. You will be able to ask questions during the live tour through a chat box feature. For a small group, it may be possible for participants to ask questions unmuted; however, the chat box will nevertheless be used as the primary method for asking questions. Thank you for taking the time to read about this opportunity!

School Council

Minutes

School Council minutes can be accessed through the AMHS school website by clicking on the link below:
[School Council Minutes](#)

Tips for Families to Support Online Learning



Teachers strive to work in partnership with home to support student learning and well-being in culturally responsive ways. Parents and families know their children best; as we transition to this new online learning context, please find some considerations below for supporting your child(ren) from home.

Establish and Maintain Routines

Help your child(ren) set regular hours for their school work using a calendar or checklist of required tasks per day. Expectations for daily tasks are important but do not have to be rigid and need to work for your family context. Customize your child(ren)'s schedule to fit their needs, as well as those of your family. Routines such as bedtime, nutrition, hygiene and physical activity are important. Establish these parameters from the beginning to build habits of success. At the end of the week, review which routines worked well and which may need to be adjusted moving forward.

Monitor Communications from your Child's Teacher(s)

Consider logging into online classrooms regularly to see announcements and lessons/activities posted by your child(ren)'s teacher and continue to communicate with the teacher as needed. Students are to do their best to complete work on time and meet deadlines and can connect with their teacher during the teacher's scheduled office hours when they need support.

Encourage Physical Activity and/or Exercise

Research shows that increased physical activity has a positive effect on cognitive functioning, health, well-being and learning. Remind your child(ren) to move and exercise. Take breaks from the learning when needed and get outside if possible. Consider an online physical challenge and/or exercise class.

Start/End Each Day With a Learning Check-In

Regular check-ins with your child(ren) will help them to process instructions, organize their work and proceed with the learning for the day. Engaging with your child(ren)'s learning can help support learning skills and work habits needed for successful online learning.

Find a Physical Space for Learning

We encourage families to help their child(ren) find a space(s) to work that supports sustained concentration, reading/listening/viewing and where they can check-in with them (consider using headphones where possible/appropriate). It is also important to remember that many children benefit from a 'flexible learning space,' meaning one where they can rearrange things or move to a different space depending on the type of work they are doing (e.g., move to a couch or beanbag chair for reading).

Remain Mindful of How your Child is Feeling

Online learning is new for everyone, so it's important to monitor and support your child(ren)'s well-being in this new context. Children may need help managing the worry, anxiety and range of emotions they may experience. Access [mental health and community support resources](#) as needed.

Support Digital Citizenship

Keep your child(ren) connecting online socially but be aware of their online interactions and the total amount of time they spend online. Monitor and set parameters for your child(ren)'s use of social media and the platforms they use. Remind your child(ren) that the rules of the classroom apply online too. They must be respectful and appropriate in their online communications. Online interactions should continue to align with the board's Digital Citizenship policy. Follow the [YRDSB Guidelines for Acceptable use of Technology](#).

School Contact Information

School Website Information

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/alexandermackenzie.hs/Pages/default.aspx>

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Alexander Mackenzie High School

Principal – Krista Pummell

Vice-Principals – Yula Nouragas (A-L), George Ellinas (M-Z)

Telephone: 905-884-0554

Special Education

Twitter: [@AlexMackSpecEd](https://twitter.com/AlexMackSpecEd)

Arts Mackenzie

<http://bit.ly/ARTSMackenzie>

Arts & Culture:

Instagram: [#amhsartscouncil](https://www.instagram.com/amhsartscouncil)

Visual Arts Department

Twitter: [@amhsvisa](https://twitter.com/amhsvisa)

Instagram: [#amhs.studio](https://www.instagram.com/amhs.studio)

Music Department

www.amhsmusic.ca

Moderns Department

Twitter: [@AlexModerns](https://twitter.com/AlexModerns)

MAC Health, Physical Education & Athletics

For information about our programs, please follow us:

Twitter: [@Mustangsmove](https://twitter.com/Mustangsmove)

Instagram: [macpheathletics](https://www.instagram.com/macpheathletics)

Alexander Mackenzie H.S. On Twitter

Follow us on twitter [@AlexMackHS](https://twitter.com/AlexMackHS)

*All Parent Bulletins are posted to the school website (*see web address, linked above).*

If you do not wish to receive this Newsletter, please notify Alexander Mackenzie High School by email.