

Message from Our Trustee

Dear families,

Thank you for your patience and support as schools closed to students and we moved to remote learning in January for two weeks after the winter break, following direction from the Government of Ontario.

It has been almost two years since the pandemic was declared and schools closed to students for the first time. Since then, we have all experienced significant changes and challenges in the way we live, work and learn. As a school board, we continue to be guided by public health advice and guidelines, our [values](#) as an organization and the goals set out in our [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#), all of which centre the well-being, learning and achievement of our students. We remain committed to sharing information with you as it becomes available. We also continue to update the Board website with resources and information, at www.yrdsb.ca/school-reopening.

On the website, you can also find information about the [Board of Trustees](#), including more about my role as your trustee, committee meeting dates, and information about public participation and how you can attend public board meetings. Following [a review](#) completed earlier this year, trustees approved some changes to [committee structures](#) and [delegation process](#) to create a stronger governance model. As a Board, we are committed to good governance, serving the needs of our community and upholding the values of York Region District School Board.

With winter well underway, I want to remind families that this year [schools will close when an inclement weather day is declared](#). This is as a result of the pandemic and the importance of adhering to public health guidelines.

There is much to look forward to in the months ahead.

This month, students in Grades 5 to 11 will have an opportunity to vote for the students who will represent their voices next school year, during the **student trustee elections**. Student trustees play an important role in our system, including participating in board and committee meeting discussions. The election process also gives students an opportunity to learn more about and participate in the voting process. Learn more at www.yrdsb.ca/studenttrustees.

Throughout February, we recognize **Black History Month**. In addition to recognizing the contributions of Black Canadians throughout history, we are continuing to Celebrate Black Excellence in our own community. I encourage you to [read or watch the stories of some of the many outstanding individuals in York Region, or nominate someone](#). You may also be interested in some of the episodes available on our [TuneIn YRDSB podcast](#), exploring Black History Month and beyond.

Later in February, our schools will become a sea of pink as we acknowledge **Pink Shirt Day** and stand together against bullying. Learn more about our work to [prevent and address bullying](#) and create [equitable and inclusive learning environments](#).

Family Day and **March Break** are also approaching, and I wish you and your families a healthy, restful and enjoyable break.

As we move closer to the spring and summer months, many families who have children graduating this year are beginning to wonder what **graduation ceremonies** will look like in June. We all want to be able to celebrate this important milestone with our graduating students in person. It is a special occasion, recognizing their years of achievement and hard work. We recognize that it has been deeply disappointing to students, families and staff that we have not been able to hold in-person ceremonies as we have done in the past, as we adhere to health and safety guidelines. School board staff continue to meet regularly with public health and to review provincial guidelines, and as more information becomes available, we will continue to provide you with updates.

In closing, I want to acknowledge that as an education community, although we have faced many challenges and changes in the past few years, we have also seen our community come together in many ways to support our students and one another. I am proud to be part of this community and I want to thank our students, families and staff for the effort and care they have demonstrated.

Allan Tam
Trustee, Markham Wards 4 and 5