



Williams' Tell Weekly – Parent Edition

Week of: Feb 6 - Feb 17, 2023

Trait of the Month: Initiative

The mission of The Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School is to develop literate students who are innovative, well-rounded lifelong learners and critical thinkers. We aim to foster caring global citizens who maintain inclusive and respectful interactions with others.

The Dr. G.W. Williams SS

Administrative Team

Melissa Schmidt, Principal
Susie Mitchell, VP (A-Le)
Andrew Gazaneo, VP (Li-Z)

Contact Us

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Phone Extensions:

Reception 0
Attendance 1
Guidance 3
Staff Directory 4

Daily Schedule

Period 1 8:20-9:40

Period 2 9:45-11:00

Period 3 11:05-12:20

Period 4 12:25-1:40

Period 5 1:45-3:00

School Website: <http://drgwilliams.ss.yrdsb.ca/>
Email: dr.g.w.williams.ss@yrdsb.ca

Social Media: [@drgwilliams](#) (Instagram & Twitter)
Attendance: [drgwilliamss.attendance@yrdsb.ca](#)

This week:

Feb. 6	Semester 1 Exam Review (AM)		Semester 2 First Day (PM)	
	Period 1	8:20 - 8:50	Period 1	11:20 am - 12:00 pm
	Period 2	8:55 - 9:25	Period 2	12:05 - 12:45
	Period 5	9:30 - 10:00	Period 3	12:50 - 1:30
	Period 3	10:05 - 10:35	Period 4	1:35 - 2:15
	Period 4	10:40 - 11:10	Period 5	2:20 - 3:00
Curling Team Game vs Thornlea SS at York Curling Club 2:30 pm Staff Meeting, 3:15 - 4:05 pm				
Feb. 7				
Feb. 8	JR Boys Basketball vs Mulock SS, home game 4 pm			
Feb. 9	Williams Invitation Festival of Bands in Cafeteria 1:45 pm - 9 pm			
Feb. 10	Open Mic (student only) in Room 129, 3:14 pm - 4:15 pm			

Upcoming

Feb. 13	SEM 2 Photo Day Curling Team Game vs Sacred Heart at York Curling Club 2:30 pm
Feb. 14	Jr Girls Volleyball vs 1) St. Maximilian, 2) Sacred Heart at Huron Heights SS 3:30 pm
Feb. 15	Meet and Greet for Farsi Speaking Families at Alexander Mackenzie H.S. 6 pm - 7:30 Last day to purchase Yearbook through school cash online . Canadian Computing Competition (CCC) in Room 249, 3:30 pm
Feb. 16	Ontario Band Association Provincial Band Festival at Toronto Chinese Cultural Center 9 am – 6:30 pm Course Selections open (Due Feb 24) Jr Girls Volleyball vs 1) King City, 2) Huron Heights at King City SS 3:30 pm IB Alumni Night
Feb. 17	Arts Camp Application deadline Jr Girls Volleyball - Tournament at Hodan Nalayeh Secondary School 3:30 pm

To support your family planning, the 2022-2023 YRDSB School Year Calendar is available on the [YRDSB website](#). Additionally, all dates for school events are continually updated on our Google calendar on our [school website](#).

Message from the Principal

We are proud of our students for making it through their first exam period in a very long time. It has been a busy couple of weeks for students and teachers as they complete and then evaluate and give feedback on course culminating activities. Everyone is looking forward to fresh opportunities on Monday as Semester 2 begins.

There is a lot happening at Williams and around the board. Please take time to scroll through all the notices in this week's Tell as there is something for everyone!!

Although semester 1 is just ending we are already beginning to plan for the 2023-2024 school year. Students have participated in the course selection assembly in early January. My Pathway Planner has been updated with course offerings for the coming year. Students will be able to begin locking in their course selections as of February 16 and **must do so by February 24th**. We ask students to 'choose once and choose wisely' using this time to research what it is they need in the coming year. Our Guidance and Student Services staff are available to support students with their decisions and the course selection process. Please see Guidance information below or ask your child to make a Guidance appointment in TeachAssist.

We want to thank the following teachers who have supported our students in Long Term Occasional roles during Semester 1 and will be moving on after today: Mr. Bell, Mr. Davidson, Mr. Iafraite, Ms. Jamshidnejad, Mr. Porfirio and Mr. Safaric. All the best to them in their new pursuits this coming semester.

On Monday we will be welcoming Ms. Cannata and Ms. Murad back from their maternity leaves. We look forward to seeing each of them back in the building! Additionally, we are welcoming more new staff in a variety of roles in the building: Ms. Lee (French\ESL teacher), Mr. McClymont (English\Teacher Librarian), Mr. Odes (Student Services teacher), Ms. Semsur (ESL\Drama teacher), Ms. Wong (Math\Business teacher), Ms. Jaramillo (DSW), Ms. McDonald (DSW), Ms. Watters (EA), Mr. Sharma (Library Technician), Mr. John Paganos (Caretakers) and Ms. Denise Sabath (Caretakers).

We hope that our students take the opportunity over the three days (today and the weekend) to step away from their studies and get a break so that they return on Monday refreshed and ready for new learning in the coming semester!

Melissa Schmidt

Message from Our Trustee

February 2023

I hope everyone has had a wonderful start to 2023, and enjoyed their winter break.

One of the most important roles of school board trustees is **communicating with the public**. I hope to use this newsletter as one way to keep you updated on Board news, to communicate my role as trustee and how I can support you, and to answer some of the questions I am often asked as a trustee.

Communicating with the public includes both sharing information and attending events to build relationships with families, but also ensuring I am available to you. If you have questions about Board policies or budget, concerns about your community, ideas and suggestions, or have a question and don't know [who to call](#), please feel free to reach out. I am happy to assist you.

Our Board of Trustees is made up of 12 trustees elected during the municipal election process, and one Indigenous trustee appointed through a separate process. Eight of the 12 elected trustees are new this term, and we are all looking forward to connecting with families and fulfilling our roles to support student achievement and well-being.

What do Trustees Do?

In addition to communicating with the public, we are also responsible for:

Establishing a Multi-Year Strategic Plan. This [plan](#) sets out our priorities as a school board and guides our direction and decision making as a system.

Setting policy. [Policies](#) govern the operation of our schools and organization, including field trips, school transportation, homework, caring and safe schools and much more. You can find out which policies are up for review in our [meeting agendas](#), or which [policies are out for comment](#) on the website. Your participation in this process is important to ensuring our policies are serving our communities and align with our priorities.

Setting an annual budget. I look forward to sharing more information about this process with you in the coming months as we engage in [budget](#) consultations.

Participating on Board and Advisory Committees. You can find the dates and agendas for these meetings on the Board website. You are welcome to attend and observe any [public Board, Advisory and Board Committee meetings](#).

Hiring the Director of Education. This process is governed by the [Director of Education Selection Policy](#), and we will keep you updated as this process progresses. In the meantime, I am deeply grateful to Interim Director of Education Scott Yake for his commitment and service.

Advocating for quality public education. I became a school board trustee because I believe in public education. I believe in the potential of each and every one of our students and our responsibility to nurture their learning, growth and achievement. Our decisions as a board are centred on our commitment to deliver the best for our students.

What's Happening in YRDSB

[Kindergarten](#) registration opened January 20 for families with children who will start Kindergarten in September 2023.

[French Immersion registration](#) is open from January 20 to February 6 for students entering Grade 1 in September 2023.

[Student trustee elections](#) are currently underway. All students in Grades 5-12 will have an opportunity to vote for the student trustees who will represent them next school year.

In February, we recognize Black History Month, celebrating the contributions of Black people to the fabric of our society. I encourage you to visit the Board's [Centre for Black Student Excellence webpage](#) and [newsletter](#) to learn more about upcoming events during Black History Month and what's happening in the Board to celebrate Black excellence.

Family Day and the March Break are also approaching and we hope everyone enjoys the break.

There are a number of other events for families coming up and I encourage you to check the [Board calendar](#).

New Schools

One of the other questions I am asked, particularly in growing communities is about new schools or capital projects. I can let you know that in our municipality the following [capital projects](#) have received approval:

Aurora

· [Aurora 2C Elementary School](#), proposed to open September 2024.

· [Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School replacement](#), proposed to open September 2025.

Whitchurch-Stouffville:

· [Stouffville Elementary School](#), proposed to open September 2024.

There are many ways you can stay up-to-date with what's happening in our school board. Visit the [newsroom](#) or website homepage at [www.yrdsb.ca](#). Listen to our [podcast](#). Follow the Board on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or [YouTube](#). Read your school newsletters and emails. I look forward to staying connected with you.

Melanie Wright

Trustee, Aurora and Whitchurch-Stouffville

School Notices

Williams School Yearbook

After two years of not being able to publish a full Yearbook, Williams Yearbook Team is in full swing preparing for a 2022-2023 full publication! Yearbooks are a special memento that students get to take away with them at the end of the school year as it highlights all events, sports, clubs, staff and of course students of that year. All grades are represented equally in the book and it is truly a representation of our school community. Purchase your beautiful hard copy today!

Will only be available for purchase on [School Cash online](#)! **Deadline to purchase Feb 15, 2023.**

Student Activity Fee Paid \$46 *Recommended

Student Activity Fee NOT Paid \$50

Canadian Computing Competition (CCC)

The Canadian Computing Competition (CCC) runs by Waterloo university. It is a fun challenge for participants with an interest in programming. Designed to be both accessible to participants with some programming experience and to challenge the keenest programmers at the secondary school level, the CCC helps participants build confidence and grow their ability to design, understand and implement algorithms.

Students will write the contest on Feb 15th at 3:30 pm in room 249.

Experiential Learning Opportunities - Input Gathering (Planning phase)

The history department at Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School would like some feedback on planning an overnight trip to Quebec City for 2nd semester (May or June). The purpose of this trip is to explore Canada's History and experience a different culture within Canada. There will be a direct link to the Grade 12 World History Course during this experience. While we are still in the initial planning stages of this tour, we welcome input from the community to ensure that this is a culturally responsive experience for our students. We would like to ensure that this trip also links to our FNMI curriculum, which we have vocalised to the tour companies. We would like to offer this trip to senior students who have not had an opportunity to travel because of Covid-19 restrictions over the past two years. We strive to bring the best possible programming to our students and make it as accessible as possible for all. This would be an excellent opportunity for our students to experience history. Please let us know if you have any questions, or suggestions on planning this tour. We invite our community (you) to share their thoughts on ways this experiential learning opportunity would further enhance and benefit student engagement in their education. Please connect with Mr. Buono (History teacher\Teacher Librarian) at anthony.buono@yrdsb.ca to provide input to the planning or to seek more information.

The History/Student Services departments at Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School would like your input on planning an international trip to Juno Beach in celebration of the 80th anniversary of D-Day next year. The purpose of this trip is to explore Canada's History and contribution to a monumental moment in World History. There will be links to the required Grade 10 History course during this international trip. The trip will take place in June of 2024 as the anniversary is June 6th. We would like to extend an invitation to all students to participate in this experiential learning opportunity. This would be an excellent opportunity for our students to experience different cultures, languages and foods outside of Canada. As we are in the early planning stages, we invite you to share their thoughts on this opportunity and how it would further enhance and benefit student engagement in their education. Please let us know if you have any questions, or suggestions on planning this tour.

Thank you,

Sarah Isber & Jordan Denton

sarah.isber@yrdsb.ca, jordan.denton@yrdsb.ca

YRDSB and Community Notices

Every Student Counts Survey (ESCS) Public Survey Consultation

York Region District School Board will be conducting the Every Student Counts Survey with students in Grades K-12 from April 24, 2023 - May 12, 2023. As part of the survey development, we are asking families to review our [draft surveys](#) and provide their feedback.

Student and family feedback is critical to the survey development process and helps to ensure that the survey is an accurate reflection of our school communities. Responses made through the feedback form are voluntary, confidential and anonymous.

The feedback form will be available from February 3, 2023 - February 10, 2023. To learn more, please visit www.yrdsb.ca/escs

Mental Health Newsletter/Tip Sheets For Parents February 2023

A focus on "[Feeling the Warmth of Winter](#)". As many highschool students have finished exams and begin a new semester continue to grow and develop, we hope to share some tips for maximising enjoyment with your family, and ways to find support at this time. We will also be sharing some helpful tips about March Break, Family day, and available recreational community resources.

Celebrating Black Excellence

As a continuation of our Celebrating Black Excellence campaign, YRDSB will be celebrating Black History Month with Celebrating Black Excellence - Black Voices.

Celebrating Black Excellence - Black Voices aims to centre and celebrate the Black members of our YRDSB community and share their voices. This Black History Month campaign asks students, staff and community members who identify as Black to consider submitting a short video of themselves answering one or more of the following prompts.

- I am proud to be Black because..
- It's important to me that I see my identity affirmed at school/work because...
- What I need at school/work is...
- People need to know that...
- I love myself because...
- I am magic because...
- Do you have a story to tell? Let us know what it is.
- If these prompts don't resonate with you, please feel free to answer a prompt or question of your own making.

These videos will be shared as Reels on the [@yrdsb.schools](https://www.instagram.com/yrdsb.schools) Instagram account throughout the month of February and beyond, and may be featured on the Black Excellence webpage or in a YRDSB video.

How to submit:

- Submissions from staff and students can be made using the [submission form](#). (Students must use their GAPPs account)
- Submissions from students under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a signed consent form from a parent/guardian.

Meet and Greet for Farsi Speaking Families

Attend the Farsi session on Feb 15 at Alexander Mackenzie H.S 6:00pm - 7:30pm. Please click [here](#) for more information.

- Meet with a psychotherapist and psychologist and learn about healthy relationships between parents and students and various relevant topics for future workshops
- Meet with the school Social Worker and learn about mental health services for students within the YRDSB
- Meet with the Afghan/Iranian Community and Partnership Developer
- Learn more about your child's report card, board policies and communication with the school
- Learn about the education system
- Participate in a survey for future workshopsSpeakers

Career Guidance Workshop for Secondary Students

ASGC in partnership with YRDSB brings a career guidance workshop for high school students and parents. This event will include separate sessions for students and parents. Students' session include panel of young professionals and Parents' session include school administrators, guidance counsellors and other educators. Students and parents will have the opportunity to participate in breakout sessions that will be taking place following the keynote speaker. Event is on Feb 11, Milliken Mills High School. Please [RSVP](#).

Autism Information Series Chinese

These two sessions will be delivered in Chinese to help parents, guardians and caregivers learn about Autism. In-person February 17 at Aldergrove PS and Virtual February 24. Please RSVP [here](#).

Autism Information Series Tamil

This session will be delivered in Tamil to help parents, guardians and caregivers learn about Autism. Please RSVP [here](#).

February Triple P Parenting Sessions

Many familiar parenting problems have very simple solutions that can be applied with some effort and focus. Triple P's easy-to-understand and practical strategies have been shown to help families in all types of situations. Please click [here](#) for registration details.

Arts Camp Application and Selection Process for Secondary Students

Celebrating over 30 years on the shores of a private lake in the Haliburton Highlands, Camp White Pine is host to a unique yearly camp for Grades 7-12 York Region District School Board students. Arts Camp is an intensive week-long immersion in visual, studio and performance art programs and experiences. [Information](#) regarding the application and selection process for secondary students wishing to attend YRDSB Arts Camp.

Three Part Series on Poverty

All parents and guardians are welcome to attend any or all of the free virtual [workshops](#) about poverty, housing rights and resources in York Region.

360°kids believes that every young person deserves a safe place to call home. Since our founding in 1989, 360°kids has continued to provide a full complement of programs and services aimed at assisting at-risk and homeless youth. For more information see [here](#).

Families and Schools Together

'[Families and Schools Together](#)' is a play and art therapy based program that allows families to come together. A program that will help reduce caregiver isolation by connecting with other families in the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

Town of Aurora No Idling

Did you know that the Town of Aurora is now idle-free? The Town of Aurora [anti-idling policy](#) states that as a motorist you MUST turn off your vehicle after 5 consecutive minutes of idling, unless in traffic. You can do other things to support the environment in the community by turning off your vehicle anytime you are stopped for more than 30 seconds. This will help Aurora's goal to reduce 80% of greenhouse gases by 2050. Please also consider carpooling your students to school. Many vehicles are picking up one single student. Work together to do our part in the Williams community!

Music Department

Open Mic (student only)

Student, please come to see the AWESOME talent of your peers on Feb 10, 3:14 pm - 4:15 pm in Room 129. Purchase tickets through [School Cash online](#).

Guidance

IMPORTANT UPDATES

- **Course Selections** open on February 16 and are due by February 24th.
 - Using the pathway planner on myBlueprint, students can:
 - Indicate they are not returning to GWW for the next school year.
 - Opt out of the e-learning requirement (if students are in grade 9 or 10).
 - Express interest in taking a summer school course this year. Please note this is not registration - that will happen later this spring. If a student intends to take summer school, do not select that course for next year.
- **Night school registrations** are open for Semester 2 - please sign up on myBlueprint > Continuing Education > Explore Courses > Submit a course and remember to print off the permission form and submit it to your guidance counsellor.
- **Graduates of 2023** must complete and submit their volunteer hours by **Tuesday, May 23rd, 2023**.

NEW Aquatic Leadership Program for Semester 2 Open

YRDSB runs an Aquatic Leadership Program in partnership with the Town of Aurora, The City of Markham and the City of Vaughan. Second semester we will be offering Part 2 of the course at the Aurora and Markham sites and Part 1 at the Vaughan site. Students do not need to live in the municipality in order to take the course. Please [see flyer](#) for more information.

Dual Credit Registrations for Semester 2 Open

Dual Credits allow students in secondary school to take college or apprenticeship courses that count towards both the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree, or an apprenticeship certification. Please see [here](#) for more detailed information.

- 2023 Winter Dual Credit Course List 2023 Winter [HERE](#)
- Dual Credit Application Form [HERE](#)

Post-Secondary Pathways

- **If students are applying to Ontario colleges:**
 - They will need their Ontario Education Number (OEN). Please watch the [How To Apply To Public Colleges in Ontario Video](#).
- **If students are applying to Ontario universities:**
 - They will need their School Number, Student Number and Temporary PIN. Please watch the [101 - How - to Videos](#).
- **If students are going into the skilled trades:**
 - Please visit [OYAP](#), [Skills Ontario](#) and see your Guidance Counsellor.

To help students make decisions about what post-secondary programs to apply to, families are encouraged to research post-secondary pathways with students using the following websites:

- <https://www.ontariouniversitiesinfo.ca/>
- <https://www.ontariocolleges.ca/en/programs>
- <https://oyap.com/>

Attendance Procedures

Extended Absences

Planned absences of three or more consecutive school days require the completion of an “Extraordinary Absence” form at least one week in advance of the leave. The form is available in the Attendance Office. The process includes obtaining signatures from teachers and a school administrator. It is the student’s responsibility to catch up on all work missed.

Parents/guardians should contact the Attendance Office to indicate when their child will be absent. The Attendance Office can be reached at 905-727-3131 ext. 100. If the attendance secretary is busy please leave a voice message OR send an email to drgwilliamsss.attendance@yrdsb.ca. If a student leaves school resulting in a late or an absence to a class period, they are to go to the attendance office to sign out. If a student arrives late for Period 1 and before 8:45 a.m., they are asked to report directly to their class where their homeroom teacher will let the office know the time of arrival. If the 8:20 bell has rung, students are asked to stand in the hallway for the anthem and announcements to be completed before proceeding to their period 1 class. For any other period, whenever a student arrives at school after the first scheduled class period has begun they are to report to attendance to sign in.

Students are expected to be in class by the times listed above.

Students, parents, and staff have a role to play in ensuring that students attend classes regularly and punctually. Students are responsible for:

- attending all scheduled classes, and being on time;
- being prepared for classes, and participating fully in the planned learning activities;
- reporting absences (preferably in advance), and presenting proper documentation to staff, and covering the material missed when they are absent.

Absences must be both valid and authorized by a parent. Examples of valid reasons include illness, bereavement, medical appointments, court appearance, etc. If no phone call, e-mail, or note is received by the school, the absence will be considered “truant”. Truancies are unacceptable.

Students who have been signed out of classes by a parent/legal guardian cannot remain on school property.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students aged 18 and older and students who have declared their independence must report all absences, late arrivals and/or changes to departure plans to the school in a timely manner. Where possible, notify the school in advance by calling the school and leaving a message on the answering machine or emailing the school’s attendance address.

If a student is unable to attend school and will miss more than two school days, homework may be requested from the Guidance Department and picked up at the school. Teachers require 24 hours to complete homework requests. If a student is absent due to a prolonged illness, he/she may be required to provide a medical note.

School Calendar for 2022-2023

- Please use this [link](#)

Family Start-Up Forms

Parents/guardians received an email from YRDSB Update with important school start-up forms to complete. **It is important that these forms are completed as soon as possible at the start of the school year as they contain important information and permissions.**

The forms can be found at <https://startupforms.yrdsb.ca/>.

Secondary school students can complete the secondary school student form at <https://startupforms.yrdsb.ca/students>. Elementary school students do not need to complete these forms.

You must be signed in to your child’s student GAPPS account to complete the form.

If you prefer to complete the forms on paper or have questions about the information in the forms, please contact the main office.

Website Resources for Families and Students

[Resources](#) for students and families on the YRDSB board website, including quick access to online tools, learning platforms and resources, community support, and translation tools.

Safety and Community Notices

York Regional Transit (YRT) has announced a new Route 32 northbound trip, beginning September 14, to meet the afternoon bell time at Dr. G. W. Williams. This information won’t be reflected on their website until November 6 but is included in this [flyer](#).

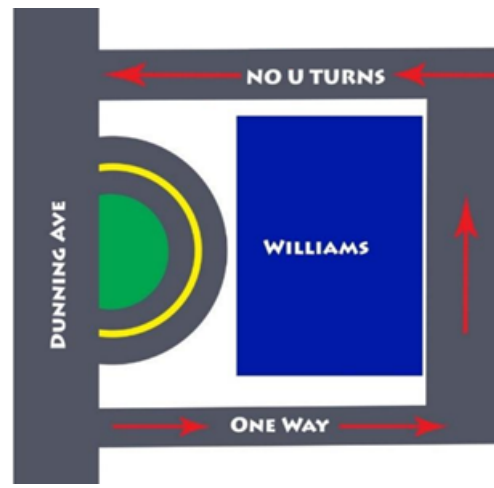
We continue to work with YRT to provide an improved experience for our students riding the 426 buses at the end of each day. Please remind your students to line up single file to board the buses and to stay behind the sidewalk (on the field) until the buses arrive and begin loading. This is important for everyone’s safety.

Driveway and Parking Lot

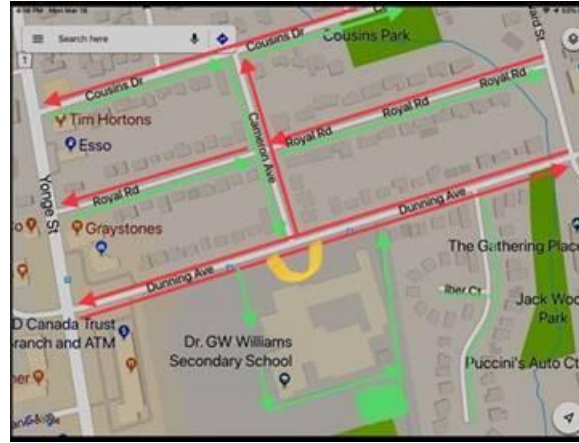
At the end of the school day, the front driveway loop is closed to regular traffic from about 2:50 to 3:10 pm. Only school taxis and buses are to use the front driveway loop at the end of the day in order to create a safe place for our students with special needs. Once all the school taxis and buses leave the front driveway loop around 3:10, regular traffic may use this area. To support our efforts to ensure physical distance, we ask that you make arrangements to meet your students at the nearest exit from their classroom (in one of the parking lots) or off school property (down the street, around the corner, etc.). Please see the maps below to support your efforts.



There is one-way traffic in our front driveway loop. In the front driveway loop, drop off/pick up students on the right side; drive through only on the left side. For safety reasons, do not drop off/pick up students on the left side.



If you MUST come to the school, enter via the West lot (beside the track, closest to Yonge Street) and drive around the school to meet your child. DO NOT block the driveway waiting. There is one-way traffic in the west entrance and on the south (back) side of the school. **It is two-way traffic on the east side of the school, however, during the end of the day pick-up time you will notice the admin directing all vehicles to enter the west lot ONLY so that we have a constant flow out of the east lot.** This makes a significant positive impact on safety for all and makes it easier and less stressful for everyone. When you are able to enter the east lot, do not make U-turns anywhere in the east parking lot from Dunning Avenue to the south parking lot. Making a U-turn in this area creates an unsafe condition for pedestrians and other vehicles. If you need to turn around, please pull into a parking spot and carefully back out.



Please note that Dunning Avenue is a **no stopping zone**. This is noted by the signage along the street and on the map above you can see the red arrows on both sides of the street.

PA Days for Williams (but not necessarily for elementary schools in our area) are:

- May 5
- June 30

School Council Meetings for 2022-2023

- February 21
- April 17
- May 15