



Williams' Tell Weekly – Parent Edition

Week of: Friday May 29, 2020

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.

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School Website: <http://drgwilliams.ss.yrdsb.ca/>

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

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Message from the Principal

What a heat wave this week!! For those that are fortunate to have air conditioning, I think this might be the only time that they might have been glad to not be in the building.

Earlier this week the admin enjoyed spending time with parents at the virtual school council meeting on Tuesday evening. I would encourage you in the fall to take the opportunity to come out to School Council if you can. We spent a lot of time sharing what has been happening, examples of activities students have been engaged in during online learning and looking ahead to the coming year. It is a great way to learn a different perspective on high school. During the council meeting, those present got to participate in a synchronous learning activity to provide input to me regarding the Williams School Community. This activity was postponed from my first council meeting in March (cancelled due to School Closure). I am working to capture voice from all stakeholders to best understand the strengths, needs and priorities of the school as your Principal. Please take a moment to visit the [Padlet](#) to provide your comments to one of the four questions provided and support my understanding of your needs as parents for your students.

Every week day our teachers are available in real time to provide synchronous instruction to students during their office hours. Office hours for every teacher have been [posted on the school website](#) and listed in your child's Google classroom since the beginning of April. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the teachers at any time if you have questions about the learning your children are engaged in.

Looking ahead to next year, although we do not yet know what the return to school will look like, we are busy staffing and timetabling for students to access their course selections. Our school continues to grow in population, which allows us to increase offerings to students. We are excited to be in a position to be hiring 7 new staff members to join our staff in September!! This growth in population has also forced us to utilize the space that we have available to us in more creative ways to ensure we have a classroom for every course, every period. To accommodate this, next year we will need to return to a 5 period day with lunches scheduled mostly during Periods 3 & 4. Even with this adjustment, we already have Periods 1, 2 & 5 at capacity for room utilization.

Please be sure to check out the initiative below to help us share our comfort foods during this time and build the Williams Virtual Cookbook. We hope to raise some money for the Aurora Food Bank as well as highlight some local take out options for those that might want a break from all the cooking and baking! We look forward to contributions from many Williams families to bring this cookbook to life.

All the best,
Melissa

Message from Our Trustee

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.

Bob McRoberts
Trustee, Aurora and King

Highlighting Our Students

Geo Challenge

Pepa Prochazka participated in the Canadian National Geo Challenge and placed in the top 20 in the national finals. He will take part in the Geo Challenge Final this weekend. The event will be run remotely due to Covid 19. Good Luck Pepa.

PPE Production

Pepa Prochazka and a group of students are working together to build protective shields for use in long term care facilities in our area. Pepa and his good friend Andrew are awaiting a new shipment of materials to come this week, to build more shields to send to different homes in our community. We really appreciate the efforts.

Williams Announcements

Williams Virtual Cookbook

In an effort to inspire, connect, comfort and help all of us with the daily task of cooking at home, we are curating a virtual pocket cookbook "What's Williams Cooking?" Students, Staff, Parents/Community are invited to contribute a favorite recipe or contribute a great take out meal to support our local restaurants. Please send your submission to dr.g.w.williams.ss@yrdsb.ca. Questions, comments and ideas are always welcome.

Mental Health Resource

As we focus on keeping ourselves healthy and containing the spread of COVID-19, we must also keep ourselves mentally well. Guidance has created a quick reference guide for students who may need assistance. Please refer to the attachment for reference or visit [Mental Health Resource - Quick Reference Guide](#) on our schools website.

Spirit Wear

Students have been inquiring about the availability of spirit wear that we normally offer again in March. We have asked the supplier and they are offering the opportunity to purchase spirit wear hoodie sweatshirts **before May 30** for completion by the end of June 2020. All orders can be shipped directly to your home for a flat fee or you can do curbside pick-up from Marchant's 849 Progress Ave, Scarborough. For more information about our G.W. Spirit wear please visit [Marchant's website](#).

Grad Wear

We have re-open sales for Grad 2020 spirit wear for those grads that missed the opportunity earlier in the year and would still like something. For more information, Please visit [Grad wear 2020](#).

Graduating Students

Student Council at Dr. G. W. Williams S. S. would like to highlight the wonderful Grade 12s graduating students this year on our Instagram [@gwwseniors2020](#). We will be creating "future spotlights" for any graduate who wishes to participate.

Graduating students can send Student Council a photo of yourself, name, and post-secondary plans and council will create a little collage for you. It's a great way to celebrate each other's accomplishments and your journey at Williams. For students who are under 18 years old, please have a parent or guardian complete the following [permission form](#) and send it along with your picture and post-secondary plans. Please either complete this permission form either with an electronic signature or by printing it out and scanning it. Send the completed permission form and picture/ post-secondary plans to Ms. King at hailey.king@gapps.yrdsb.ca

Valedictorian Nomination & Voting

Valedictorian nominations closed for the Grade 12s last night. We are just in the process of connecting with prospective nominees to confirm their willingness to stand for this role and will publish the list next Wednesday (May 27) with voting taking place **from May 28 - May 31** using a Google form sent to graduating student's GAPPS accounts. If your child is graduating, please encourage them to take an active role in choosing their valedictorian. The Valedictorian for the Class of 2020 will be announced on June 2.

Post-Secondary Resource

Due to Post- Secondary School closures, apprenticeship programs, colleges and universities have created virtual tours available online for students who are interested in researching their educational options. For more information and to view the virtual tours, please click on these links: [Apprenticeship Programs](#), [Colleges](#), [Universities](#).

YRDSB Community Announcements

Supporting Online Learning

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 website.

Online Survey - Learning and Caring Plan

Your voice is important to us and we are asking for you to share your thoughts through a quick, [online survey](#). We are hoping to learn your thoughts and ideas in real-time about the [Learning and Caring Plan](#), until the end of this school year and to inform decision making for our return in September. You can participate anonymously and your responses will be confidential. As always, your participation is voluntary. Your responses will help our Board assess and inform best practices related to our programs and services.

Black Youth Legacy Conference

The Markham African Caribbean Canadian Association (MACCA) has been serving the community for 31 years. MACCA is dedicated to supporting and to developing programs and opportunities for youth. MACCA continues to focus on empowering young people and strengthening families across York Region and the GTA. Students interested in the registering for this conference can register for Free tickets on [Eventbrite](#). The conference will run every Wednesday from **May 27 - June 17, 2020 at 7:00 pm**.

Online Safety Webinars for Parents/Guardians and School Leaders

Principals and vice-principals are invited to send this webinar invitation to parents/guardians of their students and to register themselves for these 1-hour online safety webinars.

Online Safety for Grades 3 - 6: Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

- June 2 at 2:00 pm and June 4 at 7:00 pm. Guest speaker, Paul Davis, will assist parents/guardians to: understand the rules for online safety; define responsible use of technology; and learn about digital trails, cyberbullying, picture taking and sharing.

Navigating Cyberbullying and Cyberviolence for Parents/Guardians of Grades 7-12 Students

- June 9 at 2:00 and June 11 at 7:00 pm. Guest speakers from the field of cyber safety will advise parents/guardians on: navigating the risks of cyberbullying, sexual exploitation, and cyberviolence; building healthy online relationships and safe spaces for students; and using the internet for positive purposes.

Regional Family Engagement

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

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. 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. Alternatively, leave her a voicemail with your name and number at 905-727-0022 x 4101 and your call will be returned.

Black History Month Poster Contest Voting

During the month of February, York Region District School Board held a student poster contest to determine our official Black History Month poster for 2021. We received over 250 submissions, and a panel of experts has narrowed it down to four finalists. In order to determine the winner, the Board will be holding a virtual vote open to all YRDSB students and staff. Voting will take place via this [google form](#) that will also be distributed over social media. Voting is limited to one vote per person and will take place from **June 3 - 5**.

Distance Learning Adult Programs Available

We are still offering adult programs through distance learning. Improve your skills at home.

Courses available include:

- Adult Literacy and Basic Skills · English as a Second Language · Citizenship Classes · Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

You can access learning by phone or online. You can register and start learning at any time.

- If you have a question or would like to register for a class, please: · Email uplands@yrdsb.ca.
- Call 905-731-9557 or 905-305-4122 and leave us a message.

Summer School e-Learning

Included below is information regarding the Summer School e-Learning:

- Course dates: July 2, 2020 – July 27, 2020
- Registration period for YRDSB students: **May 8, 2020 (noon) – June 25, 2020 (noon)**

Process:

- Choose a course, please note students may take only ONE summer school course, either online or in-person: Summer School e-Learning Courses.
- Contact your alpha Guidance Counsellor by email to obtain permission. Include the course chosen and verify you have the necessary prerequisite.

Last Names: A - I → Mr. Fuller: mark.fuller@yrdsb.ca

J - P → Ms. Wilmshurst: debbie.wilmshurst@yrdsb.ca

Q - Z → Ms. Durbacz: sue.durbacz@yrdsb.ca

- Complete your Summer School e-Learning registration online at: [Summer School eLearning Registration](#).
- For further details and information please visit: [YRDSB Summer School e-Learning](#).

Citizenship Classes

Due to schools being closed, Citizenship classes will be available from home until at least **May 29, 2020**. If you have a question or would like to register for a class, please email uplands@yrdsb.ca or call 905-731-9557 / 905-305-4122. For more information about Citizenship classes, please visit [continued education](#).

NEW! Summer School (Spanish & Mandarin)

Grade 8 Reach Ahead 2020 Summer Credit – Language Program & Grade 9 to 12 Students (Spanish & Mandarin)

- Grade 8 students can now take a Grade 9 credit course this summer in Spanish or Mandarin.
- Grades 9 to 12 students can now take Level B or C summer credit courses in Spanish or Mandarin.
- Prerequisites are not required for any Level B international languages course.
- This is an 18-day program (July 6 - 29, Monday to Friday, 8:45 a.m. to 3:33 p.m. daily) for one credit introductory (Level B) international languages course.

Register online using [myPathway Planner](#). Please refer to the My Pathway Planner [tip sheet](#) to register.

Reminder:

By order of the Minister of Education, all publicly funded schools in Ontario will be closed until the end of this school year to interrupt the spread of COVID-19. Transportation services, continuing education, permit activities, before and after care programs and daycare are also closed. All school site amenities, including outdoor fields and play structures are closed to the public. Please visit the Board website for [more information](#).

During the school closure related to the current Pandemic, please refer to the attached links for more YRDSB information regarding [Novel Coronavirus Updates](#) and [Coronavirus FAQ](#).