



Williams' Tell Weekly – Parent Edition

Week of: Sept 25 - Oct 6, 2023

Trait of the Month: Courage

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
Ken Arnott, VP (A-Le)
Andrew Gazaneo, VP (Li-Z)

Contact Us

39 Dunning Avenue
Aurora, Ontario
L4G 1A2
(P) 905-727-3131
(F) 905-727-8067

Phone Extensions:

Reception 0
Attendance 1
Guidance 3
Staff Directory 4

Office Hours

7:45 am - 3:45 pm

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: drgwilliamsss.attendance@yrdsb.ca

This week: SAFETY WEEK

Sept 25	✳ Yom Kippur (Judaism) Cafeteria Servery Opening (see information below)
Sept 26	Fire Drill Drill - P1 Hold & Secure - P5 Gr 9 pre-IB 'Changing Currents' field trip SR Girls Basketball (varsity) vs Denison 3:45 pm at Denison Junior boys Golf Team, tournament 1 pm at Bloomington Downs Golf Course
Sept 27	Interim Reports open Student Council Grade Rep Elections Boys Rugby/Girls Rugby vs Multiple teams, leave 8:45 - all day event at Fletchers Field
Sept 28	IB Teacher Retreat Newcomer Family Event 2:15pm - 4:00pm
Sept 29	Community classes field trip Orange Shirt Day/Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Upcoming

Oct 2	Guest Speaker: Covenant House (Ms Shillum's class) P2 and 4 Senior boys Golf Team, tournament 1 pm at Bloomington Downs Golf Course Bomb Threat Drill - P2 Lockdown Drill - P5
Oct 3	SR Girls Basketball (Varsity) vs Sir William Mulock 3:45 pm at Sir William Mulock
Oct 4	Boys Rugby/Girls Rugby vs Multiple teams, leave 8:45 - all day event at Fletchers Field
Oct 5	Aurora area Post-Secondary Fair (hosted at GWW) SR Girls Basketball (Varsity) vs Keswick HS 3:45 pm at Keswick HS
Oct 6	School photo retake Last Day of Sukkot (Jewish holiday celebrates the gathering of the harvest and commemorates) Headsup - Oct 9 Monday is Thanksgiving holiday.

To support your family planning, the 2023-2024 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](#) and all confirmed events have been updated for 2023-2024 on our website now.

Message from the Principal

It is hard to believe that it is already officially fall and the leaves are already falling. It has been a busy start to the year as students and teachers settle into their classes and our extra curricular activities begin. Last Thursday we had our Club Fair with over 30 clubs already off the ground. The sports season is also in full swing with our fall sports participating in their first matches this week and next.

Today it was a beautiful day to get outside with everyone at Williams and walk to support the Terry Fox Foundation. The PALS led us on a 2.5 km route through the community. It was great to have all students and staff out for such a great cause.

With the return to school also comes an increase in respiratory illnesses. It is important that we continue to protect one another by practising good habits. Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health reminds us that, "It's important to remember the simple and effective ways we can protect ourselves and the most vulnerable. Stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations, get an annual flu shot when it becomes available, stay home when you feel sick, wash your hands often and cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze, and consider wearing a mask, particularly if you are at high risk. COVID-19 activity is rising with new variants circulating and other seasonal respiratory illnesses are expected early this year. These small decisions are proven to have a big impact on keeping everyone in our communities safe and healthy". All students and staff are reminded to self-assess before coming to the school and to stay home if they are unwell.

Take care,
Melissa Schmidt

School Council

Thank you to all those that attended our first school council meeting of the year. We are pleased to announce the School Council members for the 2023-2024 school year.

Chair: Johana Vieneswaran
Co-Vice Chairs: Raza Khan and Shannon Harris
Secretary: Kathy Duncan
Treasurer: Murlidharan Sadanandam
Grade 9 Parent Representative: Sana Naqvi
Community Member: Ummama Siddiqi

We appreciate these members of our school community who have volunteered their time to represent parents and contribute to the engagement of our school community. We encourage all parents to come to at least one of the meetings this year. The next meeting is October 16, 2023. All meetings are listed below at the bottom of the Tell each issue.

The YRDSB has undertaken a review of School Councils across the system. Our council took time at the first meeting to review this [video](#) from PEAC (Parent Education Advisory Committee) highlighting some of the changes. We invite you to take a few minutes to watch the [video](#) and let us know how this council can best serve you.

School Notices

Cafeteria Opening - September 25

We are pleased to announce that Trio's Food Service Management is set to open our cafeteria for students on Monday September 25. For more information on this service provider and how they will be supporting the needs of our school community please visit their website: <https://www.triosfoodservice.com/content/menu.asp>

The owners of Trio do provide a lunch program for students that allows them to earn Community Involvement hours as well as a free lunch for assisting during the lunch rush (first 15-20 minutes). Students interested in this opportunity should speak to their Guidance Counsellor or Vice Principal.

YRDSB and Community Notices

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) is the year's holiest day and a day of fasting. To re-establish oneness with God and fellow human beings, Jewish people ask for forgiveness from, and grant forgiveness to, each other. They then confess their shortcomings, promise to do better in the year ahead, and seek forgiveness from God.

Sankofa Mentoring Program

"A people without the knowledge of their history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots".

The York Region Alliance of African Canadian Communities (YRAACC) is starting the school year by launching its Sankofa Mentoring Programs. The organization aims to improve Black students' self-esteem and self-efficacy by educating them about their cultural identity. YRAACC is requesting your assistance in spreading the word to students and parents. They also encourage you to become an advocate or ally for their programs. Let me know if you like to arrange a meeting to discuss our programs in more detail.

Without a doubt, the following reasons highlight the importance of these programs:

- Developing a strong sense of racial and cultural identity
- Strengthening the Community
- Enhancing critical thinking skills
- Encouraging self-reflection
- Boosting self-esteem
- Fostering teamwork

Below are the details for the sessions:

Participants: Students in grades 4 to 12.

Curriculum: A free African-centered program based on the Seven Principles (Nguzo Saba) [Guiding Principles | Nguzo Saba | ANSAIO | Halifax](#).

Session Duration: From September 23, 2023, to June 15, 2024, Wednesdays 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., Thursdays 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and every other Saturday 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. virtual.

In-person location: Bur Oak Secondary School, 933 Bur Oak Avenue, Markham, Ontario, every other Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Purpose: Students will be allowed to engage in cultural education, drumming, creating a storybook for children, field trips, listening to guest speakers, learning about Black Heroes and Sheroes, as well as studying African words and symbols. Additionally, we offer homework help and volunteer hours for high school students.

Parents: We also include parents in the in-person sessions to provide a community, support with navigating the school system, and wellness.

If you would like your child(ren) to be a part of this program, kindly register using the links below.

- **Sankofa Mentoring Program grades 7 to 12.** <https://form.jotform.com/sankofamentoring/SankofaMentoringForm>
- **Storytelling Program grades 4 to 6.** <https://form.jotform.com/sankofamentoring/StorytellingConsentForm>
- **Sankofa Identity Program grades 6 to 8.** <https://form.jotform.com/sankofamentoring/sankofa-identity-program>

Do you need a computer?

Renewed Computer Technology (RCT) is a not-for-profit, charitable organization that empowers learners, educators and not-for-profit organizations with increased access to information and communications technology (ICT), skill development and learning opportunities, in a socially and environmentally responsible manner.

Working with York Region District School Board, they are offering affordable, renewed computer packages. Click [here](#) for more details.

Guidance

Remote Night School Registrations Open

The Night School program will move to a remote learning delivery model. The program will be delivered virtually in real-time (synchronous). Classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30-9:45 p.m from October 5, 2023 to February 1, 2024. Click [here](#) for course offerings. Students can register through myBlueprint > Continuing Education > Explore Courses. Please submit the sign-off sheet to your alpha guidance counsellor.

Newcomer Community Event

Newcomer students and their families and friends are invited to attend our Newcomer Community Event that will be held on Thursday, September 28 from 2:15pm – 4:00pm in our school library. Come learn more about our school and free community resources and support.

Level Up! Unlock Your Future in the Skilled Trades Career Fair

Grades 9-12 students are invited to attend this interactive career fair. The goal of this event is to inspire students to take their first step towards a career in industries that are constantly innovating, on the cutting edge of emerging technologies, and making a critical difference in people's lives. Students will have the opportunity to learn about Ontario's 140+ trades through interactive exhibitions and hands-on activities, while hearing directly from tradespeople and local employers about life-changing career opportunities. This field trip will take place on November 15 and 16 - please connect with Guidance to register.

SHSM - Specialist High Skills Major Applications Open

SHSM students participated in a Negotiations & Customer Service workshop as well as First Aid/CPR-C Training in the past week. The Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program is for grade 11 and 12 students who wish to build their skills and resume through experiential learning in an area of interest. Our

school offers the SHSM program in the following 5 sectors: Arts & Culture, Business, Construction, Health & Wellness, and Transportation. Book an appointment with your guidance counsellor to learn more!

Post-Secondary Fairs:

- **Aurora Area Post-Secondary Fair** - Join us on Thursday, October 5th from 6:00pm - 9:00pm at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School and speak to representations from Apprenticeships, Employment Services, Ontario Colleges, and Ontario/Canadian Universities. See flyer [here](#) for a list of institutions attending.
- **Ontario College Fair** - October 18 from 5:00pm - 9:00pm and October 19 from 9:00am - 2:00pm at the Enercare Centre. See [here](#) for more information.
- **Ontario College Regional Fairs** - Events run from September 25 to November 2. See schedule [here](#).
- **Ontario Universities Regional Fairs** - Events run from September 25 to November 16. See schedule [here](#).
- **Ontario University Fair** - October 21-22 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre from 10:00am - 5:00pm daily. See [here](#) for more information.
- **Virtual University Information and Q&A Sessions** - September 26 and November 22 from 5:00pm - 7:00pm. See [here](#) for more information.

Post-Secondary Applications:

- **How to Apply to Ontario Universities** - Click [here](#). Applications open September 21, 2023 and close January 15, 2024.
- **How to Apply to an Ontario College as a Canadian Student** - Click [here](#). Applications open in October and close February 1, 2024.
- **How to Apply to an Ontario College as an International Student** - Click [here](#).
- **Apprenticeship Pathway** - See [OYAP](#) and [ApprenticeSearch](#) for more information and book an appointment with your guidance counsellor.
- **Workforce Planning Board of York Region** - See [here](#) for work opportunities and book an appointment with your guidance counsellor.

*Please see the Guidance Google Classroom for detailed information on important announcements.

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 drgrwilliamsss.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 2023-2024

- Please use this [link](#)

Website Resources for Families and Students

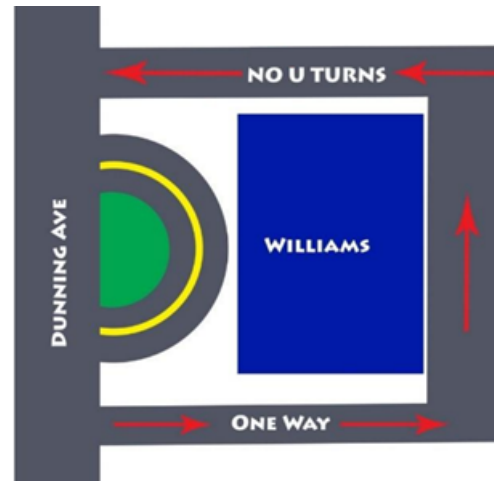
[Resources](#) for students and families on the YRDSB board website, including quick access to online tools, learning platforms and resources, community support, and translation tools.

Driveway and Parking Lot

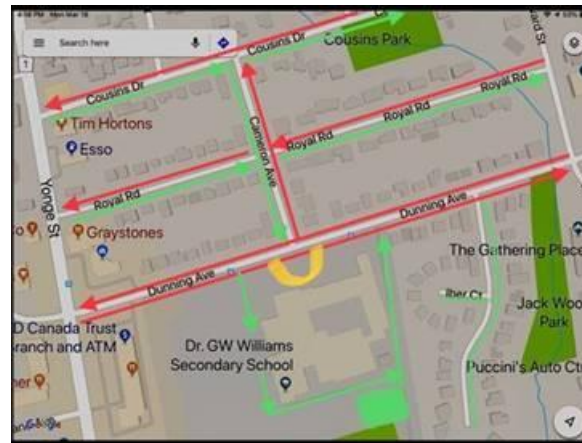
At the end of the school day, the front driveway loop is closed to regular traffic from about 2:50 to 3:10 pm. Only school taxis and buses are to use the front driveway loop at the end of the day in order to create a safe place for our students with special needs. Once all the school taxis and buses 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:

- Friday, September 22, 2023
- Friday, October 20, 2023
- Friday, November 17, 2023
- Friday, February 2, 2024
- Monday, May 6, 2024
- Thursday, June 27, 2024
- Friday, June 28, 2024

School Council Meetings for 2023-2024

- Monday October 16, 2023
- Monday November 20, 2023
- Tuesday February 20, 2024
- Monday April 15, 2024
- Tuesday May 21, 2024

