

Message from Our Trustee

Dear families,

It is hard to sum up this past school year; it truly has been a year like no other. Many of our students have been transitioning between virtual and in-person learning. Others have spent the full year learning virtually as part of our Elementary and Secondary Virtual Schools. Whatever option you have chosen, this year has been challenging and has asked a lot of all of us - students, families, staff members and community partners. We have had to be flexible and adaptable in how we learn, teach and work. We have had to be diligent in learning new routines and adhering to public health measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. And, we have had to pay more attention than ever to supporting mental health and well-being during this challenging time.

This pandemic has affected different families in different ways, and I want to thank you for your patience, support and resiliency throughout this challenging year. I also want to take this opportunity to remind you that resources are available on the Board website, including [community resources](#), [mental health supports](#), [tips](#) and [resources](#) to support online learning, and [tips for speaking with your child about COVID-19](#). These resources will continue to be available throughout the summer.

Despite the challenges this year, we have seen incredible examples of student learning and achievement. I am incredibly proud of the determination, resilience, creativity and perseverance demonstrated by our students. I also want to wish a very special congratulations to the graduating class of 2021. This is an important milestone and while we are all disappointed that we are unable to celebrate in person as we would have hoped, we look forward to honouring our graduates virtually. Schools are working hard to make their virtual graduation celebrations a very special occasion. We are very proud of our graduates and wish you all the very best in the next chapter of your journey.

I want to acknowledge the hard work of our educators and staff members who have maintained a focus on supporting students while navigating the challenges of the past year. Our staff members have shown a true commitment to their own learning in the service of our students, and have been participating in webinars, online training modules and other **professional learning opportunities** throughout the school year to enhance their own practices.

Earlier this spring, we launched the [Board's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy](#), with the goal to "achieve racial equity in YRDSB schools for Black students and staff." The strategy was co-developed by York Region Black community leaders, YRDSB staff and in consultation with students. Thank you to everyone who supported this work and participated in the launch. We look forward to continuing this essential work.

The Board is preparing for the 2022 Municipal Election by undertaking a **review of school board trustee electoral areas**. The boundaries of the areas the trustees represent change over time due to population growth and changes in student numbers. We are committed to ensuring that, as the region's population changes, electoral areas continue to reflect the communities we serve. Public input is important to the Board of Trustees during the electoral area review. Throughout the process there will be a number of ways for you to learn more about the review and to provide input. Information about the [Trustee Determination and Distribution](#) is available on the Board website.

As was communicated to families in May, we are looking ahead to the 2021-2022 school year. Our goal is to create a learning model within the provincial funding allocation that meets public health requirements and is centred on the safety and well-being of our students and staff members. To help meet this goal, we are planning to implement a hybrid model of learning for elementary and secondary schools, a model several other school boards have been using during this current school year. Through this model, families will continue to have the ability to opt for in-person or remote learning, and placement for all students will be in their home school. I know there are many questions about what this will look like and what to expect in September. The Board continues to provide as much information as possible and has shared some [frequently asked questions on the Board website](#) about the model change for 2021-2022. As planning continues and information becomes available, we will provide regular updates. Please know that health and safety of our students, staff and families remains our top priority. You can also continue to find information on the Board website at www.yrdsb.ca and on Twitter [@YRDSB](#).

As we go into the summer months, I want to thank you once again for your support over the past year, and to wish you all a safe, healthy and enjoyable summer.

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.

Bob McRoberts