

# THORNLEA SS

## E-BULLETIN

**Principal**

[patrick.belmonte@yrdsb.ca](mailto:patrick.belmonte@yrdsb.ca)

**Vice-Principals**

[victoria.johnson-lee@yrdsb.ca](mailto:victoria.johnson-lee@yrdsb.ca)

[jacqueline.sandercock@yrdsb.ca](mailto:jacqueline.sandercock@yrdsb.ca)

**Superintendent**

[donna.donalds@yrdsb.ca](mailto:donna.donalds@yrdsb.ca)

**Trustee**

[jenny.chen@yrdsb.ca](mailto:jenny.chen@yrdsb.ca)

JUNE 27, 2025

---

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. School News
2. Curriculum Highlights - Art
3. Business, Co-Operative Education
4. Computer Science, ESL
5. English, Geography
6. Guidance, History
7. Mathematics, Moderns
8. Music, Physical and Health Education
9. Science, Student Services
10. School Council News

*Thank you for a great year! Stay Thunderful!*

## Graduation Photos

Photos from the ceremony are now available.

[Access your complimentary digital download by visiting Thornlea Convocation Photos.](#)

## Tentative International Field Trip - May 2026

Thornlea staff are excited to announce the International Trip for 2026 (pending Board approval). Complete this form if you'd like more information or would like to attend an online information meeting in September: [Information Meeting Sign Up](#)

To find out more about the proposed tour, click the following:  
<https://evolveturns.com/quote/paris-and-barcelona-2/>

If you have any questions, please contact [neda.pilaram@yrdsb.ca](mailto:neda.pilaram@yrdsb.ca).

## Launch of STEM Certificate

Please click the link in the image below to learn more about Thornlea's new STEM Certificate.

Thornlea Secondary School

# STEM Certificate



**STEM Certificate now being offered as of the 2025-2026\* year!**  
(\*Students must be entering grade 9 or grade 10. Eligibility requirements apply.)

Click [here](#) to view the requirements for this four-year certification.

Have questions? Please contact us at  
[thornlea.ss@yrdsb.ca](mailto:thornlea.ss@yrdsb.ca).

Admission to this STEM certification is currently **open**. Families will receive confirmation of registration as of September 2025.



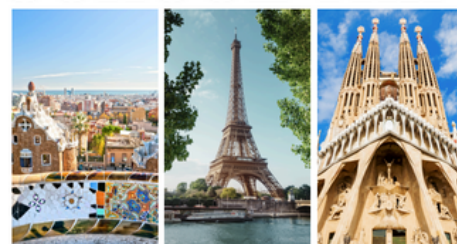
## REMEMBER THIS IMPORTANT MILESTONE!

Edge is thrilled to be on site to capture your commencement photos



## EUROPE SCHOOL TRIP

SPRING 26'



JOIN US IN PARIS AND BARCELONA THIS SPRING.



INSTA @EVOLVE.TOURS

Sign Up For Online Meeting [CLICK HERE](#)

SIGN UP BEFORE IF YOU'RE INTERESTED. DEPOSITS WILL ONLY BE COLLECTED ONCE APPROVED

neda.pilaram@yrdsb.on.ca 905.889.9096 x1189

ENROLLMENT CODE: 20-27

Deposits will only be collected once trip is approved

2025 and 2026 student admission

# CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

We are excited to share curriculum highlights from the various departments at Thornlea SS. As you will see, our staff strive to provide our students with experiential learning opportunities. The rich opportunities available to our students only grow each year. We are looking forward to continuing these offerings at Thornlea in the 2025-2026 academic year!

## THE ARTS

Our enriched Arts program provides students with multiple opportunities to further develop their skills and knowledge in the Arts to prepare for college or university studies. Our students explore a range of subject matter through studio activities, and they consolidate their practical skills in Visual and Digital Design, Classical Drawing, Painting, Digital Arts, Photography, Drama, Musical Theatre, Music Repertoire and Band courses. We also offer the advanced Arts Specialized program in English and in French (for French Immersion students) called ACAM. The Academy of Creativity and Multimedia is an innovative specialized Arts program unique to Thornlea. This program begins in Grade 9 and ends in Grade 12 with an ACAM certificate in Advanced Arts, Drama, Music, Technology/Multimedia Arts. All these FOUR enrichment programs begin in Grade 9 at Thornlea. ACAM, French Immersion, and AP may be taken in the same school year. While many of our students plan a career in the Arts, Technology and Media sectors, there are many reasons why ACAM is a great choice for every student wishing to gain an edge in virtually any future career.

We offer AP Arts and Design Advanced Portfolio Courses for our Grade 11-12 students. These courses help our students work on their Advanced Placement Portfolios so they will be ready for submission to the College Board in the US for evaluation. The Advanced Placement Portfolio Courses are a great opportunity for students working in all artistic disciplines such as, though not limited to, visual arts, film, music, jewellery, fashion, graphic design, animation and game design. Our students work together on developing their Drawing Portfolios and their AP 2-D and 3-D Portfolios. Our students also participate in Arts, Drama and Music workshops and field trips that focus on step-by-step demonstrations to help them build an advanced Visual Arts and Media Design skill set. We provide our students with many learning and leadership opportunities through a variety of community collaborative projects and SHSM (Specialist High Skills Majors) experiential learning experiences. These unique advanced training opportunities help students find their passion and focus on their career paths that match their skills and interests while meeting the requirements of the OSSD.

We organize field trips to a variety of faith institutions and temples, educating our students about different cultures and spiritual values/symbols. Their learning experiences have been translated into beautiful cultural heritage murals and immersive exhibits including traditional art and interactive animated murals that are great examples of visual storytelling.

For more information, please visit our school's website and explore the Arts, Drama and Music Department sections: [Arts, Drama and Music Department - Courses Selection](#)

# BUSINESS

This year has been an exciting and evolving period for Thornlea's **Business** Department, full of enriching experiences and new learning opportunities! We proudly secured the Exploring Entrepreneurship Program Grant, allowing us to provide student-driven business development opportunities. Our Grade 10 Business Field Trip brought students face-to-face with Toronto's financial district. Students explored the banking sector and gained insights into Canada's business landscape. From the Elevator Pitch Workshop, where students honed their entrepreneurial skills, to the Canada's Wonderland Roller Coaster in-class Activity, which fostered teamwork and strategic thinking, experiential learning was at the heart of many initiatives. Anthony Fung's presentation on the Ontario Summer Company Grant opened doors for aspiring entrepreneurs, offering financial support and mentorship. The YRDSB Entrepreneurship Showcase at Aurora Town Square was a highlight, giving students an opportunity to pitch their ideas and engage in a provincial-level competition. Ten of our students took part in this event, with two advancing to represent the Board at the provincial Skills Ontario competition.

Our Grade 11 Marketing students hosted three tradeshow, showcasing their custom-designed drinks while learning how to market their products through social media. We're also proud to have 28 students participating in the Boardroom Competition at Rotman (U of T), where they'll have a chance to win a scholarship if they receive a conditional offer from UofT in Grade 12.

Our SHSM ICE Workshop, held in collaboration with Y2 Entrepreneurship Labs, Creative Genius Academy and Alexander Mackenzie High School, provided real-world problem-solving experience, and the BEP Entrepreneurship Market Day gave students a platform to showcase and sell their creative business ventures. Additionally, ongoing professional development for Business Studies teachers ensures that the implementation of the new Grade 9 and 10 business curriculum (BEM10 and BEP20) is supported through instructional resources and training. This year's accomplishments reflect our dedication to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and business excellence among our students and staff.

We look forward to continuing to empower student minds in the years ahead!



# CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

This year has been an exciting time of growth and innovation for Thornlea's Cooperative Education Department. We expanded the program this year with two additional sections in both semesters, offering more students the opportunity to engage in meaningful experiential learning. New Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) placements were developed in cutting-edge fields, including robotics, bioengineering, software development, and graphic design. We also introduced a new human rights-focused curriculum aligned with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan on Student Achievement and Inclusive Education, helping students explore equity and inclusion in the workplace. We're excited to continue building on this momentum and look forward to another impactful year ahead.

# COMPUTER SCIENCE

In the Computer Science Department we offer ICD20 Digital Technology and Innovations in the Changing World, ICS3U Introduction to Computer Science and ICS4U Computer Science. In Computer Science, students learn how to write computer programs in Python, Java and C++; they also learn about Digital Technology and Robotics. Our Thornlea Thunder Robotics Club is located in the Computer Science Department. We participate in FIRST Robotics Competitions (FRC). Our robotics team has competed at the University of Waterloo, McMaster University, York University and Humber College and won many awards in our very first year and won a Blue Banner in our second year. Our robotics team has qualified for the Ontario Provincial Championships every year since the club started.



# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

As we wrap up the academic year, we are reflecting on many special moments shared within the ESL Department. Room 228 was an especially active hub, hosting community-building events such as our Lunar New Year celebration and Halloween pumpkin carving. Beyond the classroom, students enjoyed enriching experiences such as our trip to the Markham Fair and snowshoeing.

This year, we were intentional with our use of technology by treating it as a tool to support learning, used sparingly and purposefully. Students put their devices away so that they could engage thoughtfully and reduce unnecessary reliance on phones and screens.

We'd like to thank our students for helping to create a connected and vibrant learning environment.



# ENGLISH

As we wrap up the school year, Thornlea's English classes have been vibrant spaces of exploration, reflection, and expression. Students engaged deeply with diverse texts and perspectives that highlighted Indigenous voices, global authors, and contemporary issues. This year, our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion was brought to life through a variety of literature and media that not only mirror students' identities but also challenge them to understand experiences different from their own. Student voice and choice were at the heart of all learning, empowering students to take ownership of their growth and build confidence in their abilities. Through exploring a wide range of diverse stories and non-fiction texts, analyzing multimedia, and creating identity-based narratives and community-engagement presentations, students were able to connect their passions to meaningful, real-world experiences. By centering empathy, critical thinking, and authentic engagement, we've continued to build a learning environment where every student feels seen, heard, and empowered. We are proud of the creativity, courage, and compassion students demonstrated this school year, and we look forward to continuing this meaningful journey together next fall.



# GEOGRAPHY

The Geography Department at Thornlea Secondary School offers a vibrant and engaging program that encourages students to explore the world. From the Grade 9 Exploring Canadian Geography course, which follows the new de-streamed curriculum and introduces students to both physical and human geography, to the Grade 11 Travel and Tourism course that examines the environmental and social impacts of global travel, and the Grade 12 World Issues course that dives into critical topics like climate change, poverty, migration, and geopolitical conflict, our curriculum is designed to be relevant, reflective and meaningful. At Thornlea, we take an inquiry-based approach to teaching, encouraging students to ask meaningful questions and conduct research based on their own interests, making learning more personalized and engaging. Grade 11 students had the chance to visit the CN Tower as part of their tourism studies, and both Grade 9 and 12 students participated in hands-on, in-school workshops focused on climate change and renewable energy. We also launched the Geography Club, providing even more opportunities for students to explore geography beyond the classroom. At Thornlea, geography is more than just studying maps, it's about helping students become informed, curious, and responsible global citizens. For more information, please visit our school's website and explore the Geography Department section. [Geography Department - course selection](#)



# GUIDANCE

Throughout October and November, university and college representatives visited our school during the lunch hour to provide resources for students and to answer their questions. In collaboration with the Student Services department, we hosted a workshop to support students with the process of accessing accommodations in post-secondary schools. Our Career Studies teachers invited a representative from Metrolinx to share information about the skilled trades. We hosted our annual Pathways Night on November 26 which was an opportunity for counsellors to share with both students and their families the different high school programs available to them (co-op, OYAP, Dual Credit courses, SHSM) and how each helps students prepare for different post-secondary programs. A guest speaker from George Brown College shared information about degree programs in colleges and the Ontario's Transfer and Pathways Guide that allows students to transfer courses, programs or institutions in post-secondary schools.



The Guidance department is focused on providing students with different opportunities to understand that success comes in many forms and there are many pathways to success. We are excited to host these opportunities and new ones in the coming school year!

## HISTORY DEPARTMENT

This year, Thornlea's History Department proudly organized a series of impactful field trips that enriched students' understanding of the past and brought history to life for our students. Students visited the powerful Auschwitz Exhibit, where they engaged deeply with the realities of the Holocaust through firsthand accounts and artifacts. A trip to Queen's Park offered an inside look at Ontario's political system. Here, students experienced the workings of provincial government up close. Moreover, the Tour for Humanity Bus provided a dynamic, mobile human rights education experience that created thought-provoking discussions on human rights and social justice. Finally, the department led meaningful observances for Remembrance Day, honoring the sacrifices of those who served in Canada's armed forces.

Our History Club's sale of White Roses to honour the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women encouraged reflection on gender-based violence and the importance of advocacy with proceeds going to the Women's Center of York Region.

These enriching opportunities extended learning beyond the classroom to reflect the department's commitment to inspiring thoughtful, informed, and engaged citizens through the study of history. The History Department continues to foster critical thinking, empathy, and civic awareness in all our students.



# MATHEMATICS

This year has been filled with many opportunities to grow our foundations and to explore diverse topics.

We hosted several competitions that were accessible to all students including the following: AMC (American Mathematics Competition), OMC (Ontario Mathematics Competition), CIMC/CSMC (Waterloo Canadian Intermediate and Senior Mathematics Contests), Pascal/Cayley/Fermat, Euclid, and Fryer/Galois/Hypatia. Even our STEMIC club designed our very own in-school mathematics contest. We plan to offer these contests in the new year.



This past year, math help was available to all students at least 3 times a week, and we created a math AP club to help students study for the AB/BC Calculus exam. We look forward to providing even more enriched opportunities to students in the next school year.

# MODERNS

Modern Languages had a successful year filled with experiential hands-on learning! Student learning was enriched with field trips to CineFranco, a local French film festival, and La Troupe des Anciens, a live theatre experience.

We also cooked up a storm, learning about French Canadian communities, by taking part in cooking classes with Chef à l'Ecole. Students had the opportunity to expand their vocabulary while baking French inspired recipes from scratch, and of course students ate their creations!

French Club held a number of events throughout the year, including bake sales, movie watch parties, and Mardi Gras mask making.

We celebrated academic achievement with two of our students competing in the provincial finals of the Concours d'Art Oratoire at Glendon-York University. We also had a record number of students write the AP French Exam, and some of our students earned their DELF B2 language certification! Some of our students continued their learning by living in French speaking communities through programs such as I.S.E (Europe) or Explore (within Canada).

Félicitations to all our students!

# MUSIC

Thornlea Music had an incredibly successful year as the program continues to grow! The year started off well with two separate repertoire performance groups, in addition to daytime classes. Both the Junior and Senior groups performed at school functions such as Grade 8 Night and Remembrance Day. In November, the Senior Band took part in the Mackenzie Health Benefit Concert, in partnership with several Richmond Hill Schools. This gave us the opportunity to perform at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts and raise money for a good cause! We are looking forward to participating again next year!

Our first concert of the year, Winterlude 2024, was also very successful, featuring the Junior and Senior Bands as well as the Fall Semester Daytime class. Shortly after this, both repertoire groups went to the OBA Provincial Band Festival, where the Junior Band received a Gold Rating and Outstanding Overall Performance Award, and the Senior Band received a Silver Rating. Both bands received invitations to Nationals, which we are looking forward to attending next year. In April, students had the opportunity to attend a Toronto Symphony Orchestra concert.

Finally, we ended off the year with Encore 2025, our spring concert! This concert had a packed house, with standing room only in the cafeteria. It once again featured both repertoire groups as well as the Spring Semester daytime class, along with many talented soloists and small groups.

# PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Thornlea had a tremendous year in the Health & Physical Education Department! With many courses running, including several personal fitness-specific classes, Thornlea students learned about leading a healthy lifestyle and the importance of lifelong physical activity. Basketball, Badminton, Flag Football, Volleyball and Ultimate Frisbee proved to be our most popular sports in gym class. Other popular sports included Soccer, Rugby, Floor Hockey, Pickleball and Dodgeball. In our Fitness classes, students learned about various training principles and developed their own fitness goals. The PE Department also hosted the popular Algonquin Park Canoe Trip which took place the third week of May. In Athletics, Thornlea was extremely successful with FOUR teams going to OFSAA, the Provincial Championship: Skiing, Ultimate, Senior Girls Volleyball and Boys Golf. Within the York Region Athletic Association, which consists of 37 'AAA' schools, Thornlea placed very high in MANY sports:

Boys Baseball: GOLD  
Senior Girls Volleyball: GOLD (4th at OFSAA)  
Girls Alpine Skiing: GOLD (BRONZE at OFSAA)  
Girls Rugby 10s: SILVER  
Boys Golf: SILVER at OFSAA  
Junior Boys Singles Badminton: SILVER  
Junior Girls Singles Badminton: BRONZE  
Junior Girls Rugby 7s: 4th  
Junior Boys Volleyball: 5th  
Ultimate: OFSAA-qualified  
Senior Boys Volleyball: 9th



A very special thanks to our teacher-coaches who devoted so much time and effort in coaching our wonderful student athletes. Thornlea PE Staff Ms. Bendavid, Mr. Cuda, Ms. Esposito, Mr. Hutchison and Mr. Moghaizel are excited to promote PURPLE POWER once again next year. Go Thunder!

# SCIENCE

The **Science** Department proudly celebrates a year of academic excellence, experiential learning, and environmental leadership. A Grade 11 student earned top international recognition by placing 1st globally on the University of Waterloo's Avogadro Exam, demonstrating advanced proficiency in chemistry. In addition, Grade 12 students participated in the Chem 13 News Contest, also hosted by University of Waterloo. This rigorous academic challenge encouraged higher-order thinking and deepened conceptual understanding, with many students demonstrating outstanding performance on an international scale.

To extend learning beyond the classroom, Grade 12 chemistry students participated in two post-secondary enrichment field trips: the University of Waterloo Chemistry Lab Day, where they conducted university-level experiments, and York University's Science Research Day, engaging with current STEM research and innovation. These experiences broadened students' academic horizons and deepened interest in future scientific pursuits. Our commitment to environmental education was further highlighted through participation in the Ecospark School Watch Program, where Grade 9 Science and Grade 11 Biology students engaged in citizen science by monitoring local pollinators and analyzing ecological health. Finally, we proudly congratulate Cindy Wan and the Eco-Team for their leadership in sustainability, helping Thornlea Secondary School achieve EcoSchool Platinum status, the highest provincial certification for environmental excellence in schools.

These highlights reflect our department's ongoing commitment to excellence, innovation, inquiry, and responsible global citizenship in science education.



# STUDENT SERVICES

Student Services had an incredibly successful year, filled with meaningful programming, strong collaboration, and dedicated support across the school. Our department continues to grow, creating more opportunities to meet the diverse learning needs of all students. Inclusive student-centered practices thrived in our classrooms, supported by passionate teachers, SERTs, and educational staff. Across the building, staff worked closely with our team to ensure accommodations were in place and that every student had what they needed to feel confident and experience success. Thank you to TLC, Guidance, and the administration for your continued support. This year was a true reflection of teamwork, and we look forward to building on that foundation in the coming year.

A major highlight from this past year was a welcoming and engaging Grade 8 Day, which left future students and their families excited about the year ahead. The Peer Buddies Prom was a joyful and inclusive celebration made possible by the care and commitment of our Community Class teachers, support staff, peer buddies, Ms. Ackerman, and Ms. Bendavid. Students also had the chance to take part in baseball training through the Jays Care Affiliate School Program, led by Ms. Ackerman, Ms. Bendavid, Ms. Rodriguez, and our support staff. These three events in particular truly captured the spirit of our school community.

# THORNLEA SCHOOL COUNCIL

## Annual Thornlea Staff Appreciation

Last week, Thornlea School Council partnered with the Thornlea Admin team to thank the Thornlea staff for an incredible year. The staff at Thornlea started their day with a wonderful assortment of bagels and pastries, various drinks and a multitude of snacks for later!



# THORNLEA SCHOOL COUNCIL

## A message from Our Co-Chairs

Dear Thornlea S.S. community,

As the school year comes to an end, we, the School Council want to express our sincere gratitude to all of the families, guardians and staff at Thornlea for your incredible support and engagement.

We also extend a special shout out to all of our amazing volunteer council members. Your time, energy and dedication are what make our School Council a success. From organizing and staffing events to producing our newsletter to liaising with the administration, you've gone above and beyond. We truly appreciate every hour you've selflessly given to make our school a better place. Thank you for your passion and commitment.

Although the school year is wrapping up, we are always looking for new members to join our council. If you're passionate about making a difference at Thornlea and want to be more involved, we encourage you to consider joining next school year. It's a great way to connect with other parents, have a voice in school matters and contribute directly to our children's educational experience. Keep an eye out for information about our first meeting in the fall!

To the class of 2025, congratulations and best of luck as you move on to your new chapter.

On behalf of the entire School Council, we wish all our students, families and staff a safe, relaxing and fun summer break. We hope you create many wonderful memories and recharge for another fantastic school year.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support. We look forward to seeing you all in September!

Aroon, Myra, Sharon  
Co-Chairs  
Thornlea School Council



## Parent Council Email List for 2025-26 School Year

Fill out this short [Google form](#) to join  
our email list!

### Thornlea School Council 2024-2025

#### *Executive Members*

Aroon B. (Co-chair)  
Myra C. (Co-chair)  
Sharon A. (Co-chair)  
Diana L. (Communication/Secretary)  
Jennifer F. (Treasurer)

#### *Members at Large*

Amir S., Brenda C., Eileen M., Erika G.,  
Grace Y., Jady K., Jane P., Jenn I.,  
Lee Ann C., Natasha F., Sigalit S.,  
Susan S., Winnette S., Ying T.

#### *Contact Us*

[Thornlea.sc@gmail.com](mailto:Thornlea.sc@gmail.com)