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Parent Newsletter: March 5 - 19, 2021

Administration

Principal:
Sheri Epstein

Vice-Principal:
Barbara Caravella

Vice-Principal:
Todd Taylor

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NEWS & EVENTS

PARENTS

SCHOOL CALENDAR

GUIDANCE

A Message from your Administrators

We are finally well past the halfway point of the school year...with the hope and anticipation of having more opportunities to get outside with warmer temperatures and longer days ahead.

Even though we are well into semester two, it is feeling more and more like a settled routine for us to be back in school and in person. We cannot thank students, staff and families enough for their unwavering commitment to ensuring that the semester is running smoothly and everyone is doing their part to keep the school community safe to learn and work. We know that the day to day struggles continue during the ongoing pandemic, but collaboration and communication have remained steadfast.

February was exceptionally busy at WCI. With the course selection process, Black History Month celebrations and events, Spirit Days, virtual field trips, and student-led initiatives taking launch, the month essentially just flew by. This is also the time of year when we start thinking about the next school year. With new student registrations and program planning, the rest of this school year will be filled with many activities and processes to open the 2021-2022 school year. This also creates some excitement as we look forward to the summer months ahead and a more hopeful future.

We are in the month of March and we won't have a break for a while yet. Many of us look forward to March Break which has now become April Break. The break is scheduled for April 12-16. We do hope that students, staff and families will take the time to relax, recharge and refresh from what has been a very long and difficult year. This month, Interim Report Cards will be distributed electronically and centrally on or about March 12. Feel free to reach out to your child's teacher(s) with any questions or concerns. Parent-Teacher Interviews will take place the evening of March 24. More details will be shared in a later communication.

As we look forward to more Spring-like temperatures and getting out more and more for some much needed fresh air, sunshine and some exercise, we wish to thank you once again for your support, patience and understanding.

As always, do not hesitate to reach out to the main office or any member of the Admin Team with any questions or concerns.

Best regards,

Barb Caravella
Vice-Principal (Alpha A - L)



Voluntary Targeted COVID-19 Testing

You should have received the following information sent directly to your email address from the York Region District School Board.



March 4, 2021

Dear staff and families,

To continue to support our schools, students, staff and families, York Region District School Board is pleased to be able to facilitate in partnership with York Region Public Health and the Ministry of Education, voluntary targeted COVID-19 testing. In addition to daily screening, masking and the other [health and safety measures](#) targeted testing in schools is an important layer of protection that helps to limit the spread of COVID-19.

This is in addition to the testing being offered weekly by Ontario Health as outlined in the [communication from York Region Public Health](#).

Targeted testing will help ensure that our schools remain a safe environment for all to learn and work in.

This testing is being offered to the staff, students and families of:

- Westmount CI
- Yorkhill ES

Targeted COVID-19 testing is voluntary for students and staff without symptoms (asymptomatic) and will take place:

Dates and Location:

St. Elizabeth Catholic High School

525 New Westminster Dr.
Thornhill, ON
L4J 7X3

Friday, March 5, 2021
4 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Saturday March 6, 2021
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Consent will be required from parents or guardians of students under 18 years old. Please take note of the following:

- We encourage you to register in advance for the COVID-19 testing by choosing your school and using the vendor's online portal:
 - [Westmount Collegiate Institute](#) - registration
 - [Yorkhill Elementary School](#) - registration
- Once this information is entered, you will be able to book a time for testing.
- Once you have completed the registration process you will receive an email with a QR code.
- When you arrive at the testing location at the school, please make sure to be wearing a mask and to bring your QR code and your child's health card.
- Walk-in appointments will be accommodated to the best of our ability (please remember to bring your health cards and a parent/guardian must accompany children under 18).

Voluntary Targeted COVID-19 Testing

- If you have any questions about the registration process, please contact booking@gvtlabs.ca.

The school and the board will communicate with parents, guardians and staff should the need for future targeted testing dates arise.

This site is offering asymptomatic testing only. After being tested, you do not need to self-isolate while waiting for results unless you have:

- Been identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19; OR
- Travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days; OR
- Have one or more symptoms of COVID-19; OR
- Been tested due to a potential exposure to someone with COVID-19 or part of a cohort of students that have been dismissed at a school

We continue to ask all students and staff to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. This includes completing the [daily self-assessment for symptoms](#) before attending school.

Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy

The York Region District School Board is committed to championing equity and inclusivity. In response to continued evidence of anti-Black racism in Canadian institutions, including in education, the Board has co-developed an [anti-Black racism strategy](#).

The Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy: Creating anti-racist and Black-affirming learning and working environments was co-developed by York Region Black community leaders, YRDSB staff and in consultation with students. The launch of the strategy marks a coordinated effort to address anti-Black racism at the Board.

On March 8, 2021 from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. students, staff and families are invited to the virtual [Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy launch event](#) featuring guest presenter [Robyn Maynard](#), author of *Policing Black Lives*; consultant Tana Turner, Board Chair Cynthia Cordova, Trustee Dr. Elizabeth Sinclair, student performers and members of the Senior Leadership Team.

The program will examine anti-Black racism in educational institutions and unveil the Board's strategy. The strategy is designed to dismantle anti-Black racism in all its forms in our schools and workplaces.

The systemic nature of anti-Black racism requires that school boards act proactively to support equitable access to quality education and opportunities for all students, and to challenge the marginalization of Black students, staff and families.

Please visit www.yrdsb.ca for more details and [to register](#) for the event.

Graduation 2021

Important Information for Grade 12 Students and their Families

Dear Graduating Class of 2021

You have all been incredibly patient while anxiously awaiting information about Graduation and other Grad activities. Thank you! We finally are able to share some information with you and it is all good news!!!



Graduation Ceremony:

We can confirm that our graduation celebration will still take place in June. However, due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic, we are unable to confirm what format the ceremony will take. Most likely our ceremony will be a “live” virtual event. We are also looking into the possibility of some type of in/at school celebration for students. We continue to work with York Region Public Health and the School Board to determine what is best. We will continue to update you as we get closer to the month of June with a clearer understanding of what is feasible and safe.

Students Attending Virtual School:

Please note that students attending the Secondary Virtual School (SVS) will graduate with their WCI peers.

Graduation Photos:

We have been given the “green light” to go ahead and begin to organize Grad Photos for our Grade 12 students. We are working quickly to get this organized and available to students. At this time it looks like we will begin our Grad Photo Appointments on Tuesday, April 6th. Appointments will be available throughout the month of April. All Grad Photo appointments will occur here at WCI. All Covid Health & Safety protocols will be followed. Stay tuned for more information.

Students who have their Grad Photos taken at WCI with our provider will be included in our Grad memento book and the Grad composite photo provided to each student. Unfortunately photos taken with other providers outside of the school will not be able to be included.

Caps & Gowns:

We understand that you may wish to purchase a cap and gown for family pictures, celebrations, to wear the night of “Grad”, or as a keepsake. For this year Caps & Gowns are optional. We will be sending out an email to all graduating students with a link to School Cash Online to purchase a Cap & Gown when we have sorted out the particulars. We recognize that this decision is challenging with so many unknowns, but we wanted to ensure the opportunity to purchase a Cap & Gown was made available to each student should he/she want one.

Grad “Memento” Book:

For this year only we are producing a Grad Memento Book for all Graduation Students. There will be a cost of \$20 per book. Information on how to purchase this and be a part of this book will be sent to all graduating students. Details coming soon!

Grad Sweatshirts:

We have a wonderful Grad Sweatshirt Committee who is busy working on designs for this year’s Grad Sweatshirt. The committee is producing three designs that we are going to share with the graduating class. The grade 12s will then have an opportunity to vote on the design they prefer and the winning design will be made available to all grade 12 students to purchase. More information will be available soon.

We are thrilled that we will be recognizing our Grads in a number of ways before they leave us at the end of June. As soon as we have more information on any of the above we will share with students and their families. If you have any questions, please reach out to administration - we love hearing from you!

“Virtual” School Council Meeting

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

7:00 pm—8:30 pm

Please join us on Wednesday to learn more about *What Questions Do You Have? How is School Going thus Far? What Do You Want to Know?*

Wow! Talk about being able to go with the flow! Please join us this evening as we answer your questions on school this year?

We haven't been together in a while so please join us and ask us what you what to know!

Our Guest Speakers will be the WCI Admin team - Ms. Epstein, Ms. Caravella and Mr. Taylor

If you are interested in attending this very informative session please send an email to westmount.ci@yrdsb.ca. Include your name and “virtual” display name by 12:00 pm on March 17, 2021. The Zoom link will be sent by 3:00 pm that day for parents who



News From Guidance

@WCI Guidance

March 8 to 19, 2021



YOUR GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

Support and promote students' well-being and continuous growth in three areas: personal (student) development, interpersonal development, and career development in order to help them develop resilience and realize their potential (success) as individuals and as valuable members of society.

-Ontario School Counsellors' Association

ACCESSING YOUR GUIDANCE TEAM

Please reach out to your ALPHA Counsellor by email. **Due to the high volume of emails, please allow for 1 to 2 schools days for a reply.**

Your Counsellor will respond in the appropriate method: email, phone or on-line meeting.

Guidance Counsellors are using Zoom for virtual meetings. If a student sets up a zoom meeting we would prefer the student's camera to be on. Otherwise, a phone call would suffice.

Contact Information: Please note the change to the ALPHA allocation.

Mrs. C. Pearlstein, *Guidance Secretary*
cindy.pearlstein@yrdsb.ca

Mrs. C. Jackson
Last Name Alpha: I to N
cynthia.jackson@yrdsb.ca

Mr. R. Conte, *Head of Guidance*
Last Name Alpha: A to H
roderick.conte@yrdsb.ca

Mrs. N. Popiel
Last Name Alpha: O to Z
natasha.popiel@yrdsb.ca

GRADE 12s! PREPARING FOR GRADUATION IN JUNE

1. SUBMIT YOUR HOURS

Grade 12 students REQUIRE 20 hours of community service to graduate. Many students have not yet submitted their hours for graduation. Please do so asap. New this year! Ten of the 20 hours can be paid hours from a job. If you have questions, please reach out to your Alpha Counsellor.

<https://sites.google.com/site/wciguideance/community-service-hours> #wcigetinvolved #wcigrad

News From Guidance

2. ONTARIO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

The deadline for Ontario university and college applications has passed. Now you patiently wait for your application to be assessed. Ensure you are checking your email regularly. Colleges and universities will acknowledge your application and send you follow-up information. Check your junk folder just in case this new unrecognized message ends up there. Carefully read and understand any message you receive from a college or university. If you have any questions, contact the college or university admissions office directly.

#wcigrad

COURSE SELECTION – THE NEXT STEP

The 1st step of the course selection process is now complete. Students have selected their courses for next year through their Pathway Planner in myBlueprint. MyBlueprint is now closed.

The next step will be to verify the courses selected. The week of March 15th students will be sent an electronic verification form listing the courses they selected. It is important that students carefully check to ensure they picked the correct courses.

More importantly, students will be able to make a change to their course selection. This will be the last opportunity to make a change to their course selection before September. Please choose wisely!

Students, parents and guardians will be required to sign-off on this electronic verification form with or without changes. Stay tuned for more details.

Go to <https://sites.google.com/site/wciguideance/course-selection> for detailed information and timelines.

Regular updates will be sent through Twitter, [@WCIGuidance](https://twitter.com/WCIGuidance) #wcicourseselection



Stay connected and “in the Loop”

Bookmark the [Guidance Department’s website](#) It will be the “go-to” for all relevant information pertaining to school for all grades.

Now more than ever, please follow [@WCIGuidance](https://twitter.com/WCIGuidance), [@WCI_YRDSB](https://twitter.com/WCI_YRDSB) on Twitter for real time notifications. During this time, social media has become the most effective way of communicating information.

Spread the word. Remind friends and family of the Westmount community to follow us on Twitter.



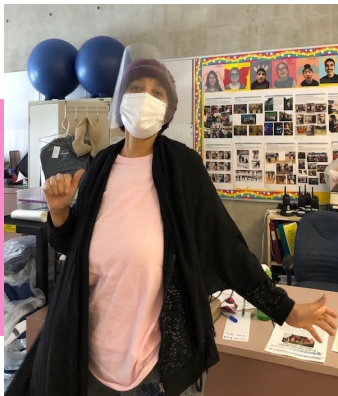
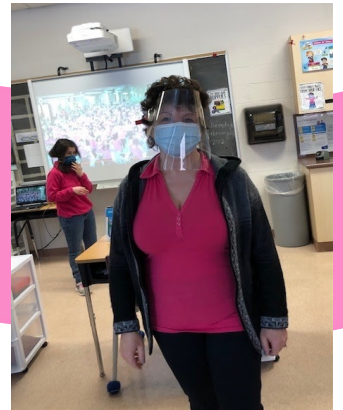
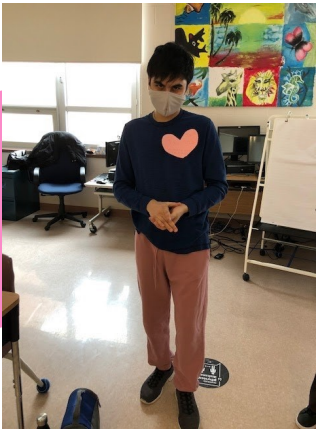
On February 26th, our Community class celebrated Purim! They made masks, danced and had a great time celebrating!



KINDNESS IS ONE SIZE Fits All

PINK SHIRT DAY!

Students in our Community class participated in **Pink Shirt Day** on February 24th. They discussed the meaning of bullying and how important it is to stop this behaviour from happening.





Let's Bake!

Hosted by GSA

GSA is excited to announce a bake night for all students, parents/guardians and WCI staff! We welcome you all to join us as we learn how to bake mug cakes from scratch! Please join us on Wednesday, March 10th after school at 3:30 pm to 4:00 pm. Click [here](#) for the google meets link.

Ingredients

Snicker Doodle Mug Cakes:

- 1/4 cup + 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 cup milk, at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons salted butter, melted and cooled
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon



HAVE YOU FILLED OUT YOUR STUDENT SCREENING?

In accordance with Public Health, all students must screen themselves before entering school.

[HTTP://BIT.LY/YRDSBSCREEN](http://bit.ly/YRDSBSCREEN)



USE THE BITLY LINK OR QR CODE to complete this form everyday
prior to entering school.
You will have to show confirmation before entering the building.





GRADUATION AWARD

IGNITE Technology Grant

for students with SEA Equipment



The Ignite Technology Grant is provided in partnership with LEARNstyle Ltd.

The Ignite Graduation Award Details:

- Application is open to all Grade 12 students whose anticipated **graduation is June 2021** and who have demonstrated **leadership** and successful application and use of their **SEA technology** throughout their educational career
- Award consists of **\$1000** in discretionary funds to purchase personal technology
- Award winning student will be expected to complete various **leadership and advocacy** opportunities throughout their graduation year

Ignite your school and community now!
Go to www.yrdsb.ca/ignite now to learn how!

Attention Youth with ASD and Their Parent(s):
Transitioning Together, a wonderful new,
free opportunity for youth with ASD,
is coming to York Region this year!



Transitioning Together is an eight-week online program designed to help teenagers with ASD, and their parent(s), plan their futures after secondary school.

For the first time in Canada, **Transitioning Together** will be delivered by local trained professionals in March-April and May-June 2021.

What's In It For Me?

- If you are someone between the ages of 14-17 with ASD who communicates verbally, attends secondary school and **wants help developing your own plan** as you transition into adulthood, **this is for you.**
- The small on-line groups of 5 people like yourself are a great way to connect with others in a comfortable format. Transitioning Together has resulted in many lasting group member friendships.
- You will develop a personalized plan with help from your peers, group facilitators and your parent(s)/family.



Brock University is evaluating the outcomes of the program. The participation of you and your parent(s) in the evaluation research is appreciated. For research purposes, participants will be randomly assigned to groups so you should be available for either Session One (March/April) or Session Two (May, June).

[Click Here For More Information!](#)

To Register, please email Research Assistant Shona Mills at sm17uf@brocku.ca

Sponsored by the York ASD Partnership with a grant from Autism Speaks Canada





Greetings,

Brock University is pleased to be hosting its second Ability Empowerment Day, which will take place virtually on **Tuesday, May 11** and **Wednesday, May 12**.

Students should be prepared to log in virtually at 9:15 a.m. on both Tuesday and Wednesday. Virtual activities will run both days until 11:30 a.m.

High school students (grades 9-12) experiencing disability are invited to attend to discover opportunities in post-secondary education. The goal of the event is to create a space where students can come together to participate in a forum to learn about different programs & departments, exchange ideas, gain perspectives, and learn advocacy skills centred around post-secondary education.

Formal invitations with more details and a link to register for the event, as well as a schedule outlining the activities of the event will be sent out in the coming weeks. Guidance counsellors and principals are also invited and encouraged to attend this event.

Please forward this email to your relevant colleagues within your schools.

If you have any questions, or concerns, please contact **Kristen Smith** at ksmith2@brocku.ca