



## **DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

### **NOTICE OF MEETING**

#### **STANDING COMMITTEE PUBLIC SESSION**

**Monday, May 2, 2022**

Chairperson: Christine Thatcher

Vice-Chairperson: Patrice Barnes

Director of Education: Norah Marsh

Recording Secretary: Kathy Fitzpatrick

**DATE:** Monday, May 2, 2022

**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Virtual

**ATTACHMENTS:** Agenda

**Copies to:**

All Trustees

Director of Education

All Superintendents

**STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
**Monday, May 2, 2022**  
**7:00 p.m.**

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|---|--------|
| 1. <u>Call to Order</u>   |        |
| 2. <u>Land Acknowledgement</u>  | Verbal |
| <p>The Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with the territories upon which our school board and schools are located. Today, this area is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We acknowledge that the Durham Region forms a part of the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, the Mississauga Peoples and the treaty territory of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. It is on these ancestral and treaty lands that we teach, learn and live.</p> |        |
| 3. <u>Declarations of Interest</u>  | Verbal |
| 4. <u>Motion to Approve Agenda</u>  | Verbal |
| 5. <u>Community Presentations</u>   |        |
| 6. <u>DDSB Presentations</u>  |        |
| (a)   Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB, Introduction to Kindergarten Program Update<br>(Superintendent Mohamed Hamid)   | 1-56   |
| 7. <u>Director's Update</u><br>(Director Norah Marsh)   | Verbal |
| 8. <u>Recommended Actions</u>   |        |
| 9. <u>Information Items</u>   |        |
| (a)   Student Trustee Report<br>(Student Trustees James Kay, De-Mario Knowles, Kayla Malcolm)   | Verbal |



|     |   |        |
|-----|---|--------|
|     | (b) Indigenous Book Review<br>(Associate Director Jim Markovski, Superintendents Erin Elmhurst,<br>Georgette Davis) | 57-60  |
|     | (c) OPSBA Report<br>(Trustee Patrice Barnes)  | Verbal |
| 10. | <u>Committee Reports</u>  |        |
|     | (a) Equity and Diversity Ad Hoc Steering Committee Report, February 23,<br>2022<br>(Trustee Patrice Barnes)         | 61     |
| 11. | <u>Correspondence</u>   |        |
|     | (a)   |        |
|     | i. Avon Maitland District School Board  | 62     |
|     | ii. Bluewater District School Board   | 63-64  |
|     | iii. York Region District School Board  | 65-66  |
| 12. | <u>Other Business</u>   |        |
| 13. | <u>Adjournment</u>  |        |

## DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**REPORT TO:** Durham District School Board

**DATE:** May 2, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten Program Update

**PAGE:** 1 of 3

**ORIGIN:** Norah Marsh, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board  
Mohamed Hamid, Superintendent of Equitable Education  
Stacey Lepine-Fisher, Senior Manager, Early Years  
Amanda Gleed, Interim Manager, Early Years

### 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Durham District School Board (DDSB) Board of Trustees with an overview of the new “**Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten**” model (formerly *Welcome to Kindergarten*).

### 2.0 Ignite Learning Strategic Priority/Operational Goals

**Success** – *Set high expectations and provide support to ensure all staff and students reach their potential every year.*

**Well-being** – *Create safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces to promote well-being for all students and staff.*

**Leadership** – *Identify future leaders, actively develop new leaders and responsively support current leaders.*

**Equity** – *Promote a sense of belonging and increase equitable outcomes for all by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement.*

**Engagement** – *Engage students, parents and community members to improve student outcomes and build public confidence.*

**Innovation** – *Re-imagine learning and teaching spaces through digital technologies and innovative resources.*

### 3.0 Background

The DDSB is preparing to welcome new children and families into our Kindergarten programs and to the DDSB community for the 2022-2023 school year. Historically, the DDSB, partnered with an external organization to offer the *Welcome to Kindergarten* program to support the transition of new children and families into Kindergarten at the DDSB. The model provided school teams with planned activity centres as well as welcome bags to support a school's Spring Welcome event. Items and activities were pre-determined and distributed to every school offering Kindergarten programs within the District.

Following consultation with educators and administrators and recognizing the need to ensure our student's and community's needs are met, the Early Years department *Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten* invites educators to focus on the specific needs of their school community, recognizing that no two communities are the same. The new model will emphasize the importance of both designing a program and child development kit that meets the specific needs of each individual community, while also promoting the importance of collaboration between Kindergarten educators and Early Years partners.

School teams have been encouraged to review Early Development Instrument (EDI) data, Durham Public Health Priority Community data, and the Ontario Marginalization Index to determine their school communities' unique strengths and vulnerabilities. This data may be analyzed to help identify key opportunities to determine how to differentiate the support for incoming learners and engage their families as partners.

#### **4.0 Analysis**

The District recognizes the impact on students and their families during the pandemic during. Children entering school for the first time will present a wide range of needs that will require significant support from the school and early learning environment. The Kindergarten transition is a critical moment in a young child's life and requires specific supports to ensure a successful outcome and positive trajectory for their future learning and development.

With this understanding during the summer of 2021, a team of Early Years educators worked collaboratively to create a framework that supports school teams in implementing their *Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten* event. The Summer Writing Team created a variety of informative resources and supporting documents that will be utilized by school teams and shared with families to help support the transition into school (Appendix A). Feedback from a committee made up of internal and external stakeholders informed the design of the resources and documents to ensure that the content represented best practices and accurate information for families with Kindergarten-aged children.

#### **5.0 Financial Implications**

The financial implications for this new model align with previous Kindergarten transition models that have been implemented in years past. Schools will host a welcome event for their incoming students and families, will provide a welcome bag that contains items specific to the needs of the school community. Individual school teams will have the ability to purchase items for student welcome bags with the funds available from the school's consumable budget. The funding allocated for each new bag (approximately \$16.00/bag) has been designed to be utilized in a manner that is responsive to specific community needs.

Schools will be provided with the new welcome bags that schools will have the opportunity to fill with their selected items. In addition, all schools have been supplied with a copy of the "Let's Play!" book (Appendix B).

The Early Years Department, in partnership with Make A Difference, has also provided additional support to DDSB priority schools by providing items for the welcome bags. Each identified priority school has received new books and crayons for their bags.

## 6.0 Evidence of Impact

Relevant data and an overview of all the programs will be collected following the implementation of school-based *Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten* events and distribution of the student welcome bags. As the resources, items, and materials will all be geared towards the specific needs of the unique school community, staff anticipate a positive impact on the students and families who are the direct recipients of the new model. The aim is for every school to align with the DDSB Indigenous Education and the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism policies, ensuring student learning and well-being is at the centre of every decision made and action taken. Grounding our practices in our duty bearer responsibilities will help us apply the policies to practice and uphold human rights for our students. The Early Years Department is eager to see the impact this new model will have on the lives of our incoming families and students.

The overall goal of *Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten* is for every child to enter Kindergarten healthy and secure, emotionally and socially competent, and confident and eager to learn. As research has shown, the experiences within a child's first five years of life are the most crucial for their future well-being and can significantly influence their overall development.

## 7.0 Conclusion and/or Recommendations

This report is provided to Trustees for information.

## 8.0 Appendices

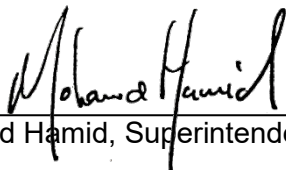
Appendix A – Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten Resources  
Appendix B – Let's Play Booklet

Report reviewed and submitted by:



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Norah Marsh, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board



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Mohamed Hamid, Superintendent of Education

# Great Beginnings

Start at the  **DDSB**  
Ignite Learning



# INTRODUCTION TO KINDERGARTEN

*“Young children actively explore their environment and the world around them through play. When children are exploring ideas and language, manipulating objects, acting out roles, or experimenting with various materials, they are engaged in learning through play” - The Kindergarten Program, 2016, p.18*

## Welcome

Kindergarten is a special time for you and your child. We look forward to working together as partners to successfully transition your child into our school community. This resource is intended to provide you with ideas and activities that can help you get started.

## Importance of Families

We know and understand that families are the first and most powerful influence in their child's learning, development, health, and well-being. We welcome and honour all diverse, social, cultural and linguistic perspectives. We look forward to working together to provide a mutually supportive program for your child's development.

## Importance of Play

“As children learn through play and inquiry, they develop – and have the opportunity to practice every day – many of the skills and competencies that they will need in order to thrive in the future, including the ability to engage in innovative and complex problem-solving and critical and creative thinking; to work collaboratively with others; and to take what is learned and apply it in new situations in a constantly changing world.”

(The Kindergarten Program, 2016, p.11)



## Supporting the Transition to Kindergarten

Your child's learning journey begins with you. The positive interactions and conversations you share are critical to their well-being and success. The education team will work with you to ensure the best possible transition to the Kindergarten environment.

### Consider the possibilities shared below:

- Encourage your child to practice completing routines and simple tasks independently (e.g., dressing, toileting, washing hands, etc.)
- Engage in active reading with your child on a daily basis (in your first language), and have conversations about the books you shared together
- Create opportunities to tell and share stories with your child in your first language
- Encourage your child to express and talk about their feelings and emotions
- Provide opportunities for your child to socialize with other children
- Provide opportunities for your child to ask 'why' questions
- Encourage your child to help around the house (e.g., fold/sort laundry, set the table, organize their belongings, etc.)
- Create opportunities for your child to practice completing various school-specific tasks and routines (e.g., zipping and unzipping backpack, opening and closing lunch containers, etc.)
- Consider connecting with community partners for resources/programs to further support your child's learning and development (e.g., Public Library, Community Centre, EarlyOn, etc.)



# PLAY AT HOME IDEAS

## Dramatic Play

When children engage in imaginary play, they are developing social skills, expressive language, conflict resolution, and exploration of emotions.

### Provide your child with:

- Clothing, fabrics, jewelry, costumes, shoes, etc.
- Puppets, dolls, action figures, etc.
- Common household items

## Constructive Play

Giving your child opportunities to construct is valuable to the development of their fine motor, academic, social, and emotional skills. It supports problem-solving, mathematical thinking, spatial awareness, hand-eye coordination, and engineering skills.

### Provide your child with:

- Household materials - boxes, cans, cups, etc.
- Building materials - ramps, blocks, connecting materials, etc.
- Sand, buckets, shovels, sand molds, etc.

## Music and Movement

Music promotes language development and a recognition for rhythm and patterns. Movement supports gross-motor functioning and healthy active living.

### Provide your child with:

- Various items that produce different sounds
- Opportunities to listen and sing along to songs and rhymes
- Hula hoops, balls, skipping ropes, bicycles, etc.



# PLAY AT HOME IDEAS

## Outdoor Experiences

Playing outdoors supports risk-taking, creative thinking, and gross motor skills. As children connect to the natural world, they develop mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being.

### Provide your child with:

- Sidewalk chalk, bubbles, etc.
- Scavenger hunts with the goal of finding natural items (e.g., rocks, flowers, etc.)
- Opportunities to walk in the neighbourhood and visit playgrounds

## Interactive Games

Playing games with others provides many benefits for children. These may include strategic and mathematical thinking, memory retention and cognitive development, social skills, and turn-taking skills.

### Provide your child with:

- Board games using dice, counting, and cards
- Memory games
- Physical games (e.g., tag, hopscotch, twister, hide-and-seek, etc.)

## Artistic Expressions

Creative experiences promote fine-motor skills, creativity, independence, and sharing of personal interests and culture. As children express themselves artistically, they are developing a sense of self, decision-making skills, and a sense of wonderment.

### Provide your child with:

- Loose parts (e.g., stones, flowers, buttons, string, etc.)
- Art materials  
(e.g., crayons/pencils/pencil crayons/markers, paints, paper, etc.)
- Sculpting materials (e.g., play dough, plasticine, clay, mud, etc.)

# 9 Great Beginnings

Start at the  **DDSB**  
Ignite Learning

## THIS IS ME!

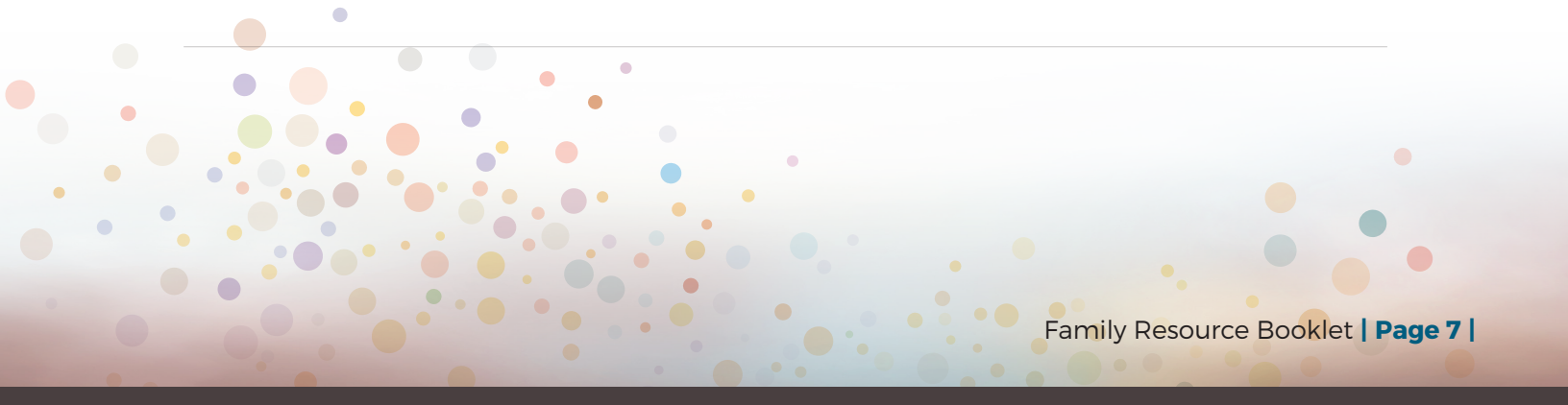
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Share your self portrait with us:  
**@DDSBEarlyYears @DDSBschools**  
**#GreatBeginningsDDSB**



Family Resource Booklet | **Page 7** |

# Great Beginnings

Start at the  **DDDSB**  
Ignite Learning





# Great Beginnings

Start at the  **DDSB**  
*Ignite Learning*



**BOOKLIST IDEAS FOR FAMILIES**

# ENJOY STORIES WITH YOUR CHILD

Parents and families are a child's first and most important teacher. Strong literacy skills form the basis for learning in all areas of development. When reading books to or with your child, engage in conversations. Acknowledge their wonderings about the texts and encourage them to analyze the pictures as they listen to the words. Encourage active listening by asking questions before, during, and after you read the book.

**Below are a few examples of questions and prompts:**

## Before Reading

What do you think the book might be about?

What do you think the author wants us to know or think about?

Ask your child about the main message of the story (i.e., being kind to others).

How might you make someone feel welcome?

How does someone make you feel happy?

## During the reading

How do you think the character(s) might be feeling? How can you tell?

What do you think might happen next? Why do you think that?

Would you .....? (select a situation specific to the character)

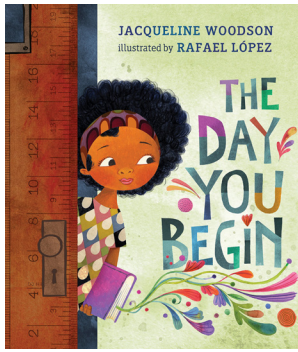
## After reading

What was your favourite part of the book?

Who was your favourite character?

Did the story remind you of anything? If so, what?

Below is a list of texts that you and your child(ren) might enjoy together. The booklist was created as a sample of diverse, culturally relevant, and responsive texts intended to highlight and support a sense of self, belonging, well-being, and child development.

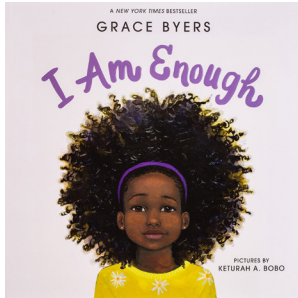


## The Day You Begin

**Author:** Jacqueline Woodson

**Illustrator:** Rafael Lopez

This story centres on finding the courage to connect with others when entering a new environment.

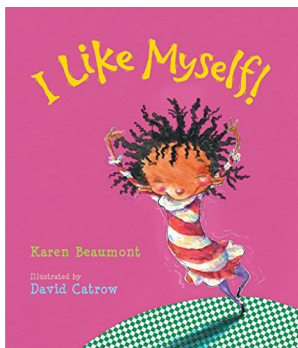


## I Am Enough

**Author:** Grace Byers

**Illustrator:** Keturah A. Bobo

This story is filled with positive affirmations and focuses on the importance of self-acceptance.



## I Like Myself

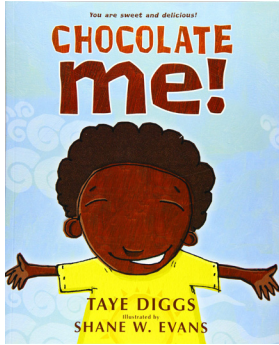
**Author:** Karen Beaumont

**Illustrator:** David Catrow

This story focuses on the importance of self-acceptance.





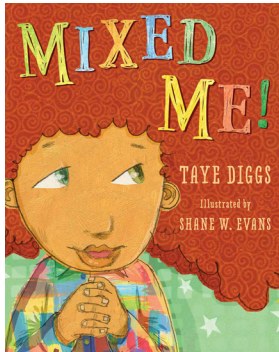


## Chocolate Me

**Author:** Taye Diggs

**Illustrator:** Shane W. Evans

This story focuses on the importance of accepting yourself, even when others don't.

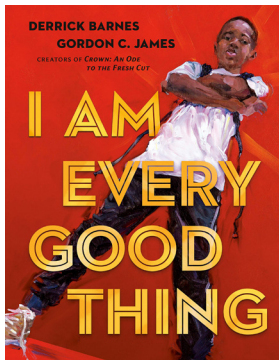


## Mixed Me

**Author:** Taye Diggs

**Illustrator:** Shane W. Evans

This story is a cheerful and honest look at the mixed-race experience of one child.



## I Am Every Good Thing

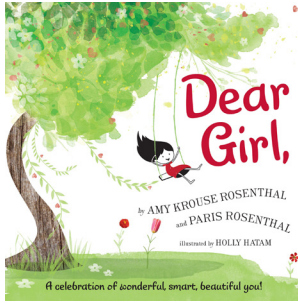
**Author:** Derrick Barnes

**Illustrator:** Gordon C. James

This story is narrated by a black boy who shares his pride in who he is and what he is able to do.





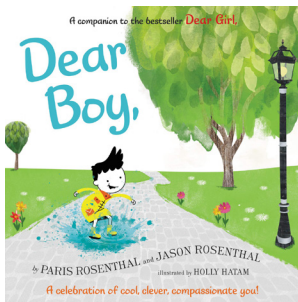


## Dear Girl: A Celebration of Wonderful, Smart, Beautiful You!

**Author:** Amy Krouse Rosenthal & Paris Rosenthal

**Illustrator:** Holly Hatam

This story is a celebration of the wonderful, smart, and beautiful female.

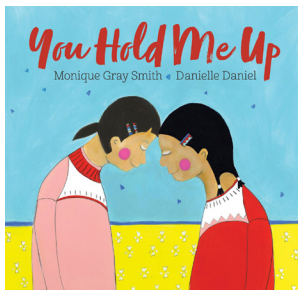


## Dear Boy: A Celebration of Cool, Clever, Compassionate You!

**Author:** Paris Rosenthal & Jason Rosenthal

**Illustrator:** Holly Hatam

This story is a celebration of males being themselves, even when existing in a world filled with male stereotypes.



## You Hold Me Up

**Author:** Monique Gray Smith

**Illustrator:** Danielle Daniel

**Translated:** Anishinaabemowin

This story is a celebration of things that help the narrator feel emotionally lifted.



## My Heart Fills with Happiness

**Author:** Monique Gray Smith

**Illustrator:** Julie Flett

**Translated:** Plains Cree

This story is a celebration of many things that make the narrator feel happy.

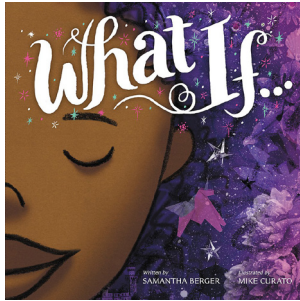


## Salam Alaikum - A Message of Peace

**Author:** Harris J

**Illustrator:** Ward Jenkins

This story follows a Muslim boy as he celebrates and promotes peace in his community.

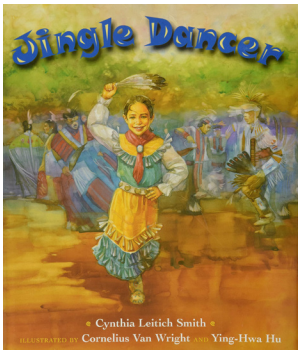


## What If...

**Author:** Samantha Berger

**Illustrator:** Mike Curato

This story celebrates the importance of imagination and self-expression.



## Jingle Dancer

**Author:** Cynthia Leitich Smith

**Illustrators:** Cornelius Van Wright & Ying-Hwa Hu

This story follows an American Indigenous girl who wants to celebrate her culture by dancing at the next pow wow.

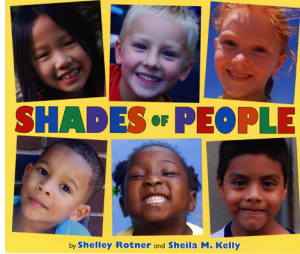




## Ruby's Worry/ Ruby Finds a Worry

**Author & Illustrator:** Tom Percival

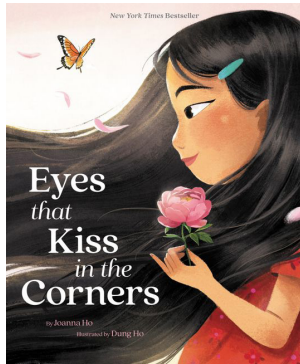
This story follows a young girl who realizes that she is not alone in her fears, and that there is help along the way when dealing with them.



## Shades of People

**Authors:** Shelley Rotner & Sheila M. Kelly

This story celebrates the many different shades of people.

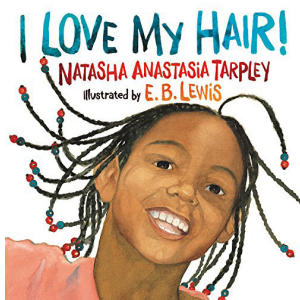


## Eyes that Kiss in the Corners

**Author:** Joanna Ho

**Illustrator:** Dung Ho

This story follows a young girl, and highlights the importance of learning to love and celebrate her unique physical features.



## I Love My Hair

**Author:** Natasha Anastasia Tarpley

**Illustrator:** E.B. Lewis

This story is narrated by a young, black girl who shows pride in her natural hair.



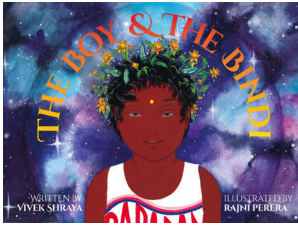


## Your Name is a Song

**Author:** Jamilah Tompkins-Bigelow

**Illustrator:** Luisa Uribe

This story centres on a child who learns the significance of her name and why it is important for others to pronounce it correctly.

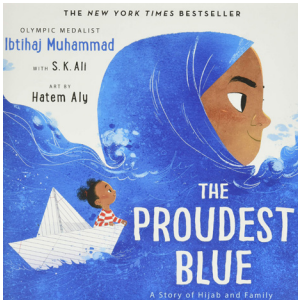


## The Boy and the Bindi

**Author:** Vivek Shraya

**Illustrator:** Rajni Perera

This story emphasizes a young boy's journey in discovering the importance of his mother's bindi, and the pride he has when wearing his own.

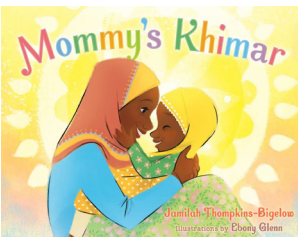


## The Proudest Blue

**Author:** Ibtihaj Muhammad with S.K. Ali

**Illustrator:** Hatem Aly

This story showcases a young girl who expresses great pride when her older sister gets her first hijab.

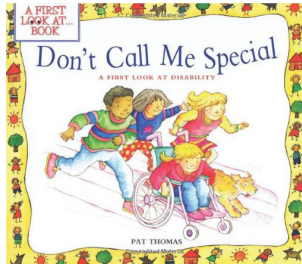


## Mommy's Khimar

Author : Jamilah Tompkins-Bigelow

Illustrator : Ebony Glenn

This story focuses on a young girl who loves her Mother's yellow Khimar.

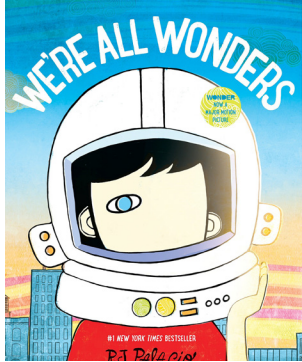


## Don't Call Me Special

**Author:** Pat Thomas

**Illustrator:** Lesley Harker

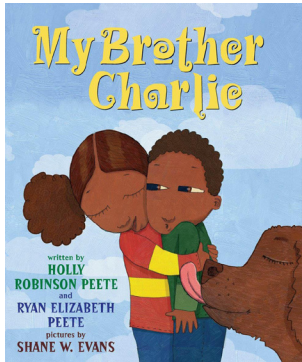
This story celebrates children with a wide variety of exceptionalities.



## We're All Wonders

Author & Illustrator: R.J. Palacio

This story centres on a boy who knows he's a wonder, but wants everyone to realize that everyone is a wonder too.



## My Brother Charlie

**Authors:** Holly Robinson Peete & Ryan Elizabeth Peete

**Illustrator:** Shane W. Evans

This story highlights the experience of living with a sibling who has an autism diagnosis.



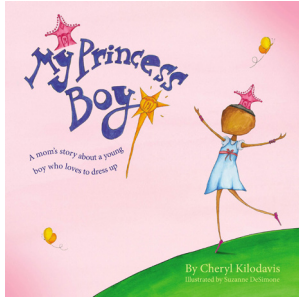


## I am Brown

**Author:** Ashok Banker

**Illustrator:** Sandhya Prabhat

This story is a celebration of being brown-skinned.

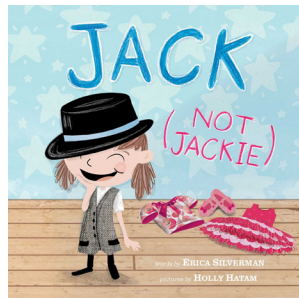


## My Princess Boy

**Author:** Cheryl Kilodavis

**Illustrator:** Suzanne DeSimone

This story celebrates a son's wish to wear dresses, narrated by his Mother.

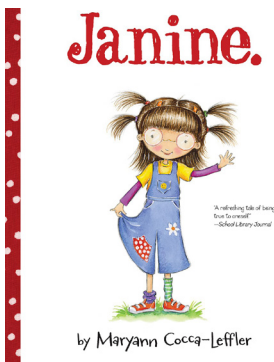


## Jack (Not Jackie)

**Author:** Erica Silverman

**Illustrator:** Holly Hatam

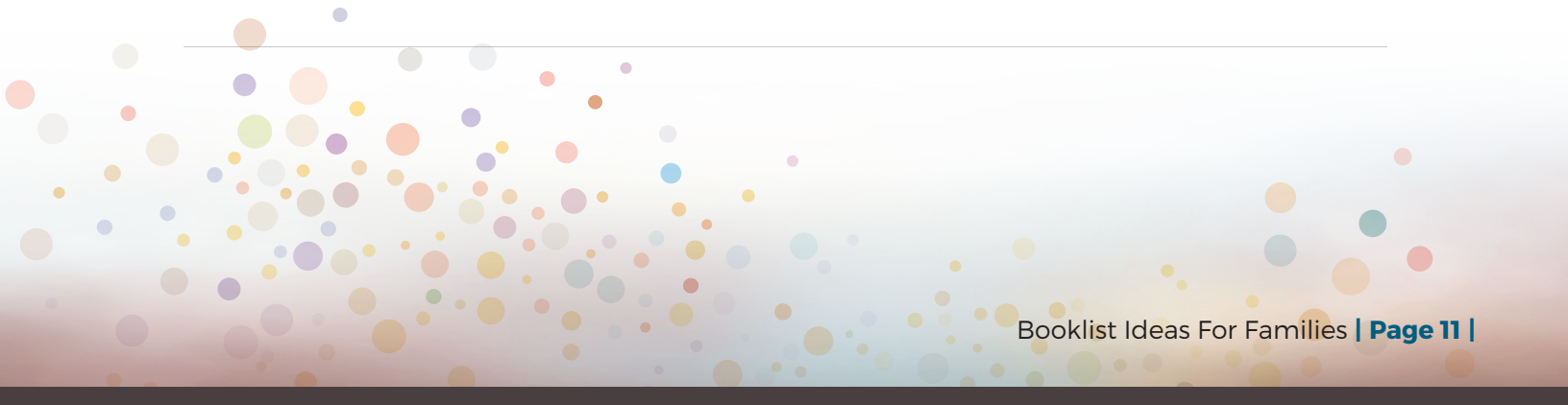
This story showcases an older sister who learns to accept and love her transgender brother for who he is.



## Janine.

**Author & Illustrator:** Maryann Cocca-Leffler

This story celebrates differences. Janine is different than other children, but owns it and stays true to herself.



Booklist Ideas For Families | **Page 11** |



# Great Beginnings

Start at the  **DDSB**  
Ignite Learning





# Great Beginnings

Start at the  **DDSB**  
Ignite Learning

**EY**  
Early Years



## BAG LIST IDEAS

Please find below a list of items you may consider providing to your families in their Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten bags. This list is not exhaustive, but acts as a starting point for school teams to think about resources/materials which may support the learning experience for each child in your school community. We encourage school teams to consider including other creative items that can be used in a variety of ways to support expression and learning.

### Possible Items

- Multicultural crayons
  - Stickers
  - Stencils
  - Child-friendly scissors
- 
- Popsicle sticks, coloured craft sticks
  - Wiki sticks, pipe cleaners
  - Sidewalk chalk
  - Letter and/or number magnets
  - Dry erase markers/boards
  - Foam dice

### Creative Uses

- Demonstrate artistic expression using multicultural crayons, stickers, stencils, scissors, chalk, paper plates, or ice with food colouring
- 
- Investigate letters/numbers with popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, Wiki sticks, sidewalk chalk, flyers, plastic plates as dry erase boards or large foam dice

## Possible Items

- Recycled items
- Boxes
- Stacking cups

## Creative Uses

- Create opportunities for dramatic and constructive play with recycled items, boxes, stacking cups, rocks, or popsicle sticks

- 
- Cookie tin, ice cube trays, strainer, dividing trays
  - Buttons, gems, fabric, pom poms

- Sort by different attributes with cookie tins, ice cube trays, dividing trays, or loose parts

- 
- Fidget toy/stress ball/finger flashlight
  - Play dough, slime, or goop
  - Dish soap

- Explore fine motor/sensory with playdough, sand, dish soap, strainer, stickers, slime, fidget toys, water, nuts and bolts, or stress balls

- 
- Books (see booklist for ideas)
  - Magazines, flyer's, or newsletters

- Foster literacy and sense of self through books, newspaper, songs, or environmental print

## Consider including the following:

- Great Beginnings start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten Booklist and Families Resource Booklet
- School swag
- Healthy snack (e.g., granola bar \*be mindful of allergies)
- Mask
- School/community specific information (e.g., child care pamphlets, brochures for community partners, etc.)



# Great Beginnings

Start at the  **DDSB**  
Ignite Learning

**EY**  
Early Years



## EVENT PROVOCATION IDEAS

Provocations are invitations of learning for children and families. Provocations should promote wonder, reflection, conversations, and curiosity in children. When offering a provocation, include a variety of loose parts and materials that are both familiar and new for the child. To incorporate literacy, offer culturally relevant and responsive texts that emphasize inclusion and diversity. Include open-ended questions that promote and encourage discussions with children and families.

When planning provocations for your Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten event, carefully consider the key messages, children's interests, and community climate.

The following provocations are examples of what might be offered at the event. School teams should collaborate to determine what would work best for their unique school community.

## Dramatic Play

Potential Loose Parts: mirrors, bangles, buttons, glass beads, gems, peg people, puppets, fabric, elastics, etc.

### Provocation



### Prompting Question

How might you celebrate?



How might you show movement?

## Constructive Play

Potential Loose Parts: blocks (different shapes and sizes), popsicle sticks, spools, straws, playdough, stacking cups, etc.

### Provocation



### Prompting Question

What structure might you create?



## Provocation

## Prompting Question



What might you build?

## Musical Expression

Potential Loose Parts: tuning forks, shakers, rain sticks, maracas, triangles, tambourines, tin cans, spoons, buckets, etc.

## Provocation

## Prompting Question



What song might you create?



What sound pattern might you create?

## Artistic Expression

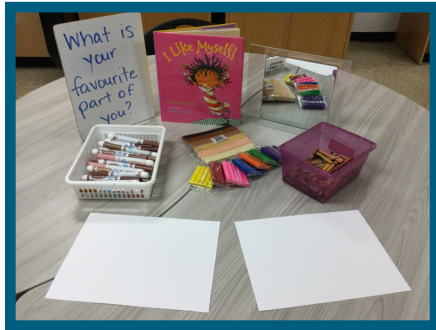
Potential Loose Parts: writing tools, 'fun' paper, mirrors, beads, yarn, Buddha Board, coloured sand/salt, laminated picture frames, etc.

### Provocation



### Prompting Question

What is special about you?

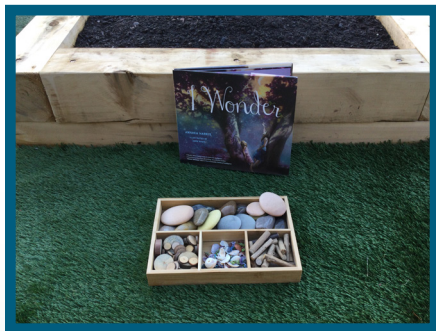


What is your favourite part of you?

## Outdoor Experience

Potential Loose Parts: magnifying glasses, tree cookies, insects, flowers, plants, worms, pinecones, acorns, rocks, sticks, shells, sand, etc. (If you will not be using the outdoor space, bring the outdoors inside!)

### Provocation



### Prompting Question

How might these materials inspire you?

## Provocation

## Prompting Question



What might you do with these small materials?

## Literacy Provocations

Potential Loose Parts: popsicle sticks, gems, string/yarn, playdough, wikki stix, buttons, stickers, paper clips, lids/bottle caps, etc.

## Provocation

## Prompting Question



What is special about your name?



What fills your heart with happiness?

## Math Provocations

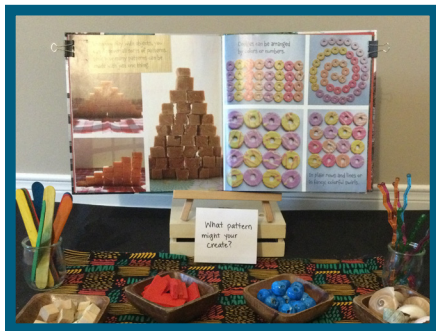
Potential Loose Parts: sand/salt, rocks, beads, blocks, toothpicks, tape, buttons, marbles, pinecones, corks, shells, pom poms, paper towel rolls, etc.

### Provocation



### Prompting Question

What do you know about numbers?



What pattern might you create?





# Great Beginnings

Start at the  **DDSB**  
Ignite Learning

**EY**  
Early Years



## YOU'RE INVITED!

We invite you to join us for a Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten event! You will get to connect with school staff, visit/virtual tour the school and learn more about our school and community partners.

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

## WE CAN'T WAIT TO MEET YOU!

# Great Beginnings

Start at the  **DDSB**  
Ignite Learning

**EY**  
Early Years



## EVENT PLANNER

### CONSIDER EVENT TYPE & SET DATE / TIME / LOCATION

Consider the event type. Provide an opportunity for children and families to connect with school staff, community partners, and each other.

#### Options:

- In-Person (open house, BBQ, etc.)
- Virtual (Google Meet or Microsoft Teams)

#### Set a date, time and location:

- Host one, or multiple events
- Use classrooms and/or shared spaces (e.g., library, gym, outdoor areas, etc.)

### USE THE GUIDING QUESTIONS TO SUPPORT THE KEY MESSAGES

1. How might you use this event to build healthy relationships with children and families, so they feel welcomed and excited to come to school?
2. What play-based learning opportunities might you create to ensure all children can be successful?
3. What might you offer (e.g., materials, loose parts, books, etc.) to reflect the identities of the children and families?
4. How might you create a space that is inclusive and meets the needs of all children and families in your school community?
5. How might you engage families to begin to build a partnership in their child's learning?

## INVITE THE IN-SCHOOL TEAM, COMMUNITY PARTNERS, AND FAMILIES

It is critical that school teams work in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to ensure children and families have a positive start to the child's learning journey and feel welcomed and valued in their school community. (Postcard invites are available on the Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten educators' site.)

### In-school teams may include:

- Kindergarten Teachers
- RECEs
- Teacher Librarian
- SERT
- Administrators
- Office Staff
- Custodians
- Prep Coverage Teachers

### DDSB & Community Partners may include:

- DDSB Speech Language and Hearing
- DDSB ELL department
- School-based Child Care
- Local Library
- Durham Region Public Health
- EarlyON Program

## PROVIDE RELEVANT INFORMATION TO FAMILIES

Consider creating a Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten site and/or slide deck (template available on Great Beginnings start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten educators' site). These can be shared during the event or sent to families for future reference.

### Some information could include:

- Kindergarten Teams
- School information
- In-School Teams
- Information about the Kindergarten Program
- Flow of the day
- What to bring to the classroom?
- First day expectations
- Drop-off/Pick-up procedures
- Lunch/snack information
- Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten Family Resource Package
- Links/Resources for community partners





## PLAN PROVOCATIONS

Provide multiple play-based opportunities that are open-ended and encourage a sense of inquiry, wonder, and curiosity. This supports a holistic view of the child, ensures success for all, and honours current abilities and knowledge.

## ASSEMBLE BAGS

Consider what items should be included in the Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten bag. A list of potential items is available on the Great Beginnings Start at the DDSB Introduction to Kindergarten educators' site.

### Items may include:

- Loose parts
- Skin tone crayons
- Play dough or recipes
- Culturally responsive books or booklist
- School swag



# INTRODUCTION TO KINDERGARTEN

## THE EVENT

Event Type:

Date(s):

Time(s):

Location(s):

## PROVOCATIONS

Provocation

Materials Needed

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## IN-SCHOOL TEAMS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Partner

Contact Info

Materials Needed

## GREAT BEGINNINGS START AT THE DDSB KINDERGARTEN BAG

To be included in the bag:

# LET'S PLAY...

**It's Better When  
We Do It Together!**





# LET'S PLAY...

## It's Better When We Do It Together!

This book has lines beneath the text to translate the story with your child in your first language.

If English is your first language, create a new story to accompany the pictures on each page of the book.





**When we play outside I learn  
to have outdoor fun. It's better  
when we do it together.**

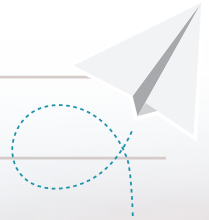
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**When we make our meals, I learn  
to measure and count. It's better  
when we do it together.**

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**When we do laundry I learn to sort  
and match my socks. It's better  
when we do it together.**

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**When we clean the floor I  
learn to help. It's better when  
we do it together.**

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**When we paint I learn to create.  
It's better when we do it together.**

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**When we sing I learn new words  
and songs. It's better when we  
do it together.**





**When we shop for groceries I learn  
about healthy food. It's better  
when we do it together.**

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**When we plant I learn to garden.  
It's better when we do it together.**

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**When we play ball I learn to share.  
It's better when we do it together.**

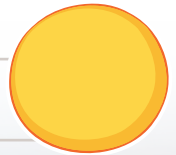
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**When we brush my teeth I learn  
to love my smile. It's better when  
we do it together.**

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**When we read a book I learn  
to love stories. It's better when  
we do it together.**

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**When we snuggle before bed I  
learn to feel safe and loved. It's  
better when we do it together.**

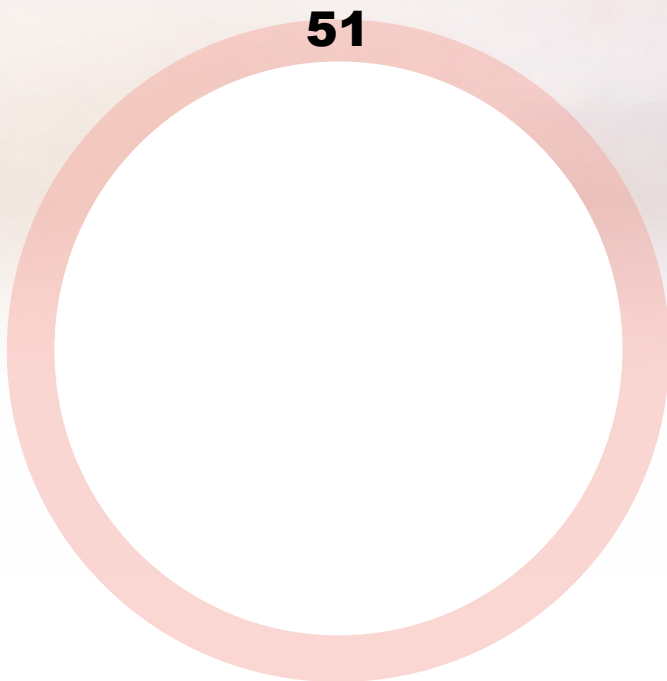
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**When we...**

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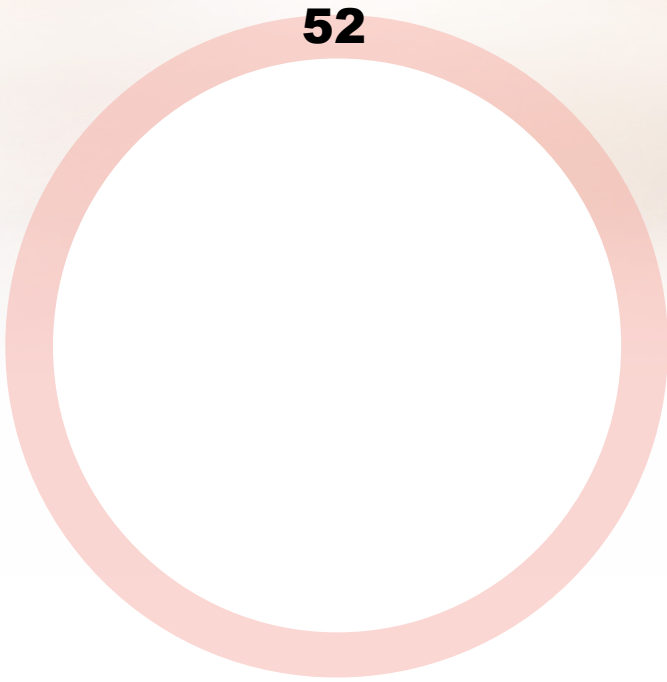
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**It's better when we do it together.**

**52**



**When we...**

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**It's better when we do it together.**

# A MESSAGE TO FAMILIES

We hope you enjoy sharing this book with your child. By doing this, you are giving your child two gifts - literacy and special time spent with you! Reading with your child every day is an important part of his/her development as well as talking, singing and playing with him/her. Always remember - you are your child's first and favourite teacher.

If you and your child would like more ideas of play based learning and activities, visit the DDSB Early Years Hub Program, EarlyON Programs or our website at [ddsb.ca](http://ddsb.ca).





# Great Beginnings

Start at the  **DDSB**  
*Ignite Learning*

## FOLLOW US ON:

Twitter: [@DDSBEarlyYears](https://twitter.com/DDSBEarlyYears)

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

YouTube: [DDSB Early Years](https://www.youtube.com/DDSB Early Years)

## CONTACT US AT:

[EarlyYears@ddsb.ca](mailto:EarlyYears@ddsb.ca)

**Written by the Durham District School Board  
‘Make A Difference, Great Beginnings’  
Sub-Committee:**

**Joan Gajadharsingh  
Stacey Lepine-Fisher  
Jessica Visser  
Lori Eaton  
Shantel Freeburn  
Diane Kotsopoulos  
Heather Cook  
Suzanne Elston**





**DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT****REPORT TO:** Durham District School Board**DATE:** May 2, 2022**SUBJECT:** Indigenous Book Review**PAGE:** 1 of 3**ORIGIN:** Norah Marsh, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board  
Jim Markovski, Associate Director of Equitable Education  
Erin Elmhurst, Superintendent of Education  
Georgette Davis, Superintendent of Education**1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with an update on the temporary removal and review of *The Great Bear* and two other Forest of Reading books from our library collection.

**2.0 Ignite Learning Strategic Priority/Operational Goals**

**Success** – *Set high expectations and provide support to ensure all staff and students reach their potential every year.*

- Support programming that will positively impact Indigenous students' well-being and achievement and uphold Indigenous rights.

**Well-being** – *Create safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces to promote well-being for all students and staff.*

- Provide learning and work environments that are welcoming, respectful, safe, inclusive, equitable and free from oppression, discrimination, racism, harassment and harm.

**Equity** – *Promote a sense of belonging and increase equitable outcomes for all by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement.*

- Schools, curriculum content, learning materials, assessment and evaluation practices, teaching styles, and classroom practices will reflect Indigenous histories and truths to identify and eliminate barriers to learning.

**Engagement** – *Engage students, parents and community members to improve student outcomes and build public confidence.*

- Fostering and developing healthy reciprocal relationships with Indigenous staff, students, families and community members.

**3.0 Background**

The Indigenous Education Policy that was approved in September 2021 is guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (2015) and the United Nations Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and highlights the Durham District School Board's (DDSB) commitment to providing services, workplaces and learning environments that center Indigenous rights, human rights and equity and that are welcoming, respectful, safe, inclusive, equitable and free from oppression, discrimination, racism, harassment and harm.



The District acknowledges that learning about Indigenous knowledge systems, worldviews, truths, histories, and contributions benefits all students in all schools and must be present in all curriculum areas. We advocate for all students to have access to Indigenous authorship. We prioritize Indigenous authorship, materials, and resources.

The Indigenous Education Department received concerns that three books contained content that could be experienced as being harmful to Indigenous students and families. The families felt that these books included content and terminology that could minimize and misrepresent aspects of Indigenous peoples and potentially perpetuate discrimination if not contextually situated within an appropriate historical context.

Upon receiving the concerns related to Indigenous Rights, schools were asked to remove these titles from their regular library circulation and refrain from using them as a read-aloud resource until a fulsome review could be undertaken. The decision to review these resources was part of our broader effort to challenge our practice given the systemic racism experienced by Indigenous students and families in educational settings.

#### **4.0 Analysis**

The Durham District School Board has 2,691 students who self-identified as Indigenous, who represent a plurality of views. All students' Indigenous and human rights must be upheld.

The District is committed to upholding Indigenous rights in a manner that prioritizes ethical conduct and healthy relationships with Indigenous community members. In this regard, the DDSB is committed to meaningful consultation and engagement with original rights holders, local Indigenous community members, Indigenous parents, Indigenous employees and the Indigenous Education Advisory Circle.

Following the April 19, 2022 Board meeting, an accelerated review process was initiated allowing staff to engage in conversations with local Indigenous community members to seek advice. Those discussions have placed the focus on the importance of making books by Indigenous authors available to students, particularly Indigenous students based on providing choice. On April 25, 2022, local Treaty Partners, Mississaugas of Scugog Island, shared a public statement expressing concern over the removal of literature by an Indigenous author while expressing appreciation for the need for families to express concerns about the school curriculum and learning materials. It was also their recommendation that the DDSB accelerate the consultation process or grant access to these materials while the review process takes place.

In response to this feedback and the feedback of other local Indigenous community members, the books were returned to library circulation for student self-selection while fulsome and meaningful consultation is conducted to guide the District as we move forward with the implementation of the Indigenous Education Policy and Procedures. This thorough consultation process will include engagement with original rights holders, Indigenous students and families, Indigenous staff, the Indigenous Education Advisory Circle (which includes individuals who represent DDSB Treaty Partners) and Keenanow Indigenous Employees' Network. It is anticipated that the consultation process will be completed by the end of June 2022.

## 5.0 Communication Plan

An updated public statement was shared on April 27, 2022, with all DDSB staff as well as on the DDSB website, indicating that the books would be returned to library circulation and that a thorough consultation process had been initiated. This communication was also shared with DDSB Treaty Partners (Mississaugas of Scugog Island and Chippewas of Georgina Island), the DDSB Indigenous Education Advisory Circle and Keenanow Indigenous Employee Network.

On April 27, 2022, DDSB families who self-identify as Indigenous and Indigenous staff also received this communication and were invited to participate in the upcoming consultation process. Participants have been provided with a variety of modes of engagement including:

- In-person small group conversations
- Virtual small group conversations
- In-person gatherings on the land
- In-person gatherings at the DDSB Education Center
- Large group virtual gatherings
- Surveys

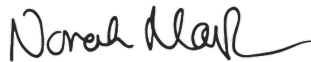
## 6.0 Conclusion and/or Recommendations

The DDSB remains accountable to Indigenous families and community members in the Durham Region. We are committed to hearing and responding to their voices. Consultation sessions will begin the week of May 9, 2022 and continue throughout the month of May. Surveys will be shared on May 30, 2022 so that Indigenous employees and families who self-identify as Indigenous may engage in conversations should they wish prior to completing the survey. We hope to complete the consultation by the end of June 2022 but know conversations will be ongoing.

## 7.0 Appendices

Appendix A: April 27, 2022 Public Statement

Report reviewed and submitted by:



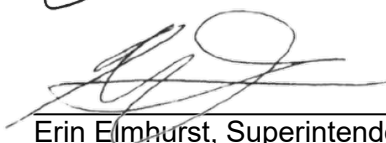
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Norah Marsh, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board



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Jim Markovski, Associate Director of Equitable Education



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Erin Elmhurst, Superintendent of Education

## **Statement on the Return of Books to Library Circulation**

Posted On Wednesday, April 27, 2022

The DDSB recognizes that there has been a request for more information concerning the review and temporary removal of *The Great Bear* and two other Forest of Reading books from our library collection, following concerns from Indigenous families that were brought forward related to Indigenous stereotypes and terminology that could perpetuate discrimination.

An accelerated review process allowed us to engage in conversations with some members of the local Indigenous community. Those discussions have placed the focus on the importance of making books by Indigenous authors available to students, particularly Indigenous students based on providing choice. In response to this feedback, we will be returning the books to library circulation.

We recognize that the Indigenous families who came forward did so with the intent to ensure we meet their children's needs. We also understand that for many families, the importance of accessing books that reflect Indigenous lived realities is critically important. In the coming weeks, we will engage in a more fulsome consultation with treaty partners, the DDSB Indigenous Advisory Circle, Indigenous staff and Indigenous families on how to best manage different responses to literature and ensure that we serve the needs of Indigenous families.

We value Indigenous literature and have introduced a compulsory Indigenous course so that all graduates of the DDSB leave with a better understanding of Indigenous lives and experiences. We deeply respect the work of David A. Robertson, along with those who decide to become authors to inspire children and youth. We have offered to meet with the authors to engage in further discussion.

As we move forward, we are committed to engaging the plurality of Indigenous voices within the District.



**Standing Committee  
Public Session  
May 2, 2022**

**Advisory, Ad Hoc Committee Report**

**Name of Committee:** Equity & Diversity Ad Hoc Steering Committee

**Meeting Date & Time:** Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

**Meeting Chairs:** Patrice Barnes (Co-Chair), Donald McLeod (Co-Chair)

**Agenda Highlights:**

1. There are 46 schools working on questions that focus on what will improve education for Black students. What will make the learning conditions and environments better for Black students in the Durham District School Board (DDSB)?
2. The Equity Department has been working with the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) where a book club program has been used to read and review books. The participants have read and reviewed the book *Cultivating Genius by Goldie Muhammad*. This initiative will provide teacher learning around culturally relevant and responsive programming. Positive feedback has been received and the author, Goldie Muhammad will participate with the group in a virtual session to have discussions about the book.
3. The Cypher is a Black Male Empowerment webinar series that has been running during the 2021-2022 school year. The webinar series has been viewed by over 15,000 students.
4. Staff are working with talented DDSB students creating a virtual choir. At the end of the month, we will be releasing the Black National Anthem, Lift Every Voice and Sing.
5. Lift Your Voice is a project led by a Black teacher, Chantelle Barham, who has encouraged students to step out of their comfort zone. The purpose of the initiative is to empower Black students and give them a unique leadership opportunity through the arts while also introducing them to public speaking.
6. The See Us Learn Us Program offers a nine-part webinar series that looks at Black Canadian history and provides an opportunity for educators to participate and learn more about Black history in Canada. There have been at least 200 DDSB educators who have attended the webinar over the past four weeks.
7. There will be two student representatives on the Committee next year and information will be shared with the system in April 2022. The Committee provides a great leadership and learning opportunity for students, with a two-year commitment for a student in Grade 9, 10 and 11. The current student representative will be part of the interview process and provide information for students who are interested in being part of the Committee.



April 14, 2022

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Lecce:

As you are aware, COVID-19 continues to circulate in our communities and we have seen a recent increase in cases among staff and students all across the province. I understand that this is not unexpected and the transition from pandemic to endemic naturally brings this increase in cases.

I am writing to you today to express concern on behalf of the Avon Maitland District School Board Trustees for the increased student and staff absences that our system is experiencing. Since returning from the holiday break, we have been relying heavily on system level staff (learning coaches, curriculum leaders, etc.) to help alleviate the vacancies that staff are leaving due to COVID-19 illness or requirements to isolate. Now that many mandates have been lifted, masks in particular, we are seeing a drastic increase in absences and we are concerned that our current strategy is not sustainable due to the fact that despite having “all hands on deck” we have significant numbers of unfilled jobs each day.

Teachers and other staff are not getting their prep times or breaks and they too are “burning out.” We are utilizing every emergency situation strategy, such as teacher’s college students, and other un-qualified individuals to fill these gaps. If cases continue to rise and our absences increase further, we believe that we will have no other option but to close classrooms and schools.

We encourage the government to clearly review the reality of the situation in our school districts and reconsider public health mandates required to allow for schools to remain open.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,



Allan Sygrove  
Chair of the Board  
Avon Maitland District School Board

cc Huron Perth Public Health  
AMDSB Union and Federation Presidents  
OPSBA  
Lisa Thompson, MPP Huron-Bruce  
Randy Pettapiece, MPP Perth-Wellington



# Bluewater District School Board

351 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North – PO Box 190  
Chesley ON N0G 1L0  
Telephone: (519) 363-2014 Fax: (519) 370-2909  
www.bwdsb.on.ca

Sent by email: [stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org](mailto:stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org)

April 27, 2022

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we are reaching out to echo the concerns in the letter you received dated April 14, 2022 from Avon Maitland District School Board regarding a recent trend of increased absenteeism and lack of staff to cover these absences. Similar concerns outlining the gravity of the situation in Bluewater District School Board were also expressed by our director of education in an email to the deputy minister.

We are struggling on a regular basis to keep our schools open with the increased number of staff who are absent due to illness, isolation, and other reasons. While our staff have been extremely supportive and creative in finding ways to mitigate the various impacts of this surge in absenteeism, our current situation is simply not sustainable.

Many of our teachers have sacrificed their preparation periods, schools have had to cancel resource and other support time, and staff are taking on additional teaching duties. This has extended to administrators, including principals, vice-principals, and central system level staff, who are covering classes daily after all efforts have been exhausted to fill positions with qualified staff and emergency workers.

With administrators working increased hours to manage this shortage, and teachers often losing their preparation and break times, we are deeply concerned about the inevitability of staff burn-out, and other negative impacts to student and staff safety and well-being. Staffing shortages are compounding stress-related absences and are also preventing us from providing professional development this year.

This high level of absenteeism is evident in other staff groups who are just as important to the safe operation of our schools, such as educational assistants, office professionals, and custodians. Continuing along this trajectory will lead to difficult decisions, including requiring school and classroom closures due to insufficient staffing.

As always, our commitment remains focused on providing a quality education for every student in a safe, accepting, and caring environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Jane Thomson'.

Jane Thomson  
Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Jan Johnstone'.

Jan Johnstone  
Vice-Chair

cc: The Honourable Bill Walker, MPP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound

64  
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, MPP, Huron  
Ontario Public School Boards' Association  
Chairs of Ontario English Public School Boards




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**THE EDUCATION CENTRE - AURORA**

60 Wellington Street West, Aurora, Ontario L4G 3H2

**Tel:** 905.722.3201 905.895.7216 905.727.3141 416.969.8131

**Fax:** 905.727.1931

**Website:** [www.yrdsb.ca](http://www.yrdsb.ca)

April 12, 2022

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
 Minister of Education  
 Ministry of Education  
 5th Floor, 438 University Avenue  
 Toronto, Ontario M7A 2A5  
[minister.edu@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.edu@ontario.ca)

Dear Minister Lecce:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, as the spokesperson on April 5, 2022, the Board of Trustees of the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) approved a motion to write to you and the Chair of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) requesting that all the EQAO Spring 2022 assessments be cancelled for the 2021-2022 school year.

Our Board's research and emerging research in Ontario notes the increased stress on students and families. In addition, the pandemic has intensified the pre-existing disparities and systemic barriers within school systems and the broader social context ([Ciuffetelli & Conversano, 2021](#); [OECD, 2021](#)). Unfortunately, the board is seeing these impacts firsthand, and are only being amplified by the mandated EQAO and related international assessments that EQAO is responsible for coordinating on behalf of Ontario.

The Administration of EQAO assessments is a monumental task in the best circumstances. It is logistically complex and complicated, involving a coordinated, resource and time-intensive solution at the system and school levels. This year the onboarding of a new online assessment platform has created additional strain on our students and staff. This stress has been exacerbated by the new platform being fraught with well-documented challenges. Furthermore, as we continue to be in a pandemic, these challenges are significantly amplified, as are the negative impacts. Finally, with the recent resurgence of COVID, we expect even further negative impacts that will again impact the mental health and well-being of students and staff.

Notwithstanding the negative impacts involved with the administration of the assessment in our current context, there are practical realities that require employing significant system and school resources. We are experiencing unprecedented staff absences due to illness, coupled with pronounced unfilled vacancies. Staff require robust training to run the assessment in the new format and when absent on an assessment day, the assessment will likely need to be rescheduled and possibly cancelled. In addition, technology necessary



to complete the assessment has been allocated for that day and may not be available again without disadvantage to other students. Without the expected staff member present, and given limited finite available technology to run the test, successful, valid, unbiased and representative outcomes are at risk.

We are committed to our common goal of building confidence in public education, reducing inequities in outcomes for our students, and providing equitable access to opportunities for all students in the province.

Your prompt attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated so that we may support our staff in responding to the needs of our students.

On behalf of the York Region District School Board of Trustees



Allan Tam  
Chair of the York Region District School Board

Cc. YRDSB Trustees and Student Trustees  
Ontario Public School Boards' Association,  
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