

**Ukrainian
Canadian
Congress**
Toronto Branch



**Конґрес
Українців
Канади**
Відділ Торонто

May 2, 2018

Trustees of the Toronto Catholic District School Board
c/o Barbara Poplawski, Chair

Dear Trustees of the Toronto Catholic District School Board,

Ukrainians have had a central role in building Canada for over 125 years. From the first settlers of the prairies between 1891 and the first world war, to the second wave between the wars, to the post WW2 city-based immigrations, to the newest members of the Ukrainian Canadian community since Ukraine regained its independence in 1991, the Ukrainian Canadian community has been a positive and productive member of Canada's multicultural fabric. Our community has created leaders in the areas of politics, business, education, sports, arts and many other parts of Canada's society. More than 25% of Canada's 1.4 million Ukrainian Canadians live in the Greater Toronto Area.

The Ukrainian Canadian community and the Eastern Rite Ukrainian Catholic Church have had a more-than-fifty-year relationship with the Toronto Catholic District School Board. This relationship has resulted in a vibrant symbiotic partnership in the Toronto Catholic community. The Eastern Rite Ukrainian Schools of the TCDSB were the pioneers of full-day kindergarten in Ontario, have a consistent track-record of excellence in academic achievement, and have provided a rich, faith-based learning environment for all generations of Ukrainian Canadians in the Toronto area.

Josyf Cardinal Slipyj, St. Demetrius and St. Josaphat have a combined enrolment of over 1,000 students. The education of our children at these schools is shepherded by administrations and staff who acknowledge, respect and become well versed in the Eastern Rite Ukrainian Catholic faith, regardless of whether they themselves are Eastern Rite Ukrainian Catholics. Furthermore, each school is supported by a nourishing community including engaged parents, overseeing parishes and many organizations and events providing an environment which augments the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum with spiritual and cultural programming in many different manifestations.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ. The TCDSB educates students to grow in grace and knowledge, to lead lives of faith, hope and charity. Among the many TCDSB Catholic values is that equity, diversity, accessibility and inclusivity are integral to the Catholic community (ref. www.tcdsb.org). There are at least eight designated heritage months at the TCDSB to date (see Appendix 1).

Tonight's delegation is led by the Catholic School Parent Council from the TCDSB's three Eastern Rite Ukrainian Catholic schools and the Toronto branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. We are here to request the designation of the month of September as Ukrainian Canadian Heritage month at the TCDSB. Our request is supported by the bishop of the Eastern Rite Ukrainian Catholic Church Stephan Chmilar, and the three parishes overseeing the schools. It is also supported by MPP for Etobicoke Centre, Yvan



Baker, who himself was central in establishing September 7th as Ukrainian Heritage Day in the province of Ontario. Most importantly, it is supported by each school's administration, staff, and Catholic School Parents Councils.

Although September is the month when schools are busy getting the new academic year rolling, we believe September is the right month for Ukrainian Canadian Heritage month as it closely follows annual celebrations of Ukraine's Independence (August 24th), Ontario's Ukrainian Heritage Day (September 7th) and also includes Toronto's Bloor West Village Ukrainian Festival. Furthermore, we would ensure communications do not precede Ontario's Ukrainian Heritage Day (September 7th) and plan for related communications to be spread over the last two weeks of the month.

The Ukrainian Canadian community, through the UCC Toronto education committee, has been a positive and collaborative partner in discussions about student transportation, the international language program, full-day kindergarten, and attendance boundaries over the past several years. Upon the designation of the month of September as Ukrainian Canadian Heritage month at the TCDSB, the committee will work with key members of our community to create a robust and informative, yet succinct resource guide and references for all TCDSB stakeholders. This guide will enable them to celebrate Ukrainian Canadian Heritage month in the second half of September, once the schools' new academic years are underway.

There will be three main areas of focus in the guide to support Ukrainian Canadian Heritage month at the TCDSB: 1) Eastern Rite Ukrainian Catholicism (traditions, feast days, songs, etc.); 2) Ukrainian Canadian history (history of Ukraine, history and geography of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, political events, etc.); 3) Ukrainian culture and art (pysanky (Easter egg painting), embroidery, song, dance, cuisine, etc.).

We respectfully thank the TCDSB Board of Trustees and staff for their attention tonight and for their support of this designation and its implementation in the near future.

Yours in Catholic education,

Orest Sklierenko
Chair, Education Committee
Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Toronto branch Josyf Cardinal Slipyj School
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Lijana Shklar & Stephanie Soltys
Co-chairs, CSPC

Taras Kalymon
Chair, CSPC
St. Demetrius School

Oksana Pikh
Chair, CSPC
St. Josaphat School

Enclosed:

Appendix 1: Current list of heritage months at the TCDSB

Appendix 2: Suggested topics for inclusion in TCDSB Ukrainian Canadian heritage month resource guide

Appendix 3: Support letter, His Excellency Stephen Chmilar, Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada

Appendix 4: Support letter, Yvan Baker, Member of Ontario Legislature for Etobicoke Centre



Appendix 1: Current list of heritage months at the TCDSB

January

- Tamil Canada Heritage Month

February

- African Canadian Heritage Month

March

- Celtic Canadian Heritage Month

May

- Asian Heritage Month

June

- Italian Canadian Heritage Month
- Portuguese Canadian Heritage Month
- Indigenous Canadian Heritage Month

October

- Latin-Hispanic Canadian Heritage Month



Appendix 2: Draft list of topics for inclusion in TCDSB Ukrainian Canadian heritage month resource guide (Resource Guide to be arranged and published upon confirmation of designation)

There will be three main areas of focus in the guide to support Ukrainian Canadian Heritage month at the TCDSB:

- I. Eastern Rite Ukrainian Catholicism (traditions, feast days, songs, etc.):
 - History of Christianity and the Catholic Church in Ukraine
 - History and information about the three parishes overseeing the TCDSB schools
 - Information on St. Demetrius, St. Josaphat, St. Nicholas and Josyf Cardinal Slipyj
 - Eastern Rite sacraments (e.g. timing of baptism, confirmation, confession, communion)
 - Eastern Rite mass (compare/contrast to other Catholic masses)
 - Eastern Rite notable feast days
 - Christmas and Easter religious traditions and observations
 - Icons
 - Ukrainian Saints
- II. Ukrainian Canadian history (history of Ukraine, history and geography of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, political events, etc.):
 - Brief history of Ukraine
 - History and geography of Ukrainian settlement in Canada
 - Canada's First World War Internment program
 - Famous Ukrainian Canadians
- III. Ukrainian culture and art (pysanky (Easter egg painting), embroidery, song, dance, cuisine, etc.):
 - Easter season traditions (pysanky (painted Easter eggs), blessing of baskets, church services, songs)
 - Christmas traditions (seasonal and religious songs (kolyady and shchedrivky), Christmas Eve and Christmas Day traditions, Malanka (New Year celebrations), Feast of Jordan)
 - embroidered art
 - other visual art
 - song and music
 - dance
 - Toronto area resources and art groups



Appendix 3.



Українська Католицька Єпархія Торонта The Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Toronto

May 2, 2018

Ms. Barbara Poplawski - Chairperson
Toronto Catholic District School Board
80 Sheppard Ave. E.
Toronto, ON M2N 6E8

Dear Madam Chairperson and Board Trustees:

Christ is Risen!

I greet you in the name of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. May the joy of the Resurrection remain with you always. May God continually bless you with love, wisdom and strength as you work to build His Kingdom on earth through Catholic Education. I commend you in your efforts and may your endeavours be rewarded a hundredfold.

Re: Petition to designate September as *Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Month* in the Toronto District Catholic School Board

It is most commendable that the Toronto District Catholic School Board has for decades recognized, supported and provided for the education of children of the Byzantine Rite. Further, I also commend the parents of children in the Byzantine Rite schools, as well as the Ukrainian community at large, for their involvement and efforts to provide the highest quality of education for their children. We, as one Church breathing with two lungs, can learn from one another and grow into a stronger body of Christ. It is my belief that designating the month of September as *Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Month* would give all Catholic children the opportunity to learn and appreciate the Byzantine Rite customs and practices. I wholeheartedly support the petition currently before the Board to effect this designation.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit always be with you.

Yours in the Risen Christ,

+Stephen Chmilar
Eparch





Appendix 4.



YVAN BAKER, MPP

Etobicoke Centre

April 3, 2018

Trustees of the Toronto Catholic District School Board
c/o Barbara Poplawski, Chair

Dear Trustees of the Toronto Catholic District School Board,

Over the past 4 years I have had the opportunity to work with some of you and TCDSB staff to strengthen the quality of education in our province and in my community of Etobicoke Centre.

It is in that vein that I am writing to you today. I am writing to lend my support to the request that has been made by students, parents, staff, administration and the spiritual leadership of the three Eastern Rite Ukrainian Catholic Schools that the TCDSB proclaim September as Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Month at the TCDSB.

I lend my support to this request for a number of reasons:

1. Ukrainian Canadians have left and continue to leave a historic mark on our country and it is important to recognize, celebrate and teach about these contributions. Their contributions are reflected in our economic, political, social and cultural life. Ukrainian Canadians have played an important role in the development of Ontario into one of the most desirable places in the world to live and have contributed to making Canada the great country that it is today.
2. Our province, city and the TCDSB is rich with Ukrainian heritage and traditions.
3. The Ukrainian Canadian community and the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Canada have had a long and productive working relationship with the TCDSB. An excellent example of this partnership is the education being provided at the three Eastern Rite Catholic schools within the TCDSB that augment the Ministry of Education curriculum through Ukrainian Canadian cultural and spiritual education.
4. These three schools have demonstrated excellence in academics, have been pioneers in Full Day Kindergarten and have provided a rich faith based learning environment.
5. September would be the appropriate month to designate as Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Month.

Constituency Office

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YVAN BAKER, MPP

Eto bicokeCentre

In 2011, the Ontario Legislature proclaimed September 7th of every year as Ukrainian Heritage Day in Ontario through the passage of the Ukrainian Heritage Day Act. As the President of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress - Ontario Provincial Council at the time, I was involved in drafting the bill and consulting with the community on the appropriate date to be designated as Heritage Day. September 7th received broad support in the community.

a. September 7, 1891 is the day when the first Ukrainian immigrants, Vasyl Efeniak and Ivan Pylypiw, arrived in Canada.

b. Every year Ukrainian Canadians in Toronto celebrate their heritage with Torontonians on the third Saturday of September at the Bloor West Village Ukrainian Festival.

c. September is the first month that schools are open after Ukrainian Independence Day is celebrated on Aug 24.

6. Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Month would provide an important and meaningful educational opportunity for all TODSB students.

Should you support the creation of Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Month, I am confident that UCC-Toronto's Ukrainian Education Committee, which includes representation of all three schools CSPC executives and has been a positive and collaborative partner in discussions about transportation, international language programs, FOK, and attendance boundaries over the past several years; would work with you to identify individuals who will create a robust resource guide to enable the TCDSB to appropriately celebrate Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Month.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Yvan Baker, MPP