



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

## RECOMMENDATION REPORT FOR THE PROCLAMATION OF JANUARY AS TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH

*"Serve the Lord with celebration! Come before him with shouts of joy!"*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
February 4, 2020	February 20, 2020	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>

Nick D'Avella, Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education, and Community Relations  
Jody Huang, Community Relations Officer

### RECOMMENDATION REPORT

**Vision:**

*At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.*

**Mission:**

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.*

*We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*



Rory McGuckin  
Director of Education

D. Koenig  
Associate Director  
of Academic Affairs

L. Noronha  
Associate Director of Facilities,  
Business and Community  
Development, and  
Chief Financial Officer

## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At the January 23, 2020 meeting of the Regular Board, a member of the Tamil community delegated to the Board of Trustees to request that the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) officially proclaim January as Tamil Heritage Month, in order to celebrate Tamil culture, promote Tamil history, and acknowledge the contributions of Tamil Canadians to society.

Trustees approved a motion of receipt and referral, directing staff to come back with a report in February in consideration of this request.

This report recommends that the Board of Trustees declare January as Tamil Heritage Month by official proclamation (Appendix A).

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 8 hours*

## **B. PURPOSE**

1. At the January 23, 2020 meeting of the Regular Board, staff were directed to come back with a report in response to the delegate's request (Appendix B) that January be officially declared Tamil Heritage Month in the TCDSB.
2. This report fulfills the Board's direction.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

1. The Tamil Canadian diaspora began in the 1940s and continues to grow today.
2. Presently, Tamil Canadians constitute one of the largest visible minorities in the Greater Toronto Area.
3. According to Statistics Canada, in 2016 Tamil became the third most spoken South Asian language in Canada.
4. Toronto has the largest Tamil population outside of the South Asian subcontinent with over 130,000 Tamil Canadians.

5. Thousands of TCDSB students and staff identify themselves as Tamil Canadians.
6. January is the month of the Tamil Harvest Festival, Thai Pongal. Thai Pongal is a thanksgiving festival.
7. Canadians of Tamil descent have contributed towards the growth and development of Canada's towns and cities through the arts, music, religion, education, medicine, and various service industries.
8. Tamil Canadians have contributed to Ontario's social, economic, political and cultural fabric. Tamil Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the role that Tamil Canadians have played and continue to play in communities in Ontario and across Canada.
9. Within the TCDSB, Tamil is among the top ten languages, other than English, spoken at home.
10. In 2014, the Ontario government proclaimed January as Tamil Heritage Month and similarly, the Canadian House of Commons unanimously declared January as Tamil Heritage Month on October 5, 2016.

#### **D. ACTION PLAN**

1. Staff recommend that the TCDSB Board of Trustees officially proclaim January as Tamil Heritage Month to coincide with the Tamil Harvest Festival, Thai Pongal.
2. The Community Relations Department under the leadership of the Superintendent responsible for Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education and Community Relations will coordinate with the Tamil Community to plan and support activities that promote Tamil history and culture within the TCDSB.
3. Information, educational and promotional materials (films, books, cultural and historical resources), provided by the Tamil community, will be made available to school administrators, students, parents and teachers via the Board portal.

## **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. The Community Relations Department and the Communications Department will monitor the uptake and engagement in schools that participate in Tamil Heritage Month celebrations through mainstream media coverage, social media metrics and any additional contributions, including photos and exhibits.
2. The Community Relations Department will monitor school community engagement in this initiative through school activities and programs that highlight the contributions of the Tamil community.

## **F. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

1. All available communications tools will be used to publicize and promote awareness of the special proclamation and the Board's initiative to the entire TCDSB community via school newsletters, exchange e-mail system to CSPCs, CPIC, OAPCE-Toronto, Communications Department's weekly wrap-up, E-news, and social media.
2. Strategic actions will focus on both mainstream and community-based media (with a focus on Tamil media), supported by communications modalities including, targeted pitches to community reporters.
3. The Community Relations Department will liaise with school staff to plan and implement activities highlighting the contributions of the Tamil community at the school level.

## **G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommend that the Board officially proclaim January as Tamil Heritage Month in the TCDSB.