



Tamil Heritage Month Proclamation

Good Evening Trustees, Mr. McGuckin, Superintendents, Associate directors, and all who are present here this evening.

My name is Scotula Navaratnasingham, and currently I am a teacher at St. Michael's Choir School and was previously at Jean Vanier Catholic Secondary School, and play an integral role in the TCDSB Tamil Heritage Celebrations.

I stand before you today to ask that you make an official Proclamation for Tamil Heritage month for all of TCDSB.

Toronto has the largest Tamil population outside of the South Asian subcontinent with over 130,000 Tamils living here and thousands of TCDSB students and staff members identifying themselves as Tamil.

The Toronto District School Board has recognized and proclaimed Tamil Heritage month since 2014. In 2015, when I was a teacher at Jean Vanier, I founded our own Tamil Heritage Month assemblies because we had a high population of Tamil students and they wanted to educate their school community and celebrate their culture.

Annually I touch base with our community relations department and communications department to ensure that Tamil heritage month is recognized as part of the heritage celebrations at the board level.

This year, January 17th marked the 5th annual Tamil Heritage assembly and celebration that took place at Jean Vanier. And though Tamil Heritage month is recognized by TCDSB it has never been officially proclaimed unlike the African Canadian Heritage month in February, Celtic Canadian Heritage in March, Asian Heritage in May, Filipino and Italian in June, etc.

The Tamil Heritage Month Act, Bill 111 was proposed in 2012 and was passed by the Ontario government in 2014 to proclaim January as Tamil heritage month. A unanimous decision was made at the House of Commons on October 5th, 2016 declaring the month of January as Tamil Heritage Month under motion M-24 proposed by MP Gary Anandasangaree at the Federal level for all Canadians.

The motion states that Tamil Heritage month will "recognize the contributions that Tamil-Canadians have made to Canadian society, the richness of the Tamil language and culture, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon Tamil heritage for future generations by declaring January, every year, Tamil Heritage Month".

In the one page document that is available to you at your request through Corporate services, I have included links to the official documentation by the Federal Government.

Therefore, on behalf of all of our Tamil student and staff population, I am asking that as leaders in the Toronto Catholic Community, you help in respecting and affirming the diversity and interdependence of the world's peoples and cultures. As well as respecting and understanding the history, cultural heritage, and pluralism of the Tamil culture by proclaiming January as Tamil Heritage Month for all of TCDSB.

Thank you for your time.