

**Taline Dorna - June 10th Regular Board Meeting
Cancer Awareness Day Delegation**

Childhood

Good evening, TCDSB Trustees, Mr. Chair, Director Browne and all TCDSB staff. Thank you for allowing me to be here to delegate for an important cause that is near and dear to my heart. My name is Taline Dorna, and I'm a proud TCDSB teacher and a mother of 3. I am here today to respectfully ask the board to recognize Childhood Cancer Awareness Day every year on February 15th, by encouraging staff and students to wear a superhero t-shirt and bring in a toonie to go towards the Childhood Cancer Canada Foundation.

On July 5th, 2017, my family's life turned upside down. At just 5 months old, my youngest child was diagnosed with a rare ocular cancer called retinoblastoma at the Hospital for Sick children. Within a week of diagnosis, his left eye was enucleated and replaced with a prosthetic eye. Thankfully, our son is now a cancer-free, 4.5 year old energetic little boy, ready to start his journey in kindergarten this fall. However, the scars in our hearts still remain.

When I returned from my nightmare maternity leave, I quickly realized the lack of awareness around childhood cancers within our school communities. I wrote and published a children's storybook called, "The Extraordinary Eye", to raise awareness about retinoblastoma and childhood cancer. We need to acknowledge and celebrate all the superheroes we know or once knew, and the ones we take care of every single day. Childhood cancers specifically affect our school communities the most since it's the demographic we as teachers are responsible for. By bringing in a toonie on this special day as well, we can ensure that Childhood Cancer Canada can receive 100% of these funds. According to the Canadian Cancer Research Alliance, childhood cancer is drastically underfunded, accounting for only 5% of all cancer research funding in Canada. By having this awareness day throughout the TCDSB, we can raise funds to help fill the gaps in research while bringing awareness.

There are an estimated 30,000 survivors of childhood cancer living in Canada today. This doesn't include the children being diagnosed every single day. Anyone who's had to stay on the 8th floor at Sick Kids, would know what this can do to a child, their siblings, and their caregivers; physically, emotionally, and mentally. Please help me bring awareness to our wonderful school board who continues to

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always strive for the needs of our youth. By doing this, you are helping families find peace with the ordeal they've had to face, while bringing awareness and a safe place to share conversations and stories to others who may not know about childhood cancers, and financially, being able to bring much needed monetary funds to Childhood Cancer Canada Foundation.

At some point in a teacher's career, they will either teach a sibling, family member, or a survivor themselves. Or perhaps they'll end up as a parent of a survivor like myself. Together let's make February 15th, every year, Childhood Cancer Awareness Day, and join the global collaborative campaign. Afterall, sometimes real superheroes live in the hearts of little children fighting big battles. Thank you for your time and consideration.