

Guidance News



At Northlea EMS

January 2012



January is the month Gr 8 students and families look seriously at their high school options. We are very lucky to have an excellent local high school, Leaside HS, where a majority of our students attend. Leaside has many benefits including being a semestered school, having strong academics, strong athletic competitive and intramural programs, many student run extra-curricular activities, in addition to being in walking distance for the majority of our students. Since the bulk of our students attend Leaside, our future Gr 9 students will have the comfort of having their friends nearby and most likely know a students in each of their classes, which can help ease with the transition to high school.

Unfortunately, Leaside is now considered a "closed school". That means they cannot take students who are at the feeder school under Optional Attendance or students who have siblings at Leaside. These students will have to go to their home high school or apply to other schools under Optional Attendance.

It is also important to know that students have other high school options. If you are interested in your child attending a school out



of district e.g., Northern, North Toronto..., an Optional Attendance form must be filled out. Each student is entitled to two regular high schools under "Optional Attendance". These forms can be attained from me or the main office. They must be filled out, returned to Northlea, signed by myself or an administrator, copied for tracking purposes, and returned to you in order that you can take it to the appropriate high school by February 1, 2012.

If your child is accepted into a high school under Optional Attendance, they do not have to accept the placement. However, once you do accept, the new high school will be deemed your "home" high school. Should you change your mind and in the future and would like your child to attend Leaside, then they have to apply to Leaside under Optional Attendance.

Students who apply to specialty programs or schools, such as Wexford School of the Arts, TOPS, CyberARTS, IB... and accept placement there, can return to Leaside without going through the Optional Attendance procedure, because Leaside is still considered their home high school.

Students in the French Immersion program should also be evaluating if they should continue in the FI stream in high school. There are many factors that should be taken into consideration such as motivation, being an independent learner, work habits, current success in the FI program (language, math, social studies) as well as a genuine interest in the French language. Families should make the decision in consultation with their French Immersion teacher.

By mid-February I will have visited all the intermediate classes showing them how to navigate the TDSB website to find information about different high schools, Career Cruising (username: toronto; password: 39600) and myBlueprint for educational and career research purposes.

In early February, I will be visiting all the Gr 8 classes and going over course selection sheets and choices to make. Of the 8 courses to sign up for, 7 of the courses will be compulsory, such as English, French, Math, Science, Geography and Healthy Active Living. Where the students have choice is the level of learning (academic or applied) and the 1 elective to choose from such as Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Health and Nutrition, Business... A motto educators have is "16 by 16". This means students achieve all 16 credits by the end of Gr 10 (8 in each of the first two years of high school) as this is a great indicator of them successfully completing high school. Recent studies have found another indicator of high school success; attaining the Gr 9 Math credit, regardless of level, the first time! Close attention should be paid to these two earmarks of success by choosing the right courses and levels for student success.

Courses at the academic level cover the core content of the curriculum and have an

emphasis on the theoretical aspects of the content. Students should be independent workers, self-motivated, use prior knowledge and experience to assist with solving problems, seek assistance when needed, completes homework consistently and thoroughly. A rule of thumb that is often used is if a student is successful in learning the way the subject material is taught in Gr 8 and currently achieving 70% or higher, then they could be taking academic. Consultation with the subject teacher is recommended.

Courses at the applied level cover the core content of the curriculum and have an emphasis on practical applications. Students work in a focused manner but not always independently. They often require reminders of previous knowledge to apply to new learning tasks. Students may need assistance to organize and complete their homework. Taking a course at the applied level does **NOT** hinder a student's ability to go university. It may take a child a couple of extra courses, but it does not put up any barriers for the student. In fact, successful completion of an applied credit is more indicative of success than taking an academic level course and then not getting the credit!



Courses at the LDCC level are for students who are working two or more years below their grade level in a subject area (e.g., English, Math). Here students work in a focused manner when prompted. Students also apply new learning to tasks that have been directly modelled. Subject teachers will be contacting parents if the student should be taking LDCC.

Please note that Gr 8 homeroom and/or subject teachers and myself are more than happy to discuss with families recommendations for courses and pathways.

Please call and make appointments with the appropriate teacher. Choices made for Gr 9 success are not "final" decisions. There are many pathways to the destination of your child's dream as I showed on the Course Selection Evening on January 19, 2012.



Families that are interested in having their Gr 7 or 8 student attend Queen University's SEEDS in Residence program, Northlea students have been earmarked to attend the week of May 28-31, 2012. On-line registration opens up to families on February 1, 2012 and continues until February 29, 2012.

Register early to avoid disappointment. For further information about the program, please check out their website at esu@queensu.ca.

As I am in three schools and my schedule changes weekly, the best way to contact me is by email at arpi.kurkjian@tdsb.on.ca

Sincerely,

Arpi Kurkjian

