



Weekly E-Newsletter
Stay Connected @ BCSS
Friday, March 22, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Week 6 of semester two ends with another successful Parent-Teacher interview night.

The OSSLT is on Wednesday of next week, the 27th. A letter went home today about the modified day on Wednesday. Check out the bus schedule further on in the e-newsletter.

The first week of April brings our school musical, "Freaky Friday". You will NOT want to miss it.

If you used the on-line interview sign-up format, would you please take 30 seconds to do the following quick survey: <https://bit.ly/2U5KlmZ> . Thanks very much.

I am always open to suggestions and comments, so please contact me at twilkinson@scdsb.on.ca if you have something on your mind.

E-newsletters are available on the Bear Creek website: <http://bss.scdsb.on.ca/>

Please follow me on Twitter: @VPWilkinson

Please follow me on Instagram: spfx8691

If you see a topic you want to learn more about, you go to the item and press the "Ctrl" button while you click your cursor and you will be "magically" transported to the topic you chose. To "magically" transport back to the table of contents, go to the "Back to the Table of Contents" words at the end of each article, and press the "Ctrl" button while you click your cursor and you will be "magically" transported back to the table of contents.

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CANADA'S 11 SEASONS

- winter
- fool's spring
- second winter
- spring of deception
- third winter **You Are Here**
- mud season **T minus 14 Days**
- actual spring
- summer
- false fall
- second summer (1 week)
- actual fall

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What's Happening at BCSS?

Bussing and Altered Schedule for OSSLT

The *Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)* will be administered on Wednesday, March 27th, 2019 to all Grade 10 students and to students in Grades 11 and 12 who have not successfully completed the test. All secondary students in Ontario must successfully complete the literacy requirement to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Bear Creek Secondary School will have an altered schedule on March 27th to support students writing the OSSLT.

Wednesday, March 27, 2019	
8:00 am to 11:15 am Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test	
11:15 - 12:05	Lunch
12:05 - 12:35	Period 1
12:35 - 12:40	break
12:40 - 1:10	Period 2
1:10 - 1:15	break
1:15 - 1:45	Period 4
1:45 - 1:50	break
1:50 - 2:25	Period 5

For those students writing the test, their transportation will remain the same.

Students not writing the OSSLT will arrive later in the day to start their regular program. An additional transportation pick-up has been arranged for these students. **All a.m. pick-up times are 4¼ hours later than regular pick-up times (e.g. 7:30 is changed to 11:45).**

Afternoon Classes

Due to the nature of the shortened periods we will be offering *no new curriculum on this day*. This day will provide our students several options to attend their classes for supports in the form of extra help, clarification, completing outstanding work or working on previously assigned tasks. **Students are expected to attend.**

- All four classes will be available for your child to attend; however, if they need additional support in one course they may choose to spend the entire afternoon working with that teacher. For example, if they need clarification in science, they might spend the afternoon with their science teacher. The same would be true for any course.
- Teachers will be available, in a single assigned location for their three teaching periods.
- A student may also choose to attend every class for the 30 minute periods.
- Program focus for the afternoon will be:
 - Supporting completion of outstanding assignments
 - Providing extra help and clarification
 - Work space and technology for independent reading, projects, research and ISU work.

Transportation at the end of the day will operate as usual for all students.

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Dropping Students Off...

Lately, our Admin has been monitoring the driveway in the mornings because we have received complaints from the school bus and van drivers about cars parked in the handicapped and special needs student drop-offs. The congestion caused by dropping off students in the handicapped and special needs vehicles sections to the immediate right and left of the front doors is very dangerous for drivers, staff, and most importantly, students.

We would ask that you drop off students at the Kiss-n-Ride loop at the East end of the school, OR go to the far side of the student parking lot on the West side of the school (near the portables) and drop off your teen there. It's all about safety for everyone.

I don't know about the rest of the Admin and Staff but from what I have seen, there appears to be less congestion and confusion in the driveway in the morning. Thanks for your efforts and please keep it up!

Thanks very much.

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Spirit Week – March Madness

Next week is the March Madness Spirit Week!

Show your school spirit by dressing up according to the daily theme.

- Sweats on Sweats on Monday
- Tacky Tourist on Tuesday
- Socks and Sandals on Wednesday
- Twin on Thursday
- Jersey on Friday and there is a Dino dunk basketball contest in the gym @ 11 a.m. where the best dunk gets a \$10 Tim Hortons gift card.

Bonus!

Win a free \$10 Tim's gift card for wearing the best, most spirited outfit of the day!

To be nominated, find a student council member for a photo or dm your outfit photo to our Instagram account.

Check out @BCSSSCOUNCIL to vote for your favourite outfit of each day on Instagram!

Happy March Madness Kodiaks!



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#ITSTARTS Public Awareness Campaign



Throughout the month of March, the Simcoe County Local Immigration Partnership invites SCDSB staff and students to take part in the #ITSTARTS public awareness campaign, designed to promote inclusion and take a proactive step towards addressing racism and discrimination in Simcoe County.

Schools are invited to participate by sharing their school's work towards equitable and inclusive school communities, and by taking the #ITSTARTS pledge on social media. Participating is easy. Just fill out one of the pledge cards (available online at simcoe.ca/ITSTARTS), upload a photo or video (30 sec. max) showcasing your school's work, or take a photo using the social media frames we'll be providing to

secondary schools and post it on social media. Be sure to use #ITSTARTS and share with @simcoecounty on Twitter or Facebook, and with @experiencesimcoecounty on Instagram. Pledge cards are also available through the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team by emailing Denise Cole at dcole@scdsb.on.ca.

For the pledge cards, participants are asked to fill the line with a word like "inclusion", "community", "understanding" etc. rather than their name.



For more information, and for additional pledge cards, please go to simcoe.ca/ITSTARTS or email sclep@simcoe.ca

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Introducing the YouthfulCities Urban Work Index

We know that the world of work is changing, and that the jobs of the future will be vastly different than today's. We know, too, that educators, policy makers, and change-makers share a collective responsibility to help young people prepare for this changing world, but how about our cities? How are our Canadian cities preparing for the future of work, and how do they fare as places for young people to work and gain an education? What makes a healthy, vibrant, youthful city?

Find out in the inaugural [YouthfulCities Urban Work Index](#).

The Index

The YouthfulCities Urban Work Index is a research-driven report created in partnership with [RBC Future Launch](#), which pulls together data and key insights on 21 Canadian cities, all through a youthful lens. The Index ranks each city against indicators categorized by four central themes: Employment, Education, Affordability, and Entrepreneurship, and the rankings result in a cumulative “score” for each city.

The indicators are as interesting as they are varied. Affordability indicators, for example, measure the monthly cost of a one bedroom apartment; the cost of a one month gym membership; and the cost of a monthly public transportation pass, among many others. Education indicators, on the other hand, measure the average tuition cost; the number of post-secondary institutions per capita; and the number of local, federally funded summer student jobs. Each indicator represents an important building block, adding to a comprehensive assessment model for our Canadian cities.

The Results

How did cities across Canada rank?

In the overall rankings, Edmonton was the top ranked city in the country for youth to work. Edmonton scored 713.86 points out of a possible 1310, with Montreal placing a very close second (708.13 points), and Ottawa following in third (697.91). Toronto (622.60) and Vancouver (571.00) ranked tenth and fifteenth, respectively, and Winnipeg (488.55) landed in the twenty-first spot.

Results from the Education rankings, on the other hand, paint a very different picture. While St. John's ranked eleventh overall, it ranks first overall in Education, followed by Victoria, Quebec City, and Montreal. Oshawa, Mississauga and Halifax took the final three spots.

The Index's education theme is organized to capture the school-to-work transition, and ranks Canadian cities on how they are facilitating this transition successfully. In this way, the Index acknowledges the fundamental role that post-secondary education plays for young workers, and captures how education sets up youth for their careers.

To be clear, the Index is not a list of winners and losers. Instead it provides a closer look at the opportunities that exist within our urban centres, and suggests where more support is needed. As the results illustrate, there is more work to be done.

The Impact

An important takeaway from this research is the expansive understanding of what ‘work’ truly means. Straightforward employment and unemployment measures are important, yes, but to understand the ‘why’ behind these measures we need to broaden our understanding of what factors into ‘work’. Work and employment do not operate in silos, but are deeply connected to indicators such as: access to education,

government attitudes toward entrepreneurship, work integrated learning, and affordable housing. Creating a great city for young people to work in means broadening our definition of 'work' itself.

Beyond expanding our definition of work, the Index also compels us to confront Canada's demographic reality: as the Canadian population ages, we need to make sure our cities are vibrant places for youth to work. Canada's '[brain drain](#)' is an oft-cited issue, and critical to curbing this issue is offering vibrant, affordable, and opportunistic cities for Canadian youth. As we look ahead, the YouthfulCities Urban Work Index is a great starting point to expand this dialogue.

For more information about YouthfulCities, and to download the full report, please visit YouthfulCities.com/urban-work-index.

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Grad Photo Retakes

Grad Photo Retakes are on Monday, March 25th.

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Student Parking

Students are reminded that you are to park your vehicles in the large parking lot to the West of the school. The areas behind the school, and East toward the roundabout are reserved. Thank you for your co-operation.

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Help Us Find Next Year's Students at the Ontario Science Centre Science School

Application deadline: April 2, 2019

A semester at the [Ontario Science Centre Science School](#) offers Grade 12 students a chance to earn their science and math credits and prepare for university in a unique setting. Though they need to be academically strong, students don't need to have the very highest grades to attend this program. They do, however, need a love of science, a desire to learn, and a real interest in interacting with people. If you know an enthusiastic Grade 11 student who you think would enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime learning experience, please encourage them to apply today.

In addition to their science and math courses, students will enroll in our newly accredited Innovation Project, IDC4U Science Centre Innovation. They'll also:

- ✧ Analyze their own DNA using PCR and Gel Electrophoresis in the DNA Fingerprinting workshop.
- ✧ Experience a space simulation in Canada's only Challenger Learning Centre.
- ✧ Insert a gene from a bioluminescent jellyfish into E.coli to create their own transgenic organism.
- ✧ Engage Science Centre visitors with science activities.
- ✧ Lead science lessons for elementary students at a local school.
- ✧ Collaborate as a team to develop and 'pitch' an experience idea to the Science Centre's experts.

Download the Science School flyer [here](#).

Feel free to contact us with any questions at science.school@osc.on.ca or 416-696-4620.

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Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) 2019 – Next Wednesday

The 2019 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) will be administered on **Wednesday, March 27th, 2019**. All students who have not successfully completed the OSSLT are eligible. Students enrolled in or who have passed the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) will not be writing the OSSLT.

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Music Fundraiser QSP Cards – ends on Wednesday, March 27th

The Music Department is selling QSP Savings passes until the end of March Break to support our bands and choirs going to MusicFest Nationals. These passes cost \$25 each and offer the bearer DAILY savings until the end of 2019. Each card is full of incredible offers - \$10 off at Lone Star and St. Louis, 15% off at Montana's and Kelsey's, more discounts at Bullseye Axe Throwing, Mucho Burrito, Booster Juice, Hero Burgers, Freshii, Extreme Pita, and more. Each of the above offers can be used EVERY DAY for the rest of the year. In addition, there are one-time 'snap offers' such as \$10 off at Jiffy Lube, BOGO at X-Play and other restaurant offers. To purchase, go to school cash online. Please print your receipt and have your Bear Creek student bring it into the music room to pick up your card on the Monday or Tuesday after March Break. Thanks for your support!

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Grad Gown News

Attention all potential graduates - Grad Gown Order Forms are needed to walk across the stage at Commencement, so you must go on to the Bear Creek Website today and order your gown. Even if you are not planning on walking across the stage, you must go online and indicate that as well. No grad gown equals no Commencement. See Mr. Hawes in Guidance for any questions or concerns.

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OSSLT TIPS Sessions

For all students writing the literacy test: there are after school preparation sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 - 3:30, starting tonight. Permission forms were given to all grade 10 classes before the exams. There are forms in the main office.

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OSSLT Practice Books

For all students writing the literacy test: practice books for the literacy test are available from Mr. Wilkinson for \$5.

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Inclement Weather Days & Road Conditions

The Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC) provides student transportation services within Simcoe County for the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board (SMCDSB) and the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB). The role of the SCSTC includes contracting bus and vehicle operators on behalf of the SMCDSB and SCDSB.

If your teen will not be coming to the school on this day, you do NOT need to call in. It's nice that you do, but it is not required.

As winter weather approaches, the SCSTC reminds all students and their families that school vehicles may be cancelled due to poor weather, road conditions or visibility concerns.

Home-to-school transportation for Bear Creek is cancelled when the SCSTC announces:

- 1) All school vehicles are cancelled in Simcoe County; or
- 2) Central Weather Zone school vehicles are cancelled in Simcoe County

These announcements are made by the SCSTC through the local media. Cancellation information for Simcoe County is also available through the SCSTC website at: www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca or via Twitter @SCSTC_SchoolBus. When school vehicles are cancelled in the morning, the decision remains in effect for the entire school day.

If you are on Remind, I will let you know almost immediately when the cancellation message comes through.

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Canadian Blood Services Needs Your Help!

During the winter months, hectic schedules and snowy weather often result in a decrease in the number of blood donations. Canadian Blood Services (and all those in need of donations) want to remind you to be part of Canada's lifeline this holiday season and give the gift of life. You can book online at www.blood.ca. Look for a clinic in your area!

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Scholarships

ScholarTree is still committed to helping reduce student debt in Canada by making scholarship more accessible. Most people don't realize how many scholarships are awarded early in the school year. ScholarTree.ca has \$997,500 worth of scholarships that are currently accepting applications. Students can find which scholarships are best fit for them by signing up at ScholarTree.ca.

To help with students prepare and transition to post-secondary life we have launched the [ScholarTree Blog](#). University students write the blog because we want the information to be as relevant to current student life as possible. The main areas of focus for the blog are:

1. Student Life: general advice and hacks
2. Scholarship Tips
3. Entrepreneurial Spotlight: stories about students starting their startup or not for profit
4. How to: tips for applying and getting into prestigious programs

Make sure to subscribe, so you don't miss the weekly updates.

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School's In For Summer At The SCDSB

Are you and your child planning their courses for next school year? Looking for a way to create flexibility in their timetable and earn a credit? Consider summer school!

Each year, the SCDSB offers a variety of summer programs to over 2,000 students. Summer school options include open, college and university level courses from Grades 9 to 12. Courses are offered in-person or online. Interested students can also travel and earn credits with the summer EduTravel program.

Summer school program details can be found on the Learning Centres website at www.learningcentres.com. Current SCDSB students should speak to their guidance counsellor for information and to register. Registration opens January 14!

I have signed up my children for on-line Summer School courses. They'll do their work from the cottage. My eldest is realizing the benefit of getting courses done in the Summer - it opens up options to courses he wouldn't have had the chance to get because of mandatory courses. And my youngest is getting a head-start.

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Badminton Club

Something new this year is the Badminton Club. It is on Thursday nights from 8 p.m. until 10 p.m. Students can come and play for fun or to be competitive. There will be coaching available. Come for fun! Come for training! Come for exercise!

We are opening this opportunity for the family of schools for Bear Creek. Grades 7 and 8 students are welcome to participate as well, from 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

See Mr. Wilkinson for more information.

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Volunteer Opportunities

**VOLUNTEER!
GET INVOLVED!
BE A PART OF YOUR COMMUNITY!**

Do you want to volunteer or get a summer job? Not sure where to start? Check out Bear Creek's volunteer and student job opportunity board located outside of the Guidance office. It is updated weekly with fantastic opportunities! Still not sure what to do? Make an appointment with your Guidance Counsellor for some further suggestions.

**Remember, EVERY student must complete a minimum 40 hours
of volunteer work to graduate.**

Please submit your "Completion of Community Involvement Activities" sheet (this sheet can be found either on-line or at the Guidance office) to the Guidance office as soon as it is signed by both you and a parent.

1. Do you like sports? Are you in need of community service hours? Do you want to get a jump on community service hours? Well the home game crew might be for you! We are in need of capable and trustworthy students to help with sports scorekeeping for the year. Basketball and volleyball are the main sports in which we require help.
2. Mr. Wilkinson is looking for students to be part of the Grounds Crew. Please see him in his office (upstairs admin tower) on Thursday for more information.
3. Mr. Wilkinson is looking for students to be part of the Breakfast Club. Please see him at the Breakfast Club table any day for more information and to sign up.
4. Are you a grade 12 University bound student currently taking advanced functions? If you are interested in tutoring mathematics to a younger Bear Creek student for either cash or community involvement hours, then come see Mr. Gunson, in Guidance, to learn what's available.
5. **Teen Advisory Board (TAB)**
Build your leadership skills. Join the Teen Advisory Board (TAB) which meets monthly to help plan new programs and services for teens. There will be pizza!
6. **BPL Teen Reviewers**
Practice your writing. Read a book, watch a movie, or play a video game and submit a review to earn two hours of volunteer time.
7. Are you looking for an easy but meaningful way to complete your volunteer hours?
Join us on March 26th from 5 - 8 p.m. to help make health kits for local homeless shelters.
The added bonus - you will receive one free hour of tutoring from a local sponsor just for volunteering!
Spots will be limited, so please check out the poster on the board outside guidance or call 705 - 229 - 6284 for more information.

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Sports News

The scores and schedules across the County are on www.hometeamsonline.com; type "scaa 'your sport'" in for league (i.e. scaa football).

Next week's sporting events look like:

Monday 25 th	Tuesday 26 th	Wednesday 27 th	Thursday 28 th	Friday 29 th
	Jr./Sr. Boys' Singles Badminton @ Nottawasaga Pines			

If you see "vs.", that means it is a home game; if you see "@", that means it is an away game.

Are you a new student to Bear Creek in grade 10, 11, or 12 and are interested in playing sports? Did you transfer from another high school? Please come to see Mr. Wilkey in Student Success, room 110, to fill out the necessary forms so you can play sports this year.

Track and Field practices started on Friday, the 22nd after school for any athletes interested. There were practices from 11:00 to 11:30 on Tuesday and Wednesday and practices will continue to be this format until further notice. Please see track board for the sign-up list.

Now, if you don't want to touch anyone who is hot, sweaty, and gross, (or hugging) like in wrestling, try **Badminton** – Thursday nights, from 8 - 10.

On Tuesday, March 19th, the **Badminton Mixed Doubles** tournament was at Romeo D'Allaire. **Brayden DeGrace** and **Samantha Curl** won the first and narrowly lost the 2nd. Brayden and **Amber Fisher** also split the rest of their games. **Jamie Curl** and **Kristie Fisher** played all of their games together and won 2 and lost 3. They are Juniors playing at the Senior level to get a bit more practice. **Ben Hilditch** and **Alex Miniely** did the best overall. They lost only 2 of their games. Considering they only had played one game together before the tournament, they did very well. **Brayden Painter** and **Avery Fisher** were very enthusiastic. They went out and unfortunately, lost every game - some narrowly and some not. Their enthusiasm was uplifting.

To all girls interested in trying out for the **Girls' Softball** team, there is a sign-up sheet posted outside the gym. This is just to gauge interest for now, so please spread the word to anyone who might want to try out.

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Important Dates

Wednesday, March 27

Thursday, April 4 until Saturday, April 6

Friday, April 19

Sunday, April 21

Monday, April 22

Friday, May 3

OSSLT

“Freaky Friday” musical

Good Friday – no school

Easter

Easter Monday – no school

P. D. Day

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Positively Speaking

A parent sent me this article and while I already had a sense of (and only a sense) what it is like living with Tourette's Syndrome and OCD, it really brought home the struggles the individual and those around him/her go through.

I have you get something out of this article. I certainly did.

Tim Howard: Growing Up With Tourette Syndrome And My Love Of Football



I wasn't much of a student. Actually, that's an understatement: I despised school. I couldn't sit still, couldn't focus, desperately wanted to be anywhere but at my desk. I hated school, hated everything about it – the tick, tick of the clock on the wall. The hum of the fluorescent lights overhead. The screech of chairs scraping across floors, the hardness of the seat beneath me. And worse: all those long, long hours of sitting still. I escaped the only way I knew how: I became the kid who raised his hand five, six, seven times a day. When it wasn't the bathroom, I'd

say I needed to go see the nurse.

I wasn't a troublemaker. I wasn't impertinent. The teachers liked me. But year after year, the comments on my report cards basically came down to a single point, and it was 100% accurate: I seemed to get nothing whatsoever out of all those long hours spent in the classroom. They were what I had to do until I could burst into the open air and get to the things that really mattered: sports.

When I was six, my mom signed me up for sports leagues. First, she signed me up for tee-ball [junior softball]. Because I was a big kid, standing head and shoulders above all the other boys my age, the coach put me in the outfield. But nothing happened in the outfield. I stood and waited as a bunch of short kids swung and missed. At best, they might send a ground ball rolling toward first base. So as I stood around in the field, I'd make up an imaginary game in my head. By the time the other team had gotten three outs, I was running wild all over that outfield, waving my arms and shouting, caught up in this imaginary game.

Then we tried soccer. My first team was called the Rangers, and we wore green T-shirts. I had no skill whatsoever. None. I couldn't dribble or trap a ball or even complete a pass. But I was fast. I ran past the other kids, got to the ball first, and blasted it up the field. Because I was tall and relatively fearless, the coach of the Rangers wanted me in goal. But I didn't want me in goal. Standing in goal was as bad as standing in the outfield in tee-ball. It wasn't where the action was. If I was standing in goal, I couldn't score. Playing up front, I was always one goal away from being a hero. As a goalie, I was one goal away from being a villain.

"If you play goalie for half the game," coach pleaded with me, "I'll let you be the striker for the other half." I sighed, and did as I was told, restlessly watching the action I wasn't involved in. Then suddenly, the other team would race down the field and the ball would sail right at me. At that moment, I felt the weight of the whole team – which, to a kid, meant the whole world – on me. I wanted so badly to stop the ball. At the same time, I was terrified I wouldn't.

Often I did stop it. But when I didn't – and when the other team's parents started cheering and the kids who weren't in green began leaping all over the field – I knew what it felt like to be exposed, all alone at a moment of spectacular failure. It was too much. I often started crying right there on the field.

I was 10 when the symptoms began to appear. First came the touching: I walked through the house tapping certain objects in a particular order. Touch the railing. Touch the door frame. Touch the light switch. Touch the wall. Touch the picture. The pattern might vary, but there was always a specific rhythm, and it had to be followed. Exactly. If it wasn't – if I tried to resist – I had to start all over again, until I got it right. It didn't matter if I was starving and dinner was on the table. It didn't matter how badly I needed to go to the bathroom. I had to obey the pattern inside my head. I had to touch these things, and in exactly this order. It was urgent. One part of my brain, the logical part, understood that these rituals were irrational, that nothing bad would happen if I didn't practice them. But knowing that only made things worse. If it wasn't rational, then why couldn't I stop? What was wrong with me?

Then similar things started happening outside of the house, on my way to school. Each day, I walked to school carrying a bag full of books. I spotted things along the way – a rock, for example. There was nothing special about the rock's shape or texture or colour; it looked like every other rock. But suddenly, that rock was special, the most important object in the world. Pick up that rock, my mind commanded. You'd better pick up that rock. I tried my damndest not to. I gritted my teeth and stared ahead, trying to convince myself that everything was OK, that I could leave the rock. I might manage to walk a few steps before my heart started pounding. Go back, my body urged me. Pick up that rock.

If I resisted, I became physically uncomfortable. My stomach churned. I might break out into a sweat. I started to breathe harder, feeling like the oxygen had been sucked out of the air around me. Sometimes I wanted to throw up then and there. For some inexplicable reason, the fate of the universe rested on this one act: picking up that rock. Finally, I gave in, I turned around, got the rock, and dropped it in my bag. I felt a flood of relief. Everything was OK now. The universe was back in control again.

Over the following weeks, my bag became filled with rocks and acorns and dirt and flowers and grass stems – all the crap I was driven to pick up on the way to school. As I arrived, I waved to the crossing guard, as if having to haul this enormous bag around was perfectly normal – Oh nothing, just my books and things, have a nice day! As if I hadn't just lost a fierce battle with my own brain. As if I didn't feel these compulsions to do things I could never in a million years understand, much less explain.

Next came the tics. Each started the same way: with an uncomfortable sensation in some part of my body – a heightened awareness, an urge. The feeling could be relieved only by some specific motor action. I started blinking, for example – forceful, deliberate blinks that I couldn't stop. I began to clear my throat over and over. Then there were facial jerks. Shoulder shrugs. Eye rolling.

With each of them it was the same pattern: that awful sensation welling up, the one that could only be relieved, inexplicably, by some action. As soon as I did it, I felt normal again. Seconds later, the cycle would repeat. Terrible sensation. Buildup of stress. Action. Relief. In school, teachers snapped at me – sit still. Stop clearing your throat. Other kids laughed. What's going on with your face? At home, mom stayed quiet, but I could feel her watching. I saw how her eyes zeroed-in on whatever part of my body I'd moved, the flicker of concern that passed over her face. I hated that I couldn't knock it off, be a little easier on a woman who deserved some peace of mind. But, of course, that was impossible.

On the soccer field, though, my whole world changed. While the ball was far away, my mind might still order me around (touch the ground, twitch, snap the Velcro on the goalie glove, cough, touch the goalpost, blink). But the closer that ball came, the more my symptoms receded. The tics, the crazy thoughts, the conflicting mental messages – poof! They were gone in an instant. So were the details around me. Players, colours, people on the sidelines, they all blurred and fell away.

Only one thing remained in sharp focus, its every detail vivid: the ball, moving toward me. I would kick it or catch it or parry it. Or it would elude me and I'd have to pick it out of the net while the other team celebrated. Either way, whether I had succeeded or failed, that's when everything became crystal clear again – players, colours, spectators, scoreboard. And then, too, the intrusive thoughts. Touch the ground. Touch the post. Twitch, jerk, cough.

When I was 11, I developed a new symptom, the worst one yet: I had to touch people before I talked to them. When I say "had to", that's exactly what I mean: if I didn't touch them first, I literally couldn't form the words. It was like touching the person opened the door to my thoughts, allowed vague ideas to flow into concrete words. But if I didn't touch the person, everything in my brain just kept thumping against the door, unable to escape. At school, I tried to hide this tic through casual touches – I might punch a kid lightly in the arm, or tap him on the opposite shoulder from behind, as if trying to make him look the wrong way. Sometimes I faked bumping into them. At home, I touched my mom on the shoulder. One tap. Then I could talk.

She glanced down at the place I just touched. She didn't say a word. After a while, when I stepped toward her, she began stepping backward, slightly out of reach. "Go ahead," she encouraged. "What were you saying?" But I couldn't tell her. I stood there mute. Just tell her, my brain screamed. Tell her something. No words came. I was helpless to control my own brain, my own body.

Mom took me to a paediatric neurologist. He peppered us with questions about my behaviour. If I'd had any doubts about whether I'd been hiding my symptoms, that visit made it clear: I hadn't been. Mom described it all: the compulsive touching, the twitching, the blinking. She'd noticed everything.

The doctor put words to my symptoms. I had obsessive compulsive disorder, or OCD, and Tourette syndrome, TS – a double whammy of brain difference, a worrisome one-two punch. OCD is an anxiety disorder, one that brings conscious intrusive thoughts and compulsions – touch the bannister. Pick up that rock. You'd better do it or something terrible will happen. TS, on the other hand, creates almost unconscious physical urges. The two are closely related – at least a third of TS patients have OCD. Sometimes it's even hard to tell the difference between a tic and a compulsion. But while tics stem from an urge in a specific part of the body – either completely unconsciously or through a premonitory sensation that's satisfied only by the tic – OCD bubbles up as conscious thoughts in the mind.

What mom already knew, and I learned over time, is that most people don't understand TS. They think of it as a “cursing disease”, a disorder that makes people swear uncontrollably. That's how it's usually depicted on television. It's a trope, because it makes a great punch line. And sure, that form exists, but it's rare – fewer than 10% of all diagnosed TS cases. But there are myriad possible tics. In fact, TS looks different in everyone who has it – I've heard it called a “fingerprint condition”, and that's exactly right. No two people have the same case. Some people echo other people's words. Some hoot, some cough, some hiss or bark or grunt. There are motor tics, too – in fact, it's not TS unless a person has both vocal and motor tics – like nose wrinkling, grimacing, kicking, or even jumping. Complicating matters, even in a single person tics often change over time, too.

So now we had a name for my urges, but not much else. There was no reliable treatment or cure. Some children did extremely well on medication; others moved from cocktail to cocktail, each one causing different side effects to little avail. But the doctor explained some other things, too – curious things. He said that he had seen some examples of people with these disorders having some special gifts – an ability to hyper-focus, to stick with a task until it's 100% mastered. He had also seen a kind of hyper-sensitivity – an ability to see and feel and smell things that others couldn't.

As we walked out of the office, he said, almost as an afterthought, “I've been doing this a long time, and there's one thing I'm absolutely sure of: with every challenge a kid faces, there's some flip side. I have no way to prove it, but I believe this: there's always a flip side.”

Soon after, my mother met with teachers and administrators at my middle school. She had gone in armed with all the information she could find: photocopies of books from libraries, pamphlets ordered from organisations, copies of every article she'd been able to find. These were the days before the internet, of course; mom had to work hard for the information she had. She sat in the classroom, a nurse, teachers, administrators, and the district psychologist arrayed in a semicircle around her. Not one of them picked up any of her handouts. One teacher even asked: “Are you sure Tim has Tourette syndrome? Because you know, Mrs. Howard, there are so many labels these days that people use to excuse bad behaviour.” “Well {poop}”, my mom thought. “Now I'm going to have to fight these people, too”. Before she had gone in, she felt alone. Now she felt worse than alone; she felt outnumbered. She cried the whole way home.

But it was true what the doctor said about an ability to hyper-focus – at least when it came to sports. I watched a documentary about Pelé, then spent hour upon hour in the backyard trying to master his techniques – stepovers, cutbacks, stop-and-gos. I practised day after day, sometimes not even hearing my mom when she called me in for dinner.

I discovered that an Italian cable station broadcast Milan's games. Saturdays became devoted to studying Roberto Donadoni's artful footwork, the way the ball seemed almost Velcroed to his foot as he dribbled down the field.

The thing is, those teachers were right: if I had given school the focus and attention I gave to my athletic pursuits, I'd have had endless potential. But I knew I would never care about homework the way I cared about making myself faster, stronger, quicker, more agile.

The more I played, the more I began to understand what the doctor had said about enhanced perception. I could see things somehow, things that other people didn't seem able to. I could see, for example when a game was about to shift, could sense the attacking patterns before they happened. I knew exactly when the winger was about to cross the ball and whose head it would land on. I could see the flicker of a striker's eyes before he pivoted. Sometimes I even saw it in time to warn my defender.

Source: "Tim Howard: Growing Up With Tourette Syndrome And My Love Of Football", By Tim Howard, Sat. 6, Dec 2014, last modified on Wed. 1, Mar 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2014/dec/06/everton-tim-howard-goalkeeper-tourette-syndrome-ocd-autobiography-the-keeper>

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Parent's Corner

I hate smoking; I hate cigarettes; I hate the smell; I hate what it does to your hands; I hate what it does to your face: I hate what it does to your lungs; I hate what it does to your heart; I hate what it does to your brain.

My brother passed away almost two years ago now, of an aneurysm. He smoked constantly...and I mean constantly!

Just in case you didn't know – I hate cigarettes and smoking.

My parents have smoked all my 51 years, plus about 5 or so years longer, before I was around.

So, let's vape instead!

Uh...NO!

Last year, we had to evacuate the school due to a fire alarm caused by the smoke of a vape battery exploding.

I don't have hard science on this but I think in 10 years, we are going to have a COPD epidemic (**Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)** is a lung disease characterized by chronic obstruction of lung airflow that interferes with normal breathing and is not fully reversible. The more familiar terms 'chronic bronchitis' and 'emphysema' are no longer used, but are now included within the **COPD** diagnosis. – thank you, WHO – World Health Organization - <https://www.who.int/respiratory/copd/definition/en/>) due to vaping.

Some of the research report the adverse effects in current and former vape smokers are:

- ☹ Dry mouth
- ☹ Sore mouth
- ☹ Headache
- ☹ Tongue inflammation
- ☹ Black tongue
- ☹ Dizziness

- ⊗ Sleepiness
- ⊗ Sleeplessness
- ⊗ Allergies
- ⊗ Chest pain
- ⊗ Breathing problems { <https://vapingdaily.com/what-is-vaping/vaping-side-effects/> }

Yeah, I want a habit that is going to give me black tongue, and prevent me from sleeping, since I don't sleep well as it is. Actually, I really don't.

E-liquids contain three major components, including a [VG/PG](#) base, [nicotine](#), and flavoring. These are either chemicals or substances derived through chemical processes. So when the kids are telling you that there is no nicotine, **they are incorrect**. { <https://vapingdaily.com/what-is-vaping/vaping-side-effects/> }.

The VG/PG base is PG and VG are propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin base for burning the juice and nicotine. Here's where I think the COPD will be affected. With cigarettes, smoke is filling your lungs and being exhaled. With Vapes, the PG/VG get vapourized to be exhaled. However, the oily substance stays in the lungs and is not exhaled, or else people would get an oily taste in the mouth, which supposedly doesn't happen. Your delicate alveoli and bronchioles will be covered in vape residue, making it impossible to breathe. However, I am not a doctor, so really what do I know. I do know, however, that taking "stuff" into your lungs that isn't air, isn't good for you!

I'll step off my soapbox for now.

Please be aware

There are graphic images below of oral damage done by vapes

Anyway, I hope you find this article informative.

Vaping And Oral Health: It's Worse Than You Think

The use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) represents a significant and increasing proportion of tobacco consumption, posing a tremendous threat to oral health. This article will look at the following aspects of e-cigarettes:

- ⊗ Overview of e-cigarette usage
- ⊗ Statistics on the current prevalence of e-cigarettes
- ⊗ Three chemicals contained in e-cigarettes and their effects on oral health

When compared to traditional tobacco use, an argument that [e-cigarette use may be as dangerous to oral health—if not more dangerous](#)—can be made.

Overview

Using e-cigarettes, referred to as vaping, works by heating a liquid to generate an aerosol that the user inhales. The liquid in the e-cigarette, called e-liquid, is usually made up of propylene glycol, glycerin, flavorings, water, and nicotine, although some users will substitute THC for nicotine. In practice, e-cigarette users tend to reach lower blood nicotine concentrations than tobacco smokers, although it is difficult to make a direct comparison because nicotine concentrations in e-cigarettes vary widely.

Reasons individuals vape include the following:

- ⊗ Smoking cessation
- ⊗ The thought that vaping is less harmful than cigarettes
- ⊗ Circumvention of smoke-free areas
- ⊗ Recreational enjoyment (1)

Prevalence

Researchers and antitobacco advocates are especially concerned that irresponsible marketing has made e-cigarettes appeal to the segment of the young population that had no history of tobacco usage and never intended to start smoking. Because of the known dangerous effects of traditional tobacco methods, use among middle and high school students has been steadily decreasing since 2014. However, since the introduction of the e-cigarette, that number is now increasing, and it is estimated that one in five high school students may now be using tobacco products. (2) **E-cigarette use from 2017 to 2018 increased 78% among high school students and 48% among middle school students.** (3)

Propylene glycol

The first danger of e-cigarettes is associated with the carrier product known as propylene glycol (PG). PG is primarily used in the production of polymers and in food processing. It can be found in various edible items, such as liquid sweeteners, ice cream, and whipped dairy products. It can also act as a carrier for various inhalant pharmaceutical products, including nicotine. PG is a viscous, colorless liquid that possesses a faintly sweet taste and is one of the major ingredients of the e-liquid used in e-cigarettes. When used orally, the breakdown products of PG include acetic acid, lactic acid, and propionaldehyde, which are all toxic to enamel and soft tissue. (4) **In addition, PG is a hygroscopic product, which means water molecules in saliva and oral tissue will bond to the PG molecules, leading to tissue desiccation.** (5) The result of this is xerostomia, or "dry mouth," which has been shown to lead to **an increase in cavities, gum disease, and other oral health issues.**

Vegetable glycerin and flavorings

The second danger of e-cigarettes is due to other major component of e-liquid: glycerin and flavorings. Vegetable glycerin (VG) is a colorless, odorless, viscous, and sweet-tasting liquid. It has a myriad of applications, including medical, pharmaceutical, and personal care. In the food industry, it serves as a humectant, solvent, and sweetener. It is 60% as sweet as sucrose and is not metabolized by cariogenic bacteria, and is therefore thought not to cause cavities. However, studies have shown that the combination of VG with flavorings produces a fourfold increase in microbial adhesion to enamel and a twofold increase in biofilm formation. (6) In addition, a 27% decrease in enamel hardness was demonstrated when flavorings were added to e-liquid as compared to unflavored controls. The viscosity of the e-liquid also allowed *Streptococcus mutans* to adhere to pits and fissures. In other words, **e-liquid allows more cavity-causing bacteria to stick to a softer tooth and can lead to rampant decay.**

Nicotine

Another danger associated with e-cigarettes has to do with nicotine. Although the percentage of nicotine is much lower (0.3%–1.8%) than traditional tobacco products, one electronic cartridge (200–400 puffs) can equal the smoking of two to three packs of regular cigarettes. The dangerous effects of nicotine on gum tissue are well known. The literature suggests that nicotine affects gingival blood flow as it is a vasoconstrictor. It also affects cytokine production, neutrophil function, and other immune cell function. (7) In addition, nicotine decreases connective tissue turnover. All of this results a much higher chance of developing gum disease and tooth loss.

Lithium batteries

Recently, a 24-year-old man from Texas was killed when his vape pen exploded, and part of the device wound up severing his jugular vein. (8) Although these types of sensationalized deaths are rare with e-cigarettes and vaping pens (only two reported to date), the explosions of these pens are not. The problem lies within the vape pen and the lithium batteries overheating and exploding. These explosions are usually attributed to improper charging of the device or have been linked to a type of device called a mechanical mod that has no internal safety and can overheat and explode.

One report found that 195 of these adverse events occurred between the years of 2009 and 2016. (9) However, Dennis Thombs, dean of the School of Public Health at UNT Health Science Center, published a study that concluded the number of vape explosions in the US were most likely underestimated. Thombs estimated that there were **2,035 e-cigarette explosions and burn injuries in the US between 2015 and 2017—more than 40 times the initial estimate** by the US government. (8) These injuries are serious and often lead to disfigurement of oral soft tissue (figure 1).

Figure 1: Oral soft-tissue injuries due to e-cigarette explosion (photo courtesy of Nicole Angemi)



Bottom line

The bottom line is vaping can be just as dangerous, if not more dangerous, when compared with smoking. The problem is that vaping is thought to be a safer alternative to traditional tobacco products, and companies are adding flavoring products to attract younger generations. According to a 2013–2014 survey, 81% of current youth e-cigarette users cited the availability of appealing flavors as the primary reason for use. (10)

For example, one patient of a general dental practice had a caries-free history for 35 years. He ceased smoking traditional cigarettes and decided to vape as he thought this was a healthier alternative. Within a year, cervical enamel demineralization and interproximal lesions were present on the mandibular anterior sextant, consistent with the primary point of contact of the e-liquid aerosol (figure 2).



Figure 2: Effects of e-cigarette usage

In another example, a young patient had been using e-cigarettes for five years. He started vaping as a method to quit smoking traditional tobacco products thinking vaping was a healthy alternative. Because of its ease of use, he smoked a cartridge of one of the more popular vaping products a day. Admittedly, he also drank energy drinks (high sugar content), stating that his mouth was often dry after vaping. This combination led

to rampant decay with smooth-surface lesions and future tooth loss (figure 3).

Figure 3: Effects of e-cigarettes



Many advocates of vaping claim that e-cigarette use and vaping poses 5% the health risks of traditional tobacco smoking and claim its use to be helpful in getting people to quit. (11) This particular use does have merit and has helped many individuals quit smoking.

Unfortunately, these studies have only analyzed e-cigarette use in former smokers using vaping as a way to stop smoking. The studies have not looked at the health effects of nonsmokers who start vaping because of the perceived innocuous health effects and because it "tastes yummy." In addition, these studies have not looked at vaping in middle school and high school individuals, the group where e-cigarette use is increasing the most in percentage of use. Because of this, a tidal wave of oral health problems is heading our way.

Source: "Vaping and oral health: It's worse than you think", by Scott Froum, DDS, and Alisa Neymark, DDS, January 10, 2019, <https://www.perioimplantadvisory.com/articles/2019/01/vaping-and-oral-health-it-s-worse-than-you-think.html>

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Parent Pointer Calendar for the following weeks (March 25 – March 29)

Monday 25 th	Tuesday 26 th	Wednesday 27 th	Thursday 28 th	Friday 29 th
Many universities and colleges offer summer programs for high school students. Help your teen start gathering information now.	Talk about the future. Ask, "How can you become what you want to be? What steps can you take? Can I be of help?"	Prepare a family recipe with your teen. Talk about recipes that have been handed down through the years.	Have your teen start a spending notebook. Keep track of expenses for a month. Use it to prepare a budget.	Talk to your teen about a time you had to work with someone you didn't like. How did you handle it?

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Have a great weekend!

Be well!

Terry Wilkinson

Vice-Principal
Bear Creek Secondary School

P.S. (Positive Statement):

"Teaching a child not to step on a caterpillar is as valuable to the child as it is to the caterpillar."

- Bradley Miller

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P.P.S.: If you like what you have read so far, please tell another parent/guardian, get them to e-mail me, and I'll add them to the e-mail list.

