

For Immediate Release
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U of T Law School and Toronto District School Board Collaborate on Canada's First Law-and-Justice-Themed High School Program

(Toronto, ON) — The University of Toronto, Faculty of Law and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) today launched Canada's first law-and-justice-themed high school program, to be implemented this fall in two downtown high schools — Central Technical School and Harbord Collegiate Institute.

Approximately 1,000 students, teachers, principals, and members of the law school community celebrated the launch of the "LAWS" program (Law in Action Within Schools) at Central Tech. The LAWS program is expected to increase high school completion rates among students and encourage them to go on to college or university. Many of the high school students participating in the LAWS program are from diverse backgrounds and opportunities, and will be the first in their families to have an opportunity to consider a higher education.

"Our goal is to use the law to engage high school students, to help develop their reasoning and literacy skills and, most important, to transform their sense of what is possible for their futures", says U of T Law Dean, Ron Daniels. Dean Daniels initiated the LAWS project after learning of a similar program in the Bronx, New York that has turned around high school completion and university enrollment rates in that community. "We hope to build on several outreach programs the law school currently operates, including a successful summer mentorship program for high school students that has been running for more than seven years."

"We are confident that this exciting collaboration will be critical to the lives and futures of our students," says David Reid, Director of the TDSB. "This collaboration has the potential to inspire students who might otherwise discount a college or university education, and is in keeping with the Board's focus on ensuring that all students make informed choices around their future goals and opportunities."

Program Details:

This ground-breaking collaboration will have many dimensions, including curricular, extra-curricular, mentorship and financial aid aspects. High school students will have access to the Faculty's network of students, faculty members and alumni in the wider legal community. Law students will assist teachers in incorporating the most interesting and pressing legal issues of the day into all aspects of the curriculum. High school students will work with law students on moot courts and mock trials, use the Faculty of Law's library and attend special lectures. Field trips will expose students to the broad range of legal professionals, including judges, politicians, policy makers, community advocates and lawyers. The mentoring program will allow high school and law students to develop mutually enriching connections and relationships. Offering support beyond graduation, U of T will create scholarship and bursary programs to ensure that no capable student is prevented from attending the University for lack of financial resources.