Waterloo Region
District School Board

January 11, 2016

Dear Waterloo Region District School Board Students, Parents and Guardians, and Staff:

Waterloo Region has a strong history in supporting newcomer settlement and has recently been identified as one of six Ontario communities supporting refugee reception. It will receive more than 1,000 government assisted and privately sponsored refugees beginning in December 2015, with the majority of them arriving in January and February of 2016. These newcomers will receive re-settlement assistance within our community.

The Waterloo Region District School Board is a safe, caring and inclusive community and is working collaboratively with municipalities and community partners to ensure a seamless and coordinated access to re-settlement supports.

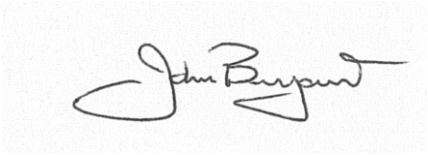
The Waterloo Region District School Board is an active partner in the recently established Refugee Resettlement Steering Committee which has direct oversight of the regional re-settlement efforts.

People in Waterloo Region are compassionate and caring, and have responded generously to appeals for assistance in times of extraordinary need or disaster at home and around the world. In responding to the emergent re-settlement needs of these newcomers, the Waterloo Region District School Board will be launching the ***"Newcomer (Refugee) Welcome"*** board-wide fund-raising initiative.

Parents, students and staff members who wish to donate to the cause may consider donating through the Waterloo Region Education Foundation Inc. (WEFI) at **www.wrdsb.ca/wefi** between Tuesday, January 12th and Thursday, March 31, 2016. The process for making such donations can be located on the attached document or accessed directly on the Board website. Donated funds will be directed by the Waterloo Education Foundation to the Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation, the agency identified by the Refugee Resettlement Steering Committee. The Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation has made a commitment to match all donations up to $200,000.

In the coming days or weeks schools may be organizing fund-raising initiatives to support relief efforts. This is an excellent way for our students to engage in a global citizenship initiative. Our generous support of this re-settlement effort will help ease the transition for these newcomer families and welcome them to our community.

Sincerely,



John Bryant, Director of Education