



Ken Lister

TDSB School Trustee - Don Valley East

December 2017 Newsletter

PART - Community Consultation on the shared boundaries for Greenland Public School and Norman Ingram

Tonight is the community consultation to get feedback on eliminating the shared boundary for Greenland and Norman Ingram. Please join me tonight at 7pm at Don Mills CI and let me know your thoughts. These two schools are the only ones in the entire TDSB who share an entire attendance area. This causes challenges for both school principals, our planning department, and costs about fifty thousand per year in transportation costs. And the question of equity has arisen as well.

Enhancing Equity Task Force

Speaking of equity, let's discuss the task force briefly. I have received about 200 emails on this task force, maybe more. I know many of you have concerns. This task force report, which tomorrow Trustees will vote to send to staff for study and reporting back. Then staff will report back at the January 31 meeting of the Planning and Priorities Committee, which I was re-elected to serve on last week. If you have concerns with the staff recommendations, you will be able to speak to all Trustees for up to 5 minutes on January 31 if you register. Let me share my thoughts with you:

A few things jump out from this report: What it says, and what it doesn't say.

Overall there are many ideas worth exploring. More specifically, many of you will be glad to read gifted programming is NOT recommended to be phased out or eliminated. I would never support phasing out gifted programming. Or eliminating specialty programming. This report calls for expanding specialty programs which is a smart direction to go. Since elected, I worked hard to add a new Gifted program at AY Jackson as I believe access to all programs should be expanded when possible. We also added a new Autism program at Lescon and many other special education programs. And we added a new STEM+ program to Georges Vanier.

Page 57 of the report surprised me. It talked about anti-Semitism not being raised frequently at the consultations, but that doesn't mean it isn't important for us to address. Perhaps this is why many Jewish students attend private schools. It also talks about Anti East-Asian Racism. I would like to have heard more about this, but was disappointed that posters promoting the consultation were not translated into Chinese, despite my request, and other trustees. Translating material more might lead to better engagement. Almost all attendees at the May Forum spoke fluent English, and I observed very few people whose first language wasn't English participating. Perhaps their voice was missing due to language barriers.

As for what this report doesn't say: It doesn't talk about issues of inequity such as the repairs needed at each school. With a repair backlog of 3.8 billion and climbing by 1 million per day, this affects some older

schools more than others. Of course addressing this inequity would take lots of money, which is not at our control. Additionally, there is no mention of some schools having playgrounds, and others not. Some with air conditioning, others none or just a bit. Again, fixing this inequity would take money, and it isn't mentioned in the report.

Finally, where will we find the money to improve access to some of our expensive programs? To add a new mechanics program for example means we need to modify classrooms into a repair shop, and purchase machinery to offer skilled trades courses. Money we don't have. Yet in our area there is no access for students to skilled trades, or other programs. Bendale Tech, Central Tech, Danforth Tech and Western Tech are all far away, there are none in north York.

Overall, I am happy to refer this report to staff and have them review what is feasible and report back January 31. I hope we get a good plan to address fundraising inequities and staffing inequities. If not, I am prepared to move a motion to end staffing inequities and provide transparency to school councils regarding the staff allocation process and formulas.

New Superintendent in Don Valley East

I am pleased to welcome Superintendent Andrea Alimi who will be covering for Superintendent Andrew Gold starting January 8, 2018. Andrew will be in another role on a temporary basis but hopes to return to our community this school year. Andrea Alimi will be in charge of Cherokee, Ernest, Pleasant View, Brian, Muirhead, Shaughnessy, Donview, Rene Gordon, George S Henry, Three Valleys, Don Mills CI, Don Mills Middle School, and Greenland.

Air Conditioning

The TDSB is in the process of creating cooling stations at schools with no full building air conditioning. This plan would cool large areas such as gyms so that students would have access to a cooler area on days of extreme heat. Given the number of schools involved, the plan is expected to take approximately 4 years to fully implement. However, we will be installing temporary A/C units in school libraries by June 2018 to act as a temporary cooling area for any school that does not have A/C or does not have a cooling area by this date. Moving forward, we will be installing permanent cooling stations at approximately 80 schools per year until complete – starting with elementary schools.

TDSB Releases Information on Condition of Schools

The TDSB shared its annual Facility Condition Index, which reports on the condition of each of our school buildings, along with updated figures for the Renewal Needs Backlog. As of September 2017, the TDSB's repair backlog is \$3.7 billion, up from \$3.5 billion last year. While funding for school repairs has improved, it is not keeping pace with the growing backlog. We continue to work with the Ministry and advocate for adequate, predictable, long-term funding. Learn more at <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Accountability/Renewal-Needs-Backlog-and-Facility-Condition-Index>.

Winter Weather and Student Transportation

From time to time, it may be necessary to cancel student transportation, classes and/or programs due to severe weather. On rare occasions, severe weather makes it necessary to close schools, administrative offices or sites.

With approximately 246,000 students in our schools and sites each day, any decision to cancel buses, classes and/or programs or to close sites can have a significant impact on thousands of families across Toronto. This decision is not taken lightly. When schools remain open on days with inclement weather, parents/guardians make the final decision on whether to send their children to school and they can keep children home from school if they so choose.

Should a cancellation or closure be necessary, information will be posted on the TDSB website, TDSB social media (Twitter and Facebook) and provided to local media by 6 a.m. For more information, please see the TDSB's Procedure for Severe Weather <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Severe-Weather>.

Join the Province-wide Conversation About Assessment

Join the province-wide conversation about how best to improve Ontario's approaches to classroom assessments, large-scale provincial assessments including Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments, and Ontario's participation in pan-Canadian and international assessment programs.

Your feedback will help inform a report to be submitted by Spring 2018 to the Premier and Minister of Education providing actionable advice for student assessments in Ontario. Participate and share your input at public engagement sessions (December 8 in Toronto) or online via survey, Twitter or webcast. Learn more at www.ontariolearningprovince.ca/participate.

Early Learning and Care Policy Consultation Share your feedback on the TDSB's Draft Early Learning and Care Policy, which provides forward-thinking principles and commitments to guide program planning, implementation, and improvement. Please send your comments to eypolicyfeedback@tdsb.on.ca before January 2, 2018 at 12:00 p.m.

Kick-start Your Child's Education Savings

The TDSB has partnered with SmartSAVER on a board-wide campaign to help families access free money for their children's future education.

What FREE money? It's the Canada Learning Bond, available now through www.tdsb.on.ca/SmartSAVER. This is a Government of Canada contribution to a child's Registered Education Savings Plan. It provides up to \$2,000 in savings for the post-secondary education of eligible children.

Who can get it? You are eligible if your child was born in 2004 or later and you have ever been eligible for the National Child Benefit Supplement as part of the Canada Child Tax Benefit. All eligible children receive at least \$500 and will receive \$100 more for each year they're eligible up to age 15 or a maximum of \$2,000. How do I get the Canada Learning Bond?

- SmartSAVER can help you apply for the Canada Learning Bond and start an RESP with \$0 when you use the Start My RESP online tool at www.tdsb.on.ca/SmartSAVER
- You'll need a Social Insurance Number for yourself and your child to complete the application
- There is no cost and you don't need to contribute any money to get the Canada Learning Bond

Don't wait! Get started at www.tdsb.on.ca/SmartSAVER

Traffic Safety Tips: Help Make this a Safe Winter Season

As winter approaches, we know that severe weather will be part of our daily lives for the next several months. While traffic safety is an important matter all year long, this is a particularly good time to review what we can do to keep students safe.

The need to be aware and alert at all times, on any road, and even in the most routine circumstances is key to traffic safety. This applies to students and drivers alike. Road conditions can be challenging in the winter months. So to those of us who drive, please take extra care on the roads and in parking lots, especially in areas where children might be present.

School staff periodically review street and traffic safety with students. Parents can help reinforce these safety messages with children at home. Below are some tips that might be helpful to review.

Stop, look, and listen for traffic.

- Only cross at corners and crosswalks.
- Make eye contact with drivers.
- Walk on the right side of the crosswalk.
- Wear appropriate footwear to reduce the chances of slipping.
- Never run into the street.
- Obey crossing signals.
- Cross only if clear.
- Walk on sidewalks.
- Where there are no sidewalks, walk as far away from traffic as possible, facing traffic.

The safety of our students is always a top priority. Let's work together to make the winter season safe so we can enjoy all it has to offer

Stay Healthy During Flu Season

Flu season is here again. In Canada, flu season tends to run between October and April. The Ontario government is encouraging Ontarians to avoid getting sick this flu season by getting their annual flu shot. Toronto Public Health is recommending that whenever students and staff experience flu-like symptoms, they are sent home and do not return to school until they are no longer infectious to others. Therefore, ill students and staff should be symptom-free (especially from vomiting and diarrhea) for at least 48 hours before returning to school.

The primary concern is for the health and safety of all students and staff. Please note that no special measures are required when there is a case of influenza in a school or daycare. However, everyone should do their part to stop the spread of the flu. As parents, you can also assist by:

- Reminding children to wash their hands often especially after using the washroom and before and after eating;
- Reminding children to cover their sneeze and cough;
- Watching for symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, and/or high fever;
- Informing the school if your child is ill; and
- Keeping your child at home when he/she is ill.

For more information, please visit the Toronto Public Health website www.toronto.ca/health, contact your family doctor, or Telehealth Ontario. 1-866-797-0000.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Lister". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ken" and the last name "Lister" clearly distinguishable.

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