

Ward 20 Ward Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, December 7th, 2015

Location: Vradenburg Jr. PS, 50 Vradenburg Drive

Attendees: Yoky Sham (L'Amoreaux CI - Parent), Susan Offor (Brookmill Blvd JPS - Parent Council Chair), Asma (Chester Le JPS – Parent Council Chair), Yunjing Chen (Chester Le JPS – Co-Chair), Grant McPherson (Brookmill Blvd JPS – Principal), Darryl Gillis (Vradenburg JPS – Principal), Peter Holleley (Sir John A. Macdonald CI – Parent), Gaynor Lim (Lynnwood Heights JPS– Principal), Sude Singh (Sir John A. Macdonald CI – Co-Chair), Kingsley Kwok (FSLAC Rep), Bola Otarahi (PIAC Rep), Meharun Nazeer (Stephen Leacock CI – Parent Council Chair), Riaz Hussain (John Buchan SPS – Parent Council Chair), Lisa Ferguson (Timberbank JPS - Parent Council Co-chair), Felicia Samuel (ETT EO), Stephanie Elias (Vradenburg JPS – Teacher; Terraview-Willowfield PS – Parent), Anna Epitropou (Timberbank JPS – Principal), Shirley Chan (ER 19 - Superintendent), Holly Cunningham (Sir John A. Macdonald – Parent Council Co-Chair), Joseph Downes (Inglewood Heights PS – School Council Co-Chair), Anita Wong (Stephen Leacock C. – Principal), Frank Liu (John Buchan SPS– Principal), Manna Wong (Ward 20 – Trustee), Araz Hassserjian (TDSB – Shared Services Liaison), Michelle Munroe (TDSB – Central Coordinator for Parent and Community Engagement)

Meeting called at 6:45pm

1) Introductions and Welcome

2) Introduction of host school – Principal Gillis:

Vradenburg Junior Public School opened its doors in 1955 and was named after the Vradenburg family, who lived on the land the school is now on. The school offer a good balance between both academics and extra-curriculars to approximately 300 students. The school has strong community support and strong parental support as well. There is an emphasis on working with the community. Thanks to supportive teachers and staff, they can offer things like arts programs, music (i.e. concerts) and intramural sports, including basketball, volleyball and cricket. There is also very strong support from the school council. The school also offer a large variety of clubs and hope to cater to at least one interest of every child in the school. Students come from a variety of backgrounds, and speak different languages but mostly speak Chinese, English, Urdu, Tamil and Greek. The school is currently Eco-Certified Gold, and the eco club is aiming for Platinum status.

3) Trustee Report (please see attached file for additional details)

- Organization Board meeting took place on December 1st. Robin Pilkey remains as chair, and Jennifer Arp was elected as Vice-Chair. Though they are both new to the TDSB, they have lots of experience otherwise, that will serve the board well.

- Manna will continue to serve on Program and School Services Committee among others. She is excited to serve on the Environmental Sustainability Community Advisory Committee and to explore the use of solar panels as a cost-reduction tool towards to repair backlog.
- Also related to the school repair backlog, FixOurSchools.ca has started a new initiative to help urge the provincial government to prioritize school infrastructure investments. Visit their website for additional details on how you can participate.
- Terry Fox PS expansion project has been approved. The over-enrolment is considered a long-term problem and they currently have 12 portables on site. The new expansion will help serve the currently over-populated student body, but it doesn't take into account future projections for over-enrolment. For this reason, a Program Area Review is also in the works for that cluster of schools. (See page 3 of Trustee Report).
- David Lewis PS is in a similar situation (134% capacity) and we are hoping to add a brick and mortar addition there as well.
- There is also a problem with parking at many of these schools with over-enrolment. More students also mean more teachers and more vehicle traffic. This is another problem that needs to be addressed as many teachers are forced to park on the street and can potentially be ticketed.
- The Years of Action plan also addresses accommodation issues – it looks at clusters of schools to potentially fix accommodation issues. A PARC (program area review committee) process can be triggered by both high and low enrolment numbers. The number of mandatory public meeting for a PARC process has been reduced from 4 to 2 but those meetings are still required for public consultation.
- A new tab on Trustee Manna Wong's Trustee Page – "Our Schools Make a Difference" features different community schools projects and items worth noting. It currently features Brookmill JPS's first place finish in the national 60 Minute Kids' Club challenge.

4) Superintendent Updates

- PARC dates should be updated soon. Updates are available on the TDSB website.
- Elementary school report cards are sent home on December 10th. However, based on union action, they will not include any teacher comments.
- Local bargaining for supply teachers has been settled, but still has to be rectified by the union.
- The 60 minute Kids' Club and other initiatives to support children's health and well-being are important. The TDSB has their own "Fun Run" in the spring to help support these kinds of efforts as well.

5) FSLAC

- Schools should have posters in their schools. Sr Kindergarten application deadline has passed – December 3rd.
- The dates for Jr Extended and Middle Immersion are in January.

6) PIAC

- PIAC conference was on November 14th. Held on a Saturday, but is very worthwhile since they offer plenty of workshops to help parents. Food is also provided for the day so parents who wish to be involved in their child(ren)'s school should register next year.
- The next large scale event is School Council Appreciation evening (February 28th). It's a chance for school council chairs and members to connect and celebrate their successes.
- PIAC is looking to get parents more involved in the Principal and Vice Principal hiring process. There is training available for parents who are interested.

7) Controversy regarding Sexual Education in curriculum

- The TDSB (possibly through PIAC) should provide feedback to the province about the new curriculum. Many feel that the new curriculum was not properly consulted with the public and parents.
- The TDSB has to implement the new curriculum since it has been passed down from the Ministry of Education. However, The TDSB policies do allow for anyone's rights to be infringed upon, so anyone is able to opt-out if they wish. Schools are being advised on how to support opt-out procedures.
- There is lots of misinformation being presented – i.e. there is no "Sexual education curriculum". There is a health and physical education curriculum with 3 strands, and each of these strands has a series of subsections. One subsection is "Human development and Sexual Health".

8) Speaker Series: " School council 101 and Beyond" – Michelle Munroe, Central Coordinator Parent and Community Engagement

School councils need to follow Regulation 612 that governs School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees. It's available on the TDSB website and Ministry of Education website. Michelle provided a quiz about School Councils and the regulations surrounding them. The correct answers are listed below for your knowledge.

- 1) The purpose of the school council is: to improve student success and to provide a system of accountability to parents. Fundraising is not part of the mandate for any school council, though they are free to do so (as many do).
- 2) The school council executives are responsible for: Planning agendas for the meetings, working with the school/principal to set meeting dates, coordinating all meeting preparations (i.e: minutes, refreshments etc.), consultation and outreach to all parents.
- 3) The school council chair is responsible for: working with the principal, council exec & members and chairing all meetings.
- 4) School council elections should be held: within the first 30 days of each school year.
- 5) Who sets the date for the school council elections? The school chair in consultation with the principal.

- 6) What is the term of office for a school council member? One year. *Note: many parents often state that they are members of the school council for multiple years, but unless they are continually re-elected, they are not official members of the school council.
- 7) A school council constitutes how many elected parent members? As many that are specified in the school council by-laws.
- 8) What is the minimum number of meetings that must be held? Four meeting in a school year.
- 9) At Appleseed Junior Public School, the second school council meeting was attended by the principal, the teacher rep, the community rep, the school council chair and a parent. Thus: Cannot be considered an official school council meeting. An official council meeting must have more parents present than voting members (i.e. teacher, student or community reps).
- 10) On a school council, who has voting rights and can vote on council matters: All members with the exception of the school principal.
The school council must prepare the following: Minutes of all meetings, financial reports of all fundraising, an annual report of its activities that is submitted to the school principal and the TDSB.
- 11) Each year, school councils receive how much funds from the TDSB and the Ministry of Education to support their work? A Minimum of \$300 and a maximum of \$1000 that arrives in September and an automatic grant of \$500 from the Ministry to supplement activities that reaching out to hard to reach parents.
- 12) School councils are required to buy additional school council insurance if: They have a major fun fair, Rent/buy special equipment, or recruit and number of volunteers each year for events. Any other basic events can be covered by the basic insurance already provided by the school.
- 13) School councils who engage in fundraising are required to: Develop and financial plan and consult with the principal on fundraising ideas.
- 14) School councils can request a TDSB email account by: requesting that the principal activates the account.
- 15) What department of the board provides financial services and supplies for school council parent workshops? The Continuing Education department.

Some other tips and issues that were discussed:

Teachers can't be school council chairs due to a potential of conflict of interest. But they are allowed to participate as parents.

Council is not a place for parents to bring up personal grievances (i.e: and issue with a teacher). These types of problems should be brought up directly with the teacher or principal. The council is meant to focus on issues that involve the entire school community (i.e. parking or traffic issues in the student drop-off areas).

School councils need a set of bylaws to govern properly and to ensure proper elections. The bylaws should included and clear and transparent process on how to hold elections. Not doing so can often alienate parents who are interested in joining but are not informed. Do not

assume that parents are disengaged – keep them informed about the elections process (especially parents who are new to the school and may want to get involved).

By-laws should also include a section on conflict –resolution and a policy of declaring conflicts of interest.

It is suggested that decisions are made in the by-laws on who will maintain e-lists or social media accounts. Many councils use these platforms to communicate with parents, but they can be left unattended or are not-updated since no one is assigned the task.

School councils are not charities. The TDSB can produce charitable tax-receipts on behalf of the council. If a donor makes a donation to the TDSB and specifies what school and program it wants it to go to, that is where the money is used.

Funds that are produced by the council need to be earmarked in the financial plan – they can't be continuously "carried over" as a "just in case". Many council don't follow this practice and it is against the rules.

Outside groups are not allowed to fundraise of the behalf of the school. i.e an Alumni association can't use the name of the school to collect funds. While outside groups can make donation to the school, they are forbidden from using the name of the school to collect funds.

There is also a supplemental PowerPoint presentation that offers further details.

Next Meeting will take place on January 25th, 2016. Please see all the rest of this school year's dates in the Trustee update.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:50pm