

Ward 3 Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday March 28, 2017
Islington JMS, 44 Cordova
"School Council Night Out"

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** The evening began with "Sugarbush Nojitos" mocktails at the bar (created and served by PIAC Rep Trevor Burnett) and a selection of hors d'oeuvres prepared and served by students of Lakeshore Collegiate Institute. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm and began with an acknowledgement of Indigenous traditional lands by Trustee Pamela Gough. Host Principal Rocco Coluccio welcomed everyone to Islington JMS.
2. **Ward Updates: Richard Carter, SEAC Rep:** reminded everyone to register for <http://www.parentsaspartners.ca/> Saturday, April 1, 2017. **Melanie Amadasun, FSLAC Rep:** FSLAC recently had a guest speaker Superintendent Colleen Russell- Rawlins speaking about the changes happening to Early Years. New regulations from the Ministry of Education will see school-based Childcare Centres providing more before and after school care. More information available on the TDSB website. **Trevor Burnett, PIAC Rep:** It is Autism Awareness Month. Free Cycling Education Programs are currently available, schools can register through TDSB EcoSchools.
3. **Superintendent Report: Superintendent Tracy Hayhurst:** Greek Heritage Month is coming to an end. April is Sikh Heritage Month and May is Jewish Heritage Month and Asian Heritage Month as well as Bike Month. "TDSB Connects" is a new monthly communication that will be going to all on the TDSB's email listserve. **Superintendent Sandra Tondat:** the schools are currently in the process of staffing for next year. Executive **Superintendent Sandy Spyropoulos:** to all parents and students, please participate in the TDSB Student and Parent Census at <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/research/research/parentandstudentcensus.aspx> Exciting news that all schools are acknowledging Indigenous traditional lands every morning and the TDSB's First Nations School has now relocated to Eastern Commerce CI site together with the TDSB Aboriginal Education Centre. It will expand to become a K-12 school with Grade 9 starting in September.
4. **Trustee's Report: Trustee Pamela Gough** gave a comprehensive trustee report and reminded everyone that her trustee newsletter is the best way to find out all the TDSB news both at the local level and the system level. Read it and subscribe [here](#)
5. **SAC Inspirations:** Representatives from 10 Ward 3 School Advisory Councils shared stories of success in parent engagement and fundraising.

Ward 3 School Council Success Stories

Islington JMS, International Lunch - SAC Chair Jeff Dick: Islington's annual International Food Fair celebrates the international flavor of the school community. This event sees parents

bringing delicious snacks reflecting their various cultural traditions to the school to be shared with other parents, staff and students. It raises money for the School Advisory Council.

Sir Adam Beck JS, Holiday Bazaar - SAC Chair Cindy Gibson: The SAB Winter Bazaar has been going for over 60 years. It is a one day event that raises approx \$12,000. There are many elements: silent auction, snack bar, bouncy castles & games, Santa's Gift Shop, bake sale, craft table, photos with Santa, and vendor tables. The event takes a lot of volunteers (80 adults and students). It's a tradition at the school that the community looks forward to.

James S Bell JMS, Parent Engagement Communication and Survey- SAC Members Veronica Zeballos & Morgen Young: James S Bell parents send out a weekly e-blast from the SAC to let other parents know what's happening at the school. It is done through a gmail account and is distributed to all families that volunteer their email addresses. Creative measures are used to build the email data base, for examples: flyers sent home, table at welcome back BBQ, kindergarten information session, SAC events. The best idea: raffle off front row seat tickets for the Holiday Concert in exchange for email address permissions.

SAC did a parent engagement survey earlier this year. The survey asked what kind of things would bring parents out to the school events and what are the barriers. Results are still being tallied but information helped the council to see what kinds of events parents feel they would enjoy attending.

Second Street JMS, School Travel Planning- Armi DeFrancia: Armi is a School Travel Planner from Green Communities Canada working with Second Street School to promote active transportation, which is a term for students walking or cycling to school. Active transportation is the healthiest mode of travel for students both mentally and physically, with many benefits.

Armi heads a Safe Routes to School Committee consisting of SAC representatives, the school principal/vice principal, City of Toronto traffic department staff members, TDSB transportation representatives, a representative from the City Councillor's office, and a TPS 22 Division officer. Second Street School has increased the safety of active transportation to school through effort such as having the city traffic department add better intersection markings to the closest street crossing by the school, and redesigning the school bus lay-by/ street parking area in the front of the school. The school has also installed new bike racks and held cycling safety workshops, learn-to-bike sessions and bike rodeos.

Second Street JMS, School Fundraising - SAC Chair Kamala Kalsi: Second Street School has implemented parent-run pizza lunch to fundraise for the school. The pizza lunches raise about \$6,000 yearly. Another fundraiser involves raffling off tickets for prizes at the Spring Concert.

Seventh Street JS, Why Bother, Become a Blogger - SAC Member Trevor Burnett: Blogging on the school's SAC website is a great way to get involved in the parent network.

Blogs can be reflections on parent experiences, letters of thanks, best practices, etc. It's like being an online ambassador for your school.

Park Lawn JMS, Section 37 Funding for Ped Pathway- SAC Member Sheila Chochinov:

Sheila is an experienced urban planner and long-time SAC member. She and a group of other parents at Park Lawn JMS worked from 2012 to 2014 get Section 37 funding for the city to build a well-lit and paved pedestrian pathway running across the border of the schoolyard and its adjoining city parkland over to Park Lawn Road. The new pathway safely joins the previously somewhat disassociated Stonegate area to the back of the school. Previously the path had been an unlit, precarious footpath which had been unsafe at night.

Section 37, part of the Planning Act, allows a developer to contribute funds to the City in exchange for height and density increases in a proposed development that would otherwise not be allowed under the Act. The negotiation and use of Section 37 funds is under the jurisdiction of the local councillor, with guidelines provided by the Act in that funds must be used for community enhancements of certain sorts.

The Park Lawn School Grounds Revitalization Committee successfully lobbied for \$250,000 from the city for the project. Success was attributed to a solid groundwork of communication and messaging. It was a 2+ year project, supported by the entire school community. The committee was also able to develop a schoolyard master plan to be left as a legacy to future parents, which envisions as next steps an outdoor classroom and learning garden.

Sunnylea JS, Fundraising Events- SAC Chair John Melanson: Successful fundraising events at Sunnylea include pizza lunches, two parent social events, and the Spring Fair- the latter brings in over 50% of the school's fundraising budget. Key factors for success are good relationships with principal and staff, as well as parents who are very engaged and participatory. Trustee Gough is also very active with the school. All events are longstanding traditions so this legacy aids in keeping them running from year to year.

Wedgewood JS, Road Speed Reduction and Traffic Calming- SAC Member William

Vanderburg: Ashbourne Drive runs parallel to Kipling and is heavily used by drivers as an alternate to the main street. It is also an important route-to-school street for many Wedgewood families. There is only one stop sign in six blocks on Ashbourne and traffic is often clocked well over the 50 km/hr speed limit making it difficult for students to cross. There is a cross walk but no crossing guard.

Wedgewood SAC decided to request the speed limit on Ashbourne be lowered to 30 km/hr. School Council took a petition along the street and sent it to the city, triggering a traffic study and traffic department survey, but city's own survey did not yield enough resident votes to warrant the change. Councillor DiCiano was not convinced of the merit of the request. SAC continued to press the Councillor's office, contacted 22 Division Toronto Police Service, and looked into traffic calming by-laws.

In the end, Wedgewood did manage to get the speed limit reduced to 40 km/hr with assistance from Trustee Gough, Principal Beischlag and residents through quick action when the matter came onto the agenda of the City of Toronto's Etobicoke-East York Community Council. Despite the fact that the staff report recommended no change in the speed limit, and despite finding out about this meeting on short notice, Wedgewood representatives attended the meeting in person, contacted the trustee to activate her support, and sent letters from the local principals to all councillors on Community Council. The Community Council members voted to override the staff recommendation and in the end the speed limit was lowered.

Lessons learned: be the squeaky wheel and get every advocate you can. Engage not only your own local councillor but also the other councillors on Community Council. The ultimate decision rests with the elected Community Councillors. Even if the city traffic staff decides that your project does not meet the warrants, it's still possible to have success in traffic calming.

Etobicoke School for the Arts, Auditorium Retrofit - SAC Chair Ann Agar: Being a secondary school with a unique focus on the arts, ESA has two parent organizations, the School Advisory Council (SAC) and Supporters of ESA Talent (SESAT), which is a registered charity run by parents. SESAT raises about \$35,000/year and the money is divided equally among the six arts majors.

A Capital Campaign Committee was recently launched to raise money beyond the scope of the arts majors. New chairs for the auditorium emerged as a need. Money had been raised in the previous five years for lighting, sound and electrical refits in the auditorium. With the chairs dating to 1953, seating was the next phase of retrofit. The campaign was kickstarted by an anonymous benefactor who wanted to give matching funds to encourage others to donate.

Three key components to the campaign:

1. a benefit concert at the Winter Garden Theatre,
2. a "seat sale" campaign to have people sponsor a seat in the auditorium with a plaque.
3. an appeal for direct donation.

The newly renovated auditorium was launched with a celebration show in November 2016.

Ann encourages parents to stay involved and engaged in their children's education beyond elementary school. Continue to volunteer through the secondary level- it's rewarding.