**Minutes**

**Ward 3 Ward Council**

**Theme: Ask Me Anything!**

**Thursday November 15, 2016, 7:00 pm**

**John English JMS, Library**

**95 Mimico Ave**

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm. Trustee Gough gave an acknowledgment of Indigenous traditional lands. John English School Advisory Council Co-Chair, Marie Cook was introduced and gave a brief overview of John English JMS.
2. Community Advisory Committee Reports: Trustee Gough introduced Christy Heath, TDSB Ward 3 Ward Council Representative as co-chair of the meeting. Christy Heath introduced the TDSB Ward 3 Community Advisory Committee representatives for updates.

* Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) representative for Ward 3, Trevor Burnett of Seventh Street JS, gave a brief update from the recent PIAC meeting: a new co-chair, Trixie Doyle, has been appointed, there are motions on the table regarding Full Day Kindergarten childcare, and French Immersion registration deadlines for fall enrolment are approaching.
* Outgoing PIAC Rep, Tina Cham Kim, reminded everyone of the Parent Involvement Makes a Difference Conference, Saturday Nov. 19th <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/HowtoGetInvolved/Conferences.aspx>.
* Trustee Gough took the opportunity to thank Tina Chan-Kim and David Kim (outgoing French as a Second Language Committee (FSLAC) representative) for their five years of service as TDSB community advisory committee representatives in Ward 3.
* FLASC: Melanie Amadasun of Islington JMS was introduced as the new Ward 3 FLASC representative. Melanie has not had the opportunity to attend a meeting as of yet so had no report.
* Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC): Ward 3 SEAC Rep, Richard Carter, was introduced and gave a brief update on SEAC. They are working on inclusion within the TDSB. Richard Carter invited anyone interested to speak with him or attend SEAC meetings.

1. Trustee's Report:

* Trustee Gough encouraged everyone to follow her on Twitter (@pamelagough) and join her e-news network as these are the most effective and environmentally friendly ways to get out the news on education: join enews via the trustee's website [here](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/ward3/Ward3.aspx).
* EQAO: test scores are out for the ward and are posted on the trustee's website [here](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/ward3/Ward3.aspx). In general, schools in Etobicoke Lakeshore are doing better than TDSB and provincial averages however math scores are trending down. This is a province-wide problem and TDSB is providing increased daily blocks of time for elementary math instruction as well as more math coaches.
* The Ministry of Education has announced an increased focus on student well-being and has released an engagement paper inviting public comments.
* People for Education's recent conference was fully registered with parents from across Ontario. The focus this year was on measuring aspects of education that are needed for long-term success, such as self-regulation, citizenship, perseverance, collaboration and adaptability.
* Traffic safety continues to be a concern for parents across Toronto. The Toronto Centre for Active Transportation has released an important new tool for school communities to use to advocate for modifications to make their streets safer: [the Guide to Safer Streets Around Schools](http://www.tcat.ca/project/guide-to-safer-streets-near-schools/).
* Dr. Linda Rothman of the Hospital for Sick Children recently presented her research on dangerous driver behavior near schools, such as speeding. She showed that collision risks for students are greatly mitigated by modifications to streets such as traffic calming and crossing guards. Poorer areas in Toronto have fewer street modifications, creating concerns about equity of risk to students.
* The newly established Ward 3 EcoSchools award was given to the following schools: Bloorlea, Etobicoke School of the Arts, George R. Gauld, Islington, James S. Bell, John English, Karen Kain School of the Arts, Norseman, Park Lawn, Second Street, Twentieth Street and Wedgewood.
* Early Years Learning and Care: changes have taken place to the legislation governing day cares in schools and family literacy centres; more information to come in January at the next ward council January 19th 2017.
* Bussing update: many problems were experienced with a lack of school bus drivers at school start up. TDSB is actively recruiting and training new drivers.
* TDSB's Business Development and Community Partnerships Office has released an updated [Fundraising Guide](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/Community/docs/FundraisingGuide.pdf) for schools.

1. Superintendents Report: the Superintendents Sandra Tondat and Tracy Hayhurst, waived their report as they would be sitting on the panel later in the agenda.
2. Networking: led by Christy Heath, all attendees introduced themselves. Everyone was asked to speak with someone they did not know and find out something interesting or unique about their school.
3. **Ask Me Anything: a panel discussion Chaired by Trustee Pamela Gough. Panelists: TDSB Director John Malloy, Executive Superintendent Sandy Spyropoulos, Superintendent Sandra Tondat and Superintendent Tracy Hayhurst**.

Trustee Gough introduced the panel and facilitated questions.

Director Malloy began the discussion with an overview of the TDSB's Integrated Equity Framework. He spoke of meetings that he and his team have held over the past year. Clear messages have come from staff and parent communities. Staff made clear that there were too many priorities coming at them, directives, requirements, etc. and direction was needed to help schools focus on their own unique contexts. There are 588 schools across the TDSB and they need to be a strong system of schools while honoring the local voice, needs and experience of students, staff and parents in each unique community.

The main issue from parents and guardians was the issue of system responsiveness. What happens when a response is needed from board staff outside of the school? It was not clear who was responding to matters at this level. The Learning Centre Strategy answers this problem by creating four centres, each guided by an Executive Superintendent supported by a group of Superintendents of Schools, who will be engaged in frequent visits to all schools under their wings and available to address concerns that require attention from a higher level than the school. The Vision for Learning in the TDSB is shared leadership, every voice matters, enhanced learning communities, trust, focused improvement in the area of achievement, and wellbeing.

The new Learning Centre Strategy, established September 2016, has divided TDSB into four Learning Centres, with 140-150 schools each, seven Superintendents and one Executive Superintendent overseeing each Centre. This model will develop a rich foundation of relationships to help respond to school needs, bringing resources as close to schools as possible. Issues that cannot be solved by the principals should go to the Superintendents and they have the resources and support to respond. There are expectations and deadlines for response: 24 hours for a response from the Superintendent's office and 48 hours for a personal response from the Superintendent.

Integrated Equity Framework: this is founded on the principle that each and every student can and must achieve to full potential. There can be no gaps in learning from one student to another, we must raise expectations. This framework looks at policy, budget, and school improvement plans. Leadership is key: creating the right conditions for each and everyone to succeed- students, staff and community.

Inclusion and Special Education: with many differing views on what constitutes the best kind of placement for students with special needs, there is a need for inclusive support.

Employment Equity: staff will feel honoured, respected and celebrated. Hiring practices and promotion processes understand how bias can impact the diversity we require in the TDSB.

This framework will demand engagement throughout the TDSB. We will be engaging communities in challenging questions, such as what can we create together? There is a vision that speaks to our focus, a Learning Centre Strategy that speaks to our collaboration, and we have an Integrated Equity Framework that signals what changes may be required to meet our goal. That is our architecture and now the work begins.

Trustee Gough opened the floor to questions for the panel:

**Question #1**. SEAC rep Richard Carter: How are you going to drive the massive change that is required on the special education front to make all special education children included and get them into regular classrooms? What is the vision of that change?

**Answer#1**: John Malloy spoke to the "vision": the vision is challenging because not all parents and staff agree on what the best learning environment for each special education child should be. We need to look at the most inclusive learning environment that we can create. Where students are successful, they feel good about themselves and connect to their peers. What are the conditions in those programs? We need to look at what the most important resources are for the individual student and find them in the closest proximity to their home community. Executive Superintendent Sandy Spyropoulos spoke to inclusion in special education: experience from town hall meetings with staff and parents gave us differing views and opinions. We need to work together with a growth mind set to understand the individual student needs. How can we address those needs as an organization is the question.

**Question #2**: FSLAC rep Melanie Amadasun: How is the new equity framework going to apply to hiring in the TDSB?

**Answer #2**: Director Malloy: TDSB for the most part is not in a hiring mode. We all bring bias and we need to name that. The TDSB is going to give training and education opportunities to staff to address bias in hiring and promotion.

**Question #3**: Outgoing PIAC rep Tina Chan Kim: Is there a plan to service the growing French Immersion elementary population in Ward 3 as they get to the secondary level?

**Answer #3**: John Malloy: Yes, it is front and centre of the TDSB's Long Term Accommodation Plan. Trustee Gough: The Long Term Plan identifies Lakeshore Collegiate as the eventual place for a secondary school French Immersion program in south Etobicoke. Numbers have grown in French Immersion in Ward 3 and over the last six years the number of French Immersion schools in the ward have doubled. This speaks to a need for a secondary level French Immersion program and this will happen as soon as numbers permit. Enrolment is being monitored and a review will be done in 2018.

**Question**: John English School Council Co-Chair Marie Cook: Are there other wards that have a similar swell in French Immersion?

Answer: Yes, French Immersion is growing across the entire system.

**Question #4**: Vivek (?). How is the syllabus managed for split grades at the middle school level? My grade 8 child is in a split grade with grade 7. How do I know she is getting the full math program for her grade that she needs for high school preparation?

**Answer #4:** Superintendent Hayhurst: Classes are organized in the best way possible within the confines of the Ministry of Education staffing formula. Within the curriculum there are repeating "big ideas" in each grade to give latitude for teaching. The skills change but the overall ideas repeat from grade 1-8. Suggests parents work with the school to address concerns. Reaching grade level expectations can be managed through subject matter that spans different grades. Director Malloy: There are many areas to focus on in order to increase student achievement: global competencies, critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, communication and so forth..we are trying to change the learning environment so that students are no longer sitting in desks with teacher at the front. Combined classes are not just for financial issues, they are better classrooms because they demand that the students use critical thinking and work in groups. Trustee Gough: There is [an article on her website](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/ward3/EDU%20Combined%20Grades%20What%20Works%20Research%20Into%20Practice.pdf) about split grades.

**Question #5**: There are many disparities from one school to another. How are you going to balance resources so that there is equity in funding to all schools?

**Answer #5**: John Malloy: Toronto's Social Development Research Council cites Toronto as a "divided city" as it relates to poverty. There are indeed great disparities from one community to another. In May a task force was set up to look into this issue. They have one year to look at resources, equity and access, and to figure out how to be equitable with the resources we have. This doesn't mean each school will have "the same" resources, rather it means putting resources equitably where they are needed. So this question cannot be answered at this time. A media article on the report is available [here](https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2014/11/28/how_do_we_unite_torontos_divided_city.html). The TDSB is working towards working together as a whole. The task force will release recommendations in a year's time.

The panel was thanked and the door prize draw was held. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.

The next ward council meeting will be on Thursday, January 19th 2017 at Islington Jr. Middle School. The topic will be Child Care Centres and Schools: An Evolving Partnership.