



## **School Councils Email Access**

**To:** Program and School Services Committee

**Date:** October 3, 2019

**Report No.:** 10-19-3748

### **Strategic Directions**

- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being
- Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the report on School Councils Email Access, in response to a recommendation presented at the May 1, 2019 Program and School Services Committee meeting, be received.

### **Context**

The Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) has requested the email addresses of parents/guardians from each school be made available to the School Council Chair(s) of each respective school for the purposes of School Council related communication directly to parents/guardians. This report outlines the steps in making this available.

The importance of having parent emails recorded in our Student Information System was communicated to Principals prior to school start up. All families have an opportunity to add or update an email address as part of the student information verification process that occurs annually in September. Email addresses are not mandatory for parents/guardians to provide. These email addresses are available to Principals and Vice-Principals to communicate either through email directly or the Board's parent/guardian messaging platform, School Messenger.

Providing email addresses to School Council Chairs will require adjustment to the current Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) Notice of Collection posted on the public website. As some School Council communication may involve commercial items, Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) compliance is required. School Messenger provides an option for parents to opt out of commercial messages at any time using the individual preferences within School Messenger.

## **Considerations**

The current plan for providing school council chair involves the following components, many of which are underway:

- The Board utilizes a communication tool, School Messenger, for Principals, Vice-Principals and Office Administrators to communicate with parents/guardians through broadcast message via phone or email. School Messenger is fed information nightly by Trillium and contains up-to-date email addresses collected through student registration or directly by the school.
- Email addresses of parents/guardians continue to be collected through the student registration process and the annual information verification process that takes place each September. Additionally, at any time a parent/guardian may contact the school to request a change to their email address. The online registration form will be modified to capture a parent/guardian email address(es) with clear communication around the purpose and MFIPPA notice of collection statement. Email addresses would continue to be stored in Trillium and would be kept with the student record for five years after the student has left the Board.
- The Board will provide School Messenger accounts to the School Council Chair(s) at no additional cost. Work is on track to meet the requested implementation of November 1, 2019.
- School Messenger offers individual parents/guardians the ability to set personal preferences for the types of messages they wish to receive:
  - School Hours Emergency
  - Non School Hours Emergency
  - Attendance
  - General
  - Phone Only
  - Commercial Message (provides CASL compliance)
  - Safe Arrival

These preferences can be updated at any time.

### **Further Considerations and Resource Implications:**

- CASL compliance is an important component of this plan. Presently, when a parent provides their email through student registration there is an option to subscribe to commercial type messages, those that may involve an offer or request for funds. This information is then stored in Trillium and fed through to School Messenger. Only if the parent checks this box on the student registration form will they receive commercial messages. If a parent decides later they wish to receive or not receive commercial messages they can manage and change these preferences at any time through School Messenger. A revised Notice of Collection would be required to be compliant with MFIPPA:

“The Toronto District School Board (the “TDSB”) collects, uses, retains, and shares personal information for the purposes of planning, administering, and delivering its educational programs and services. The purpose of this collection is to permit the school’s Parent Council to communicate with parents and/or guardians through email correspondence or phone number, regarding school events, meetings and the distribution of newsletters. The collection, use and disclosure of personal information for these purposes are expressly authorized under the authority of sections 58.5 and 169.1 of the *Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2*. The information is retained in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M. 56*. This information will be shared solely with parent council members in order to administer the above noted purposes. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office at 416-394-2344 and [FOI.Privacy@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:FOI.Privacy@tdsb.on.ca).”

- Message approval workflow. The Board’s Coordinator of Parent and Community Engagement will work with interested PIAC members to craft a workflow process that will allow for the Principal of the school to be aware of and provide input into messages the School Council Chair(s) wish to send.
- Providing school messenger access to School Council Chairs will likely increase the workload of front office staff. These staff members will be communicating with School Council Chairs, sharing information and answering questions about the School Messenger platform. It is anticipated there will also be questions from parents/guardians about receipt of these new messages. It is also anticipated that office staff may have more interaction with parents/guardians about their email addresses, including corrections to previously used addresses and entering and updating this information in Trillium. These are positive efforts that will result in increased communication with parents but could represent a

potential increase in workload for school front office staff.

- IT Services staff will likely experience an increase in support calls to the Client Service and SIS Support Desks from school staff about entering and updating parent/guardian email addresses in Trillium, use of School Messenger and its training material. Preparation of training materials for the School Council Chairs is an additional work effort required of IT Services. There will also be some additional work for the IT Services accounts team in creating messaging platform access to School Council Chairs.
- Work has begun on the School Messenger training materials along with adjustments to the School Council Chair(s) account creation process to enable School Messenger.

## **Communications Considerations**

A communication plan is being prepared for Principals, Vice-Principals, office staff and School Council Chair(s) outlining several items including:

- Importance of collecting parent/guardian email addresses;
- Understanding that parent/guardian email addresses are to be stored in Trillium only;
- How School Council members will access School Messenger; and
- School Messenger training and support materials available.

## **Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)**

P094 - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

PR676 - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

## **Appendices**

Not Applicable

## **From**

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