

ICAC Meeting Minutes
Thursday May 10, 2012
6:30 – 9:30 pm

In Attendance* –

Cheryl Skovronek, Jann Houston, Lesley Johnston, Aim Mujib, David Clandfield, George Martell, Michael Griesz, Sharlene Bourjot, Trustee Chris Glover, Trustee Sheila Cary-Meagher, Natasha Burford, Heather Johnson

Regrets –

Alejandra Bravo, Lisa Watson, Donna Quan, Nathan Gilbert, Howard Kaplan, Chris Penrose, Sejal Patel, Laurie Green

Guests –

Almaz (parent from Lawrence Heights), Michael Kerr (EPAC), Andrew Deakin (Social Planning Council)

Staff –

Manon Gardner, Vicky Branco, Cassie Bell

From PIAC – Jim Spyropoulos, Michelle Munroe, Cathy McCulloch

***Note –** PIAC (Parent Involvement Advisory Committees) members, including parents, staff and trustees joined ICAC to informally discuss TDSB Budget issues and possible strategies

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Draft Agenda approval – moved by D. Clandfield, seconded by J. Houston – approved unanimously

3. Previous Meeting Minutes approval (April 19, 2012) – moved by G. Martell, seconded by J. Houston, approved unanimously.

4. ICAC Co-ordinator's Report –

Handouts –

- Ministry of Education's final policy guidelines and follow up Toronto Star article
- Special Education Report – People for Education
- Deputation to Board Budget Committee on proposed cuts – Social Planning Council (L. Johnston)
- Ontario's Vertical Mosaic Report (Colour of Poverty)
- PSSP (Professional Student Services Personnel) invitation to May 14th gala event
- Pedro Noguera's presentation from the FUTURES Conference
- Public System, Private Money (SPC Report)
- School Closures Report and media release– People for Education

Action Items-

- Review of agenda package
- Page 3 – Invitation to CAO (Chief Academic Officer) for Focused Interventions and Student Supports invited to June ICAC meeting - **complete**
- Page 4 – three follow up items with Comptroller of TDSB – **in progress**
- Page 4 – TPH (Toronto Public Health) meeting with staff set – May 24th – **complete**

- Page 8 – ICAC Special Education Ad Hoc Work Group meeting (confirmed Monday May 14th @ 7 pm - D. Clandfield to co-chair) – **complete**
 - Page 8 – Advertising Policy Review Committee ICAC input – **complete**
 - Page 8 –Trustee Chris Glover’s Budget YouTube and presentation – see pages 11 & 12 of agenda package (YouTube currently not available but will be posted asap) – **in progress**
 - PIAC (Parent Involvement Advisory Committee) and EPAC (Equity Policy Advisory Committee) and ICAC – collaboration and coordination around TDSB Budget process – **in progress**
- ICAC Meeting Dates and Locations for 2012 – 13**
- Group discussed best times and locations and determined what does not work for Trustee Co-chairs (i.e., Wednesday evenings when most trustee meetings are held)
 - Possibility of using Fairmeadow as venue (poor TTC access however)
 - Suggested that ICAC coordinate with CPAC meetings (Cluster Parent Academy Committees) three or four times over the year; allow ICAC and parents to meet and network

ACTION ITEM –

ICAC Co-ordinator to work with staff to organize next year’s meeting dates and bring to June ICAC for input/approval.

5. MSIC Report Team Update

- FUTURES Conference – Equity and Inclusive schools
- CCP (Central Co-ordinating Principal) Branco one of key organizers – well done!
- Special thanks and ‘kudos’ to Michael Kerr (EPAC Co-chair) who worked very hard on FUTURES Conference and kept process true and real from the beginning
- Conference began on Wednesday May 2nd with very successful Faith Walk
- Approximately 25 people visited different religious sites representing the faiths of many of our students, for example, a Buddhist Temple, a Hindu Temple etc.
- Group met by Faith Leaders who provided background information and context of particular faith
- Schools in MSIC programs do Faith Walks regularly, as well as ‘community’ walks to learn more about the community in which they work and teach
- Over 3000 people attended over Conference’s three days!
- 600 MSIC parents and 200 children fully participated in Saturday’s programming- incredible to see; parents able to fully engage in conference while children were entertained/fed etc.
- MSIC parents had PD (professional development) with Dr. Wayne Hammond - over 300 attendees learning about resilience in children and strength-based assessments
- Emotionally charged presentation – very moving
- MSIC program was show-cased at Conference and Saturday was realization of equity in action!

6. ICAC Sub-committee Updates and Next Steps

ICAC Ad Hoc Special Education Work Group

- Meeting notes circulated to attendees of April 2nd group (meeting chaired by L. Green)
- May 8th meeting held with Chair Bolton and parents of children with special needs to discuss issues/concerns
- Approximately 70 attendees, plus Trustees and staff; meeting was ‘fabulous’ according to some attendees
- Next meeting of ad hoc group is scheduled for: **Monday May 14th @ 7 pm** in Committee Room B; all welcome; Chair will be D. Clandfield

- **Fees and Fundraising Sub-committee Update (L. Johnston)**
- Ministry of Education has finally released final 'policy guidelines' on fundraising -
- <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/Fund2012Guideline.pdf>
- Social Planning Council's Report, *Public Schools Private Money* raised equity issues with draft guidelines and provided fairly critical response
- Report highlighted increasing need of public institutions to rely on private money and offered suggestions for alternate methods to distribute fundraising money, for example, for every dollar collected, 33 cents would go to a central equity fund (as mentioned in TDSB Fundraising Resource Guide¹)
- Note that Moe has provided guidelines **only** – up to TDSB to incorporate them into their own policy
- L. Johnston commented to the Toronto Star when interviewed – final Moe guidelines provide transparency and accountability for fundraising process which is positive, but there is nothing to address equity concerns – for example, Moe states that fundraising can be used to “enhance opportunities”, but that presumes opportunities exist in the first place!
- Guidelines also opened door to using dollars to support capital projects (i.e., school yard improvements) but cannot be used to increase student capacity (i.e., classrooms, gyms etc.)
- Furthermore, cannot add capital projects that will cost money in the future to keep up or repair (unless that money is provided in trust)
- Questions become – how do we (ICAC) respond? Do we want to? Relation to Drummond Report – path of austerity leading to more private dollars

Discussion:

Q: Curious as to how TDSB will respond to these guidelines?

A: (from staff) Likely Administrative Council will review guidelines, as well as Finance Department; fundraising discussed a lot recently, for example, laptops – can schools fundraise for them? If yes, then what about equity – some schools can fundraise a lot of money and others very little meaning some schools will have adequate technology and others not nearly enough

Q: All the data used by Toronto Star was from a 'FOI' (Freedom of Information) request and was aggregate; these guidelines don't introduce reporting mechanisms to provide clarity on this; further, suggest ICAC work on “may report on...” versus “must report on....” When recommending how to report out on Board wide data – this is a soft document!

- Need to enhance the understanding of how equity is impacted by fundraising annually and longitudinally

Q: Can we show the number of Model Schools (who individually or aggregate), raise less vs. the rest of the schools (who can raise more)? Would wealthier schools contribute 10% to poorer schools?

Q: Portland model – 1/3 of funds raised donated centrally – given we / Board just came through Equity Conference we could remind them of the depth and breadth of **what equity means**; need to remind TDSB decision makers of impact of these guidelines

- This is now the 4th year of the rollout of the Moe's Equity implementation rollout – these fundraising guidelines are at odds with the equity implementation!
- Inconsistency of two initiatives should be highlighted

Q: Should ICAC send something to the Moe highlighting this concern?

¹ **Q & A TDSB Fundraising**

http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/Trustees/Ward_3/docs/Fundraising%20Q%20%20As.pdf

Q: (parent perspective) Want to point out that parents are empowered when they are engaged, including in fundraising; taking money and pooling it centrally is fine, but real advantage of fundraising is as a parent engagement tool

A: We need to hit 'sweet spot' where parents are engaged and we are able to equalize fundraising amounts between higher and lower LOI schools

Q: We've been here before. Next move was to go to the Board of trustees; we've had trustees say at this committee that there is no way they'd propose the Portland model so we're left with a document which allows schools to fundraise inequitably; perhaps next step is to draw up motion presenting Portland model through Board processes? (i.e., PSSC – Programs and Schools Services Committee)

Q: Remember the extent of the inequity as highlight in information presented by staff – one of the schools lowest on the LOI (and a small school to boot) raised \$350K in one school year, whereas some schools raised \$ 0!

Q: Suggest we develop a standard? Recommend to board to monitor fundraising adequately and transparently, in order to and data which could be filtered through the LOI (Learning Opportunities Index) and level out funding through budgetary processes

Q: Guidelines entrench belief that private dollars can and should fund public schools; corporate partnerships review is on the way – very worrisome

Q: These are 'just' guidelines however; Board in fact doesn't have to 'do' anything! This issue requires education on how the system works! We can empower parents without resorting to inequitable fundraising. Need to advocate for a mandated equity lens on fundraising

Action Item

That time be made on the next meeting agenda for the ICAC to develop and approve a plan (including a motion) which addresses the inequitable fundraising issue and proposes a rigorous and fair standard for fundraising throughout the system which is infused with equity.

Working Group on plan/motion: Kate Wallis, Lesley Johnston, Trustee Sheila Cary-Meagher, Michael Griesz, David Clandfield

Action Item

Lesley Johnston of Social Planning Toronto will prepare a letter in response to the Moe's final fundraising guidelines and circulate around ICAC for feedback.

7. TDSB Budget Update and Advocacy – joint discussion with PIAC, EPAC and ICAC

- Trustee Glover presented a budget overview
- \$110 million total needed in cuts out of a \$2.67 global TDSB annual budget
- Cuts in March (i.e., staffing allocations) amounted to approximately \$50 million
- \$60 million more to come – clarification of what \$60 million might look like
- Central Administration? Downsizing?
- Special Ed – cuts?
- Most years Boards are allowed to run a 1% deficit (carried over the following year) but only our Board is not allowed to run this deficit – not really sure why!
- **June 13th** will be the Board budget meeting – open to the public

Discussion – Q & A:

Q: What are next steps?

A: Budget committee has met and debated potential cuts – will produce final “document” to circulate publicly early next week, likely Monday – Trustee Glover will send to ICAC, PIAC and EPAC as soon as he can

Q: Are cuts strictly political?

A: Not strictly political – Liberals are looking to do ‘damage’ now, i.e., early on in their mandate; this means they will be in good shape prior to next election; funding for education to our board is down \$18 million this year alone

Q: Cost of labour within this board appears extremely high – have trustees looked at this issue?

A: The first cost is the running of the Facilities Department, i.e., cost of superintendents etc. is factored in before you get labour and materials

Q: Consider connecting with City Councillors – ask them out for a ‘safety ‘audit (Section 37)

A: Good place to start to look at efficiencies – there is a new staff person beginning to look at these

Q: PIAC is asking that each school council chair ask their principals to present budget as it stands now (i.e., \$50 million in staffing cuts) and report to council how cuts are going to impact individual school level; report back comments/recommendations to PIAC rep for carrying forward to trustees and Board

Q: PIAC rep says “budget tsunami” is coming – not even on parents’ radar yet! Need to work collectively to help parents recognize how it will impact their and their children’s world

Q: Use of Facebook and social media (i.e., Twitter) to get message out?

A: Trustee Glover suggests parents might want to hold a media conference?

Q: **Vis-à-vis the Education Act – is our funding sufficient to meet the legal mandate to protect student achievement and well-being??** There are legal cases popping up all over the US with respect to this

A: Agenda of neoliberalism is to privatize public education; this is where we are headed

ACTION ITEM:

Social Planning Council is preparing a petition against cuts in education funding – asking that interested people:

a) Read and give feedback on wording (short turnaround time)

b) Sign and circulate far and wide – will be posted on a website which can be forwarded

ICAC Co-ordinator will forward to PIAC Co-ordinator.

Q: Suggest we think big and not too simplistically; do not pick away at budget details as problem is huge and will continue next year; we need to find ways to buttress system and support principals of fairness and equity; EPAC motion – EPAC members deputed to Budget Committee and PSSC – motion directed back to Budget! **Too many of those committee meetings have been in camera!!**

- Motion in essence was to fully stop any further budget cuts until they can be examined through an equity lens – equitable learning outcomes are critical

Q: We need to move forward with an understanding that there IS enough funding so that kids shouldn’t be learning in mold infested schools! There is enough money in this rich province to support our kids – the question is – will they be made a priority?

Q: What about Model Schools funding? Should we send a newsletter to parents telling them this is going to impact your students? And what about the MSIC communities - \$110 million out of an economy will have an impact, i.e., increased crime, poverty and loss of business

Ongoing-

- Petition by Social Planning Council Toronto – (Lesley Johnston)
- Ongoing communications between EPAC, ICAC and PIAC through Virginia, Kate, Janet, Michael and Lesley

Meeting Adjourned

**Next ICAC meeting –
Wednesday June 6, 2012
9:30 am – 12:30 pm
Boardroom
5050 Yonge Street**