

ICAC Meeting Minutes
Wednesday September 21, 2011
9:30 am – 12:30 pm

In attendance –

Lesley Johnston, Aim Mujib, Graham Hollings, Jeff Kugler, Peter Mallouh, Nathan Gilbert, Cheryl Skovronek, Sejal Patel, Judy Whitfield, Michael Shapcott, Howard Kaplan, Chris Glover, Sheila Cary-Meagher, Laurie Green, David Clandfield, Alejandra Bravo, Chris Penrose

Regrets – Nanci Goldman, Darcy MacCallum, Anne Sheppard, Sharlene Bourjot, Michael Griesz

Guests-

Nadia Heyd, Sharma Queiser, Saida Sabrie

Staff-

Donna Quan, Manon Gardner, Vicky Branco, Cassie Bell, Carl Riley, Thelma Akyea , Vidya Shah, Julie-Ann Baxter

1. Welcome and introductions/Member announcements

- Short video clip from “An Ounce of Prevention”:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvCNam0P8fg&feature=youtu.be>
- **PIAC Parent Conference – “5th Annual Parents Make a Difference Conference: Team Up with your children**
- The Parent and Community Involvement Office (PCIO) and the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) would like to invite you to the 5th Annual Parents Make a Difference Conference: “Team Up” with your Children. The conference will be held at Earl Haig Secondary School, 100 Princess Avenue North York, ON, on Saturday November 12, 2011, from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm”
- <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=91&menuid=8109&pageid=7084>

2. Approval of Draft Agenda –

- Request to move item #6 up after item # 3; moved by N. Gilbert, seconded by H. Kaplan, unanimously approved

3. Approval of previous ICAC meeting minutes (September 21, 2011) – moved by H. Kaplan, seconded by N. Gilbert, approved unanimously

Discussion:

- Trustee Kaplan noted that there is an increase in Romani students in the Bathurst/Manor area and asked if staff are aware of this?
- Staff confirmed they are tracking increases of this population across the city in order to accommodate their needs
- Is Roma curriculum developed in the 1970s being accessed?
- Yes, staff have copy of document and will update it; new experiences of these students need to be reflected
- Staff are also preparing briefing note to go to Academic Council shortly; numbers of Romani students seem to be fluid – some leave, new students arrive; needs and level of needs change and supports must adapt quickly;

principals are being very supportive as new families are appearing in 'pockets' across city, for example, Fisherville, George Syme, C.H. Best and Vaughan Road Academy

- Staff will continue to update ICAC regularly on this issue

#6. MSIC Resource Team Update

- (i) *Update on MSIC Parent Academies* – see soft copy of update attached
 - Executive Committees of Parent Academies deciding on priorities for year – courses offered will have a wide variety
 - Survey given to CPACs (Cluster Parent Academy Committees) to gather feedback on first six months of MSIC Parent Academies
 - Updated Parent Resource Guide will be posted on MSIC Facebook site as soon as possible (<http://www.facebook.com/TDSBParentAcademy?sk=wall>)
 - Some feedback included: process for changing executive members, inclusion of how-to budget section (parents want to be 'hands on'), improved communication between CPACs and school councils
- (ii) *MSIC Backgrounder /Org Chart for 2011-12*
 - ICAC Co-ordinator to circulate soft copy as soon as possible
 - Suggest this chart be shared with parents
 - PIAC (Parent Involvement Advisory Committee) is coming up with new Events' calendar to link school councils –suggest a parent(s) from a Parent Academy be part of this sub-committee

ACTION ITEM

Staff to identify any interested parent(s) from MSIC Parent Academy to be involved in Event Calendar sub-committee process (PIAC) – connect with Laurie Green (ICAC and PIAC rep)

Request that MSIC org chart be forwarded with wards and LOI identified (complete)

(iii) *MSIC Fall Classic – October 5, 2011* Kick off MSIC program 2011-12 with parents, principals and superintendents; Karen Gravitis will speak about focused interventions, tele-psychiatry, hearing and vision screening, and pediatric clinics; Dr. Wayne Hammond will be the keynote on resiliency and the results from resiliency surveys done last year

Discussion-

- Is the Parent Academy mandate right across the board? For example, is there outreach to other schools which might be struggling to get this off the ground? Is there mentorship, sharing?
- MSIC Staff are working with TDSB Parent and Community Involvement Office to share and expand best practices – currently developing generic information to go out to whole board; parent academy is not just MSIC, needs to be philosophy of school board
- Parent Academy will spread under Director's *Vision of Hope*
- For example, Westview Centennial SS is not designated a Model School, but it partnered with a CPAC and put together a celebration for whole Jane/Finch community
- Learning as we go – great potential with MSIC Parent Academies!

4. ICAC Co-ordinator's Report (please see attached)

- Handouts
- Link to TDSB Research Report on MSIC Hearing and Vision Screening: http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/about_us/external_research_application/docs/Integrated%20Service%20Delivery%20in%20the%20TDSB4-FINAL.pdf
- Trustee Cary-Meagher raised issue of All Day Kindergarten programs (pre/lunch/post programming) for children given potential cuts to similar programming

ACTION ITEM

Trustee Cary-Meagher requests an update from Staff at next ICAC meeting regarding TDSB's All Day Kindergarten supplementary programming (location, cost, number of children enrolled, types of programs offered and enrolment numbers etc.)

5. ICAC Sub-committee and Work Group's Updates

ICAC FFS (Fees and Fundraising Sub-committee) L. Johnston and members

- Social Planning Council just released their report, "Public System, Private Money: Fees, Fundraising and Equity in the Toronto District School Board"
- <http://socialplanningtoronto.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Public-System-Private-Money-Final-Full-Report.pdf>
- A sincere 'thank you' to all staff for work done to set up consultations with the Ministry of Education (MoE)
- Release of "FOI" (Freedom of Information) data by Toronto Star was instrumental
- Transcription done by ICAC Co-ordinator was also very helpful
- Sub-committee has been working on report since last June
- School-generated funds data were cross-referenced with the LOI (Learning Opportunities Index) and divided into quintiles – result? Huge disparities found
- Fees issue seems greater at secondary school level, while fundraising is bigger issue at elementary level
- Media coverage was excellent – National Post article today asked, "we wouldn't accept two-tiered health, why accept two-tiered education?"
- Key findings over three years:
 - (i) Over three years the 20 least marginalized primary schools fundraised **36** times the funds than the most marginalized 20 schools: **\$250,000** per school compared to **\$7000** per school (numbers rounded up)
 - (ii) Over three years, the wealthiest 20 secondary schools fundraised **920** times more money than the poorest 20 schools in Toronto: **\$33,000** per school compared to **\$36.00** per school
- Private foundations are also problematic; some schools set up foundations outside both TDSB and MoE regulations and policies so there is no accountability on how the funds are spent
- Some schools simply ask for \$300 per student up front in order to raise target amount (i.e., \$40,000) for school

- Monies conceivably used to enrich required courses
- Dr. David Hulchanski's maps of the "Three Cities" overlap perfectly with the differential between these fundraising areas
- Report recommendations include:
 - *Ban fundraising*
 - *Consider implementing Portland, Oregon model (create central equity fund by pooling fundraising)* <http://www.thinkschools.org/local-school-foundations/faq/>
 - *Fund education adequately*

Discussion

- What about using LOG (Learning Opportunities Grant-provincial) dollars and matching them with fundraising done by richer schools?
- Not a good option, but schools that receive LOI funding do little fundraising usually, so LOG funds would not subsidize but be used to simply *keep up* with richer schools; using the LOG seems a logical way to mitigate after years of accumulating resources in rich schools, poor schools need to catch up
- Fundraising funds are difficult to disaggregate (i.e., social justice efforts from school-targeted) – critical to know how dollars are spent but not depress or squelch commendable philanthropy
- Twinning schools? (richer schools with poor schools)
- Can the SPC report be circulated and/or posted on the website? (Complete)
- Trustee Kaplan notes that inequalities amongst resources in schools can be huge –one school in his ward has total of three "Smartboards" and another school has one in each classroom; can't begrudge parents wanting the best for their children, but appalled by inequity
- Trustee Glover comments on TDSB's new student fees policy which does not allow charging for required courses, however, two arts courses are required in secondary school and supplies are ostensibly covered, but if a student chooses to take a third course then student could potentially be charged for them – very complicated!
- Hearing from government that they will not ban fundraising, but schools that can fundraise will, and those that can't could be considered for 'priority funding', but that means *all* schools will still be under-funded!
- Leads to bigger discussion about purpose of public education in the 21st century – can we address this?
- Social Planning Council's proposed solution (and People for Education's), relates "Essential School" document with desired outcomes which then must be funded accordingly – *what should be in every school in order for children and youth to succeed?*
- Lots of interest currently in fundraising issue – also raises point that public education needs to be paid for through taxes, not charity
- If the Liberals are re-elected they will likely proceed with consultations on corporate donations policy guidelines
- Worried about corporate sponsorship – recent story about Barrie school being saved by local car dealership – Barrie schools are "open for business"
- Dangerous to argue that LOG should cover fundraising gap – LOG goes above and beyond – LOG should be sweated – *that's* the argument

- Trustee Cary-Meagher notes that fundraising issue came up at All Candidates Education meeting – fundraising in the old days was about raising “fun”, not all about raising dollars – mustn’t fundraise for essentials, but also mustn’t lose idea of “fun”

Staff: Hear concerns being raised – staff are currently talking to principals and vice principals about policy change and stressing fees are voluntary; board is now at crossroads and must consider changing courses in order to adapt to policy, for example, from providing flutes to recorders for music classes in order to avoid mouthpiece fees etc.; use of school names in school foundations is *not* allowed and is being followed up; in terms of smart/white boards issue, local decision-making comes into play, one size fits all is not equity, equity also means choices; please remember this is a transition year as we try to determine what is “essential”

Q: What are next steps for the Report?

A: Social Planning Council will send the recommendations to the MoE

Q: Is there a way of accessing the raw data for individual schools?

A: Through the Toronto Star – writers Winsa and Rushowy have data on website and it includes all data for schools in the Catholic and the public school board

Q: Important not to go soft on recommendations and allow government to shift responsibility onto private sector; situate fees/fundraising in context of mythical donor-land! Just pay for the real cost of public education

- ICAC FFS will meet again before October ICAC and bring back plan and/or motion to move recommendations to TDSB forward
- Next step should include bringing parents together to discuss resource-sharing idea and invite other suggestions and ideas to the table
- Timeline might include –
 - ICAC FFS goes to PSSC (Programs Committee) on November 2nd with PIAC (Parent Involvement Advisory Committee) representatives to speak to broader city-wide issue
 - Recommend to trustees at committee that discussion could be integrated through Participatory Budget Pilot process providing opportunity to have parents across city discussing issue

- *Research Symposium Work Group Update – A. Bravo, M. Shapcott and members*
- Three meetings held so far
- Presented symposium idea to Toronto Neighbourhood Research Network (TNRN) on September 19th at the Wellesley Institute
- Good uptake from TNRN and support from Michael Shapcott and David Hulchanski as both the Wellesley and David Hulchanski are undertaking sophisticated research using complex and interactive dynamics
- Research Symposium very much in early stages with focus on the “thriving child” and the complex dynamics at the local neighbourhood and the city level which support this goal (i.e., metaphor for the thriving city)
- Key document being referenced is the City of Toronto Report Card on Children published beginning in 1999

- Original Report Card provided a ‘picture in time’ of how children were doing in Toronto and set the benchmarks for improvement
- Subsequent Report Cards (published until 2007) reflected gains/losses according to benchmarks thereby providing accountability
- Noted that interventions tended to be ‘siloes’ into particular areas, i.e., health, education, housing etc. rather than cross sectoral
- Goal for “The Thriving Child” is to create a ‘tool for action’ – not just research
- Event will have a media component in order to move issue out into broader community
- Outcomes might include a coalition of voices speaking about poverty from a different approach

Discussion

- ICAC member D. Clandfield sends “get well” wishes out from ICAC to George Martell who is recovering from a serious accident, and adds that George would want to ensure that the Research Symposium would spend as little time as possible on standardized testing!
- Trustee Cary-Meagher notes that the Research Symposium may capture a moment in time and develop a campaign or a movement to tell a different story about the importance of a ‘thriving city’ for the well-being of our children’s future
- Toronto EDI (Early Development Instrument) Advisory Committee* uses EDI data and City data to create maps for specific neighbourhoods – called TMP tool; recommend RSWG looking at this tool (*Maria Yau sits on this advisory committee)
- Should also look at Information/knowledge Mobilization Index, Index of Well-Being (Harvey Low at the City)
- No need for RSWG to create *new* data but use data available through lens of ‘thriving child’ focus
- Some policy interventions end up being counter-intuitive because we only look at individual silos and do not take into account other factors
- RSWG will need to have quantitative analyses lined up with stories to get ‘whole’ picture – this was process used in Toronto Community Services report – concept mapping with 280 Torontonians consulted – will be released shortly

Opportunity Gap Work Group (OGWG) Update- N. Gilbert and members

- The OGWG last met with Superintendent Jim Spyropoulos in June
- Heard about revised Opportunity Gap Report, but still did not see it
- Superintendent Spyropoulos spoke of three important initiatives being undertaken to address opportunity gap, but ICAC group had still not seen what should be a revised version of ‘report’ which was frustrating
- Currently polling members to see if work group should continue and will update ICAC at next meeting

6. Trustee Update

Participatory Budget – Trustee Chris Glover

- Motion passed at June Board in support of participatory budget process
- Work group met and did work over email in the summer
- As People for Education put it, school board funding is between a budget rock and a funding formula hard place
- TDSB had a \$35 million deficit going into budget process and GSNs (Grants for Student Needs – i.e., provincial funding) added another \$20 million leaving a \$55 million structural deficit
- Board has sold off some schools but enrolment is going up so we will need buildings and property
- In Brazil, everyone invited in community to take part in participatory budget process; choose representatives for several tiers of decision-making
- Participatory budget is a process, not a one-off event
- When Trustee Glover held budget information sessions last June in his Ward, two parents came and there were six staff there! Outreach was problematic and there had not been enough lead time
- Participatory budget will look to different engagement processes, i.e., Town Hall meetings, to inform and gather feedback, online surveys and discussions etc.
- First goal will be to impact February 2012 staffing decisions
- Key part of Participatory Budget process was in section #5 – What question do we go forward to community with? Range could include valued programs and services (i.e., cut vs. keep), to what do children need to succeed, to, what is the goal/purpose of public education in the 21st century?
- Noted that asking *what question* should be asked is engagement in itself

ACTION ITEM

**If you would like to be part of Participatory Budget Work Group, please contact Trustee Glover - chris.glover@tdsb.on.ca
Or send him feedback on process, question to ask community etc.**

Discussion -

- Parent asks why when they give feedback they do not see that feedback reflected in budget results?
- Trustee Glover responds that this will be an annual process and if Board asks for volunteer time to participate then board has obligation to report back on decisions; also, primary objective of process will be education and information – this is key to participating and making informed recommendations about budgets
- Participatory Budget process also intersects with current “community consultation” process review being done by Superintendent Spyropoulos and staff
- Noted that Continuing Education Advisory Committee is missing from Trustee Glover’s list of advisory committees to be included in work group – Trustee Glover adds this will be changed¹

¹ Continuing Education Department subsequently clarified that the “Continuing Education Advisory Committee and its two sub-committees (Community Programs and International Languages) is not a *formal* committee of the Board which is why it was not on Trustee Glover’s list of committees. (via email: Monday, October 24, 2011)

- Comment that current core services review happening at the City is *not* a participatory budget process! Student nutrition funding, priority neighbourhood funding etc. are all under consideration for cuts – can/does the TDSB intervene or involve itself at the city level in these cases?
- Cautioned that it is early days yet for TDSB to get involved

ACTION ITEM

Trustee Glover asks to brainstorm over email – Michael Shapcott will send out initial email to ICAC for feedback and to discuss next steps (possibly an ICAC motion) around City Core Services Review and impact on most vulnerable populations.

7. Business Arising

- Somali Parents group are hoping to do some fundraising for the terrible famine in Somalia; anyone interested in helping or being involved should contact Saida Sabrie through the ICAC Co-ordinator as soon as possible.

Meeting Adjourned

**Next ICAC Meeting-
Thursday October 20th
6:30 – 9:30 pm
5050 Yonge Street, Committee Room “A”**