

Inner City Advisory Committee Minutes
Wednesday, January 08, 2014
9:30am to 12:30pm
5050 Yonge Street, Committee Room A

In Attendance	Aim Mujib, Trustee Howard Kaplan, David Clandfield, George Martell, Vincenza Pietropaolo, Cheryl Skovronek, Graham Hollings, Nathan Gilbert, Jennifer Arp, Nathan Gilbert, Lesley Johnston, Imogen Mercer
Regrets	Trustee Sheila Cary-Meagher, Ellie Avishai, Sharlene Bourjot, Alejandra Bravo, Laurie Green, Jann Houston, Ingrid Palmer, Debra Payne, Nancy Vogel.
Staff	Vicky Branco, Helen Fisher, Kwabena Yafeu, Michael Griesz, Bonnie McDonald, Leonard, Hilary Wollis
Guests	

Welcome, Introductions, Information Sharing and Announcements
ICAC Co-Chairs

- Aim Mujib welcomed everyone in attendance. He noted that in the absence of Trustee Cary-Meagher, Trustee Howard Kaplan will act as co-Chair today.
- Introductions were made around the table.
- There were no announcements.
- Hilary Wollis read the member regrets for the meeting.

1. Approval of Agenda
ICAC Co-Chairs

- Co-chair Aim Mujib requested that the Nomination of a new member be added at number 2 on the Agenda.
 - Member George Martell requested that the report from the Special Education sub-committee be moved to number 4 on the Agenda.
- Moved, Nathan Gilbert. Seconded, David Clandfield. Agenda approved as amended.

2. Nomination of New Member
ICAC Co-Chairs

- Model School parent **Jennifer Arp** has attended an ICAC meeting as a guest, and has asked to be nominated to the committee as a new member.

Jennifer Arp has two sons attending Joyce PS. She is Chair of her School Council, and is the Secretary of the Cluster Parent Academy Committee (CPAC). Jennifer owns her own business, Cakeaholic. She is very active in her local school, and has a significant interest in inner city issues. Previously, Jennifer worked for the Member of Parliament (MP) for Toronto Centre. This role exposed to the many issues affecting inner city communities. She is proud to have children who attend one of TDSB's Model Schools for Inner Cities (MSIC).

Nominated by Nathan Gilbert. All approved.

3. Approval of Minutes: November and December 2013 ICAC Co-Chairs

- The draft Minutes of the following meetings were distributed for review:
 - Thursday, November 20, 2013
 - Thursday, December 05, 2013

ACTION: ICAC will send a letter of thanks to all of the presenters. The letter will be directed to individuals, and to the 3 CPAC Chairs. Hilary Wollis and Helen Fisher will draft the thank you letter, which can include a way for parents and students to stay in touch through email to ICAC or through the Cluster Parent Academy Committee (CPAC) Chairs.

ACTION: Hilary Wollis will begin to gather together the major themes that emerge from the community meetings so that ICAC may incorporate the themes into its work.

ACTION: Helen Fisher will provide the names and contact email for the CPAC co-chairs to ICAC.

Q: Can we be in contact with students?

A: We must take care when talking about contacting students. The better approach is to provide them with an ICAC email to contact.

Motion to Approve the Minutes of the November and December ICAC meetings: Moved, Nathan Gilbert, Seconded George Martell. Approved

4. Sub-Committee Report: Special Education

- David Clandfield delivered the report.
- The sub-committee met on December 19. The meeting included guests Rob Brown and Gillian Parekh from TDSB Research and Information.
- The group discussed the three Brown / Parekh reports released during the fall of 2013. From those reports we developed our 3 areas of concern.
- The new BIPSA (the Board Improvement Plan Student Achievement) is available. (A full copy of the plan was held up for the group to see - David Clandfield has it). Of direct interest to this committee are:
 - A commitment to reducing the number of students in congregated SE classrooms by 50%:
 - A commitment to improving the demographic balance by racial and language groups in various Special Education needs categories.
 - A commitment to increase the proportion of students from the three lowest income groups within gifted, secondary academic, and specialty programs.
 - It is encouraging if there is a move to reduce the tendency to place students with Special Education exceptionalities as though they were deficits.

I think it would be important to have the Director come and speak to ICAC about both the Board Improvement Plan and the Years of Action plan.

The next meeting for the sub-committee is Monday, January 20. I am hoping to have David Johnston attend with us.

ACTION: Hilary Wollis will confirm the room booking for that meeting.

Q: Is your committee thinking about how Model Schools (MSIC) can help to achieve these goals? How can the MSIC program help to support families and assist the shift away from congregated classes and over-representation?

A: I think this is a good item for Director Quan to address. Also, I wonder how funding from the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) that is currently not supporting students, can be redirected so that it does address these items?

Q: In terms of advocacy by ICAC, how can ICAC frame its input to the Board in terms of using Model Schools (MSIC) and the existing system and resources to make gains in this area?

A: Our work is helped by a very strong Research department.

ACTION: Jennifer Arp asked to join sub-committee.

Q: [PIAC](#) (Parent Involvement Advisory Committee) has a Special Education sub-committee, as well as a liaison committee with [SEAC](#) (Special Education Advisory Committee). Here are 3 groups that are working on Special Education issues. I am concerned with overlap. Perhaps we could work better together?

A: We did identify 3 particular concerns that affect inner city communities to move forward with: wait lists, parental rights, and overrepresentation of low income and racialized kids in behavior classes. I think these concerns are particular to inner city communities. I think the lens of ICAC is different from the others. As well, our committee has been frustrated in our attempts to liaise with SEAC on these important concerns.

Q: Should all 3 Special Education groups be prepared to speak to the Special Education review that is underway at the Board? Is that an opportunity we need?

Comment: I think that there is an opportunity for ICAC to express the importance of CACs (Community Advisory Committees) and their sub-committees working better together and creating liaisons between CACs within the scope of our upcoming deputation to the P&P ([Program and Priorities](#)) Committee on January 22, as they consider the recommendations of the CAC review.

ACTION: The members drafting the deputation to the P&P committee will include the above item within their deputation remarks.

5. Model Schools for Inner Cities (MSIC) Update MSIC Resource Team

- [Model Schools](#) will be offering MSIC Kindergarten to Grade 2 teachers' sessions in Precise Teaching for Readiness in reading and writing. There will be 4 sessions across city, one each month starting in January. These sessions allow teachers to work with literacy specialists from across the Board. Registrations are coming in, and we hope to fill the workshops.

Q: Is there a link in this initiative for [Toronto Public Library](#) (TPL)?

A: We are hoping to move this initiative to the CPAC (Cluster Parent Academy Committee) level. That is where the TPL can play a bigger role in the program.

- The [Parent Academy Conference](#) will take place on Saturday, April 5th. The sites are Cedarbrae CI in East, and Thistletown CI in the West. The conference topics will be created by parents. They are working with agencies and the CSWs (Community Support Workers) across the CPACs to develop the workshops. This is also a partnership with Plan Canada. In addition, we will be piloting a new registration tool at this Conference, with support of the TDSB web team. There will be event promotion throughout the CPACs and Model Schools.

- This is also an opportunity for Toronto Public Health, Toronto Public Library, and Continuing Education to develop workshops for the Conference. They must be presented twice in the day, and at each location. Last year Toronto Public Health provided 3 separate presentations.

Comment: I will say that last year, the parent presenters did a much better job connecting with and engaging parents than some of our professionals. This year, Toronto Public Health (TPH) wants to involve parents as co-presenters, or perhaps mentor a parent to be the topic leader. I recognized that there was a dynamic of trust between the parent presenters and their audience that did not exist with the professional presenter.

- The 8 modules for the Conference were created through a proposal for a PRO (Parents Reaching Out) grant from the Ministry of Education. The group was awarded \$15,000 because the Ministry representatives came to the conference and saw the amazing results. Model School parents deserve the recognition. It is well organized, very well done.

Comment: The costs for Continuing Education courses are high for parents who are not in public housing. This group constitutes the majority of MSIC parents, and it remains an obstacle.

Comment: There has been a suggestion that parents present modules to other parents through the Continuing Education system.

Comment: There is a Continuing Education subsidy policy that allows people on social assistance and low income seniors to take one course per term for \$10. If you go on the web, look at adult programs, [Learn4Life](#), and you can see the subsidy policy.

ACTION: To find out what the policy is, how parents apply for it, what courses are eligible. Graham Hollings can provide the policy to ICAC.

- MSIC is happy to see so many of its initiatives included within the Years of Action Plan.

Q: There is a reference to the creation of an Inner City department. What is this?

A: The Years of Action has that as a goal. As this goal moves forward, we will be keeping you informed.

6. Committee Business ICAC Coordinator

- Cheryl Skovronek gave a report from the Toronto Public Library.
 - Our "[Ready for Reading](#)" program targets very early literacy for families. They are introduced to early literacy skills through activities like playing, singing, drawing, and building. I have copies of our Ready for Reading publication.
 - We are partnering with Toronto Public Health as part of their Learning with Baby program. A Librarian will attend sessions to teach early literacy skills and deliver story time.
 - We work closely with [Parenting and Family Literacy Centres](#) in the schools, and with the Early Years centres. The Summer Reading club includes an early-learning component.
 - We are doing more outreach to agencies, shelters, and community centers with our Ready for Reading program
 - In addition, we try to go into every kindergarten class. We work with a priority list of schools, which includes all of the Model Schools.
 - All of the Library's 98 branches offer programs for babies / toddlers / preschoolers.
 - TPL is reworking the web site, with input from the school boards to help us better reach different audiences. The new site will include more interesting pieces for parents.
 - Every branch runs a full roster of free programs for families during the March Break.

- Our new middle childhood initiative launches soon and will include more regular after school programming, and adding more technology in our programs.
- Families can already take advantage of our Museum pass program. They can line up on a Saturday morning to get a pass to a museum like AGO or ROM.
- [Dial a story](#): this popular program offers stories in 13 different languages.
- I would like to get TPL into schools and working with parents more. I have a meeting with Lise Medd at MSIC to discuss how to access parent communities directly. This may be through the CPACs.
- The TPL is also piloting a summer camp program this year, which is very new for us.
- The TPL would also like to get involved with the MSIC summer school programs, and bring the summer reading club into the summer schools.

Q: What about afternoon programming?

A: Yes, potentially they could come to us once or twice a week for programming in the afternoon.

Q: I hear parents requesting less formal, but longer running programs.

A: The new middle childhood initiative is going to offer more of that after school, ongoing opportunity for students.

- Hilary Wollis reviewed the following ICAC committee items:
 - All TDSB public meeting dates between January and March 2014 (handout)
 - January, February, March CPAC dates for clusters that ICAC have not yet visited (handout)
 - Upcoming deputation to the Planning & Priorities Committee: Aim Mujib and Jennifer Arp will be making the deputation regarding the review and recommendations for Community Advisory Committees. This will largely be an affirmative deputation, and will stress that all CACs will benefit from enhanced communication and coordination. We are meeting following ICAC to begin to craft the remarks. Lesley Johnston has agreed to assist us.

ACTION: Hilary Wollis will register the deputation with the Board.

- Wollis confirmed that the February meeting at Secord Elementary will continue with similar themes as the November community meeting. ICAC sub-committees will speak briefly regarding their work, why it matters to Inner City parents, and how parents can become involved with ICAC. In turn, the parents and students will frame their presentations around the sub-committee categories.
- ICAC would like Director Quan to visit ICAC to talk about the [Years of Action](#) and Board Improvement Plans.

ACTION: MSIC staff will approach the Director regarding her availability to attend a meeting.

7. Sub-Committee Reports

A) Evaluation of Learning: Group Lead George Martell noted that this sub-committee will remain inactive for the next several months.

B) Governance: Lesley Johnston provided the report:

- ICAC members visited several CPAC meetings in December, and will visit others over the next two months. The meetings have been positive. We learned that we require close to 30 minutes during the meeting, to allow for discussion and provide an opportunity to answer parent questions.
- Election of a Community Co-chair: We have discussed previously that the best course is to elect an interim co-chair, who will serve a term of one year. This will allow us to build more connections with parents, and attract candidates. ICAC will accept nominations for the position in January and February. The election will take place at the March 5th meeting.

ACTION: Hilary Wollis will send out a communication to ICAC members regarding the election of a co-chair. She will confirm the message content with the Governance group before distribution.

C) Fairer Ways & Greater Means: Lesley Johnston and David Clandfield provided the report.

- The TDSB is developing its staffing budgets right now. ICAC needs to decide how we will frame our remarks around the MSIC staffing budget. We could discuss this at the end of the February 6th meeting. The dates of the Budget committee meetings are not yet available online.
- Learning Opportunities Grant – Demographic Allocation (LOG-DA)
 - The sub-committee intends to depute to the next budget meeting on this item.
 - The issues around the LOG have changed slightly. Lesley Johnston, David Clandfield, and Trustee Cary-Meagher met with Comptroller Craig Snider to discuss the report. There is concern that the Ministry of Education has indicated that the terms in the Technical Paper are meant to be taken as guidelines, rather than directives. If this is true than the Province is abandoning its commitment to poverty reduction for children. This could also be bureaucrats speaking to bureaucrats, not having been given direction from elected representatives.
 - The ICAC position has to be to ask the TDSB to do what is right for students. Through the Years of Action (YOA) and Board Improvement Plan Student Achievement (BIPSA), the Director intends to move to better support students. The following is from the YOA: “Review of LOG, followed by action-oriented steps to address student needs”.
 - Considering this item, the statements regarding Special Education, and the potential development of an Inner City Department, I think that the ICAC should highlight pieces that impact inner city students and suggest how the needs can be addressed through the TDSB budget and use of the LOG.

Q: Should the ICAC presentation include a request that over the next 2 years coaches be reinstated, as a means of building capacity?

- There are 3 aspects to our remarks, I think: the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI); capacity building through coaches, and our response to the Associate Director’s report on the LOG-DA. We should also add that, using the goals of the YOA, the Board can gradually find more ways to push LOI money out to directly support inner city students.

Q: Who is the Superintendent overseeing the review of the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI)?

A: Roula Anastasakos, Executive Superintendent, Organizational Development and Research and Information Services.

Comment: We must ask to have an ICAC representative on the LOI review committee.

ICAC supports the sub-committee in moving forward on the issue and endorses them to request the re-instatement of the Model School Coaches and the increased use of the LOI in allocating the LOG in the upcoming staffing budget.

Comment: Sub-committees should submit specific questions in advance of the Director's visit, so that she can address your questions. Then there can be an open Q&A.

ACTION: Once a date is established, Hilary Wollis will accept the advance questions for the Director.

8. Trustee Report

- Trustee Howard Kaplan provided the report.
- Trustee Kaplan commended the TDSB for its excellent response to December's ice storm.
- The Board opened East York CI and Lawrence Heights schools as warming centres to support the local communities who were without power for a long time. The TTC provided free travel to anyone who had the MSIC flyer about the school warming centres.
- MSIC ran the pancake breakfast for families who sheltered overnight.

Q: What is the plan for tree cleanup on school properties?

A: A needs assessment is underway. Considerable reporting is required for insurance purposes, for all damage including spoiled food in school kitchens.

9. Adjournment

Moved, Nathan Gilbert, Seconded, David Clandfield. Adjourned.

NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, February 6th, 2014
6:00pm to 8:00pm
Secord Elementary School, Library
101 Barrington Avenue (near Main subway station)