

Inner City Advisory Committee Minutes
Tuesday, April 01, 2014
9:30am to 12:30pm
5050 Yonge Street, Boardroom

In Attendance	Ingrid Palmer, Trustee Sheila Cary-Meagher, Trustee Howard Kaplan, Jennifer Arp , Ellie Avishi, Fiona Bowser, David Clandfield, Laurie Green, Jann Houston, Lesley Johnston, George Martell, Cheryl Skovronek, Bob Spencer, Nancy Vogel.
Regrets	Sharlene Bourjot, Alejandra Bravo, Helen Fisher, Nancy Goldman, Michael Griesz, Michael Kerr, Jeff Kugler, Julia Myer, Aim Mujib, Ruth Sischy, Kwabena Yafeu.
Staff	Vicky Branco, Joanne Davis, Bonnie McDonald, Hilary Wollis, Andrea Alimi, Marla Fowler, Jill Andrews, Amita Handa.
Guests	Merum Mugeem, Meredith Hayes, Nadira Yasmin.

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

- Community co-chair Ingrid Palmer welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Introductions were made around the table. Regrets for the meeting were read.
- Announcements:
 - TDSB's [Parenting and Family Literacy Centres](#) will have 6 centres open throughout the summer months, thanks to funding from Model Schools for Inner Cities (MSIC).
 - David Clandfield announced the release of his book, [Re-stacking the Deck](#).
 - [TDSB Continuing Education](#): teacher postings are open for summer school programs. Summer program registration will soon be online.

1. Approval of Agenda
ICAC Co-Chairs

- The following amendments were moved to the draft Agenda for the meeting:
 - The addition to item 9, Business Arising, to discuss the working meeting with the Director in June.
 - The Special Education sub-committee report be moved to be Item number 5.
 - As the MSIC staff were not available, the co-chairs suggested we proceed to approval of the Minutes.
- Amendments moved by David Clandfield. Seconded, Lesley Johnston. Approved.

2. Approval of Minutes: March 05, 2014

- The draft Minutes of the ICAC meeting held on March 05, 2014 were presented for approval.
- Moved, Howard Kaplan. Seconded, Ellie Avishai. Approved without amendment.

3. Model Schools for Inner Cities Update

- Superintendent Vicky Branco delivered the MSIC report.
- The [Parent Academy Conference](#) is this Saturday, April 5th. There are 300 parents registered at the east location, Cedarbrae CI, and 200 parents registered to attend Thistletown CI in the west.
- The registration begins at 9:00am, and the day runs from 10:00am to 2:00pm. It includes food, bussing, and child-minding.
- Thank you to everyone who has organized this Conference, including MSIC staff as well as Teaching and Learning, Special Education, and partners like Toronto Public Health and Toronto Public library, who will be presenting alongside all of our parent presentations.
- Last Friday, 430 Principals and Superintendents gathered together for Innovation Day with Claude Legrand, from [Ideaction](#). This firm helps organizations grow by building the internal competencies and capabilities that enable innovation. Amanda Lang was our keynote speaker. She is the author of [The Power of Why](#).
- Legrand helped the group create a framework to form questions that trigger the creativity of children.
- We will continue to work with Legrand to develop curriculum modules. Schools are already offering to pilot these modules, which will start with grades 3 and 6. The National is going to follow this process.

Q: Am I to assume that with all this innovative thinking that we are moving beyond outcomes-based education and the standardized testing entrenched in the system? It sounds not serious, but rhetorical.

A: Innovative thinking is a strategy for children to incorporate in their education. We are helping teachers understand how they can incorporate innovative thinking into their classroom, and engage kids to meet the expectations of the curriculum in a more innovate way. In this example, we are working within the 150 MSIC, not the whole system.

Comment: It is absolutely central that if we care about curriculum in our MSIC, we need children to understand that there is caring in this curriculum, so that they can grow to be citizens and engage to change the world. There is nothing in the curriculum or administration that makes this point. This cheerful "we're going to be innovative" doesn't cut it. It is not just an issue of fragmentation. It is an issue of substance.

- Plans for MSIC summer school are underway.
- Our [Guide to Community Resources](#) will be launched on Saturday at the Conference. There will be media covering the launch. Every school in TDSB will get a copy, and will get to see the great work of MSIC.
- Trustees have received their packages, on this resource, and Superintendents will receive it by Friday.

Q: Will the community resource guide be online?

A: Yes, it will be live once the Saturday launch is done. You will find it on the TDSB web site, searchable by Ward, on the [MSIC web page](#).

- June meeting with Director Quan: The final June 3 ICAC meeting, in Committee Room A, will include a 2-hour work-smart session for discussion and input. We are looking for your input into where we are going.

Q: When the Director presented in March, the different maps she used made a strong impression on me. Could we have access to those maps?

ACTION: MSIC will follow up on the data from that presentation with the Director's office.

Q: Is Maria Yau presenting the MSIC data at the next [Program and School Services \(PSSC\)](#) meeting?

A: No, a presentation is not planned at this point. Trustees have approved 8 teaching and learning coaches for MSIC. Usually, we present in the February or March meetings.

Q: How can we tie in the prospective budget, to be public in June, with the planning for the Inner City department? Also, with regard to the working meeting with the director, is there a way to involve parent and student voice in this exercise?

A: student voice is important, but we have to be conscious about pulling secondary students out of class in June. Options can be explored.

Comment: In the Equity department, we are addressing innovative ways of adding student voice - maybe we can help?

Q: Data is so overwhelming. Could we have representatives from the [Research Department](#) available for the June meeting, to animate the process, and not have just a pile of paper?

A: Leading up to the session, we need to determine what the big questions are. I can see having the necessary resource experts in the room. I am open to suggestions.

4. Presentation: FoodShare

- ICAC member Fiona Bowser from [FoodShare](#), with colleagues Meredith Hayes and Nadira Yasmin, presented.
- FoodShare has worked in TDSB schools for twenty years. Over 149,000 students in Toronto are served, and about 65,000 of those students are in TDSB schools. Each TDSB Ward has some participation in a FoodShare nutrition program.
- FoodShare receives some government funding, but the majority of our funding comes from donations and parent contributions to programs. Canada is the only G20 nation without a national school nutrition program.
- Nutrition programs are run largely by volunteers. We do have some paid program coordinators. Thorncliffe Park's program requires almost 40 volunteers, and 2 140 students are fed each day at that school.

Q: What is the quality of the meals?

A: Programs are held to a nutritional standard determined in partnership with Toronto Public Health. We need to stretch the budgets, and are working to keep the meals healthy and within the guidelines.

Q: Do students get lunch?

A: The majority of our programs offer a mid-morning snack. Research shows that is the best time to add nutrition. Many high schools programs are "grab and go". Many lunch programs are delivered through other nutrition programs.

ACTION: Staff to ask Mena Paternostro for a report on nutrition and lunch programs in Model Schools for Inner Cities schools. The report to include information on the range of what meals are provided, funding, quality of food, how many students are served. To include concerns like students who are unable to afford fundraising, etc.

Comment: Can nutrition programs be one of the "big questions" in the June workshop? How are we / should we provide nutrition for MSIC students.

Comment: Sometimes resentment builds around nutrition programs when parents grow concerned that only a few parents are paying to cover the costs of the entire program. How do we ensure that the cost burden is equitable?

- FoodShare student nutrition programs are universal, with no payment by parents. Other lunch programs have to collect fees in order to sustain the program.
- FoodShare also engages in food education and literacy programming. This includes our "School Grown" and urban farming programs, and field to table programs.
- Our programs utilize real tools to teach kids to prepare food independently.
- FoodShare will be piloting mobile food carts in high schools, to take the healthy food out to the students, where they are spending their time.

- [Great Big Crunch](#) Day: This is an example of programming that is easy for principals and teachers to access and participate in with their school.
- The rooftop garden at Brock PS is one way that foodShare teaches healthy eating from ground up. This setting allows us to provide teacher training sessions, where we can share our resources and expertise with educators.
- "[School Grown](#)" Secondary Program: This program is at Eastdale and Bendale high schools. At Bendale, the front lawn and back yard spaces were turned into food gardens. The gardens tell a new story about what is happening inside the school. In the first summer, 10 youth were hired through [Focus on Youth](#) (FOY) to maintain, harvest and sell the vegetables. The food is used in nutrition programs and in the culinary arts program at the school.
- The students were outstanding employees, and for many it was their first job. This program is not just about food, it is about growing skills and job experience.
- Eastdale has a 6 000 square foot roof garden. This site will be part of [Toronto Doors Open](#) this spring. It was an underused tennis court, and now it is growing food, and building skills for youth. Elementary kids are coming into the space, and it is an outdoor classroom.
- It is a social enterprise, and sales generate revenue outside of the FOY funding. Last year, students earned \$14,000 at the East Lynn market, and by selling to restaurants. We run cooking programs with the students, so they can interact with their customers with expertise.
- **Q: Can we get a copy of your presentation to share?**
- A: Yes you can. We will follow up with Hilary.
- **Q: Have you done much research on expansion of urban agriculture?**
- A: We have some funding that will allow us to document what is required to run our programs, from the very small to the large high school gardens. We are also looking at creating good food hubs, using Bendale as a hub farm that is connected to smaller sites.
- **Q: We have the Good Food boxes delivered to many of the Parenting and Family Literacy Centre locations. Nutrition is a huge issue, and the key is fresh fruit and vegetables. Could we do a better job of consolidating many programs into one?**
- A: Organizing and funding from a system-wide perspective is something we are always considering. One idea we are working on is a Portal model, which would provide a way to procure fresh food through a central system.

5. Presentation: New TDSB Draft Policy for Police Reference Checks

- Executive Superintendent Andrea Alimi, and Marla Fowler from Employee Services presented to the group.
- Numbered library copies of the draft policy were distributed for reference, and were collected at the conclusion of the presentation.
- At this point in the policy development process, they are conducting information sharing sessions. They do consider the comments received from stakeholders in the development of the new policy.
- Alimi provided some background to the new policy.
 - The safety of students, staff, and community members is of greatest importance to TDSB. Since amalgamation, Employee Services has had policies in place to comply with regulation 521 of Education Act, which applies to school boards.
 - However, we have never had a formal policy in place that provides clear, consistent transparent language around police reference checks (PRC).
 - Currently, all employees of TDSB must have a PRC in place before commencing employment. That PRC costs \$50 for Toronto residents.

- Our Board has practices in place for volunteers. The current cost is \$15 for a volunteer PRC. The relationship with Toronto Police Service has allowed us to negotiate this price because of the large volume of requests.
- Recently, the verdict of the Coroner's jury of the inquest into the death of Jeffrey Baldwin was delivered. Of 103 recommendations, two of them specifically speak to police reference checks and the annual offence declaration (AOD).
- Director Quan has committed that TDSB will work to take action on these important recommendations.
- Vulnerable sector screenings, or police records checks, are required for people who have direct contact with vulnerable people. Our acronym for a [police reference check](#) is PRC. It happens once every five years. In the intervening years, a quick declaration that no offences have occurred within the past year is completed.
- This Draft Policy will proceed to review by the Trustees, first to the HR committee, and then to the Board. Our goal is to have this draft policy at Board for the May meeting cycle. This would allow for good communication to schools to explain the changes that are coming, and allow for PRCs to be in process over summer period.
- A PRC is not required from: a student under 18, a guest, members of school council attending meetings only, attendees at events to which the greater community is invited, although volunteer roles may occur within this larger event.

Q: Is there ability for a Principal to manage large annual events that require a large number of community volunteers for a short period of time, events like a Terry Fox Walk, or track and field day?

A: We are working through it. The requirements around specific events are not detailed yet.

- The recommendation requires that volunteers must have a PRC in place before volunteering begins. This is the aspect that presents the greatest degree of change for schools.
- For the upcoming year, we will suggest a transition phase within this school year to help manage the degree of change. Returning volunteers would complete the AOD, new volunteers will be encouraged to apply this June.

Q: How will school field trips be categorized?

A: Field trips will be a volunteer activity requiring a PRC.

Q: In terms of a PRC being in place first, is there any way to speed it up

A: No. Our current experience is an 8 week wait for a PRC. That is why we are working on transition and communication as we head into the first year of the policy.

Q: What about visiting librarians in the schools? Are they guests?

A: We are making a note of this.

ACTION: Hilary Wollis will provide Cheryl Skovronek with Alimi's contact email.

Q: Toronto Public Health currently does not have PRC in place for all of our health staff who visit schools, but many are nurses who complete it as part of their licensing process. This group also includes health inspectors for pools and other roles.

A: These are all items we need to consider, we are noting it.

ACTION: Hilary Wollis will provide Jann Houston with Alimi's contact email.

Q: How can we ask parents to prepare to accompany a field trip months in advance? I think we have to acknowledge that this is not possible for all volunteers to do.

A: Most of our current volunteers do have PRCs in place. This is not affecting as many people as we fear.

Q: Is there any way for TDSB to use a similar process as teacher candidates, which cuts the wait time to two weeks?

A: That fast-track process happens when teacher candidates have already registered with the OCT. For anyone who has not, the standard wait time applies.

Q: Is there a way to do a one-time blitz?

A: Yes, that is part of our plan for June, but the policy must first be approved.

Comment: the MSIC Parent Conference, is offering the opportunity for parents to apply to be a volunteer. MSIC will pay the fee for the PRC. We hope that this will allay anxiety, and smooth the transition.

Q: Is the Community Use of Schools Advisory Committee (CUSAC) included in the policy consultation?

A: Yes, they have been part of the process.

Q: Have you been to the Equity Policy Advisory Committee (EPAC)?

A: They attended the focus group.

6. Special Education Sub-Committee Report

1. Special Education:

- David Clandfield provided the report.
- The sub-committee held a meeting on March 27th. Superintendent Anne Seymour attended.
- There was much conversation around the plans for Special Education as are outlined in the [Years of Action \(YOA\)](#) and in the [Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement \(BIPSA\)](#), as well as or the areas of concern brought forward by ICAC, which came out of Rob Brown's research reports. These concerns focus on wait lists for assessment, the disproportionality of some groups within special education programs.
- In place of a lengthy report, the group decided to make a motion in support the BIPSA, and express our support for these goals, to encourage it to move forward through the Board.
- Clandfield read motion aloud, and moved the motion. It was seconded by George Martell.
- An amendment to the motion was suggested.

Q: Is the motion making a request of staff or the Board? That is not clear.

A: This is a motion of confidence. We are stating our support, so that the Board hears support of the goals within the BIPSA, and not just criticism of the plans. There is no request of the Board.

Q: Where will this motion be directed?

A: The motion will be submitted to the Programs and School Services Committee (PSSC).

- The question was called on the amendment.
- Amendment carried
- Motion as amended: approved.

ACTION: Laurie Green will provide Hilary Wollis with the full amended motion.

At this point in the meeting, quorum was lost. Some discussion continued among the remaining members.

7. Committee Business: ICAC Coordinator

Lesley Johnston introduced guests Jill Andrews and Amita Handa, Student Equity Program Advisors (CEPA) with the [Equity and Inclusive Schools](#) department at TDSB.

- We work to empower youth to find their voice and be empowered. We help to make them aware of the Board's 5 pillars of equity.
- We facilitate workshops, train youth, build capacity, help them to plan conferences around equity issues. We raise awareness around equity, how to make school fit students, and helping students make school fit them using a variety of means, including drama, writing, videos, etc. We help students feel that they are at the table as real stakeholders.
- We have been working with groups of students identified within Opportunity Gap report as being at risk of not graduating. We work with student leaders, and some are leaders within marginalized groups
- Students want to participate and speak about how disadvantage affects them, and how inequity in their school affects their lives. We can find alternative ways to incorporate their input into your conversations, beyond having students attend meetings.
- Could they be involved in the conversations you are having with the Director?

Comment: we love to connect, and have added students to our community meetings. We appreciate their input, especially around our subcommittee topics like special education, and transitions.

Comment: There may be an opportunity to incorporate student work within ICAC meetings, and sub-committee meetings, by playing a student video, distributing writing, or displaying art pieces.

Comment: I would like to connect with you because we are seeking youth voices at TPH, and could be a great experience for them for future employment skills.

ACTION: Hilary Wollis will provide contact information for Jann Houston to Andrews and Handa.

8. Sub-Committee Reports

2. Fairer Ways and Greater Means:

- Lesley Johnston indicated that there is no report. The group is awaiting details for the capital budget in June.

3. Governance:

- Members provided feedback to Hilary Wollis, gathered at the CPAC meeting she attended at Robert Service.
- Members will visit DA Morrison in April, and hope to visit Willow Park and Firgrove at their June meetings.
- ICAC will have tables at the Parent Academy conference on Saturday, April 5th. Lesley Johnston will be at Cedarbrae CI, and Laurie Green will attend the Thistle town CI site.

9. Trustee Report

No report.

10. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn, Lesley Johnston. Seconded by Cheryl Skovronek. Adjourned.