



Toronto District School Board
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee Name: **Inner City Advisory Committee**
 Date: **Thursday, January 15, 2015**
 Time: 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
 Present: Trustee Sheila Cary-Meagher (Co-chair), Trustee Howard Kaplan, Trustee Chris Glover (telephone), Vicky Branco, Helen Fisher, Sharlene Bourjot, Kwabena Yafeu, Ingrid Palmer (Co-chair), Alejandra Bravo, David Clandfield, Nathan Gilbert, Laurie Green, Claudette Holloway, Adam Iggers, Matthew Judd, George Martell, Sejal Patel, Debra Payne, Annie Peng,
 Regrets: Jennifer Arp, Michael Griesz, Nathan Gilbert, Bonnie Macdonald, Cheryl Skovronek
 Guests: Anne Seymour, Kuga Palan, Ying Ong, Cori Macfarlene, and Mohamed Sani-Abu
 Recorder: Hilary Wollis, Coordinator

ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATION/MOTION
Call to Order/Quorum	Co-Chair Ingrid Palmer called the meeting to order. Palmer noted changes to the meeting times and locations for February and March. The schedule is printed on the reverse of the Agenda.	
Approval of Agenda	.Draft Agenda presented. No amendments.	Nathan Gilbert moved, GM seconded. Approved
Welcome and Introductions	Introductions were made around the table. Palmer welcomed guest parents Kuga Palan, Ying Ong, Cori Macfarlene, and Mohamed Sani-Abu to their first ICAC meeting. Palmer read the regrets for today's meeting from Trustee Jennifer Arp, Michael Griesz, Bonnie MacDonald, and Cheryl Skovronek.	
Presentation: Special Education Coordinating Superintendent Anne Seymour	Coordinating Superintendent, Special Education, Anne Seymour shared information regarding the Inclusion strategy at TDSB. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been encouragement for more students to be in regular classroom with support. • Inclusion is making a new, better space for everyone. The Years of Action (YOA) goal is to achieve a 50% reduction in the number of students in congregated special education classes by 2017. • Intensive support Programs (ISP): Students are in a congregated setting with a 	ACTION: Anne Seymour will make the presentation slides available through the Coordinator.

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	<p>Special Education teacher and support. Currently there are 706 elementary and 380 secondary programs. This number includes all identified students, including gifted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDSB has models for exclusion, integration, separation, and some inclusion. This strategy seeks changes in rates of exclusion and separation. • Belonging, or how students feel about themselves at school is important. 50% of those in Special Education program feel they don't belong. • There are also equity issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The majority of students enrolled in Gifted programs are from affluent neighbourhoods. Low-income groups are very underrepresented in gifted. ○ Self-identified Black students comprise 14% of students, but represent 36% of total students attending behavioural programs. ○ Twice as many boys attend special education programs than do girls. ○ I observed congregated programs in the East region. I went into some classes that comprised exclusively boys, and there was significant racial skew. • Statement of Inclusion: All students including those with Special Education needs are educated in a class with their peers. Students are provided with equitable learning opportunities in the classroom. • The Strategy: • A decision was taken to first consider primary students, in grades 1 to 3 who were attending an Intensive Support Program (ISP). This included Learning Disability (LD), Mild Intellectual Delay (MID) and behavioural exceptionalities . • The number of students in primary ISP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Disability (LD): 88 • Mild Intellectual Delay (MID): 195 • Behaviour: 137 <p>-The resulting action is to reduce the numbers of students in congregation for September 2015. Students are still going through key developmental stages in terms of literacy and cognitive development.</p> <p>-The process includes an annual review of each student, with the hope being that they will be able to manage in a Home School Program (HSP).</p>	

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	<p>-Individual Placement Review Committees (IPRC) will meet in January and February for all of these students.</p> <p>-Expectations: If all 420 students returned to their local home school, this would translate into approximately a one child increase per school. But of course, there are some schools that would see 2 to 3 students return to their local home school.</p> <p>-Schools that have a returning student will receive support from the Special Education staff in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition planning that welcomes the student and family to the school. Principal leads in the Family of Schools (FOS) across the TDSB will be sharing updates and learning. • Intensive job-embedded professional learning for teams made up of the Principal, Teacher, and support staff. Transitional staff will be utilized to meet learning needs, and will assess what resources are at the school, and what needs to be in place for this student. <p>Discussion: <i>Comment:</i> The last section, where you described the action plan: if that is for a parent audience, it needs to be in much plainer language.</p> <p>Q: What is intensive job-embedded professional development? A: Learning has to be within the context of the work educators are doing. Teachers are working in the school, learning as a hub. They will bring the curriculum they are teaching, and work with Special Education staff to learn how to adapt and differentiate to support the student in the class.</p> <p>Q: Will there be teaching and learning Coaches, like in MSIC? A: Staff will first be allocated to support students returning to schools where the learning needs aren't met by existing resources. Other staff will become "Inclusion Facilitators". We will retain some of our staffing budget to create these roles. ISP is designed for students whose needs exceed the supports available in the regular classroom. But it should not be considered a permanent placement. We expect staff to come to meetings with evidence of student progress in this intensive program.</p> <p>Q: Will children continue to be identified and moved out of the home school into ISP? If students are below the threshold of needs of students who are returning to the home school, they will remain in their home school as they are identified with</p>	

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	<p>Special Education needs? A: The criteria for all exceptionalities is under review, concurrent with a larger Ministry of Education review. There will always be a very supportive program for some students, but there will be an intentionality to move children back to the regular classroom.</p> <p>Q: In 1990s, the Ministry of Education said inclusion was the first option unless it was not in the best interest of the child, or if a parent wanted their child in special program. This was repeated later in a working group. Are we saying the same thing again? A: This is about operationalizing inclusion. The first goal of the IPRC is the learning needs of the child. The second goal is the wishes of the parent. Is inclusion meeting needs of child? Our work has shown that with a very young child, maybe we are acting too early to separate that child. We need to try other options for support first, things like technology.</p> <p>Q: I understand the Avon Maitland Board has begun full inclusion in elementary: Is there any information exchange ongoing? A: Yes, we have met together.</p> <p>Q: What proportion of students who are in grades 6 or 8 were identified in grade 3? A: I don't know that answer. We have asked TDSB Academic Research if a student was in an identified program in grade 6, where are they in grade 9 or 10?</p> <p>Q: Is the proportion of identified students in grades 4 to 8 greater than the population identified in grades 1 to 3? A: There are a lot more students identified in grades 4, which arises from changes to the curriculum that require deeper skills, along with students who were being observed when younger are identified at this time.</p> <p>Q: Are the official exceptionality categories still in place when a student leaves ISP and returns to class? Are those providing support in the regular classroom seeing students with fresh eyes, more holistically?</p>	

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	<p>A: I hope that teachers see the full potential of children. After all, behaviour is communications.</p> <p>Q: You chose to include black male students being overrepresented in Special Education. Has TDSB done research on why this is happening? Is that part of your study bring students back to the regular classroom? We know that depression is shown as aggression. Are we missing mental health problems?</p> <p>A: I showed the overrepresentation of black males, but overrepresentation also applies to aboriginal and south-east Asian groups. I know that there is a significant issue, and it is something we are still investigating.</p> <p>Q: We talk about data and about the child and their family. But is the problem the system?</p> <p>A: Yes, absolutely, and that is part of the good work that the Equity staff has been doing.</p> <p>Q: With regard to operationalizing inclusion: You talked about reducing permanent placements in Special Education. Some in the teacher population are afraid when they hear inclusion. How are we investing in overcoming this mindset?</p> <p>A: When I review the referrals for the Behavioural Team I consider whether these behaviours really mean a child can't go back to the regular classroom. Are there unreasonable expectations of behaviour in place? Can teachers be better supported through training opportunities?</p> <p>Q: You mentioned areas where educators can use additional support. I wonder about diversity training? Is some of the overrepresentation linked to language or bias?</p> <p>A: MSIC has worked hard to get beyond these things. For example, does this child need glasses? Are they bored? What is the real reason? Special Education has done a lot of training with Special Education staff as well.</p> <p>Ingrid Palmer thanked Superintendent Seymour for her excellent presentation.</p>	
Model Schools for Inner Cities Update	Coordinating Principal Helen Fisher provided the report.	ACTION: Helen Fisher to provide a copy of the monographs that

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	<p>iPad program: Training sessions have been held for grade one teachers with Apple Canada, to support teachers in using the iPads effectively. There are additional opportunities for teachers to participate in training with MSIC Coaches. Finally, there will also be iTunes based classes available online for teachers. A MSIC goal is to have every child reading at a DRA level of 16 (where they should be) when leaving grade one.</p> <p>STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) kits: MSIC has purchased STEM learning kits for all Model Schools. K-8 schools also received an intermediate kit. MSIC Coaches are supporting teachers to better teach this interdisciplinary format. There are four after – school courses available for teachers with the Coaches.</p> <p>Q: Can we see the printed material that goes with the kits? I’m looking for the substance of the learning that is intended? A: We have the monographs, and Helen Fisher can bring a copy to the next meeting.</p> <p>HEROES program: This is a program that identifies with character, and helps to build confidence and a sense of self. We run this program in conjunction with Alberta, and developed it with Dr. Wayne Hammond. Two of the MSIC Coaches wrote a new unit that is more inclusive of urban students, based on the feedback received. The tasks within the program are very relevant to our students. We are looking forward to the training tomorrow.</p> <p>Poverty Reduction Strategy: Following up on our conversation in December, MSIC staff collated the results, and we have grouped the input by theme so it holds together. There are copies for everyone. MSIC have the master lists from the charts, and we also grouped the input by question, and that was submitted to the City of Toronto staff as part of their consultation.</p> <p>Q: What is next? Working with other agencies, I have noticed that that there is not really an education or school-based lens on poverty. I have argued that there IS a proven model of closing the poverty gap through MSIC. Why should we reinvent the model from a city / agency point of view?</p>	<p>accompany the STEM kits to the next meeting for George Martell and members to peruse.</p> <p>ACTION: The Coordinator will distribute David Clandfield's chapter on Schools as Community Hubs to all members.</p> <p>MOTION: ICAC will develop a process to lead discussion of the role of schools in a Poverty Reduction and Community Investment Strategy for Toronto with different partners.</p> <p>Moved, Ajejandra Bravo, seconded Howard Kaplan. Approved.</p>

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	<p>A: At the multi-sector roundtable in November, Vicky Branco was the only representative from education, the only person who said "school" or "education" in discussions. There was often a negative response in the room, which is disheartening, because MSIC and ICAC work so hard to close gaps and advocate.</p> <p><i>Discussion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging from that Roundtable experience, is a request from the City to do something bigger that is a forum where schools is the main topic of conversation. TDSB is already working within target communities, in their neighbourhoods, and schools are an excellent path for communication. • We need to ask: Is ICAC the right venue? Is it a community investment strategy, and not just a poverty reduction strategy? Can ICAC be the sponsor of an event where we discuss this? • There is an incredible need to re-establish TDSBs relationship with the City of Toronto. TDSB is becoming irrelevant. <p><i>Comment:</i> David Clandfield has worked out a wonderful structure for the TDSB and City to get together on a range of activities that preserves autonomy and saves money. He wrote a chapter of a book on Schools as Community Hubs.</p> <p><i>Suggested Process:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a process design team to create the day; 2. Invite key partnership groups to discuss and help us develop a proposal; 3. Present the proposal to the Board of Trustees regarding changing relationships. <p>MOTION: ICAC will develop a process to lead discussion of the role of schools in a Poverty Reduction and Community Investment Strategy for Toronto with different partners. Moved, Alejandra Bravo, seconded Howard Kaplan. Approved.</p>	
Sub-Committee Discussion Groups	The ICAC sub-committees broke into small groups to discuss goal setting and create action plans for their work.	

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	The Fairer Ways & Greater Means, Governance, International Languages and Special Education groups were represented.	
Trustee Report	No report	
New Business	None	
Next Meeting Date	Thursday, February 19, 9:30 am to 12:00 pm 5050 Yonge St, Boardroom	
Adjournment	Moved Annie Peng, Seconded Laurie Green. Adjourned.	