

ICAC Meeting Minutes
Wednesday June 6, 2012

In attendance –

Aim Mujib, Jeff Kugler, Nathan Gilbert, Michael Griesz, David Clandfield, Sejal Patel, David Smith, Chris Glover, Howard Kaplan, Sharlene Bourjot, Lisa Watson, Alejandra Bravo, Bob Spencer, Sheila Cary-Meagher, Varun Desai, Lesley Johnston, Heather Johnson, Laurie Green

Regrets –

Donna Quan, Jann Houston (TPH), Cheryl Skovronek, Chris Penrose, George Martell, Kemp Rickett, Natasha Burford

Staff-

Manon Gardner, Vicky Branco, Marjolein Winterink, Cassie Bell

Guests-

Fiona Crean (City of Toronto Ombudsman), Jorge Kaneshalingam (Ombudsman's office), Saida Sabrie (Somali Parents' Liaison Committee and Cedar Sinai Centre)

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Guest: City of Toronto Ombudsma(n) – Fiona Crean

- Title "ombudsma" is of Swedish origin and is gender neutral
- City of Toronto's Ombudsman's office is still in its infancy and is deeply underfunded
- Office originated as a result of MFP scandal and the Bellamy Inquiry along with Integrity Commissioner and an Auditor General role
- Office opened in April 2009; voice through an independent office for the people
- Ombudsman's office plays a different role than that of elected representatives
- Ombudsman supports city council in ensuring good governance
- Extremely wide ranging jurisdiction but it is also an office of 'last resort', i.e., citizen complaints go directly to person or office involved *first*
- Policy gap discovered recently regarding people with diminished responsibility (for example, a senior living alone)
- Ombudsman's office has now built policy framework to address this issue
- It is important to note that ombudsman's office is exempt from "FOI" (Freedom of Information) Act; why? Because no one would ever come to ombuds if there was a chance that files and/or names could be disclosed
- When Ombudsman Office Reports are published, all people (complainants, witnesses etc.) are protected
- Legislation for ombudsman is remedial and non-punitive
- This is the most complicated level of government by far -twelve years after amalgamation and it isn't 'over' yet!
- Policies developed between 10 and 20 years ago are now not only in some cases irrelevant but unfair to certain sections /groups of people/citizens
- Ombudsman's Office budget is currently \$1.3 million; office will need more resources if it is to function adequately and fulfill its mandate
- This visit (to ICAC) is to share information, make connections and share all of this information more broadly
- Through experience, Ombudsman's office is typically not used by a lot of youth; why? Likely not aware of existence of office and given this is office of last resort their issues may be settled at other levels

Discussion

Q: What is time needed for complaints?

A: Half an hour to one year!

- Everything is precedent setting currently so must be done right!
 - Issues can vary from miscommunications to policy re-writes
 - Credibility is key – accuracy is vital, especially when shining light into dark corners of organization
- Q:** If we could provide opportunities for you / your office to connect with inner city communities, could you do it?
- A:** Yes! We'll be there
- Q:** Do you have a sense that people know what they are entitled to re: services?
- A:** No
- Q:** Thank you for coming. I knew of the existence of the office of the Ombudsman and am so pleased you are this role – you are even-handed, fair etc. In the case of those citizens with diminished capabilities, would it be possible to examine medial files of citizens...?
- A:** I seriously doubt it – there are many ethical issues with regards to this – it is an interesting point though
- Q:** How do you manage the different arms of government which intersect? How do you manage overlapping systems?
- A:** Answer is theoretical; there is no ombuds at school board level, but any entity as large and complex as the TDSB would benefit; many issues which can be resolved through commonsense
- National disgrace that Canada does not have a federal level ombudsman, only one of three (3) Western countries that doesn't
 - We are as independent as possible within own structure – perception matters! For example, being physically outside City Hall is incredibly important – people must feel safe when they go to the Ombuds, that people can come and go anonymously
 - Who fills the role of ombudsman in any organization matters a lot
- Q:** Do you have media access?
- A:** No, but all information / report out of Ombuds office are public, therefore are in the realm of the media; this is part of due diligence
- Q:** Ombudsman's office increases confidence in government, which seems to be at an all-time low; need to rebuild trust; who established this office?
- A:** City of Toronto Act by the province established office
- Q:** Why not broaden jurisdiction of Toronto and Ontario Ombudsman's offices?
- A:** Question needs contemplation; each organization must craft what works best for them

Action Item:

- *Ombudsman offers to look into other ombudsman's offices in the education sector and forward information to ICAC.*
- *Trustee Chris Glover announced a "participatory budget" meeting open to everyone, Thursday June 7th @ 7 pm @ 5050 Yonge Street.*

3. Agenda Approval-

Moved by N. Gilbert, seconded by C. Glover, approved unanimously;

4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (May 10, 2012)-

Moved by N. Gilbert, seconded by D. Clandfield, approved unanimously;

5. ICAC Co-ordinator's Report -

- Approval of 2012-13 ICAC meeting dates (**see attached**) > moved by A. Bravo, seconded by N. Gilbert, approved
- **Handouts:** National Day of Action (June 18th), Real Change (June 14th), Toronto Star article on course fees, P4e annual report on schools (www.peopleforeducation.com), Ombudsman information package (history, how to contact etc.), TDSB budget background information, "Feeding our Future" Report
- **Upcoming Events:** Board budget committee meeting tonight, Wednesday, June 6th @ 7 pm here; Final Board budget meeting Wednesday June 13th @ 7pm > \$58 million more in cuts to find

- Issue raised about Somali students – important
- Task forces created to look at opportunity gap for other communities such as, Portuguese, West Indian, Aboriginal etc. – wouldn't it make sense to work with communities so as not to re-create the wheel?

Under-taking /Action Item

Group to meet to look at issue of opportunity gap for our Somali students and bring back recommendation to larger ICAC – Saida Sabrie, Jeff Kugler, Sharlene Bourjot, Marjolein Winterink, Alejandra Bravo, David Clandfield, Chris Glover and Michael Griesz.

6. MSIC Resource Team Report

- Hard copy of new MSIC Organizational chart presented, including 33 new schools
- Overview of 'welcome' meeting for 33 new schools (pending final board meeting)
- As of September 2012 there will be – 150 elementary schools highest on the LOI and seven secondary schools
- The MSIC schools will be located in all FoS (Families of Schools) except one (ER 17, Ward 12 – Trustee Mari Rutka) by September 2012
- All SoEs (Superintendents of Education) will have at least one MSIC
- Budget meeting tonight – so far the MSIC portfolio is intact – decision is ultimately the Board's
- Moving towards 70,000 students next year!
- T & P (Transfer and Placement) process - CAO (Chief Academic Officer) is at the table – works in conjunction with other superintendents to make sure 'fit' is right with principals and schools

Q: Process for transition for new staff?

A: Yes, Leads will go to provide PD (Professional Development) and MSIC is invited to 'new teacher' orientation Sessions

Q: Schools here are numbered 1 – 150 on the LOI?

A: Yes, caveat however, medical schools not included, nor are school closures; in total therefore, numbers go from 1 – 162; we have gained back some schools we lost earlier in the program which is exciting

➤ Social Determinants of Health (SDoH)

- Began process in order to help principals and staff to be aware of what's in their community
- Looked at 211 and 311 city data sources – found websites difficult to navigate
- Assigned CSWs to go out into communities to find out what was available in terms of community resources
- These documents are both for MSIC and non-MSIC school use
- In draft format now – evolving document

Discussion

Q: If we know our ward and have extra resources to add, who do we email?

A: Email Vicky Branco with changes/amendments/additions

Q: This is amazing! Have you committed to an updating schedule? Things become outdated quickly
Also, keeping a document such as this updated and incorporating people's input could be a massive undertaking – what about an interactive site of some sort?

A: Yes, we will look at updating once a year – committed this with CSWs (Community Support Workers); good idea to have a website for submitting your organization's details, but need to review if organization meets matrix; not sure about that part yet.

Q: Fabulous document! Are you adding additional clinics that are under the radar (i.e., clinic out in Scarborough that deals with refugee health issues)?

ACTION ITEM –

Staff will develop a system so people can submit ideas re: SDoH supports and continue to develop the site. There will be an update in September 2012.

- S.Sabrie to send name of her organization and some background information over summer
- N. Gilbert to send After Four program details over summer for consideration

Q: This is a great idea! It would be very helpful to have a map with all wards included; there is some ‘bleeding’ of services so a map showing overlap of wards would be useful; also, is it possible to develop another map showing overlap (and including TTC routes?)?

A: All suggestions will be considered for fall 2012

7. ICAC Subcommittee Updates – Fees and Fundraising (see attached documents prepared by D. Clandfield)

- Learning Opportunities Supplement (LoS) provided to each school budget (as per TDSB public website)
- Richer schools get some money through formulaic calculation, but funding is tapered to flow more to poorer schools
- 15 to 20 schools identified as having private charities / foundations as reported through CRA (Canada Revenue Agency)
- Cut 25% off totals as an arbitrary factor to allow for funds **not** spent in schools, and/or costs incurred in fundraising
- Some schools have adopted ‘sister’ schools to which they contribute some of their fundraising – this is often done anonymously so difficult to track
- Question of “central equity fund” – have heard it mentioned in some documents (i.e., TDSB Fundraising Policy Guidelines: http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/parents/fundraising_guide/docs/fundraisingguide2.pdf) but no one seems to know much about it; need to look into this more
- School generated funds and charities amounting to approximately \$24 million; \$21 million goes to schools that are not MSIC schools so still a huge disparity

Discussion

Q: Suggest we follow up on question of Central Equity Fund approved in 2009;

- suggest that David include years/data sources in his material as this topic will be controversial and therefore must be rigorous;
- reporting of amounts has only been released ONCE under FOI (Freedom of Information) request by the Toronto Star
- School budgets are posted on schools’ website -slippage in data information however (i.e., numbers posted are not always current)

A: Note that Dr. Clandfield’s data does not include staffing nor operations figures; only staff have those; in his opinion there is “no earthly way MSIC will ever catch up” [*sic with budgets boosted by fundraising and other private sources*]

A: (staff) Current MSIC funding is \$8.925 million; additional funding is staffing through the LOI incremental allocation and amounts to \$7.7 million (or 77 more teachers) through increments of .5 teacher; larger MSIC schools might stimulate up to 1.0 teacher per school; other grants which flow are targeted by Ministry and not unique to MSIC schools (i.e. other schools also receive them)

Motion –

Whereas the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) allocates some resources to mitigate disparities amongst students facing greater or lesser external challenges as expressed by the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI) to ensure “all students have access” and steer “additional resources to the schools serving students who face greater challenges”¹;

¹ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/62343713/LOI2011>

and,

Whereas school-based fundraising, corporate donations, charitable foundations and student fees lead to greater disparities and resource gaps at the local school level, even after accounting for the Learning Opportunities Supplement (LOS);

and,

Whereas the Inner City Advisory Committee (ICAC) supports the Equity Policy Advisory Committee's (EPAC's) recommendation that all budgetary decisions be constituted through the lens of the LOI, as per TDSB policy;

Whereas, in September 2012, the Model Schools for Inner Cities Program (MSIC) will be expanding to include 150 elementary schools ranked highest on the LOI, impacting up to 70,000 of the TDSB students beset by the gravest level of external challenge;

and,

Whereas the number of children currently living in poverty in Toronto is 1 in 3², and public schooling, according to TDSB policy must be resourced to ensure "that every student has an equitable opportunity to succeed."³

Therefore be it resolved that –

- a) **the Learning Opportunities Supplement (LOS) continue at its current level;**
- b) **all MSIC funding be exempt from the current round of TDSB cuts;**
- c) **a board wide committee be struck to examine all revenues between schools and any arising inequities, including (but not excluded to) student fees, fundraising, charitable foundations, and corporate partnerships/donations;**
- d) **the LOI be used as a lens for all budgetary decisions as per Board policy**

Moved by: D. Clandfield; Seconded by: A. Bravo; Approved: Unanimously

- **ICAC asks that Trustees put motion forward today at Budget Committee meeting**
- **R. Spencer will depute in favour of the motion**
- **ICAC Co-ordinator will apprise committee of outcome**

Meeting adjourned

² <http://www.moorelands.ca/poverty.php>

1. **Toronto Campaign 2000's Report Card on Child Poverty in Toronto. Poverty is defined using the Low Income Cut-Off Measurement (LICO). Statistics Canada identifies low income families as those that spend a significantly higher proportion of their income on food, shelter and clothing than an average Canadian family of comparable size and community of residence. In a large metropolitan area such as Toronto, the low income cut-off for a family of two is \$21,760 and \$32,759 for a family of four.**

2.

³ http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/about_us/external_research_application/docs/LOI2011.pdf

Have a wonderful summer everyone!

Next ICAC Meeting:

Wednesday September 12, 2012

9:30 am – 12:30 pm

5050 Yonge Street, Committee Room A (main floor)