

Trustee Update for PIAC – October 13, 2016

Submitted by Shelley Laskin

Islamic Heritage Month - October 2016

On 25 October 2007, the Government of Canada officially declared October as Islamic History Month, in recognition of “the important contributions of Canadian Muslims to Canadian society, the cultural diversity of the Canadian Muslim community and the importance of Canadians learning about each other to foster greater social cohesion.” Also, at the Regular Board meeting held on 22 June 2016, the TDSB Board of Trustees resolved that the month of October, in each year be declared as Islamic Heritage Month. The TDSB affirms our commitment to celebrating Islamic Heritage Month, and encourages students and staff to take this opportunity to learn about the history, heritage and diversity of our Muslim fellow Canadians. Islamic Heritage Month is an occasion to improve our knowledge about the many contributions of Muslim Canadians to the building of Canada’s democratic society through their work in the areas of political and social justice.

Somali Heritage Month - October 2016

At the Regular Board meeting held on 22 June 2016, the TDSB Board of Trustees resolved that the month of October, in each year be declared as Somali Heritage Month. The TDSB affirms our commitment to celebrating Somali Heritage Month, and encourages students and staff to take this opportunity to learn about the history, heritage and diversity of the Somali heritage. As well as celebrating, facilitating and encouraging education excellence with Canadian students of Somali descent, Canadians of Somali descent have made and continue to make significant contributions to the City of Toronto, province of Ontario and Canadian society at large. The month of October will provide an opportunity for Somali-heritage communities to share their vibrant culture and traditions with the TDSB communities and the City of Toronto.

October is Women’s History Month

Women’s History Month is an opportunity for all our schools and workplaces to improve our knowledge of women’s achievements and their contribution to the building of our democratic society. It is also a chance to learn about women’s experiences and struggles around the world to achieve social justice on issues of poverty, discrimination, abuse and tyranny. Women’s History Month will also give recognition to the heroic women of our communities who do extraordinary things every day to nurture and guide our children, who support our schools, and who work hard to preserve our neighbourhoods and our valued institutions.

New Date for Equity Webcast – October 20, 2016

The TDSB’s vision is for all students to succeed. It is critical that we provide safe and caring schools where students have the resources and tools they need to be successful. We have done a lot of work to support our students, but still, not all students are as doing as well in school as they should be. We need to change that. We are looking at how we support all of our students and are taking a more focused approach. We must help those who aren’t reaching their potential, while also continuing to inspire, engage and raise the bar for all students. Your voice and opinion are an important part of this conversation. Please join the discussion and share with us your thoughts on how parents and schools can work together to improve the learning experience for students.

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We continue to speak with our communities about equity and helping all students succeed. Two in-person consultations are scheduled for October 13 and 15, a live webcast with Director John Malloy will take place on October 20 and everyone is welcome to submit their thoughts and ideas online anytime. For more information about these events, visit the website <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/community/publicconsultations/equity.aspx>.

Report on Transportation Issues

At the Finance and Accountability Committee on September 28, staff presented a system update on the student transportation issues. To read the complete report, click here <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/AgendaMinutes.aspx?Type=A&Folder=Agenda%2f20160928&Filename=160928+Transportation+2929.pdf>. Student Transportation Services for both the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) is administered by the Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG). This cooperative model of transportation has been in place since 2011. School start-up has been exceptionally challenging this year, primarily caused by an unexpected shortage of school bus drivers across the GTA, but there are other factors that have contributed to the school start-up disruptions, including the introduction of new carriers to Toronto's service, new drivers and the reallocation of routes among carriers.

On the first day of school, 60-70 routes out of a total of 1,758 routes covering Toronto schools did not have fixed drivers in place. Although the carriers indicated that all routes would be covered (using alternative service providers and by splitting routes), the impact was felt by 2,500 students and their families (1,200 TDSB students) in Toronto area schools. Typically, September start-up includes some degree of open routes as carriers complete their summer hiring process. TSTG worked with carriers through the month of August to realign routes as open routes were identified and drivers hired. Prior to start of school, TSTG worked with carriers to limit the number of open routes and had assurances from the carriers that accommodations would be in place for all students served in the first week of school.

The unique bussing policy of the TDSB and the TCDSB also has an impact on the bus service capacity during the first few weeks of school. Unique features include the bussing of nearly 5,000 French Immersion students in TDSB schools and bussing of over 4,000 non-eligible riders in TCDSB. These unique situations impact the extent of route change and driver availability. The driver shortage in Toronto is a compelling case for reviewing the impact of unique bussing arrangements in both TDSB and TCDSB. This will be part of the deeper review to be undertaken once the service normalizes.

It is of critical importance that these matters be fixed structurally and permanently. A comprehensive review of each Board's transportation policy, TSTG's work process leading up to school start-up, the process for route allocations and service issues will be undertaken once the service normalizes. This will involve staff from TSTG, both school boards and the bus operators. Ministry staff will be kept informed of these discussions given the broad provincial nature of the issues.

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Enrolment up from Projection

Based on Week 4 enrolment, the TDSB will be above projection in both the elementary and secondary panel by the end of September. Elementary enrolment could come in over the September 30, 2016 projection by just under 1% and secondary enrolment could come in about 0.90% above September 30, 2016 projection. The increase in enrolment can be partially attributed to the arrival of Syrian newcomer students to the TDSB.

In comparison to projections for September 30, 2016, we are currently 1,829 head count above projection in the elementary panel (1.08%), and 886 head count above projection in the secondary panel (1.21%). System-wide, we are 2,715 head count above projection (1.12%). Last year at this time, we were 2,471 head count below projection in the elementary panel (-1.43%), and 184 head count above projection in the secondary panel (0.25%). System-wide, we were 2,287 head count below projection (-0.93%). The arrival of Syrian newcomer students to the TDSB is one factor contributing to the increase in enrolment above projection. Thank you to all the students, staff and parents for your support if you were affected by the enrolment fluctuations and therefore staffing changes within many schools. Elementary schools have settled; secondary schools should be settled this week.

Reminder to call school if your child will be late or absent

One measure of keeping our students safe is to ensure we can account for any absences or reasons for being late to school. We would like to remind you that if your child is going to be absent or late for any reason, we ask that you contact the school immediately and report the reason for the absence. If we are not informed about the absence, we will make attempts to contact you through our automated call-out system to determine the reason for the absence. To find out how this automated system works please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/HighSchool/CaringSafeSchools/SafeArrivalProgram.

Also, please let the school office know if your contact information, including phone number, changes at any time throughout the school year.

French Programs Application Deadline

For families interested in the Toronto District School Board's French Immersion or Extended French programs, we offer an online process for applying to:

- Early French Immersion (EFI) which begins in Senior Kindergarten;
- Junior Extended French (JEF) which begins in Grade 4

We guarantee an offer of placement in the program (not a specific school) to all on-time applicants. Transportation is provided as per the Board's Transportation policy.

The timelines for applying for these programs for September 2017 are:

- Applications for Early French Immersion (for a Junior Kindergarten aged child), must be completed online between November 1, 2016 and December 1, 2016.
- Applications for Junior Extended French must be completed online between January 9, 2017 and February 2, 2017.

Offers of placement within your chosen program will be made to all on-time applicants in the weeks following the close of the application window.

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Please note: families with an older sibling currently in a French program are still required to complete an online application for the new student. Further information on French as a Second Language programs and the application process is available online at www.tdsb.on.ca/french.

High School Information Nights

To help you make an informed decision when choosing a high school, TDSB schools host information nights for parents and grade 8 students each year between October and January. Learn everything you need to know about our incredible variety of schools, programs and courses. The dates and times for all High School Information Nights are available online at www.tdsb.on.ca/HighSchool/GoingtoHighSchool.aspx.

Free Math Programs

TVO's mPower is a free creative online game that teaches fundamental K-6 math skills while enabling students to have fun and learn more about the world around them. Designed and developed in partnership with Ontario students and educators, mPower uses an interactive game setting to foster positive attitudes about math. It is Ontario curriculum-based and supports the development of global competencies. In addition it tracks student progress and responds to learners' needs. Click here for more information <https://mpower.tv.o.org/educators/#/login/>

Homework Help is a free online math help resource for students in Grades 7-10. Homework Help provides free, live one-on-one tutoring from Ontario teachers Sunday to Thursday from 5:30pm – 9:30pm ET. Homework Help is funded by the Ontario government and administered by TVO's Independent Learning Centre. Parents/guardians can sign up for a guest account. The guest account gives parents/guardians access to math videos, interactive exercises, and a scientific calculator 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can get further information at the Online Help Website, <https://homeworkhelp.ilc.org/>.

Young Entrepreneurs, Make Your Pitch Competition

The Government of Ontario and Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) launched the fifth year of the *Young Entrepreneurs, Make Your Pitch competition*, an event which helps foster high school entrepreneurs. Since being introduced in 2013, hundreds of Ontario high school students have pitched their business ideas to experts and the public through the competition. The contest challenges high school students to pitch their business idea in a two-minute video. The videos are evaluated by judges from the business community with the public able to vote for the best pitch online. Twenty finalists will present their ideas to a judging panel at OCE's Discovery conference in Toronto on May 15 - 16, 2017, where they will also receive coaching from a number of Ontario business leaders. The video submission period ends on March 29, 2017. Finalists will be announced April 24, 2017. For more information, click on <http://www.makeyourpitch.ca/>.

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Local Government Week - October 16 - 22, 2016

Local Government Week, which raises awareness about the role of local government, will take place from October 16 – 22, 2016. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) has developed some useful tools to raise civic awareness and promote the role of Trustees among Ontario students. OPSBA is encouraging Trustees to contact principals and arrange meetings with Grade 5 Social Studies and Grade 10 Civics students to discuss their important democratic role. For more information and the resources, click on

http://www.opsba.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/OPSBALocalGovWeekKit_2016.doc

First Nations School of Toronto Relocated to Eastern Commerce Collegiate Institute

At the last Planning & Priorities Committee, Trustees supported the recommendations from the September 15, 2016, meeting with parents/guardians and community members from the FNST who voted unanimously in favour of the move to Eastern Commerce CI. To read the complete report, click the link below.

<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/AgendaMinutes.aspx?Type=A&Folder=Agenda%2f20161005&Filename=161005+First+Nations+2922.pdf>

New Deputy Minister of Education

Bruce Rodrigues, Chief Executive Officer of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), has been appointed Ontario's Deputy Minister of Education. He will remain with the provincial agency until the middle of October before taking his new role with the Ministry of Education.

Legislative Agenda (From OPSBA)

On Thursday September 8, 2016, the Premier prorogued the legislature which ended the previous session of Parliament and had the effect of terminating all outstanding business before the House. The government indicated it would reintroduce all government bills that had not reached Royal Assent in order for debate to continue. On Monday September 12, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario resumed as planned and began with a Throne Speech delivered by the Lieutenant Governor. The Throne Speech contained the Liberal government's priorities, including 3 with an education focus:

- Creation of additional Child Care spaces
- Creation of new Ontario Student Grant - reforms to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP)
- Review recommendations of the Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel
- Strengthen Health Care
- Infrastructure Investment
- Competitive Business Environment
- Improve Retirement Income Security
- Relief on Electricity Bills
- Election Finance Reform

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Read the mandate letters Premier Kathleen Wynne wrote to each Cabinet Minister, outlining the key priorities for their ministry by clicking here <https://www.ontario.ca/page/mandate-letters-2016>.

Current and Upcoming Legislation

Please note that any Bill that did not receive Royal Assent will be re-introduced and given a new number and possibly a new title. The following is a list of legislation OPSBA had been monitoring:

- Bill 8, Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014 (creation of the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act)
- Bill 10, Child Care Modernization Act, 2014
- Bill 113, Police Record Checks Reform Act, 2015
- Bill 115, Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015
- Bill 127, Pathways to Post-secondary Excellence Act (Post-secondary Educational Report), 2015
- Bill 132, Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2016
- Bill 139, Smoke-Free Schools Act, 2015
- Bill 149, Rowan’s Law Advisory Committee Act, 2015
- Bill 181, Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016
- Bill 197, Allergy Friendly Schoolyard Act, 2016
- Bill 198, Immunization of School Pupils Amendment Act, 2016
- Bill 200, Protecting Students Act, 2016
- Municipal Legislation Review (The Municipal Act, the City of Toronto Act and the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act)
- Construction Lien Act Review

TDSB Monthly Update

PIAC is on the list to receive the [latest edition of TDSB Update](#), the Board's corporate newsletter. It is published 10 times per year, after each Board meeting, and provides a brief summary of corporate news and events in the TDSB as well as a summary of recent Board of Trustee decisions. We are continually expanding our distribution list for this publication and welcome your suggestions.

Note – is there any other topic you would like to hear about through these updates? Please do not hesitate to let me know – shelley.laskin@tdsb.on.ca