



Toronto District School Board
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee Name: **Inner City Advisory Committee**

Date: **Thursday, May 14, 2015**

Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, Crescent Town Elementary School, Library

Present: Trustees Cary-Meagher (co-chair), Story, Kaplan, Helen Fisher, Simona Emiliani, Ingrid Palmer (co-chair), David Clandfield, Nathan Gilbert, Laurie Green, Matthew Judd, Shaila Krishna, Annie Peng, Paul Blackwood, Patrick Boland, Jodi Burton, Catherine Evans, Daniel Commisa, Colleen Huggins, Melissa James, Zulekha Nourmohamed, Duane Spencer, Fonda Zettler.

Regrets: Trustee Jennifer Arp, Trustee Michael Ford, Trustee Chris Glover, Trustee Marit Stiles, Sharlene Bourjot, Claudette Holloway, Adam Iggers, Michael Kerr, Debra Payne, Cheryl Skovronek.

Guests: Cori Macfarlane, Shauna Bonnett, Thuy Kinh Laurence, Ron Laurence, Tamara Nolan, Yvonne Budhu, Debra Providence, Cheryl Mercury, Kuga Palan, Leandra Sydney, Lana Miller, Barb Barta, Rownale Laila, Rubaiya , Parveen, Maya Ivanova, Sajida Chowdhury, Halima Chowdhury, Saida Rafiq, Sherry Lin, Morshadu Rhanam, Helena Khatun, Rubab Malik, Deepa Katikineni, Manu Kapoor, Petrana McIntosh, Zarin Abbas, Devon Franklin, Kimberly Padova, Ying Ong, Denise Wedderbun, Zahra Mahmood, Ivum Sajjad, Rudayba Yesmin, Laurie Bowman, Craig Carter-Edwards, Ricardo Tranjan, Gita Madan, Jahenara Rehana, Dina Laila..

Recorder: Hilary Wollis, Coordinator

ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATION/MOTION
Welcome and Introductions	<p>Co-Chair Ingrid Palmer opened the meeting and welcomed the group. Palmer thanked Crescent Town for welcoming us for our final community meeting of this year.</p> <p>Palmer then thanked the all of the Model Schools staff and Community Support Workers (CSWs) for supporting the meeting and the Community Investment Strategy process. .</p> <p>Palmer reflected that Cluster Parent Academy Committee (CPAC) parents are important because they are leadership models for their children, and their involvement in CPAC is a service to the community. Parent voices are important to the community, to ICAC. and to your school. Speaking up and acting can be challenging for Inner City residents, but it is through small local actions across the city that parents are having a larger overall impact on communities.</p>	
CPAC parents	Palmer welcomed representatives from the Parent Academies in Clusters A1, A2, and B3.	

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	<p>Cluster A1::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you to the A1 CSWs for supporting our Committee, and to ICAC for listening tonight.. I see the benefits of attending CPAC: meeting other parents and sharing best practices for our School Councils. There are opportunities to participate in seminars on topics like positive parenting and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). • I can share this new knowledge with my school council peers , and enrich our school community. I've met new partners, and brought them back to our school to present to parents. My role on School Council helps me improve my speaking skills and boosts my resume as a new experience. • I have attended all of the CPAC meetings this year, and it has been beneficial. I don't like the public speaking, but I realize now that I don't have to speak, and I can help out in another role. For me, that is as treasurer. Parents need to know that it is okay if they can only come two or three times per year. Many think they have to make a commitment to attend every meeting. • A challenge is a lack of participation at School Councils and at CPAC. There are several reasons for this, including a lack of understanding of what CPAC is and the benefits of involvement. Parents don't understand what is involved, and overestimate the time commitment. Many newcomers have some fear that they won't fit in or their English isn't strong enough. • Parent Advocates in our School Councils could encourage and educate parents about CPAC and its benefits. They can gain more buy-in from parents. A CPAC advocate or a CSW could attend some local community groups or meetings like ESL classes or play groups, to talk to parents and reach them that way. • At my school, the Council struggles to get parents out to a parent seminar. In contrast, child-led nights like a movie night, for example, are always well attended. Next year, the Council is going to run these events concurrently, with the hope that the parents will attend the parent event since they are at the school anyway, and we will provide childminding for the movie. • If we more engaging childminding activities at CPAC meetings, that made the kids want to attend, then maybe more parents would come out. Ideas we have thought of include a magic show, or a special art night. 	

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	<p>Cluster A2::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This cluster is large, and runs north-south on the west side of Scarborough. This year I am vice-chair of the CPAC, and it has been educational and beneficial. • One thing I've learned is to be mindful of using positive language when speaking, so I will talk about our learning and successes. • Our mission at CPAC is to reach and engage parents. I would love to see more parents like those who are filling this room. What we have to offer is going to benefit everyone. • Our key learning includes: • The importance of geography: In past years, CPAC located its meetings centrally. This year we moved the meetings to a location in the south of the area, and parents didn't come. There must be good TTC access, and available parking for parents. • CPAC needs to create and maintain a strong flow of communication. We need to focus on the kind of information to which parents respond. For us, that means paper flyers, because many families don't have computers. We need to take advantage of school newsletters, and other ways to announce events. • We need to clearly communicate the role of CPAC and how it benefits parents, and what Model Schools is, because there is much miscommunication out there. A presentation at the start of the year would be helpful. It is important to approach people on their terms, and to always have a welcoming environment. • We recommend something to replace the CPAC / MSIC handbook. It is valuable, but it is too much information. Perhaps we could supplement an in-person presentation a shorter brochure. Parents need to make a quick connection to the benefits of CPAC, demonstrating it is worthy of their effort to participate. • Our target audience is parents who put their kids first. If kids are bored, parents will put them first and not return. Child-minding needs to be a fun, positive environment for the children. It can parallel the parent theme, for example, mental health night is a yoga for kids activity, or homework help 	

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	<p>night is a STEM activity night. Activities could include art programs for special events. I think we can do it economically if we think creatively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our CPAC would really benefit from clearer, more up to date budget information so that we know we where we are at when we have meetings, and can plan. • We need to be mindful of adult attention spans. People are tired in the evening. Workshops need to be shorter, like an hour, and have a hands-on component to maintain engagement. • I think we need to redirect some of that energy into topics that will attract parents who are in the work force, but want to improve their employment. Topics like moving up in a career, upgrading your skills, presentation skills or event planning are some ideas that would reach a different group. • We want to acknowledge our strong CSWs and an administrative support staff who really supported us. We couldn't accomplish our goals without them and the support. We had some very strong events this year. • We took photos, and I noticed the smiles and the engagement through nodding and body language. • The best CPAC event is the Parent Academy Conference. I saw people challenging themselves to speak, and step outside themselves, tackling a new topic. At the end I saw parents who were excited, proud, and looking forward to next year. These skills and confidence will transfer to other aspects of their lives. <p>Cluster B3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are happy to have this meeting in our cluster. This year, our meetings included volunteer training, a meeting with our local Trustee, a STEM workshop that was hands-on (facilitated by Erika Lloyd, a MSIC coach), first aid training, food handling, social media training, preparation for the April conference, and a family fitness night in the Monarch Park dome. In June, we will have a celebration. • The challenges we encounter are similar to the other groups. We started the year with great numbers, and with most schools represented. We have trouble 	

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	<p>attracting and retaining a Secretary, which has made it difficult to produce the minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Cluster encounters some financial challenges. Transportation costs are high because of the wide geography of this Cluster. We are thinking of relocating meetings to minimize transportation, by holding them at schools with the greatest amount of parent attendance. TTC and accessibility are important. One idea we are considering is taxi-pooling with parents from a central TTC station. • Food costs are a challenge because we have not been about RSVPs, and so we tend to over-order. • Another challenge is getting information discussed at CPAC back to our schools. Issues range from getting Agenda time at the School Councils, to CPAC representatives who do not attend School Council meetings, or the challenge for CSWs to get to all of the Council meetings. We like the idea of a CPAC Advocate / Ambassador who goes to meetings. • We would like to send a big thank you to our CSWs for their support and help. • I love coming to CPAC and I love MSIC. I don't think CPAC gets enough credit at the schools. • I think CPAC should create "tip sheets" that we can give to parents, and that we can share with School Councils • I think we should use name tags at meetings to help everyone get to know everyone else. • I wonder if CPAC can take advantage of the auto-dialer services at schools to promote meetings to parents. <p>Ingrid Palmer thanked all of the parent representatives for their excellent remarks and thanked them for volunteering in the community.</p>	
<p>Community Investment Strategy</p>	<p>Ingrid Palmer introduced Trustee Jennifer Story to introduce the next portion of the evening.</p> <p>Story noted that she is Trustee for Ward 15, Toronto-Danforth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Model Schools for Inner Cities program is a jewel at TDSB. Thank you to Ingrid Palmer and to Trustee Sheila Cary-Meagher for championing Model 	

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	<p>Schools at the Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want to introduce this idea of Open Schools. • We live in a city that has an increasing income gap. The premier has prioritized a concept of “community hubs’. This is a way of opening up our schools and pooling community assets in our schools. • At the same time, there is enormous pressure on Trustees to decrease the number of TDSB buildings. • The City of Toronto is currently creating a Poverty Reduction Strategy. ICAC became aware that schools were not included in that strategy as a site for poverty reduction. • ICAC moved to bring the City to our table, and to examine the obstacles that TDSB has created to being a partner with the City and other community partners. • ICAC held a big meeting with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss the idea of Open Schools on March 6th of this year. • The result is the yellow document, with its five key areas of need. Please read through the needs. • The next part of the evening is to gather your input into this process. ICAC wants to know how schools can best meet the needs in your communities, for your families. • ICAC will take the input we gather tonight, and use it to refine the strategy. Moving forward, the team will be reconvening with a plan start this process of Open Schools in the fall. • The group broke into four smaller discussion groups, to discuss each of the four areas of need identified in the draft report. Scribes rotated through each group, so that all attendees had the opportunity to comment on each need. • At the conclusion of the discussion period, Ingrid Palmer thanked everyone for attending and providing their ideas and energy to this process. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm. 	
Next Meeting Date	Tuesday, June 9th, 9:30 to 12:30 pm at 5050 Yonge Street, Committee Room A.	