

**Inner City Advisory Committee Minutes
Wednesday, November 20, 2013
6:00pm to 8:00pm
John Polyani CI, Cafeteria**

In Attendance	Trustee Sheila Cary-Meagher, Trustee Howard Kaplan, Aim Mujib, Ellie Avishai, Nathan Gilbert, Laurie Green, Jann Houston, Lesley Johnston, George Martell, Ingrid Palmer, Bob Spencer.
Regrets	David Clandfield, Debra Payne, Hilary Wollis, Kwabena Yafeu,
Staff	Vicky Branco, Helen Fisher, Simona Emiliani, Maria Yau
Guests	Jennifer Arp, Ayaan M, Merissa Thomas, Njambi Bernard, Sheriza Khaderoo, Vincenza Peitropoulos, Tian Yi Liang, Sana Samdani, Karim Bitariho, Keisha McFarlane, Anbu Bitariho, Susanne Holder, Imogen Mercer, Ilil Osobla, Bibi Raiedh, Carmen, Joanna B, Rosa C, Nicola Monad, Nadine Paul, Arashia Moms, Nadine Power, Sarah Aly, Garfield Rhoans, Gladys Gomez, Ahmed Alsaad, Rahine Hassen, Alyssa Beemes, Mike Rocchetti, Susana Florez, Nelly Mesa, Relita Padilla.

Welcome and Introductions (Aim Mujib)

Co-chair Aim Mujib welcomed everyone to the group, and thanked them for attending. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

Announcements:

- City of Toronto budget will be released on November 25. The budget will affect communities, and things like access to child care. Residents can speak to their local Councilor, or contact Lesley Johnston and she will connect anyone who would like to know how to participate in the budget process.
- Toronto Public Health is implementing a Health Survey. It involves a random selection of 12000 students and parents, and will provide a picture of student health. Please spread the word, this is the first time a survey has been conducted within the TDSB.
- Philippines Typhoon: This devastating event has displaced 660000 people, and approximately 9.8 million are affected, including 4 million children. The Secretary General for Lions international has announced a campaign. The Lions Club has already sent \$500 000 in relief money. They are asking for donations to the Lions (or anywhere else) to help families in the Philippines. A donation sheet from the Lions will be circulated.

1. Agenda Approval

Nathan Gilbert,moved. Jann Houston, seconded. Approved.

2. Previous Meeting Minutes (October 08, 2013)

Jann Houston, moved. Ingrid Palmer, seconded. Approved

3. Secondary Students Presentation

Model Schools for Inner Cities secondary students will be talking about the Impact of MSIC on students, they will sharing their narrative story and thoughts, and provide the student voice perspective.

John Polyani CI students:

- We will present the student perspective on several aspects of our education experience.
- **EQAO:** standardized test, literary and problem solving skills, want to know how students are doing
 - Our concerns with EQAO: The tests are too generalized and some students are unable to properly communicate the knowledge they have because of the format of the assessments.
 - Communication in EQAO: generalization allow to communicate orally
 - Concern regarding the inaccuracy of EQAO results: Would smaller, more specific, and more frequent assessment provide more detailed results and greater accuracy?
- **Relationships between teachers and students:**
 - Some students experience a hard time because of poor communication. A teacher can provide more motivation, trust, mutual respect.
 - Current problems that we identify: Teachers who don't care or support students who need it, who are busy or hard to talk to, and just not approachable. The results are students who feel like there is no time for help, and teachers who feel students are disrespectful. This builds mistrust and animosity. Teachers need to be aware of the impact of relationships.
 - Possible solutions include improving parent and teacher relationships.
- **Student Council Leadership:**
 - Student leaders need to know how we can be successful in the future. We don't really know how to be good leaders and how to further develop our leadership skills. Student Council's job is to encourage student voice, etc.
 - Student Council Issues: It can be a popularity contest. Student Council candidates need to understand what the job requires, what it means, and what are they going to be doing in their role.
 - Possible solutions include the creation of training sessions to help elected members become effective leaders in their schools.
 - To conclude, Students need to have a say in how Student Councils are organized, because students spend a lot of time on Council work.

Nelson A Boylen CI:

- Our school has one of the most diverse student bodies.
- Grade 11 student: Challenges that I have faced as a student:
 - Understanding our work

- We need an additional Special Education teacher. The class is unable to understand, and many parents don't truly understand the special education programs and report cards.
- Some students don't attend regularly. These students need something to intrigue them, programs like the arts, music, etc.
- Literacy should not be the only determining factor. Other subjects should be included.
- Our school has only a half day guidance counselor. If students have personal issues or require changes to their schedule, they face long wait times.
- We have reduced access to current resources because they were taken away due to low enrolment. These are things like design tech, fashion and photography.
- Staff members are spread thin.
- The school cafeteria was shut down because of budget cuts. The cafeteria should be cost effective, and students want healthy food choices available to them.

North Albion CI:

- **Special Education programs:** All students should be able to understand how these students are supported: we see things like extra or double time to write exams, being taken from class to do another math lesson, using support staff. All students need to understand what that's about and that it's okay to be a special education student, with a disability or needing to learn English. How do special education students deal with stress?
- **MSIC program communication:** Students still want know more. We value the staff Coach. Only one of us had that opportunity, and further cuts to the MSIC budget will make it worse.
- **TDSB budget:** Schools need more. The budget affects our future. There are fewer night courses due to Board cuts. Students need more information, maybe in pamphlets. Could there be monitors in the schools who can share board information.
- **International Languages Program:** Personally, I loved the program. Problems include the fact that students are at different levels. They should test students at their level, so they can learn and benefit from the program. We spent too much time copying from the blackboard. It would be better if we could do group presentations, projects, a contest at the end of class, and incorporated things like movies and songs to make it more interesting. The teachers use old school methods, and they should better communicate and better support their students. A few changes could help.
- It was noted that many of the ICAC subcommittees will listen to the information shared this evening.

4. Cluster Parent Academy Committees Presentation

Parents from Cluster D5

Educational Components:

- **EQAO:** We echo students concerns about EQAO. French immersion students: some parts of EQAO cannot be tested in French, and some students scored lower because they did not write some components. Some parents are unaware as to how EQAO results are used, and as a result, school selection is a problem based on EQAO. The CAT 4 testing: parents don't know what these are (including Board Improvement Plan and the School Improvement Plan). Schools and parents should work together and parents should be able to have an impact.
- Work in partnership with the school: Parents lack an understanding of this. Regular reports to parents would ensure transparency, education on the data, and the school budget need to be shared, along with how it works together with School Improvement Plan.
- **Special Education:** parents fear that students are labeled or stigmatized. There is a lack of information and understanding, parents might be unaware.
- French Immersion Program: Sometimes Qualified teacher, would like them to allocate more budget, funding.
- **International Language Program:** to continue, there needs to be more attention to the improved supervision of instructors, and issues around student engagement. There is a need for French to be a part of the International Languages Programs.
- Raises the question: Why are the parents not all here?
- **Years of Action** plan from Director Quan: Parents to become involved
- **School Councils:** Are they aware of their responsibilities? Model Schools provide these for our families, along with top notch teachers. Budget cuts affect inner city schools, their development and implementation.
- **MSIC:** Workshop to empower parents, put more funding and more community support workers (CSWs) in our schools, along with more ECEs and lunchroom supervisors.

Parents from Cluster E7

- **Special Education:** Parents need to advocate for their children. They face language barriers, many are newcomers and English is not their first language. Becoming part of the school council helps.
 - Concern: Not being able to advocate effectively for your children who need attention to their self-esteem. The TDSB should have interpreters and translated paperwork for parents to read and understand what they are thinking.
 - Model School provides a rich and diverse experience, language barriers, working long hours
 - At our school, Special Education was reduced to 1 teacher.
- **Support Services:** For example, Occupational Therapy has an 11 months wait list. Private therapy would cost \$500.
- **International Language Program:** should be viewed as a global opportunity. (For example, I enrolled my son in a Cantonese class as an opportunity to learn another language. I removed him because of bullying and being told he did not belong because the home language was not Cantonese.)

- **CAT 4** assessment allows teachers get to know students better
- **EQAO:** causes anxiety, if a child has a bad day it affects performance, many families lack the income to provide extra experiences for children. The pressure affects their social and emotional state of the child.
 - The Principal explained that the attitude toward learning is a concern, and a high EQAO score does not mean success.
- Despite being engaged, sometimes it is difficult for a parent to find information about the TDSB.
 - For example, I'd like to know more information on Board meetings. There are many steps to communicate with parents and how they can be involved and support their children.
- **Reading Recovery:** my child's improvement in this program was remarkable.
- **Budget cuts** make an impact on schools and make it more challenging for teachers. With regard to support services, allocating 1.5 days for the social worker at our school is not practical. How many kids are not being helped?

Parents from Cluster F6

- **Special Education:** Calico PS has 6 DD classes for approximately 50+ students who are bussed to school. Our VP was removed because of lower enrolment.
- Model Schools: Workshops, Training, etc
- **Budget cuts** affect our school, how is this part of the equitable and inclusive guidelines?
- Model Schools Program is a fantastic idea, but it is underfunded and understaffed.
- **Question from Calico parents:** What equitable and inclusive things have they done for these children?

5. ICAC Sub Committee Reports

a) **Special Education** (Laurie Green, member):

- Green highlighted parental rights in Special Education programming, and noted that there are areas within special education where race and income appear to play a role in student placement.
- The group would love your input. There is also a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) at TDSB. If you would like to participate, please leave your contact information.

b) **International Languages** (Bob Spencer, lead):

- Our plans for the program include improving the quality of instruction, and addressing the need for mainstream educators.
- The subcommittee, working 2.5 hours per week, is not sufficient. Please join us and help to build a stronger program.

c) Fairer Ways and Greater Means (Lesley Johnston, lead):

- I appreciate everyone's comments today, and am disheartened to hear your concerns around cuts.
- Why is money available for full day kindergarten while other program areas are being starved? There was a 20% cut to the MSIC budget.
- There is currently a review of the funding formula by the Ministry of Education. Your concerns need to be heard, and they want to hear from you. Your voices need to be heard outside this room, at the Ministry and the TDSB.
- Let's continue this work together.

6. Presentation: Model Schools for Inner Cities Research Update

Deferred to the December 5th meeting.

7. Previous Action Items Update

Deferred

8. Trustee Update

Deferred

9. Business Arising

Helen Fisher: (Sharing item for Hilary Wollis)

- All Community Advisory Committees will have the opportunity to depute to the January meeting of the Planning and Priorities Committee of the Board regarding the recommendations of the Review of Community Advisory Committees. This meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, January 22, 2014 at 7:00pm. I have the materials available to any member who would like to take this on.

10. Motion to Adjourn

Moved, Nathan Gilbert, Seconded, Josh.