French Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: January 14, 2025

A meeting of the French Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee convened from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm via virtual Zoom meeting, with Parent Co-Chair Lynne LeBlanc presiding.

Item	Invitee Name
Attended:	Moosa Alloo (Parent Vice Co-Chair W19), Aamir Barlas (W14 Alt), Divya Chandra (Ward 11 Alt), Maeve Gray (W10), Nabil Hasbun (W1), Sharlene Henry (Parent Vice Co-Chair, W5/W6 Alt), Lynne LeBlanc (Parent Co-Chair W8), Lisa McAvoy (W2), Gail Miller (W22), Oluwakemi Ojowa (W4), Devon Pool (W3), Bibi Safraw Hanif, Andrew Waters (W3 Alt), Charles Zhu (Parent Vice Co-Chair W11). Also present: Angela Caccamo (Centrally Assigned Principal), Mary Cruden (Canadian Parents for French), Roni Felsen (Staff Co-Lead), Trustee Dennis Hastings (W1), Trustee Dan MacLean (W2), Liliana Martins (Co-ordinator, Secondary), Deborah Williams (Trustee Co-Chair W10).
Guests:	Kevin Hodgkinson (TSTG), Randy Samuel, Neav Constantine.
Regrets:	Cheryl Batty (W8 Alt), Elizabeth Carvalho (W7), Maeve Gray (W10), Michelle Munroe (Central Co-ordinator PCEO).
Recorder:	James Jarrett

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
1. Call to Order	● Land acknowledgment – Lynne LeBlanc. ● Meeting recorded for minute taking purposes. ● Introductions.	
2. Quorum / Membership Changes	● Quorum met 11 out of 12 Wards present. ● Ward 20 Zuojun Han membership temporarily suspended, missed last 6 meetings. ● Ward 1 Nabil Hasbun is new rep., children go to Rivercrest JPS, West Humber CI. ● Ward 4 Olowakemi Ojowa is new rep., child goes to Topcliff PS. ● Ward 4 Bibi Safraw Hanif is new alt. rep., children go to Firgrove PS. ● Ward 14 Aamir Barlas is new alt. rep., children go to Gateway PS and Leaside HS.	
3. Approval of Agenda	● Moosa Alloo moves, Devon Pool seconds. Carried. ● Staff moves timing of Transportation presentation.	
4. Approval of November 12, 2024 minutes	● Sharlene Henry Approves, Devon Pool seconds. Carried.	James Jarrett to post minutes on FSLCAC Page
5. Declarations - Possible Conflict of Interest	● Andrew Waters is running for Trustee of Ward 11. ● Gail Miller is an emergency replacement person in the TDSB.	
6. Transportation	● Staff: Kevin Hodgkinson,General Manager, Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) for TDSB and TCDSB. ● TSTG transports approximately 50000 students daily, 18000 of which are TDSB students. ● We have students both transported by school bus (approx. 1800 daily) and TTC. ● This is a new contract year for us and we have two new operators. ● The board has 3 main silos of students. ● There are different distance thresholds based on age. ● Students from JK to Grade 5 are on school buses. ● Students in Grades 6 to 12 are given TTC tickets, if they are not special education.	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
	● Q: I know of a parent who has 3 kids going to the same school. They are picked up from their home school 1.7 km away to a program at another school. ● Staff: French Immersion and Gifted children are picked up on a school-to-school model. Children with complex needs are picked up from home. ● In the past we have had severe driver shortages, necessitating the staggered start for special education excluding gifted in Week 1, everyone else in Week 2. ● The new carriers have helped mitigate these problems. ● 13000 students are transported in the first week. 36000 students in Week 2. ● This staggered start is based on past years' driver shortages in the first week. ● There is also an empty seat protocol, for buses with at less than 75 percent capacity possible for beginning of school year, for busses at 75-100% capacity, empty seats made available after Thanksgiving. Students walk to a pick-up point at a school. ● Preferably like to know who is transported by June. First 3-4 weeks are in flux. ● Requests for transportation go through the principal to the Transportation department. ● Q: Is busing for all students or special education only? ● Staff: Special Needs students, elementary French Immersion students and Gifted students, as well as students that are beyond the distance threshold to their home schools. ● Q: Is there a wait list for transportation? ● Staff: There should be no waitlist for students that have registered by June. ● Q: In the case I gave earlier, they are 3.5 km from the FI school so why aren't they picked up from home. ● Staff: For FI the transportation model is from school-to-school. ● Threshold for transportation of primary students is 1.6 km. ● Q: For students in Grade 6-8, do the students have to apply for TTC Tickets? ● Staff: Yes, it's done through the home school. We confirm the age and distance. ● Q: The tickets are sent to the school, it's very labour intensive to hand them out. ● Staff: Metrolinx produces 1-time presto tickets, have not migrated to Presto yet. ● Q: For students Grades 9-12 more than 4.8 km from school, they apply at school?	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
	● Staff: Correct ● Q: Why is it not possible for students to start on the first day? ● Staff: We used to do it before COVID. The cause since then has been driver shortages. We prioritize special education students. ● Q: This assumes parents have flexibility to transport their children the first week. People must take vacation days to manage. ● Q: Chair Pilkey said in a past Board meeting that it was because of COVID. I don't see the difference between the first week and the second week. ● Staff: You're right in terms of services. We would like to have everyone start on the first day, but we must deal with the shortage of drivers. We have people that commit to us, and then don't show. We don't want students left waiting at a stop. ● Q: The Governance Committee of TSTG controls this, correct? ● Staff: Yes. ● Q: Are the bus companies contracted to have a full compliment of drivers? ● Staff: We ask the companies to do a dry run of their route before school starts. Sometimes the drivers don't show up on the first day. ● Q: I heard the Chair say that busing was staggered for special education students, but before COVID all students were accommodated. Are the bus companies getting paid full amount? ● Staff: We pay for what we run. There is a small savings for the staggered start. ● Q: Would the savings in part dictate the policy? ● Staff: No. ● Q: If we look at the FSL enrolment report, the peek was 4800 transported in 2016 for FI. Now its down to 3059 because there are more sites. In 2023, there were 629 delays the first week, and 1965 in the second week. Delays drop in week 5. ● Q: When does the governance committee make the decisions? ● Staff: In May ● Q: Do you take delegations? ● Staff: No, but we could take written submissions. ● Q: Where do parents appeal transportation decisions? ● Staff: Through the school.	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
	● Q: I've had to take off 4 days of work after labour day to get my kids to school because there is no bus. I take vacation days, but other families cannot afford to be off. This needs to be addressed. ● Q: For parents who qualify for transportation, they'd speak with their school first? ● Staff: School is the point of contact. ● Q: For students in MFI, would that conversation happen at their current school? ● Staff: We suggest the program school, but home schools have the forms. ● Q: Is there any information on the Transit Rider Safety Program? ● Staff: We can't give a timeframe. We're working with the TTC but it's problematic. We have some material online, but we don't have a program yet ● ● Q: The group could draft a position on lack of Week 1 transportation on FI and provide it to members for review at the February meeting. ● Parent Co-Chair: Agreed. We would love to share our concern with the decision makers with a view to ending the delayed start for September 2025 and have it communicated to parents by June. ● . ● Parent Co-Chair: The first week is stressful for parents, don't see how the delayed start makes a difference to the system. ● Motion to draft a letter to the Governance Committee of the TSTG on this concern and bring it back to the February meeting for final approval. Lisa McAvoy moves, Devon Pool seconds. Carried. ● Parent Co-chair: Members can email additional comments to me. Executive will draft the letter and circulate in time for the February meeting. .	
7. CPF and Ward Reports	● Nil report for CPF. ● Nil reports for the wards.	
8. Parent Co-Chair Report & Trustee's Report	● Parent Co-Chair: Nil report from the parent chair. ● Trustee Co-Chair Report: NEWS:	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
	● 2025-01-08: Clayton La Touche Appointed TDSB Director of Education The appointment will take effect February 10, 2025. https://www.tdsb.on.ca/home/ctl/Details/mid/43823/itemid/399 ● 2025-01-13 Toronto Public Health: Reducing the Spread of Respiratory Infections in Schools. See the information and resources for reducing the spread of respiratory infections in schools. https://www.tdsb.on.ca/home/ctl/Details/mid/43823/itemid/406 ● 2025-01-08 Letter re: PowerSchool Cyber Incident. On Tuesday, January 7, 2025, PowerSchool notified the TDSB and other school boards in Ontario and across North America that they had experienced a data breach between December 22 - 28, 2024. We will continue to update the community as more information becomes available. https://www.tdsb.on.ca/home/ctl/Details/mid/43823/itemid/400 EVENTS: ● Equity and Belonging Begins at Home with Dr. Andrew B. Campbell (Dr. ABC) DATE: January 15, 2025 TIME: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. (virtual) LOCATION: virtual (register to receive link) REGISTRATION LINK: https://bit.ly/CEBSA-ABC ● PIAC Ready. Set. Engage. - School Councils & Principals: Stronger Together: PIAC's 18th Annual Conference DATE: Saturday, February 1, 2025 TIME: 1:00pm – 5:00pm LOCATION: Woburn Collegiate Institute, 2222 Ellesmere Rd, Scarborough ON This event brings together School Councils & Principals to collaborate towards enhance School Council relationships for strong & effective Leadership Teams. Invitations have gone out to School Councils, Principals, and Trustees. HERITAGE MONTH: ● Tamil Heritage Month January 2025	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action

	TDSB proudly recognizes Tamil Heritage Month during the month of January. This year, the theme for Tamil Heritage Month is from a quotation by influential Tamil philosopher Kaniyan Pungundranar:
	Kinship: யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர் // Yaadhum Oore Yaavarum Kelir
	To us, all towns are one, and all people are our kin
	For further information about Tamil Heritage Month, please follow @TDSB_Tamil on X to learn interesting facts on Tamil traditions and explore what students have to say in their own words about the Tamil heritage.
	
	ADVOCACY:
	● 2024-12-17 Chair, Trustee Shan wrote an advocacy letter to Mayor Olivia Chow in support for the motion to create a Toronto Youth Employment Program, as outlined in City Council item 2024.MM24.2; and urged the City to work collaboratively with the TDSB and other community partners to ensure the successful implementation of a Toronto Youth Employment Program. https://www.tdsb.on.ca/home/ctl/Details/mid/43824/itemid/394
	● 2024-11-26 Chair, Trustee Shan wrote an advocacy letter to Minister of Education Jill Dunlop requesting increased funding to support the hiring of additional Math Learning Partners (Math Facilitators) in the 2024-2025 school year to intensify support in Math Learning Partner (MLP) schools. 2023-2024 TDSB Math Achievement Action Plan - a comprehensive mathematics strategy - with targeted support for Math Learning Partner (MLP) schools (Math Priority Schools). Positive gains were recorded across the 123 MLP schools from 2022-23 to 2023-24:
	  ○ Grade 3: 4-point increase in students scoring at or above the 70% standard
	  ○ Grade 6: 2-point increase in students meeting or exceeding the 70% standard
	● This advocacy letter also requested that funding be restored in the 2024-2025 school year for staffing of de-streaming. If restored, the funding will be used to support the release of curriculum leaders to provide coaching within secondary math departments, increase professional learning offerings, and enhance appropriate tiered interventions for students as needed.	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
	https://www.tdsb.on.ca/home/ctl/Details/mid/43824/itemId/391/20241126153240 BUDGET: ● The annual TDSB Budget process has begun. There will be opportunities for the public to delegate and also participate in Budget Town Halls similar to last year. The following are key dates in the timeline:	

Date	Type of Meeting	Purpose
Jan 30, 2025	Regular FBEC	• Report on $5M savings centrally • 1st Quarter financial report
Feb 27, 2025	Special FBEC	• Financial projection for 2025-26 report • Financial Facts submission
March 4, 2025	Special FBEC	• School Based Staffing 2025-26
March 26, 2025	Regular FBEC	• Presentation of balance budget plan • Update on Core Ed Funding (if available)
April 30, 2025	Regular FBEC	• Update on Operating Budget based on Core Ed Funding 2025-26 • Presentation of draft capital budget
May 15, 2025	Special FBEC	• Update on Operating Budget Plan
June 4, 2025	Regular FBEC	• Approval of 2025-26 Operating and Capital Budgets

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
	June 18, 2025 | Board | • Approval of 2025-26 Operating and Capital Budgets ● Q: For math you saw positive results. What were these? ● Trustee Co-Chair: There was progress in Grade 3 with 70 percent reaching the provincial standard and in Grade 6 with 70 percent reaching the standard. ● The progress is not in all our schools. We have 123 math learning partner schools. ● Q: How are they chosen? ● Trustee Co-Chair: Staff can speak to this. It's based on the academic need. ● Staff: The schools are chosen based on prior EQAO, with LOI being a factor. ● Math learning schools have PD, but this is available to the entire system. ● Q: Has there been any advocacy to the mayor on free TTC for secondary? Transportation costs can be a barrier for low-income FI students. ● Trustee Co-Chair: That's a great idea. ● Q: It was part of our transportation delegation when TTC support was cut in the 2019 budget. ● Q: Concerning PIAC, we are tracking towards having a table at the event. ● Trustee Co-Chair: It will be in person at Woburn CI, the focus of the event is principals and school councils working together. ● Parent Co-Chair: My own council has not received PIAC communication yet. ● Trustee Co-Chair: My understanding is that invitations have gone out. ● Q: The conference is February 1, there will be a series of workshops. There were targeted invites, we reached out to councils where we had contact information. ● Q: If a council hasn't received anything? ● Q: Reach out to Latha or Margaret. All schools are invited. All principals have received the communication. Some councils have had trouble forming. ● Q: Regarding the CAC, I would love to know the processes and procedures. I know Lynne is the Chair. ● Parent Co-Chair: We usually have an on-boarding meeting in September and another in March. We can have a chat before the February meeting.	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
9. Staff Report	• Staff: We have 79 EFI sites and 40 MFI Sites. • The FI sites have catchment areas that are made up of English home schools. As an example, Firgrove is connected to an FI site in its area. For Firgrove, Topcliff is the EFI location, Stanley is the MFI location. • Q: What do parents do who want to attend a site? • Staff: You need to apply for French Immersion programs. We guarantee a spot in a program, but not a particular school to all eligible on-time applicants. For EFI, the entry point is JK. For MFI, the entry point is Grade 4, so the application is submitted when your child is in Grade 3. • Q: There's no entry point for grade 1 or 2? • Staff: No. • The EFI application process ran in November for JK entry, from November 4-29. This was our last year of using our PARS system. For those who were on time, they were guaranteed a spot, though not at a particular school, based on demand. • For the last few years, the number of applicants was under 3000, this year it's above 3200. • The portal remains live for late applicants, who will be held on local waitlists. • Middle French Immersion is our second entry point at Grade 4. We are one of the few boards that offer this. • This year the application process is integrated with PowerSchool. • The enrolment period opened January 6, and closes January 31st. • We have sent out an email to all parents via school messenger in addition to all other forms and modalities of communicating the application period. • Two parent sessions, January 15 at 10:00 am and January 21st at 7:00 pm. • www.tdsb.on.ca/MFI, the information is on one page. There is a video with step-by-step instruction on how to complete the application online • Q: How is PowerSchool working for the application process? • Staff: It's quite user friendly, better than PARS for families and staff. • Staff: We're the only users of PARS, so there is more support for PowerSchool.	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
	• Q: What are PARS and PowerSchool? • Staff: PARS was used for application process. PowerSchool is our student database and now used for the application process as well. • Q: Are their new FI sites being opened this year? • Staff: No. We've opened 4 sites in the last two years. Bannockburn opened this year, through a PART process. Additional sites were opened in the previous year. • Q: Our school believes that Military Trail is being opened. • Staff: No that's not correct	
10. CAC Review	• Staff: From the Org. Board meeting on November 13, we were elated that the name change was accepted by the committee. • Afterwards, there was a motion presented and passed to reconstitute the CACs. • We spent a lot of time talking about PR.741 and PR.742. • Trustees also passed a motion to explore alternative committee models (p 9: https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Agendas-Minutes/Type/M/Year/2024?Filename=241113+Org.pdf). • The report will go to PSSC in the fall. There was a directive to move to a different model of operation for this committee. • How it will look is still being discussed • . • Any format change will go through Executive Council. • Trustee Co-Chair: This is looking at the options, it's not to presuppose anything. The committee could remain in its current structure. There is work to be done. • Q: What's happening with other CACs regarding this? This is only 2 months away. • Parent Co-Chair: Is this going to be a priority for the new incoming Director? We have many issues in the TDSB. What prompted the decision that these 3 committees are going to be explored? • Staff: 6 were brought forward. 3 have been completed. The remaining 3 are to be reviewed, but they are directed to investigate changes as part of their process.	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
	● Trustee Co-Chair: The review process left trustees feeling that it didn't give enough analysis of CACs. This aims to do that. It didn't give a staff analysis of where CACs fit. We must examine this, and the Director will be responsible. ● Q: Staff did the review. The process should have been directed by Trustees and had Trustee feedback in the written report, particularly from Trustees who sit on CACs. They have the best information on what CACs are doing and how it is helpful to the Board. Very awkward to have Staff doing a review of parent volunteers. ● Parent Co-Chair. We need to acknowledge that CACs in the review provided their annual reports and self-reflections but these were not shared in the report to Trustees. Trustees in turn seemed dissatisfied with the info they got. ● Trustee Co-Chair: This process is not meant to prejudge. ● Trustee MacLean: This wasn't a Trustee run process. We didn't ask for a review or have a need to modify the number of CACs. Do they have value? We have identified 2 CACs that do the same work, and we believe they can be combined. ● We need to review all CACs before we make changes. It doesn't make sense to see half the data, change, then get more data. I'm sure the staff presentation is accurate but I would want to go back to the Board to find out what the plans are. ● Q: Is Spring 2025 realistic? ● Trustee MacLean: The point is well taken that people gave their time for the fall 2024 review with the expectation that it was 3 year renewal. Spring 2025 is a bizarre date to me. It's poor timing for a new Director, who will have an abundance of work. We are committed to doing the work. I defer to Trustee Co-Chair, but we are here to support the CAC. We will take the feedback. ● Staff: Whatever we can do to provide support, we will do. ● Staff: Related to the Board decision to change the committee name to FSACAC, we've been asked to hold off on updated conference poster and email address for use in the newsletter. ● Parent Co-Chair: Let's think about next steps and other questions we have. ●	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
11. Adjournment	• Divya Chandra moves, Devon Pool seconds. Carried.	
Next Meeting	• February 11, Virtual; March 18, hybrid, April 22, hybrid.	