



Meeting Date/Time: April 28, 2021 – 9:30-11:30am.

Meeting: Zoom, hosted by Trustees Chernos Lin

Attendees:

Trustee: Rachel Chernos Lin/RCL (Ward 11)

Staff: Andrew Howard (Superintendent), Ron Felsen (Superintendent), Wilmar Kortleeve (Shared Services Liaison/notes)

Parents-Caregivers/Students/Staff/Community members: 22 people attended

MEETING NOTES

1. Welcome & Introductions

Trustee Chernos Lin welcomed all, especially as everybody is busy juggling so much with all kids doing online learning. These “Coffee Mornings” are a casual format, like the ones we used to have in person, so feel free to drop in and out. It is for asking questions, sharing information, and using the resources in the ‘room’.

Trustee Chernos Lin represents Ward 11, Don Valley West, which has 24 schools, from Thorncliffe Park in the south all up to Highway 401 between Yonge and Leslie streets. Webpage: www.tdsb.on.ca/Ward11.

- After some Zoom housekeeping and ground-rules, attendees went around the table introducing themselves. Among the Attendees:
 - Ron Felsen: Superintendent for Learning Network 06. Previously, among other, Principal at Northern Secondary School
 - Andrew Howard: Superintendent for Learning Network 05. Previously, among other, Principal at Northlea, St. Andrews, and Maurice Cody.
 - Catherine Manson from Don Valley Community Legal Services (<https://www.donvalleylegal.ca/>), offering free legal services for low-income residents living in the area bounded by the Lake Ontario on the South to York Mills/401 on the North and from Yonge Street/Don River on the West to Victoria Park Avenue on the East). Available for presentations on how to access legal services in Toronto, or Truth & Reconciliation projects, including for Civics Courses.
- Also:
- a Principal and several (Vice) Principals
 - Several School Council Chairs
 - many parents, some community members (including parents of former TDSB students).

2. Trustee & Board updates

Trustee Chernos Lin provided an update from the Board of Trustees:

- The Board is working hard on its **Budget** for next year, and still awaiting more detailed information from the Ministry of Education which is needed to fill in many details about the 2021/2022 school year.
- The **Covid** numbers are not great at the moment and we know the pandemic is having profound effects on everybody. We hope the schools can reopen for in-person learning as soon as it is safe. Please note that several schools have actually been open for certain students with special needs. Education staff **vaccination** is thankfully starting, with a great effort by board staff to get over 40K verification letters to them. Many people are however still waiting for appointments and the next question is of course the wait until full vaccination after the second dose.
- There have been news reports (e.g. by the [CBC](#)) about a Ministry consultation on **permanent online learning** as a choice for parents. This is not taking an occasional course in high school, it is virtual learning for all grades from Kindergarten to grade 12. Details are scarce, but the Board and Trustees have many concerns.
- A **Program Area Review** is underway that involves **John Fisher Junior Public School**, in which the TDSB is trying to address capacity issues in the Yonge-Eglinton Area, including overcrowding at Eglinton Public School. Representatives of the involved schools, as well as a parent representative of the French as a Second Language Advisory Committee (FSLAC) for Ward 11, Charles Zhu, is part of the Program Area Review Team (PART). The PAR(T) is looking to create a dual track (English & French Immersion) at John Fisher and open a separate French (Immersion) Centre at Bannockburn public school. Resources are available on the [TDSB website](#) (links: [PART web page](#), [Yonge-Eglinton Program Area Review project website](#), [most recent presentation](#)) and a public meeting is coming up on May 4 ([meeting invite link](#)).
- Another public meeting is coming up, on May 3, is about the proposed new addition to expand the building of **Hodgson Middle School** (more below).

Wilmar Kortleever provided an update on behalf of PIAC, the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee, which advises the Board of Trustees on parent engagement. Janice Barnett and Wilmar are the two parent representatives on that committee for Ward 11. Information about PIAC is at torontopiac.com and social media (Facebook [@PIACToronto](#), Twitter [@TorontoPIAC](#))

- PIAC has been active advising the Board on parent engagement for **families in the Virtual School**.
- PIAC recently organized a Consultation together with Board staff about the currently ongoing review of the **Human Rights policy & procedures** (available for re-watching: [here](#)). Feedback due April 30. Added note: extended until May 11.
- PIAC organizes a **Conversation Series**, together with a Board office called PCEO, Parent & Community Engagement Offices. Coming up next week is a session called **Let's Talk Vaccines**, with Dr. Dubey from Toronto Public Health. Most Conversations are recorded and can be (re)watched via the Conversation website ([link](#)) on the PCEO Youtube Channel ([link](#)). Added note: *Let's Talk Vaccines* Conversation is: [here](#).
- Coming up as well this weekend on May 1 and May 2 is PIAC's Spring Conference. The theme is 'Breaking Barriers by Changing Biases'. Information is on the Conference website:

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Conferences/PIAC-Conference>.

Everybody is welcome!

Wilmar Kortleever, together with Randy Samuel (Ward 11 parent, and FSLAC Rep for Ward 14) provided an update about FSLAC, the French as a Second Language Advisory Committee, which advises the Board of Trustees about anything around French as a Second Language instruction – which includes French Immersion and Extended French, but also the Core French classes that all students in the English stream get. Information about FSLAC is at [tdsb.on.ca/fslac](https://www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac). Charles Zhu and Wilmar are the parent Representatives on the committee for Ward 11; Trustee Chernos Lin is the Trustee Co-Chair of FSLAC this year.

- Most recently, FLSAC has received information and provided feedback on matters like registration for next year's French Immersion programs, the change from Extended French (which starts in grade 4) programming to Middle French Immersion (also starting grade 4), and various other matters including teacher shortages, Virtual School, and more.
The great news about the roll-out of **Middle French Immersion** is that all sites that previously had Extended French will have enough registrations to start the Middle Immersion class(es). One of the benefits of the change to Middle French Immersion is that the program comes together with the Early French Immersion students in grade 9, which opens up more high school options – and alleviates teacher shortages in secondary as well.
- In addition to parents, some members of FSLAC are involved with Canadian Parents for French (CPF), including the Ontario chapter Chair, Mary Cruden, which adds to the great amount of resources available. The **FSLAC newsletters** are highly recommended ([link to latest edition](#)), as it has lots of information on French resources for parents & kids, French language activities including camps, and much more.
- Please note that **registration for French Immersion** starting in 2022 will already be in November of this year (2021). The start of Early French Immersion is switching from SK to JK begins in September 2022 (which means registration occurs in fall of 2021), so tell everybody with interest in French Immersion whose kids who turn 4 in 2022, to be alert to the November 2021 registration. To make sure no cohort misses the opportunity of French Immersion, there will be French Immersion starts in 2002 for BOTH JK and SK students.

3. Q & A / Roundtable

- Cynthia Smith (parent): compliments on the ISP program and the **supports provided** at Bessborough School. Query about the **criteria for reopening for Special Education classes** in the system under the new stay-at-home orders. Staff and/or Trustee will touch base directly to follow up with the parent.
- Tammy Doan (parents): expresses **appreciation** for all the effort everybody is putting in during the pandemic. Superintendent Howard extends this to all students and parents as well. Trustee Chernos Lin, while acknowledging how challenging the year+ has been, notes the great events

and initiatives that are happening in each and every school, and in parent communities.

Mentioned are trivia nights, even an upcoming online cocktail workshop.

- Asked by Sarah Claydon (parent, former Co-Chair Maurice Cody) for a sneak preview on the **Hodgson addition** presentation, Trustee Chernos Lin cannot say much in advance. Seconded by Natasha Golding (parent, Co-Chair Maurice Cody) as well: Have multiple options been considered?

Trustee Chernos Lin indicated to have seen that staff has worked hard to evaluate different scenarios.

Superintendent Howard does refer to the community meeting presentation, but stresses that much details will be available, and the best judgements will be presented, with a focus on safety and programming.

Trustee Chernos Lin pointed out that community meetings and consultation are important. In the review that involves John Fisher, for example, recommendations were added based on questions asked by parents and concerns they raised.

- Divya Chandra (parent): the passing of a young girl from Covid recently has had a profound effect on many people. We need to try and **help communities get the information about vaccinations**. Trustee Chernos Lin and others agree, and it is pointed out that this ‘Third Wave’ of Covid is different in that it affects younger people and seems more contagious. What remains the same is that the effects of Covid are not felt equally between different communities – racialized and less privileged groups are hit much harder. Thankfully, there are great things happening around community information, including in Thorncliffe Park, between community members and institutions like Michael Garron Hospital.

In addition, there is also work to do in providing emotional support to families, including even grief support for students. The Board has professional staff that are doing a lot on this subject. Cynthia Smith highlights the great work that Toronto Public Health is doing in Flemingdon Park and other areas, for example around testing. Teacher vaccinations are now critical.

Rachel Chernos Lin shouts out to Munira Khilji (parent, in attendance), who is a coordinator at Health Access Thorncliffe Park, a local outreach program. Each week she leads a safe space for people to ask questions, in multiple languages. It has led to great conversations and communications between parents, community members, the schools, and healthcare providers.

Divya & Munira: we need to leverage as many ways of communication to get the word out about vaccinations to as many people as possible. Not everybody has access to Vaccine Hunters on Twitter.

- Lynn Leblanc (parent, also Co-Chair of FLSAC): thanks for organizing these Coffee Mornings, great format. We may start using this for our school. With people moving between online and in-person, do people **stay part of their local school** even if they are learning remotely from outside the city or even country? Superintendent Felsen encourages that, for continuity and social connections, that students try and stay part of their community until the end of the year, there is no problem with that. If they physically move, they can register with their new school for coming September.

- Randy Samuel (parent): For High School students, what is the difference between Summer School and E-learning courses. Superintendent Felsen explained that both provide high school courses that are high quality and provide credits that are accepted by the Board. Usually, Summer School (run by the Continuing Education Department) is fully or partially in person, while E-learning is fully online. This year though, because of Covid, both will be online. Summer School is only in July, E-learning has courses in both July as well as August. Another difference is the organization: Summer School has set times of live instruction, E-learning is more a-synchronous. For more information:

- All Summer School options: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Innovation/Summer-Programs>
- [Elementary Summer School](#)
- [Secondary Summer School](#)
- [Secondary E-Learning](#)
- [The difference between Secondary Summer School and E-learning.](#)

Also:

- [TDSB Summer Music Camps](#) ('planning underway')
- [International Languages Elementary and African Heritage Summer Program](#) ('coming soon')

4. Closing

Trustee Chernos Lin thanked everybody for attending. Please join again on June 9!