

Ward 15, Toronto- Danforth

Trustee Jennifer Story

Ward Forum - School Councils 101

Tuesday October 24, 2017 from 6:30- 8:30pm

Danforth Collegiate Institute/Greenwood Secondary School

Present: Laura E. Bullard (Riverdale CI), Renee Martens (Riverdale CI), Cori MacFarlane (Queen Alexandra), Kate Leuschen Millar (Chester, R.H. McGregor), Audra Stitt (Chester), Karen Thomson (Blake), Matthew Hall (Equinox), Winston Gregory (Westwood MS, William Burgess), Jen Volk (Frankland), Anne Heiser (Monarch Park), Anne Smith (Dundas PS), Christel Higgs (Frankland), John Beauchamp (Frankland), Danielle Bader (Pape), Charlene Dunstan (Riverdale CI), Jennifer Proos (Jackman), Kate Sanagan (Ward Council Chair), Lucy Giannotta (Superintendent, LN 28), Jennifer Story (Trustee, Ward 15, Toronto- Danforth), Vasso Tassiopoulos (Shared Services Liaison)

Welcome

Kate Sanagan (Ward Council Chair)

Introductions

Intro from Trustee

Jennifer Story (Trustee)

- The goal of ward forums is to support school council reps with info, resources, and provide a forum for discussion. It's an opportunity for the trustee to share info, be accountable, and answer questions.
- Meetings have rotated throughout all Toronto-Danforth schools over 3 years.
- Binders on today's topic available for all council reps.

Introduction to Danforth/Greenwood

Rob McKinnon (Principal)

- When Principal McKinnon came to Danforth in February the transition of Greenwood moving into Danforth had already started. Greenwood SS is exclusively for newcomers. Students work together from both schools. The Danforth population is 1000; Greenwood population is 200.
- The school was built in 1923 and has changed from being a technical school to offering many diverse programs. It has a lot to offer and he wants to breakdown the tech school stereotype. Danforth is a comprehensive school, with 5 pathways for students. It is also a community hub with a variety of programs and partners. There is a program for autism spectrum students, the MAST program, the Special Education program is integrated into the rest of the school, there are co-op programs, TUSC, TIGP, evening courses are also available. There is an Open House coming up in November and a MAST night is also being organized.

Elections and Reports from PIAC and FSLAC

- It is a requirement of the Education Act for school boards to have a Parent Involvement Advisory Committee rep. PIAC is a formalized table for parents' voice; a way to consult with parents in a formal way. PIAC meetings are open to reps and alternates, and also open to the public (not for participation). A PIAC conference is coming up in November (included in newsletter). It is a way to meet other parents

and connect on issues/policies. The French as a Second Language Committee members are parents and community reps giving advice on French programs. Each committee elects its reps on a 2-year term.

- Election of FSLAC Rep and Alternate -- **not in attendance (names)**.
- Election of PIAC Rep and Alternate -- Cori MacFarlane (rep), Kate Leuschen Millar (alternate).

School Council 101

Guest Speaker: Michelle Munroe, TDSB Central Coordinator, Parent and Community Engagement

*Handout provided for members in attendance. PowerPoint slides and other documents available on TDSB website at <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/ward15/Ward-15/Ward-Council> under "February 27, 2017 on School Councils 101"

- The Trustee's work includes supporting school councils and reps to get better at what they do, offer support, advice, and help navigate Board. The Parent and Community Engagement Office also supports school councils, as well as assisting with interpretation, sign language, child care, community advisory committees, and professional development with staff on working with school councils, and engaging parents and guardians.
- The purpose of a school council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. Five core responsibilities: Constitution and by-laws, Recording, Reporting, Consultation, Communication. School councils should work to identify what families need in terms of support.
- Elections must be held within 30 days from the first school day in September. The Principal needs to inform the parent community within 14 days before the election with details on date, time, location. Council elections are for electing parent representatives to council not executives (co-chair, secretary, etc.). Choose how many parents will be sitting on your council. This is now extended to community and staff members, students. There is a challenge of ending up with a council of four parents that end up making all the decisions. You cannot run for the position of executive if you are board staff. For treasurer there is no rule against TDSB staff (suggestion that staff cannot be in council). School staff have other opportunities across the system; councils are a parent forum.
- Responsibilities of the Executive: collaboration on agenda setting; collaborate around meetings; leaders of council; make sure that committees are doing the work, not the decision makers of council; council advises and directs executives about how funds get spent; also advise the treasurer.
- Responsibilities of Principal: there to support council; make sure they are operating; the principal is responsible for council; required to respond to advice and make recommendations; the council does not direct the principal; collaborative conversation.
- All official council meetings must be held in the school; families who don't know you well might not be comfortable. Think of all parent body and ensure that all parents can participate.
- Each school council shall make the following by-laws: govern election procedures and filling vacancies in the membership of council; establishing rules regarding participation in cases of conflict of interest; defining, in accordance with TDSB policies, a conflict resolution process for internal School Council disputes. Councils have to think of how to design by-laws that fit the school community, the demographics, how much work you do, and how many committees you have. Fundraising is not a mandate and councils need to focus on engaging and supporting families. Make sure some committees do not have same people on them e.g. 3 committees of same people. Council members should work with other parents and committees to find every opportunity to inform all parents not on council, build the capacity of families to engage, pass on succession planning. Committees are vehicles to recruit parents and find non-council involved parents to join. If councils use social media as a tool for communication they have to be accountable for what is posted and how the account is run. Make sure

to outline responsibilities for social media. If something goes wrong it ends up on principal's desk. Councils can collect contact info themselves and collaborate with administrator.

- School Committees: three areas, Safe & Caring Schools, Staffing, School Improvement Plan (SIP). School Budget is not a requirement, Safe & Caring Schools is a school council, and parents should be consulted on School Budget, also on Safe & Caring Schools. Council can provide feedback of Staffing model even though there is little flexibility since the funding model allocates teachers to schools.
- The School Statement of Needs can be a process of identifying what schools need and can feed into SIP. It is due end of October. Resource to develop school's statement of needs: www.torontopiac.com
- Funds and Grants: Think about who our families are. Engaging families isn't always about coming to a council meeting. Every council starts the year with some funds min. \$300 max. \$1000. Determine how those funds are allocated, use to engage the disengaged, provide info and resources for all families, make sure to spend the money (the money goes back to the ministry if it is not spent in the year). The board also supports councils for a variety of grants. Discuss funds at each council meeting and discuss if they are being spent. Schools and councils are allowed to fundraise—procedures embedded for our schools and guidelines for councils. The TDSB has approved vendors of the board who need to be used to be reimbursed; the principal needs to use discretion. Councils are not a separate entity of the TDSB and cannot use vendors that board does not use. For more info see approved vendors list at <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/ward15/docs/FundraisingVendors-docforprint.pdf> or contact Susanna Siou, Manager Business Development, at Susanna.Siou@tdsb.on.ca.

Lightning Round: What does your school council do well?

Kate Sanagan (Ward Council Chair)

- One council looked at what the chair does, broke down the role to what was required, then had communication lead, grants lead, broke down exec roles, pulled from parent community to do the work, and came up with an equitable work strategy.
- Another council debated move to K- 8 school (Leslieville), provided a survey for parents, made sure it was translated, found that parents wanted K- 8 from the Chinese translation, heard and considered all voices.
- Another council had a pre-election meeting (had a full room), gave out all info on what members do, ended up with 35 voting members.
- Dinner at meetings bring councils together: starts earlier, parent paid to cook the meal, brings in more people and is inclusive.
- Queen Alexandra has a community event every February to get to know members of the community since it gets students from all across the city.
- Further suggestions: communicate with Chinese community, phone line where messages are translated and responded to, parent tea at Leslieville works, try not to make cultural assumptions, voice broadcast system (translation option available?).

Trustee Updates

- The board is not closing specialized programs and schools. The task force is looking at equity, feedback about equity in specialized schools, equity enrolment options. Some feel that specialized programs are not available to them (e- mail from John Malloy).
- Vision Zero is a comprehensive traffic safety plan. School zone safety proposals will take too long and many are pushing The City to accelerate the plan. Councillors in Toronto-Danforth are ready to meet with council on issue.
- The next ward forum is on EQAO with a prof from OISE. Standardized testing from an equity lens.

PIAC Update

- At PIAC meetings rep Cori will need to declare that she is TDSB staff member before every vote.