

Toronto District School Board  
Joint Ward Forum Ward 20 and Ward 21  
Hosted by Trustee Manna Wong (Ward 20) and Trustee Yalini Rajakulasingam (Ward 21)  
Meeting Notes  
Date and Time of Meeting: Thursday May 21, 2020 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
Held on WebEx

**Opening:**

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

**Present:** (Last names are organized in alphabetical order. Where name was not provided, the usernames of WebEx attendees are included)

015960  
036253  
037179  
041288  
063362  
079914  
082197  
Admin  
Board, Alison  
Cai, Feng  
Cheng, Gloria  
Donaldson, Jason  
Elaine  
Fisher, Helen (Superintendent)  
Ghafouri, Sahar  
Han, Zuojun (PIAC Representative)  
Holleley, Peter  
Home PC, Rey  
HP  
Lacobucci, Mary An  
Lakula  
Leisha  
Levien, Christopher (PIAC Representative)  
Mahar, Abhaydeep  
Maxine  
Miche  
Momhum  
Morgan, Audra  
Morgan, Audra  
Nicoll  
Nicoll  
Panagiotopoulos, Diana  
Rachel  
Radhika  
Rajah, Anujan (Shared Trustee Services)  
Rajakulasingam, Yalini (Trustee)  
Samina  
Samina  
Sheila  
Sprack, Marc (Superintendent)

Stadnyk, Kerry-Lynn (Superintendent)  
 Sui  
 Temi  
 Vijay  
 Ian Allison (Superintendent)  
 Wildman, Lesley  
 Wong, Manna (Trustee)  
 XPS  
 XPS  
 Zeng, Ham

### **Approval of Agenda:**

Both Trustees had approved the agenda prior to the meeting.

## **Minutes and Notes**

### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Trustee Wong at 7 pm. A board-approved Land Acknowledgement was read for the geographical areas of Ward 20 and 21. Trustee Wong introduced Anujan Rajah from Shared Trustee Services to host the meeting.

### **2. Welcome**

Anujan Rajah introduced himself and introduced attendees to the rules under which the meeting will be held.

### **3. Superintendent Updates**

Superintendent Helen Fisher provided the following updates

- Schools are closed until September
  - TDSB is looking at a summer learning option and will have more information soon
  - Over 55,000 devices have been delivered and are being sent out to homes
  - Board is still accepting requests for devices and families are asked to reach out to the principal(s) of their schools
  - Report cards will be sent to homes end of June and the grades of students can only improve from March (Grades will not and cannot be lowered)
  - High school graduation commencements are not cancelled, rather are postponed to the fall
  - Elementary schools will need to decide if graduations are cancelled or are postponed
- Access to schools to obtain personal items (shoes, books, items in lockers) are being worked out with the advice of Toronto Public Health

Superintendent Ian Alison provided the following updates

- The school board will implement a general process to access the buildings, based on advice from Toronto Public Health. The logistics will be carried out by individual schools to their needs and unique situations.

Superintendent Kerry-Lynn Stadnyk provided the following updates

- Social workers are providing a wide range of support for families, including mental health support, and access to food banks.
- Welcome to Kindergarten tours are being held online for incoming kindergarten classes

Superintendent Marc Sprack provided the following updates

- Schools are working with parent councils, student councils, community members to celebrate the achievements of our students

#### **4. Updates from PIAC Representatives**

- PIAC will continue to support schools in their efforts to continue learning while keeping students safe
- If there are any questions or concerns, PIAC representatives are available to help families.

#### **5. Remote Learning Experienced During School Closure**

Trustee Rajakulasingam shared her thoughts regarding remote learning.

- The delay in getting remote learning to function was due to the logistical steps that needed to be made. Obtaining devices for families who need them took some time. We are currently doing remote learning.
- Teachers have unique ways of teaching and, they are best suited to decide how the course contents will be delivered
- Information on local community partners who are providing support is available

Questions and Answers RE: Remote Learning

- How are grades evaluated? How is it possible for grades to go up?

Answer: If there are significant improvements to grades since March, then those will be included in the evaluation. If grades are the same or have gone down, then it will not be included in the assessments.

- Will social distancing be maintained in schools once schools are opened?

Answer: Based on the advice from Toronto Public Health, the TDSB will implement procedures to ensure our students are kept safe in September. A plan will be released from the Government of Ontario end of June regarding how schools will proceed in September.

- Why are learning processes unique per class? Why do we not have a board-wide policy to uniformize how classes will be delivered

Answer: Every student is living a different life, and many have barriers that prevent a 9 am to 3 pm class. To help address the various obstacles, teachers are given the flexibility to decide how courses will be delivered.

- Does my child need to all their assignments?

Answer: If students complete all their assignments, the grade *can* be improved, but the grade **will not** be reduced if they do not complete their assignments.

- My child is in grade 7. We are currently trying to manage the learning are continuing with the syllabus for grade 7. My question is, how will my child be graded and how this will impact my child's admission into a specialized high school program, as they assess grades from the second semester of grade 7?

Answer: Grades can only improve for this semester and cannot be reduced. The impacts of e-learning will not negatively impact your child's chances for admission into a specialized high school program.

## **6. Strategies on re-opening in September**

Trustee Wong acknowledged the uncertainties around reopening in September. The TDSB sent a letter requesting the Minister of Education to increase funding to address students' mental well-being in September. The province is yet to respond. Trustee Wong acknowledges that many issues need to be addressed before schools can open in September, including hygiene and cleanliness of schools, safe transportation of students in buses, and PPE availability. The priority of the TDSB is to prevent a further spread of COVID-19 and to reduce the chance of a second wave. Each school will assess their needs and situations to support students in September and will work with the board to address these needs.

Trustee Rajakulasingam acknowledged the need to support students during the pandemic with mental health services. Trustee Rajakulasingam also recognized the need to address the gaps and to better prepare for September to ensure students are safe and are healthy to learn.

- 1) Will students be asked to do the EQAO next year, as it was cancelled this year?

Answer: Based on the information available thus far, students who miss the EQAO and the OSSLT tests will not be required to do it next year. The province may decide otherwise in the future.

- 2) Will the summer courses be delivered in the same method as currently being used?

Answer: Teachers are free to utilize any method of teaching that works for them currently, and according there are many diverse methods being utilized currently. E-learning, which is different from remote learning, will have live teaching sessions. Summer courses will be delivered as with the e-learning method.

3) Will remote learning continue in September, if yes will there be live teaching methods utilized?

With the information available right now, schools are scheduled to hold in person classes in September. We are still learning from this experience and we are trying to improve how learning is done. Based on the information we are gathering now; we will continue to improve the learning. If it is decided we will continue remote learning in September, we will be ready and will continue provide the most equitable and accessible learning experience.

4) Will bell times be changed as previously planned for September?

Answer: At this time, we're not sure how the term is going to look, but everything will be considered as we do not have a set plan yet.

## **7. Wrap up and Adjournment**

Trustee Wong: Once again, I want to repeat that these are the challenges ahead of us, and we may have to deal with it again because nobody knows when we will be going back to school for a certain period of time. There is the possibility of a second wave, and there is much uncertainty ahead of us. We will continue working with families and with the different levels of government to make sure to provide the best environment. Lastly, I would encourage you to send me your feedback, your questions and your thoughts on how you think we should open. Thank you

Trustee Rajakulasingam: Thank you so much to all of our parents, guardians caregivers for all your feedback. I know this isn't an ideal situation for students and especially for families that have had been impacted in different ways by COVID-19, but we do value your feedback, and we are going to continue these conversations with our staff and with the other trustees to see how we can further support our students. Thank you so much to parents, our principals, teachers and superintendents.