

**Minutes**  
**Child Care in the Schools: An Evolving Partnership**  
**TDSB Ward 3 Ward Council**  
**January 19, 2017**  
**Islington JMS**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Ward 3 Trustee Pamela Gough welcomed everyone and acknowledged that the land beneath the building was the ancestral land of Indigenous peoples. Trustee Gough handed the meeting to Ward 3 Parent Representative Christy Heath who invited Islington JMS Principal, Rocco Coluccio to introduce the host school Islington Junior Middle School. Mr. Coluccio gave an overview of Islington's history and current program offerings. School Council Co-Chair Jeff Dick introduced himself and gave a further insight into Islington JMS. Islington School Council Co-Chair Ms. Surer Osoble shared her positive experiences with the school and welcomed the Ward Council.

Christy Heath did a quick survey of attendees to find out who was present representing child care centres, schools & parents. All groups were well represented.

**Reports and Updates:** Christy Heath introduced the Ward 3 TDSB Community Advisory Committee Representatives to give their respective updates:

**Parent Involvement Advisory Committee ( PIAC) - Trevor Burnett:** Trevor had four items to pass on:

1) Health and Wellbeing Parent Partnership Committee: On February 2nd at Rosedale Heights School, from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm, there will be a TDSB consultation on student wellbeing and a presentation on Mindful Parenting.

2) TDSB's Parenting and Community Engagement Office is looking to meet with parents, caregivers and families of Afro-Canadians to discuss their experiences in engaging with the school system. For information or to schedule a discussion contact Kera Vijayasingham [kera.vijayasingham@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:kera.vijayasingham@tdsb.on.ca) or Farrah Aslam [farrah.aslam@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:farrah.aslam@tdsb.on.ca) or connect with Twitter @TDSBBikFamilies.

3) TVO program, Predict My Future, The Science of Us, an excellent four part TV series looking at child development based on research from New Zealand's famous Dunedin study, in which a group of over 1000 people born in the same year in the 1970s have had their development intensively tracked as they grew into adulthood. Available [online](#) here.

4) Student Nutrition Program Grant Applications for 2017/18 school year are available [online](#) for schools wishing to apply to the city for a nutritious snack or meal program. Applications must be signed by principals and are due Friday February 10th, 2017.

**French as a Second Language Advisory Committee (FLSAC) - Melanie Amandasun:**

There are three new French Immersion locations opening next year in the TDSB (none in Ward 3). Extended French Grade 4 registration is now available online until February 1, and there was an information night on this program on Tuesday January 17th at Second Street JMS. Last fall, a gifted screening test (CCAT) was universally given to all grade 3 students in the TDSB for the first time. This will continue going forward in the TDSB. The test was given in English to the French Immersion students.

**Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) - Richard Carter:** Richard sent regrets.

**Trustee Pamela Gough's Report:**

Trustee Gough thanked all those present for coming to the ward meeting and noted that the topic of child care in schools is very timely since city council is at present considering eliminating the Occupancy Grant to the school boards in its upcoming budget. The Occupancy Grant funding from the city helps the schools to cover maintenance costs for the child care centres that are housed in them. The elimination of the Occupancy Grant will leave the school board with no recourse but to ask child care centres to recoup the lost funding from their own resources, which will mean an increase in child care fees to parents. Parents in Toronto already pay the highest child care fees of any city in Canada. The elimination of the Occupancy Grant will push fees up even higher, by an estimated \$350 per year per child. Currently fees are in the range of \$1,300 per month per pre-school child. This is like having a second mortgage.

Trustee Gough encouraged those with an opinion on this pending city child care budget cut to write, phone, or text their councillors, who are Mark Grimes in the area south of the Gardiner and Justin DiCiano in the area north of the Gardiner.

Other matters to report: congratulations to Wedgewood Jr. School for successfully convincing the city to bring in a speed reduction on Ashbourne Drive, a well travelled road close to the school. Ashbourne's speed will be reduced to 40 km/hour, making it safer for students travelling on foot or by cycle to school. Trustee Gough also pointed out that the City of Toronto has endorsed Vision Zero, which is a plan to reduce yearly traffic fatalities to zero through changing street design, reducing traffic speeds, and putting other measures in place to keep pedestrians and cyclists safe from collisions with vehicles. Many cities in Europe and several major cities in the US such as Seattle and NYC have put Vision Zero in place and have seen encouraging reductions in pedestrian accidents.

For further news, Trustee Gough encouraged everyone to sign on to her e-newsletter list in order to receive monthly "news you can use" on the TDSB. Sign-up can be done electronically through the trustee's website [here](#).

## **Ward Representative Christy Heath's Report**

Christy Heath made an announcement that Ward 3 is currently seeking an Alternate Representative for the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC). Anyone interested in finding out more should contact Trevor Burnett or Christy Heath through Trustee Pamela Gough.

### **Superintendent's Reports:**

**Tracy Hayhurst, Superintendent Learning Network 22:** Acknowledged and thanked Islington JMS Staff. Reminder that Jan. 20 is PA day where teachers are working on assessment, evaluation and reporting. Report cards will be coming out in February, and Parent/Teacher interviews are on February 16th & 17th (February 17th is next PA day). Parents, check out the Guide to Supporting your Child's Learning through Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reportCard.html> for more information on how to interpret a report card. Family Literacy Day is Friday January 27<sup>th</sup>. It's a day that encourages families to read and learn together.

**Sandra Tondat, Superintendent Learning Network 27:** There will be a live webcast with Director John Malloy and Executive Superintendent Uton Robinson regarding Special Education on February 2nd between 7 and 8:00 PM <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/>.

### **Main Agenda Item: Childcare in Schools an Evolving Partnership**

Trustee Gough introduced the evening's topic, Child Care in the Schools, an Evolving Partnership and introduced the keynote speaker:

#### **Colleen Russell-Rawlins, Executive Superintendent Learning Centre 3 & Early Years:**

Ms. Russell-Rawlins gave an overview of the changes that are happening with regard to child care that impact schools and allow children to have access to before and after school care. She introduced her associate Louise Humphreys, Child Care Services Manager who was assisting with the presentation. Ms. Russell-Rawlins' PowerPoint presentation is attached separately to this report.

**Child Care in the Schools Panel Participants:** Charlene Lyn, Financial Manager Park Lawn PreSchool inc., Rocco Coluccio, Principal of Islington JMS, LeeAnne Barrett, PLASP Area Manager for Islington School's Before and After School Program, Monica Jacobs, Principal of Seventh Street JS, Lisa Tjernstrom, Director of Lakeshore Child Care Centre at Seventh Street School.

Panelists gave brief introductions of themselves and programs that they work with. The audience was given a few minutes to talk and share with each other, then questions were taken:

**Question 1:** Has Islington JMS got child care programming?

**Rocco Coluccio** - We have three community programs for children that run out of our school. We have a before and after school child care program run by PLASP that uses space in the school to ensure a seamless transition through the school day to after school. Also Islington houses a provincially-funded Family Literacy Centre for infants and preschool children with their parents or caregivers, who experience a stimulating early childhood program with an Early Childhood Educator in the school during the school day. We also have an active Community School program run by City of Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation, offering registered recreation programs after school and on Saturdays. Also we have March Break Programs run through the City of Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation.

**Question 1 continued:** I have one child in Early French Immersion here at Islington and an older child in Grade 3. This school is like a second home to our family. I would like my older child to go to the Extended French program next year. Is there any chance that Extended French will be offered at Islington in the near future so they can stay at the same school?

**Rocco Coluccio-** Our French Immersion Program which begins in SK is now it's third year so we have classes from SK to Grade 2 and each year the next grade will be added as the program grows. However we do not have Extended French here at Islington JMS so your older child, if enrolled in Extended French, would have to be bussed to Briarcrest Junior School.

**LeeAnne Barrett:** Because Islington is your child's home school, your child would be picked up and dropped off here and therefore, would qualify for the PLASP before and after school care at Islington, even if your older child is enrolled at Briarcrest.

**Question 2:** I am a volunteer board member of a local community based child care centre. I'm interested in learning more about the city's potential elimination of the Child Care Occupancy Grant to the school boards. What is the methodology for determining the impact on fees and, what changes can we expect if this City of Toronto budget cut goes through?

**Charlene Lyn:** During amalgamation, the occupancy grant was created to provide support for child care centres in the schools by alleviating lease costs through funding by the City of Toronto. The city provides funds to the TDSB based on a per square footage cost for the space that the child care centres are using in the school. Under the initial umbrella agreement, \$6.53 per square foot is the cost for school space used by child care centres. Non-child care lease holders in TDSB pay \$11.00 per square foot. If the City removes the Occupancy Grant then the client families not on subsidy will have to cover the extra lease costs to the TDSB through increased fees. Before and After School Care for 4-12 year olds will be charged on a cost recovery basis so their charge per square foot will be \$11.00. This will be for shared space in the school.

**Louise Humphreys:** Child cares using shared space in the school do not get charged the lease cost from September to June however, no matter what the lease fee, if the City takes away the Occupancy Grant those costs will have to be absorbed by the child care centres through fees, increasing the cost of child care for the families.

**Charlene Lyn:** Here is a real life example from one of our child care centres. Calculating the exclusive space for two rooms at one site at 2222 square feet, 39 children would have to share those costs at \$2.19 per day so \$47.63 per month would be added to their existing fees. If there

were fewer children, these costs would go up. This does not take into consideration whether they would have to pay for other spaces in the school like shared staff rooms, kitchens and laundry rooms. A lot of details are currently unresolved.

**Colleen Russell-Rawlins:** So there is a lot we don't know. Centres and parents are asking questions and at present there are no clear answers, only estimates. We all agree that child care is incredibly expensive. We need to look at other ways to bring down the costs. That is an ongoing conversation. Are we expanding the number of child care spaces overall in Ontario, but restricting them to only a select group of people who can afford the costs?

**Question 3:** What is the timing on all of this? If fee increases for before and after school child care are being implemented in September, do we know when we will have answers so we can plan?

**Colleen Russell-Rawlins:** I can't say at this time. We can only give ball park estimate as to what fee increases would be.

**Charlene Lyn:** The City has asked us to ball park our figures but each daycare will make their own decision as to how those fees will be dispersed. The Occupancy Grant has been on the table for elimination in previous years as a budget reduction measure and historically the city backed off and did not cut the Occupancy Grant. That's not to say that the City will back off this year however. It is a very real possibility that the Occupancy Grant will be removed.

**Question 4:** Is shared space in schools for Before and After School Care for 4-12 year olds now mandated? How will it be implemented in the schools in which space is currently not shared before and after school? What happens if there is opposition from a principal to opening up that shared classroom space?

**Colleen Russell-Rawlins:** That is part of the change brought in by the new legislation. We are still struggling to convert hearts and minds with principals on the issue of shared school space. The decision does not rest with the principal. It will be a shared decision between parents, the school, and the City of Toronto Child Care Services. The decision will be made based on community needs, programs currently existing in the community, and programs currently in the school. Based on that data, decisions will be made as to whether or not a before and after school program is needed at a particular school.

**Question 4 Con't:** At our school, the child care has a large wait list so we know there is a need. Will the school space have to be made available or does the child care provider get a say as to whether the child care operator wants to run the expanded before and after school program, which entails hiring more staff, expanding the programming, etc..?

**Colleen Russell-Rawlins:** There is now a legislated responsibility to bring before and after school programs into the schools where demand exists. Our challenge is limited capacity in the smaller schools. It will mean having to navigate between competing needs for after school extra-curricular programs and child care programs.

**Lisa Tjernstrom:** Our challenge is hiring people to run these programs. It requires working a split shift. And for child care professionals trying to earn good money it is difficult to work a split shift and earn a good living.

Some discussion on waitlists ensued. Generally there is a lot of work to be done to support all parties involved in the expansion of before and after school care. Parental input on this matter will be sought in the near future but the means has not yet been determined.

**Question 5, Trustee Pamela Gough:** How is the TDSB going to communicate information on this matter to parents of children in the schools and to parents with preschool children?

**Colleen Russell-Rawlins:** We are about to embark on Kindergarten registration so we will have a means to get info out to parents that way, since surveys are done each year to determine the need for child care from kindergarten parents. The answer is that every school is different so we need to engage in different forms of communication for each school and program.

**Question 6:** Our school has a child care centre with two locations. If the existing child care centre does not have the means to meet the requirements of the new legislation, will another provider be able to come in?

**Louise Humphreys:** We will be working with the operators of the child cares and the school principals to try and expand existing programs to meet the needs of the families. We need to find the balance between the needs of the schools, the child care centres, and the community.

## **Wrap Up**

**Trustee Pamela Gough** reiterated that the Occupancy Grant has not yet been withdrawn by City Council. The decision will be made in February 2017. City Council has tried to withdraw this grant before but has reversed its stance when many stakeholders lobbied against it. Letters, phone calls and emails do make a difference and will be listened to by most politicians, who ultimately want to make decisions in the best interests of their constituents.

If you want to voice your opinion to your City Councillor, for Etobicoke Lakeshore's area north of the Queensway your councillor is Councillor Justin DiCiano who can be reached [here](#).

For Etobicoke Lakeshore's area south of the Queensway your councillor is Councillor Mark Grimes who can be reached [here](#).

You can also contact the Mayor, John Tory [here](#)

And the Chair of the Budget Committee, Gary Crawford [here](#)

## **Closing Matters**

Trustee Gough thanked all panelists, speakers, and attendees. The next ward council meeting will be on March 2 at Second Street School, 7 pm. The topic will be the TDSB's budget for the upcoming year and the Long Term School Program and Accommodation Plan.

The meeting was wrapped up with gifts of appreciation to the panelists and the drawing of door prizes.

