



Trustee Pamela Gough's Update: December 8, 2015

As we enter the active holiday season, the schools become very busy places! I would like to wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday season. I hope that you take some time to relax and enjoy the break with family, friends and loved ones. Please note that the last day of school is December 18, 2015 and school resumes again on January 4, 2016.

My holiday reading is going to include a book that was co-authored by Lanor Jr. Middle School's Principal, Alison Gaymes San Vicente: "Restacking the Deck-Streaming by class, race and gender in Ontario schools". Ms. Gaymes San Vicente is also involved in the provincial team that is rewriting the curriculum for one of the Ontario principals' courses. Principals such as this who are active researchers and practice leaders create a dynamic environment for learning to occur for both students and staff. We are very fortunate in the TDSB to have committed, hard-working principals who are exceptional leaders. My thanks to all of them as this challenging first academic term comes to a close.

In this issue:

- 1. Hall advisory panel report**
- 2. Trustees gain new vice-chair, maintain Robin Pilkey as chair**
- 3. Education and the path to reconciliation: panel discussion Dec. 10**
- 4. ESA hosts guest speaker on supporting your LGBTQ teen Dec. 8**
- 5. Upcoming ward council on special education Jan. 12**
- 6. Ward-wide Safe Routes to School Committee**
- 7. Ecoschools: Applying for bike racks, water refill stations, school greening**
- 8. Public consultation on TDSB draft policies Jan. 21**
- 9. Severe weather procedures**
- 10. Local specialized program application dates**

1. Hall advisory panel report

Last Friday, December 4, the Ministry of Education posted the long-awaited [Hall Advisory Panel report](#), apparently in error, and quickly deleted it. It was re-released in the evening. This report makes a number of recommendations as to how the TDSB should be governed. It was written last summer after a series of public consultations, but not released due to the problematic labour situation that the Ministry of Education and the Ontario school boards were dealing with. The TDSB trustees have not yet had time to discuss the Hall Advisory Panel report at a board meeting or reach out for a response to the community.

Given that half the board of trustees is new as of Oct. 2014 and many recent steps to improve governance have been taken since last spring, it is not clear to what extent the Ministry of Education will agree with, or implement the Hall Panel recommendations. My own opinion is that much depends on the new director and whether the provincial government is ready to venture into the expensive territory of

reorganizing the TDSB into smaller administrative units. The chronic provincial underfunding of TDSB's school infrastructure was not dealt with by the panel, and it would be difficult to justify millions of dollars going into building new administrative centres or breaking up the board as suggested by the panel, if the underfunded \$3B+ TDSB school facilities budget is not addressed. More to come.

2. Trustees maintain Robin Pilkey as chair, elect new vice-chair

At the TDSB's yearly Organizational Board meetings, trustees move around on the main committees. On December 1, Trustee Robin Pilkey was re-established as Chair of the Board and Trustee Jennifer Arp was elected Vice Chair. As your representative, I am active on a number of central committees, including:

- Programs and School Services Standing Committee
- City-School Boards Advisory Committee
- Aboriginal Community Advisory Committee
- Special Education Advisory Committee
- Environmental Stewardship Community Advisory Committee
- Health and Mental Well-Being Committee

I welcome feedback on all matters pertaining to these committees. For schedules and agendas, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/boardroom.

3. Education and the path to reconciliation: panel discussion Dec. 10

On Thursday, Dec. 10, the TDSB's Aboriginal Education Centre is hosting a panel discussion on the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. I will be a panelist along with Dr. Duke Redbird, Elders Joanne Dallaire and Blu Waters, TDSB Director Donna Quan, and Aboriginal Education Centre educator Tanya Senk. Join me for this critical conversation to discuss the transformation needed to redress the legacy of the residential schools and advance reconciliation.

When: 5-7 pm, Thursday December 10, 2015

Where: The TDSB Aboriginal Education Centre, 90 Croatia Street, Auditorium (Bloor-Dufferin)

4. ESA hosts guest speaker on supporting your LGBTQ teen Dec. 8

ESA's school council is hosting a parent education evening featuring Toronto PFLAG (Parents, Families, Friends and Allies of Toronto's LGBTQ community). Toronto PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of the LGBTQI community and their families and friends. Representatives of PFLAG will attend ESA to connect with an informal gathering of interested parents. PFLAG offers a supportive space to ask questions and learn from the experience of others. All welcome. PFLAG also invites anyone in need of immediate support to call their 24-hour telephone support line at [\(416\) 406-6378](tel:416-406-6378).

When: 7-9 pm, December 8, 2015

Where: Etobicoke School of the Arts Library, 675 Royal York Rd (Royal York/Queensway area)

5. Upcoming ward council on special education Jan. 12

My next ward council meeting's theme is "Special education: not one size fits all". Keynote speaker Wendy Roberts, Vice-Principal of Special Education, will give a presentation outlining special education followed by a Q and A session. All are welcome. School council chairs and ward representatives are especially invited to attend and network. Childminding will be provided. RSVP please if bringing children to pamela.gough@tdsb.on.ca so we know numbers in advance.

When: 7-8:45 pm, Tuesday January 12, 2016

Where: Second Street JMS, 71 Second Street (near Dwight Ave and Lake Shore Blvd. W.)

6. Ward-wide Safe Routes to School Committee

"Most mornings, my daughters and I walk to school. It is half a mile from our house. Twelve hundred and fifty footsteps. It is often my favorite 15 minutes of the day." Dan Rubenstein from *Born to Walk: The Transformative Power of the Pedestrian Act*.

Many parents understand the health benefits of walking/cycling to school for children. It's an easy way for them to get part of the hour of physical activity each day they need. A common theme among almost all school councils I attend is a concern about road safety for children. I have formed a ward-wide Safe

Routes to School Committee that will help create safer ways for children to get to school and back actively. If you are interested, email me at pamela.gough@tdsb.on.ca. Local ways to take action on street safety and active transportation will be an agenda item at the next ward council meeting Jan. 12th.

7. Ecoschools: Applying for bike racks, water refill stations, schoolyard greening

The implementation of the TDSB Charter for Active Safe and Sustainable Transportation is underway. The TDSB Ecoschools Cycling Support program is developing new ways to help schools develop a culture of cycling by providing infrastructure and programming support. Visit the [Ecoschools cycling supports website](#) to find out how to apply for bike racks to be installed this fall. Soon to come: opportunities to have a free skills-based cycling education program presented at your school.

Water Bottle Refill Stations: Plastic water bottles are expensive, take a lot of energy to make and transport, plus they last 400 years in landfill. The TDSB is encouraging students and staff to bring portable refillable water bottles. Send a message of environmental stewardship and go from landfill to refill by applying [here](#) for a free Oasis water bottle refill station in your school for fall 2016.

Schoolyard Greening: in March 2015, the TDSB approved new guidelines for schoolyard greening and landscaping projects. EcoSchools has resources to help schools with smaller projects such as building outdoor classrooms, or larger scale multiple-year partner-funded projects. Find out more and book a schoolyard design consultation at no cost [here](#).

8. Public consultation on TDSB draft policies Jan. 21

Due to new guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, the TDSB is revising its policies on Pupil Accommodation Reviews and Community Planning and Partnerships. Several public meetings will be held and feedback from parents and community members is welcomed. Draft policies will be posted on the TDSB website shortly and feedback can be sent to accommodationreviews@tdsb.on.ca. The local meeting will take place as follows and all are welcome:

When: Thursday Jan. 21, 6:00-8:00 pm.

Where: Martingrove CI, Library, 50 Winterton Drive, Etobicoke (Martingrove/Eglinton)

9. Severe weather

From time to time it is necessary to cancel student transportation, classes and/or programs due to severe weather. On rare occasions, severe weather makes it necessary to close schools, administrative offices or sites. This decision is not taken lightly. When schools remain open on days with inclement weather, parents/guardians make the final decision on whether to send their children to school and they can keep children home from school if they so choose. For more information on our severe weather policy, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/aboutus/severeweather.

In the event that transportation is cancelled or schools are closed, local media will be informed before the beginning of the school day. Tune to local media for the latest information, visit www.tdsb.on.ca or check twitter.com/tdsb.

10. Upcoming local specialized program application dates

Middle School Arts Program

Karen Kain School of the Arts (Queensway/Royal York area)

Entry grade: 6

Apply by: **Thursday December 11, 2015**

Elementary Sports and Wellness Program

James S. Bell Sports and Wellness Academy (JK to Grade 8)

Entry grade: JK

Apply by: **January 29, 2016**

Junior Extended French Program (Entry grade: 4)

Second Street JMS (Mimico area)
Information night: 7 pm, January 6, 2015
Apply between: January 4 – 28, 2016

Enriched Secondary Academic Programs: Pre-Advanced Placement (Grade 9)

Lakeshore Collegiate (New Toronto)
Apply by: January 12, 2016

For more education news, go to my [website](#) or follow me on Twitter @pamelagough! I welcome feedback.

