



Weekly Update – April 12, 2015
Items of Interest

Consultations on the Toronto District School Board

“We want to hear your ideas and input on ways to improve the governance structure at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB)”... as so it begins... again. On Wednesday, Minister Sandals announced further details with regards to public consultations as part of the province review of the governance structure at the TDSB. People have been invited to attend in-person sessions at locations across Toronto – I will be at the session tomorrow at the North Toronto Community Centre. Individuals will also be able to share their thoughts online at <http://consultationsontdsb.ca/consultations-on-tdsb>. I am really hopeful many of you will be able to publicize this chance as we welcome any opportunity for the community to share their ideas about the TDSB... however, all of them, except size, could be asked of any school board... As President of the Ontario Public School Boards Association Michael Barrett wrote to the Chairs of the other 31 public boards, “Although the advisory panel is looking at TDSB-specific governance issues, I encourage your board to consider submitting a response that supports the role of the democratically elected local trustee. As demonstrated in our promotional work for last fall’s municipal and school board elections, OPSBA believes in the value of trustees and the important work they contribute to public education and the success and well-being of all students.”

FYI, the questions they are asking are in two categories –
Creating a Supportive and Inclusive Culture

Trustees and senior administrators of the TDSB have a leadership responsibility to create a positive working and learning culture for all staff and students of the board. Consider these questions:

1. How can the TDSB build a positive climate marked by mutual respect and trust between and among trustees and staff?
2. In what ways should the TDSB reach out to families, especially those who may not feel welcome now or in the past?
3. Currently, the TDSB is divided into 22 wards, and voters elect one trustee to represent their ward. Although each trustee is accountable to their local constituents, they are required to act in the broader interest of the board as a whole. All school boards have the option to elect their trustees at large (i.e. all voters can vote for all trustees of the board). What would be the benefits or the disadvantages if the community elected their trustees at large?

Ensuring the Success and Well-Being of All Students

Effective school boards create the conditions for meaningful, authentic and equitable learning opportunities for all students. They have a responsibility to act in the best interests of the whole board while balancing the needs of local communities. Consider these questions:

1. What would signal to you that the Board of Trustees is governing in the interests of all students?
2. How could the board ensure that decisions are made in a manner that provides equity of access for all students in the board?
3. How can trustees stay connected to their communities and act in the interests of all students of the board?
4. How can the TDSB ensure that parents and students know how to get their concerns addressed in a timely way and follow the appropriate channels?



5. The TDSB is the largest school board in Canada with more than 240,000 students, 22 trustees, and over 45 senior executives and superintendents. What are the benefits of the TDSB being a large board? What works well?
6. What are the challenges of the TDSB being a large board? What does not work well? What changes would you recommend to address these challenges?

School Safety and Engaged Communities Report (from the TDSB Website)

In October 2014, a steering team was established to conduct an independent review into the circumstances surrounding the death of a student inside North Albion CI. In addition, the team also reviewed how the TDSB can be responsive and current to best support safety and care for all students and staff, both before and after critical incidents. The steering team consulted with over 500 people and held two public community forums and received over 35 written submissions from staff and members of the public.

The steering team's final report contains 41 recommendations for actions in the following four areas:

1. Crisis Response;
2. Caring and Safe Environments;
3. Policies, Procedures and Practices for School Safety; and,
4. Community Engagement and Support.

Though tragedies such as this are difficult for all of us, we continue to work together to tackle the complex issues that result in community violence.”

We will be discussing the Report at our board meeting Wednesday. Should you have any comments, do not hesitate to let me know beforehand. To read the full report, click on [School Safety Engaged Communities Report](#).

Fundraising – Confirming the Facts

The amount of fundraising reported in this weekend's paper, like the article in last year's paper and the year before that is often skewed – these amounts reflect school accounts which include more than parent-driven, community based funds – for example, funds raised for field trips, school trips, school photos, year books, Terry Fox and other charitable fundraisers, Agendas/Planners, etc. These items tend to come into and then go out of school accounts when the event occurs or the bills are paid. The TDSB is fully aware that fundraising activities do take place and has taken into consideration regional demographics, community composition and differing socio-economic conditions by giving additional resources that help address the disparity in fundraising among schools. We distribute a \$1.5 million central fund based on a school's learning opportunity index (LOI). The LOI ranks TDSB schools based on measures of external challenges affecting student success. This is in addition to the supports that are provided to model schools through increased resources, budgets and staffing. Many schools also take advantage of partnerships with charitable foundations that fund specific school initiatives in lower socio-economic areas. And it is a point of pride that many parents who support the foundations of equity and diversity in this city are troubled by the sharp inequities in fundraising among schools in different communities and put aside a percentage of fundraising dollars to donate to specific projects in another school or hold events specifically to donate to a “sister” school in elementary or a charitable organization in secondary. This gives parents and students choice and puts a human/social face on a process that otherwise just feels like giving more money to the board or excusing the province from fully funding education. As I wrote in the November Toronto Post,



“Pooling of fundraising dollars across the system has been considered in the past, as it is a logical solution to inequity, but there are real concerns that parents would be less generous if they knew the money wasn't going to their child's school directly and, as a result, everyone loses.”

Ontario Special Needs <http://www.specialneedsroadmaps.ca/>

I draw your attention once again to this website – the brainchild of two parents of children with special needs from the Ottawa area who created the Ontario Special Needs Roadmap for school – this is a wonderful resource as their website notes “to help empower other special needs parents through knowledge.” All their visuals are on their Pinterest Site <https://www.pinterest.com/ontariospecialn/>- they are really worth checking out.

The Future of our Schools <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/ourschools/Home.aspx> @OurSchoolsTDSB

A reminder... TDSB new website and twitter worth following...

“Deciding the future of one of our schools is not an easy decision or a simple conversation, but it is an important one. The 10 year strategy is our plan for talking with school communities about the future of our buildings, our programs and how all students can have access to high-quality learning spaces.

Do we recognize that some schools may need to close...yes. But, we also know that once a school is sold, we can never get it back. We have asked for a roundtable with provincial and municipal leaders in Toronto to start a collaborative process for planning school spaces in our communities and to bring the parties responsible for green space and childcare to the table. This site will provide you with the information you need to join us in this conversation.” **Also worth following is** <http://fixourschools.ca/> @Fix_Our_Schools – a grassroots parent initiated group with the vision that “every TDSB student should attend school in safe, well-maintained buildings and that public schools should be considered an integral part of our public infrastructure – on par with roads, transit and water.”

Motions to Board Wednesday

Agenda at <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/AgendaMinutes.aspx>

There are two motions coming this week that are of interest to all –

▪ **Acknowledgement re Ancestral Lands**

That the Board begin each meeting with a customary acknowledgement that the meeting is situated upon traditional territories, which include the Wendat, Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee (HOE DENA SHOW NEE) Confederacy, the Mississaugas of Scugog, Hiawatha, Alderville First Nations and the Métis Nation. The meeting shall also recognize the enduring presence of Aboriginal peoples.

▪ **International Walk to School Day**

That International Walk to School Day be added to the Days of Significance in the TDSB calendar in 2015 and all subsequent years, and celebrated system-wide as a symbol of the importance of active, safe and sustainable transportation.

New Invitations

▪ **NT School Council Speaker Series Presents: Understanding Learning Disabilities and How They Affect Youth Wednesday, April 15, 2015 from 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Room 215, N.T.C.I.**

Kate Cressman from the Child Development Institute where she works as a Community Education & Engagement Facilitator. Kate will take us through an experiential workshop called Walk a Mile in My



Shoes where you'll learn about the current thinking in the field of learning disabilities and develop an understanding of how they can affect the mental health and everyday life of our youth.

- **FHCI School Council: Please join us for our 2015 Educational Evening on Tuesday, April 28th at 7:00 pm in the school library, featuring the distinguished Dr. Stuart Shanker, speaking on: "Help! My Teen is Stressed -- Innovative Ways to Help De-Stress Your Teenager".** Please RSVP to fhschoolcouncil@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

- **Cedarvale Marketplace at Cedarvale Public School, 145 Ava Road** Friday, April 17, 4-8pm and Saturday, April 18, 10am-4pm
- **Model Schools for Inner Cities 2015 Parent Academy Conference - By Parents for Parents – Education, Empowerment and Employment;** East – Saturday, April 18 at Cedarbrae CI 10:00-2:30; West – Saturday, April 25 at Thisletown CI 10:00-2:30 - Both locations will offer light breakfast, lunch, transportation, child-minding, interpreters. To register click on <https://surveys.tdsb.on.ca/index.php?r=survey/index/sid/887835/lang/en>
- **Registration is now open for the 2015 TDSB Healthy Schools 5k Run/Walk Saturday May 23, 2015, Downsview Park** –Register at www.tdsb.on.ca/5k
- **E-Summer School** provides flexibility by being available 24/7 to fit students' schedules. Get the details at: <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/eLearning> and check out this video on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ftk7oRjdbI>
- **Evergreen Canada's Tips on Taking Active Transportation to School and Beyond**
- Students who walk, roll, or take other forms of active transportation to and from school experience many benefits. Check our [Active & Safe Routes to School guide for parents](#)
- **Clean Toronto Together – Friday, April 17th at 2pm** On Friday, April 17th at 2 pm, students from across Toronto are encouraged to help rejuvenate our city's green spaces by picking up litter in their school yard or neighbourhood park. Schools can register by filling out the [School Clean-Up Day form](#). For registration details, resources, and campaign updates visit the [TDSB's Clean Toronto Together campaign webpage](#). You'll be amazed at what we can accomplish in as little as 20 minutes!
- **Legislative Page Program – Apply before June 15** The program is open to students who are in Grade 7 or 8, have very good grades (80% or higher), are involved with their school or in their community, have an interest in current events and get along well with other students and adults E-mail: page_program@ontla.ola.org.
- **Humewood – Supporting Your Child Series - 15 Cherrywood Ave**
The Humewood community has invited parents in WR08 to join them for a series of info meetings: Talking with Your Teen, April 23, 6:00pm, presented by Toronto Public Health, Register: <http://goo.gl/forms/nV26n95oc5> Child minding available upon request. Please email Barbara.Sandler@tdsb.on.ca to register for child minding.
- **Parent and Community Engagement Office Workshops**
Workshops on "Running an Effective School Council and Secondary Transitions". For workshop dates and locations visit: [Workshops](#).
- **The OTIP Teaching Awards** Deadline for submitting nominations is March 31, 2015. <http://en.teachingawards.ca/>



Hold the Dates for Future Ward Forums

- **May 21 – Topic TBC**

Board & Committee Meetings

- SEAC, April 13, 2015, 7 p.m.
- PIAC, April 14, 2015, 6:30 p.m.
- Regular Board Meeting, April 15, 7 p.m.
- Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee, April 16, 2015, 7 p.m.
- FSLAC, April 21, 2015, 7 p.m.
- Human Resources & Professional Learning Committee, April 22, 2015, 5 p.m.
- Community Use of Schools Advisory Committee, April 23, 2015, 9 a.m.
- Equity Policy Advisory Committee, April 23, 2015, 6 p.m.
- Program & School Services Committee, April 29, 2015, 5 p.m.

2014-2015 School Year Calendar

TDSB's school year calendars are on Google Calendar (add to yours!).

Elementary: <http://t.co/SRsjzPYgI> + Secondary: <http://t.co/s1sWVP0naB>

Victoria Day May 18, 2015

Elementary School PA Day June 5, 2015

Secondary School PA Day June 24*, 25, 2015

Board-wide PA Day June 26, 2015

* High School Semester Change: The first day of second semester is 30 January 2015. The seven days noted for secondary school include a PA day only for semestered schools on 29 January 2015 and a PA Day for full-year schools only on 24 June 2015.

Before scheduling events, please check the TDSB Days of Significance Calendar

[2014 - 2015 Days of Significance](#)

School Year 2015-2016 Dates to Remember - School Year Holidays (as per Ministry of Education)

Labour Day: September 7, 2015

First Day of School: September 8, 2015

Thanksgiving: October 12, 2015

Christmas Break: December 21, 2015 – January 1, 2016

Family Day: February 15, 2016

Mid-Winter Break: March 14-18, 2016

Good Friday: March 25, 2016

Easter Monday: March 28, 2016

Victoria Day: May 23, 2016

Last Day: June 29, 2016 (Elementary) June 27, 2016 (Secondary)

If you no longer wish to receive these weekly e-mails, please let me know at shelley.laskin@tdsb.on.ca