

October 12, 2014

Items of Interest from Trustee Shelley Laskin, Ward 11

Website click on [Trustee Shelley Laskin](#)

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Global Cities Education Network (GCEN) Symposium

Last week, the TDSB hosted the Global Cities Education Network (GCEN). The GCEN is a network of urban school systems in North America and Asia that are focused on challenges and improvements that are common to them, specifically the need to develop and sustain a high quality teaching force, and the need to improve educational outcomes for linguistically and culturally diverse students. The network is intended as a professional learning community of education leaders to collaboratively design and deliver internationally-informed solutions to 21st century learning. Each cycle involves knowledge sharing and problem-solving at the annual GCEN Symposium with the overarching goal to develop practical wisdom from and share best practices with member cities – Chicago, Denver, Hong Kong, Melbourne, Seattle, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, and Toronto.

Key features of the Symposium are visits to schools and educational institutions to experience and observe learning, programs and school improvement work, and a Public Forum that brings together the city's students, parents, teachers, leaders and politicians to engage in rich discussion on 21st century competencies. I was very proud that Cedarvale was included in the tours.

I had the pleasure of attending the public forum, moderated by Tony Mackay, CEO Center for Strategic Education, Melbourne. It featured education leaders from Melbourne, Singapore, Shanghai and Kentucky. The following is a series of tweets from the Conference and frankly, it was one of the best professional development sessions I have ever attended. I am looking forward to following up with senior staff on how to move forward for the sake of our students.

- Looking forward to Global Cities Education Community with school districts in Asia and North America #gcec14
- What will it take for 21st Century learning? #gcen2014 #tdsb hosting... discussions beginning
- What roles does governance play for student achievement & well-being? I would argue through leadership it matters! It matters! #gcen2014
- Nine global cities are represented here #gcen2014 Room is full of educators from around the world...
- 3 parts to conversation... the "what" of learning; the "how" of organizing learning systems; and both in the spirit of equity & inclusion #gcen2014
- In Singapore, "move away from doing math to thinking math"... disciplines remain the same, but re imagine... deeper learning #gcen2014
- Values, Social & Emotional and Emerging Competencies... 1. information, communication & collaboration; 2. Critical and innovative thinking ... and
- 3. civic literacy, global literacy and cross-cultural skill; these build students who are purposeful, active contributors
- And students who are concerned citizens, self-directed and confident... #gcen2014 Does Singapore have it right?
- Interesting to learn similar conversation in Kentucky #gcen2014 diversity is changing rapidly... 93 languages spoken... more than 50% poverty... focus on equity
- Don't teach the content separate or apart from skills... ``critical thinking`` while teaching math or science!
- Love Kentucky analogy "Equal is everyone gets new shoes; equity is everyone's shoes fit" #gcen2014... teach Japanese, Chinese & Spanish K-12

- Australia next... #gcn2014 Curriculum reform movement... pays homage to disciplines...but so are skills... and now indigenous peoples critical focus
- Hong Kong is a leader #gcn2014 ranks high in PISA... measure abilities though, not knowledge... moving away from economic discourse...key
- Hong Kong #gcn2014 societal change; not human resources but human beings - need more than knowledge & skills; prepare young people for life
- Hong Kong - prepare children not students... compress formal subjects to enhance learning experiences not outcomes... #gcn2014
- Hong Kong has added "liberal studies" without assessment... #gcn2014 learning current affairs and global awareness...
- In today's digital world content is a "commodity" because of digital world #gcn2014 "split screen" with focus on learning not teaching
- What actual is "creative or critical thinking"? #gcn2014 important to develop continuum of learning - evidence of learning from Melbourne
- Singapore creates creative tension for teachers to want to develop the competencies...#gcn2014 important to "show" experiential learning
- Singapore new forms of assessment - oral, on-the-spot, portfolios, etc... if you assess must be important! Design the environment #gcn2014
- Hong Kong - 2 principles - reform, not improvement; wisdom with the teachers, not with us - share questions, not answers - PLCS #gcn2014
- PD in Hong Kong brought 6 from each school together... 72 groups over 2 years... prior to the reform implementation #gcn2014
- School system has to move from industrial model as a mechanism to get a job to the opposite... liberate people to face the future #gcn2014
- Tremendous inspiration and learnings at #gcn2014... students as active learners... building on strengths of each other...
- Learning from "spectacular failures"
- Do kids even know what failure is until they enter school
- I wish all parents and teachers and staff were here #gcn2014... education is everybody's business #tdsb
- Cross-sector collaboration: the key to unlocking youth potential | Guardian Professional <http://buff.ly/1vNjs3e>
- Great question asked: we talk ab the skills youth need/curriculum changes but how do we empower teachers to change their teaching methods?
- Hong Kong focused on learning experiences vs. outcomes in its education reform, incl a non-graded liberal studies subject
- Free teachers to allow them the space and time to collaborate - "set the zoo on fire"
- From our presenters: "Great collaboration is about shared values, capacity building and meeting the needs of the community."

At the end of the visit, the Director noted "All staff from across the system should be proud of the positive feedback about TDSB schools, programing and the leadership occurring in our schools every day." I know I am. For more information on the GCEN, please click on <http://asiasociety.org/education/learning-world/global-cities-education-network>.

October is Skilled Trades Month

There are a number of events taking place across the system culminating on November 3, with the Skilled Trades Summit which will be hosted at the Ontario Science Centre. Students from Grades 7 to 12 will be invited to network with industry, college and training partners, as well as students in Technological Education classes who will demonstrate their learning as it relates to skills and knowledge integral to the Skilled Trades. For more information, please click on [Skilled Trades Month](#).

High School Information Nights

Parents are encouraged to attend their home school's Grade 8 Information Evening as well as the Information Evening at other schools you are interested in. The information evenings are listed on the TDSB website. Click on [Open Houses and Information Nights](#).

Homework Help for students grades 7-10

This free, online service is available for Ontario students in grades 7 to 10. Homework Help is run by TVO's Digital Education Division, with support from the Ontario government. [Homework Help](#) provides live one-on-one tutoring with Ontario Certified math teachers every Sunday to Thursday, from 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm ET. To learn more about this free service funded by the Ministry of Education visit Homework Help at ontario.ca/homeworkhelp.

Early French Immersion (SK entry)

The Early Immersion Program begins in Senior Kindergarten. It offers 100% French instruction in the classroom until the end of grade 3, although some specialist subjects may be taught in English. English instruction is gradually introduced beginning in grade 4 until it becomes a half-day program from Grades 6-8. Designated school pathways exist to ensure that students have a continuation of program from the SK entry to the end of grade 12. There are 56 schools across the TDSB that offer entry to the Early Immersion Program. **The application system for Early French Immersion (SK Entry) will open on November 3, 2014. Deadline for applications for this program is December 5th, 2014. Click on [http://secure.tdsb.on.ca/pars/\(S\(xvaj3t45nwodmm55vkb0ct45\)\)/public/welcome.aspx](http://secure.tdsb.on.ca/pars/(S(xvaj3t45nwodmm55vkb0ct45))/public/welcome.aspx)**

The attendance area for an Early French Immersion program is created by a group of "associated" English feeder schools. To locate the Early French Immersion school in your area, you must first confirm the English school for your home address, then visit our French Immersion Location Finder. Note: Attendance areas as well as associated feeder schools for Early French Immersion programs may be changed at any time in accordance with Board policy and procedures.

Information Nights are scheduled as follows:

- Davisville PS 43 Millwood Rd 416-393-0570 November 4, 2014 7:00 pm
- Humewood PS 15 Cherrywood Ave 416-394-2383 November 18, 2014 6:30 pm
- John Fisher PS 40 Erskine Ave 416-393-9325 November 18, 2014 7:00 pm
- Rawlinson CS 231 Glenholme Ave 416-394-3080 November 17, 2014 6:30 pm

For a complete list of Information Evenings, please click on:

<http://tdsb.on.ca/ElementarySchool/SchoolChoices/FrenchPrograms/InformationEvenings.aspx>

Note - The application period for Junior Extended French or Middle Immersion (Grade 4 Entry) is between January 5th and January 29th, 2015.

TDSB Celebrates International Day of the Girl on October 16

Hundreds of girls and mentors from the TDSB's Young Women on the Move initiative will gather at Spirale Banquet and Conference Centre for a day themed "The Power of Girls to Innovate and Create Through Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)." The participants will hear from best-selling author-illustrator Ashley Spires who will facilitate an interactive presentation of creativity and persistence, while featuring many of her beloved children's book characters. She will also lead a short drawing exercise, followed by The Most Magnificent Book Hack, in which participants are encouraged to bring out their inner engineer, designer, writer or artist to create something entirely new from a mini version of *The Most Magnificent Thing*. In the afternoon participants will focus on innovation and creation by building and exploring circuits - girls will become 'electrical engineers'. They will learn about conductive and insulating play dough, understand electrical properties, and become circuit designers! TDSB's Young Women on the Move (YWM) supports thousands of girls each year and works to remind girls that they are capable and should feel competent to enter any profession.

Mandate Letters

Sorry! I understand the links from last week did not open. For information on what Premier Wynne wrote to each Cabinet Minister, outlining the key priorities for their ministry, please click on

<http://www.ontario.ca/government/mandate-letters>.

Resources from “Tweets” you may find interesting

@tdsb: Explore a career in a trade through a co-op program #skilledtradesmonth <http://t.co/5WK1TcsXO0>
<http://t.co/SzwLvdxRq4>

@OPSBA_Official: A must-see talk from Justice @Sincmurr: Reconciliation—Our Shared Path Forward
<http://t.co/qNgWynuimy> #FNMI #OntEd

@qpwatcher All Ontario teachers should be given classroom keys, task force says

http://www.thestar.com/yourtoronto/education/2014/10/09/all_ontario_teachers_should_be_given_classroom_keys_task_force_says.html ... via @torontostar #etfo

Remembrance Day Learning Resources available free to order from Veterans Affairs Canada

<http://www.gilmore.ca/vacstore/eng/learningresource.aspx>

@Anniekidder Great piece on reality of modern PTA's. It's about "advocating for health, education & welfare of all children." http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/08/heading-the-pta-and-challenging-the-school-board-in-colorado/?_php=true&_type=blogs&emc=eta1&r=0

@edutopia MT @BetterLesson: 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teachers Who Use Technology:

<http://bit.ly/1hDIYyR>. #edtechchat

@qpwatcher A great media report on importance of: Early childhood education – Oct. 6, 2014

<http://shar.es/1mrfmU> via @OMNITelevision #ETFOBetterSchools

@LearnConcern: A second look at a sensitive, controversial issue. What's your take? <http://ow.ly/ChQ3A>
Such an important topic...

@TheAgenda In the upcoming municipal elections, ignore your trustee at your peril.

<http://theagenda.tv.org/blog/agenda-blogs/overlook-your-trustee-your-peril> #onted

In the News

[Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair breaks silence over fatal shootings of three teens](#)

Toronto Star (October 10)

Summary: Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair broke his silence Thursday over Monday's fatal shootings of three teenagers, saying he is "very concerned" with what he described as an "escalation of violence." Speaking to reporters following the Toronto Police Services Board meeting, Blair defended his silence by saying it is up to the homicide squad to comment on homicide investigations, as was done in these cases. Blair previously spoke at the scene of other infamous shootings, including at C.W. Jeffreys Collegiate Institute in 2007, where 15-year-old Jordan Manners was gunned down. On Thursday, he said he felt it was "appropriate" to go to C.W. Jeffreys to speak with the parents gathered there. He also addressed the media at the time.

Note – I am anxious for follow-up discussions at the board especially with regard to gang violence.

[Toronto school board sets higher improvement targets for students based on race, sexual orientation](#)

Toronto Star (October 6)

Summary: For the first time in Ontario, a school board has set a different — and higher — target for raising the marks of students who are black, Spanish-speaking, aboriginal, Portuguese, gay or lesbian, than the target for its students overall. The Toronto District School Board has pledged to boost the test scores and report card marks of students in these groups next year by 15 per cent compared to 10 per cent for all students, in a bid to shrink the learning gap it has found these students face and help them succeed at the rate of their classmates

Events of Interest

The 6th Congress of Education: Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

Saturday November 8, 2014, 9:00 am at Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering, University of Toronto District School Board, 35 St. George Street, Toronto Ontario

For information visit the Spanish Speaking Network (SSEN) at: www.SSEN.ca

People For Education's 18th Annual Conference

Saturday, November 8, 2014, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto

This year's Making Connections conference features keynote speaker Paul Tough, the author of *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character*, as well as a range of panels and workshops covering financial literacy, education funding changes, entrepreneurship, community schools, sex ed, and more. Register <http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/events-workshops/come-to-our-conference/>

PIAC Presents: The 8th Annual Parent Involvement Makes a Difference Conference

Saturday November 15, 2014, 8:30 am at Earl Haig Secondary School

For information visit: www.tdsb.on.ca/parentconference

Dates to Remember

- **Humewood is turning 100 years - and need your help to celebrate** Contact them at Humewoodcentenary@gmail.com **Save the Date – Saturday, October 18, 2014!**

2014-2015 School Year Calendar

TDSB's school year calendars are on Google Calendar (add to yours!). Elementary: <http://t.co/SRxsJzPYgL>

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

Board-wide PA Day	November 14, 2014
Board-wide PA Day	December 5, 2014
Christmas Break	December 22, 2014 to January 2, 2015 (inclusive)
Last day of school	December 19, 2014
School resumes	January 5, 2015
Elementary PA Day	January 23, 2015
Secondary PA Day	(Semestered Schools only) January 29, 2015
Board-wide PA Day	February 13, 2015
Family Day	February 16, 2015
March Break	March 16 to 20, 2015
Good Friday	April 3, 2015
Easter Monday	April 6, 2015
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](#)

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