



Items of Interest Week of December 14, 2014

CHANGE OF DATE – January 22, 2014 Ward Forum

Subject – Social Media and a Hands-On Tutorial on Twitter!

PIAC Representatives for Ward 11

Education is a partnership involving students, parents, teachers, principals, trustees, school boards, government, and the community. The **Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC)**, a parent involvement committee to the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) provincially mandated by [Ontario Regulation 612/00 of the Education Act](#), is committed to strengthening this partnership. PIAC supports parents and school councils at the TDSB with the goal of improving student achievement and well-being and enhancing the accountability of the education system to parents. Thank you to Rania Saleh and Ali York for volunteering to represent our ward. For more information click on <http://www.torontopiacc.com/>

Severe Weather Conditions – What Guides the Decision to Cancel Busing or Close Schools?

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. With approximately 250,000 students in our schools and sites each day, any decision to cancel buses, classes and/or programs or to close sites can have a significant impact on thousands of families across Toronto. This decision is not taken lightly by staff. 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. Click on weather-related [Qs and As](#) and TDSB [Operational Procedure 519](#) for more information on how TDSB responds to severe weather.

Junior Extended French Applications Process (JEF)

All grade 3 students will be receiving application packages for the Junior Extended French program (JEF) grade 4 entry next week. The application process for JEF is completely “on-line” opening on January 5, 2015 and closing on January 29, 2015. All on-time applicants will be offered placement in the program. **But please note** while admission to a TDSB French Immersion/Extended French program is guaranteed to on-time applicants, admission to a specific school is not guaranteed if the school reaches capacity. Further information is available at: www.tdsb.on.ca/french.

Last week two information meetings were held regarding the Junior Extended Project – one at Eglinton PS and one at Forest Hill Jr/Sr PS. Included in the 2014-15 annual projects in the [Long Term Program and Accommodation Strategy](#) was a staff recommendation to explore relocating the Extended French Program from Eglinton where projected enrolment continues to go up (projected to reach 550 students by 2019). Information prepared for the meetings discussed transitioning the program, however, staff did reconsider and are prepared to leave the program at Eglinton for Eglinton students and open a second Junior Extended French program (Grade 4 entry) at Forest Hill Jr/Sr Public School as of September 2015. The Board's Policy 068 details the process by which staff determines - in this case, it is a Director decision. The decks presented at the Information Sessions can be found on my website – [Extended French at Forest Hill JrSr Information Meeting 2014-12-10](#)
[Extended French at Eglinton Information Meeting 2014-12-10](#)



The Grade 7 Extended application process also opens January 5, 2015 and closes January 29, 2015. It is a paper application process. For the Junior Extended French program and Grade 7 Extended French program, information evenings will be held throughout January.

Parents, students, trustees, teachers and staff are invited to attend and participate in FSLAC meetings. Meetings start at 7 pm at the TDSB offices at 5050 Yonge St., ground floor. FSLAC information is posted on the TDSB website: tdsb.on.ca/fslac. **Upcoming meetings are:** Jan 27, Feb 24 and April 21, 2015. Thank you to our Ward Representative on the FSLAC Betheny Maheu. For information on Canadian Parents for French, please click on <http://canadianparentsforfrenchontario>.

Safety in our Schools – Community Forums – January 13 and 15, 2015

The Director has advised us of the on-going work of the *Safety in Our Schools Panel* as a result of the tragic murder of Hamid Aminzada inside North Albion CI in September. The *Safety in Our Schools Panel* will be holding two Community Forums on the following two dates: 13 January 2015 and 15 January 2015. Time for both sessions will be: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm. Locations will be confirmed soon, but tentatively one session will be held in the West and one in the East. The purpose of the forums is to hear from parents, students and the community on their thoughts on school and community safety and suggestions to improve safety in our Toronto schools. We will confirm the locations as soon as they are known.

Budget Begins

The first meeting of the Budget Committee for 2015-16 met last week. We discussed the Toronto District School Board's feedback to the Ministry of Education on the 2015-16 Education Funding Consultation Guide. To read our response, please click on [TDSB Funding Consultation Guide 2015-6 GSNs.pdf](#).

At the end of this Update, please see a summary of information regarding **TDSB Budget Challenges** taken from Board documents. For more details click on **Financial Facts** and **Capital Facts**.
http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/AboutUs/Budget/FinancialFacts_update_May2014.pdf
<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/AboutUs/Budget/CapitalFacts.pdf>

Tips for Dealing with Holiday Stress

(From the Mental Health and Well-Being Belongs to all of Us, Issue #4)

Although the coming break is supposed to be about rest and fun, the reality is that it will also probably bring you and your family some stress. Part of that comes simply with the change it will bring to your family's routine: your children will be home all day, and you will probably spend more time at home, as well. You may have more social events to attend than usual and dealing with family and friends can be complicated—and therefore stressful. If your winter holidays include hosting celebrations, you'll have more cooking and cleaning to do. And if your traditions involve gift giving, you will have lots of shopping to do, which takes time, decision making, and money. How to cope?

1. Avoid over-commercialization. If you have a tradition of giving presents at this time of year, remember and remind your children that the holiday isn't only—or even mostly—about expensive gifts. Although there is a real joy in seeing your children's faces light up as they open your gifts and love them, taking on extra debt can ruin your enjoyment of the holidays.

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Research shows that children often worry about money more than their parents think. Remind your children, and yourself, that this can be mostly a time to celebrate relationships between family and friends. It can also be about giving to strangers—donating gifts, money, or time to people less fortunate than you. Research shows that people who help others feel more contentment and satisfaction with their lives. Families who volunteer their time to support the needy can put their own difficulties in perspective and strengthen family relationships.

2. Look after yourself. Try to eat and sleep well, and take time to do some things you really enjoy, like a hobby. Although nutritious eating is, of course, good for you in many ways, overdoing holiday eating can add stress to your life, especially if you are trying to stick to a healthful lifestyle. Active fun, like tobogganing or skating, actually gives you more energy and clears your mind, and activities that aren't too demanding on your body, like walking in a park, can also allow you to reflect on your life, especially on the things you're thankful for.
3. Have realistic expectations...and seek help if you need it. Realize that there will always be stress in your life, but you can learn to deal with it better. Something as simple as “stepping back” from a stressful situation, breathing slowly and deeply, and counting to ten can be hugely helpful when stresses start to mount. Talking about holiday-related stress with friends and family is a healthful way to cope. If that doesn't help enough, however, consider talking with a mental health professional in psychology or social work. Many well-researched techniques have proven effective in managing stress and increasing coping skills. A professional will tailor the help to your individual situation.

(By: Paul O'Connell, Chief of Psychological Services Area A and Paul Legzdins, Chief of Psychological Services Area C)

Guiding Principles for Collective Bargaining (from OPSBA)

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) represents English public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario, which together serves more than 1.2 million public elementary and secondary students. OPSBA is the umbrella organization for public school trustees, the only elected representatives for public education in Ontario. The Toronto District School Board is represented on OPSBA with a Vice-President on the Executive (Shelley Laskin) and two Board representatives on the Board of Directors (Jerry Chadwick and Parthi Kandavel).

As a result of the *School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, 2014*, OPSBA is now the official bargaining agent for English public schools in Ontario. OPSBA is recognized as an equal partner at the negotiations table along with the government and each union in the employ of the boards OPSBA represents. Through the collective bargaining process it is OPSBA's mission to negotiate fair and equitable collective agreements, within the government funding parameters, to ensure positive learning conditions that promote student achievement, learning and well-being for all the students in our care.

Basic Assumptions

- There is a common purpose to our collective efforts in public school boards – to maximize the opportunities for success for each and every student in our care.
- Everything we do is designed to help students learn and be successful in school and in life.
- Every employee in the education sector is there because they have an unwavering commitment to student achievement, learning and well-being.



- In the collective bargaining process there must be a recognized need to balance staff working conditions with learning conditions that support and promote student achievement, learning and well-being.
- The negotiated elements within a collective agreement must be fully funded by the government to ensure system sustainability and continuity. (*Supporting Student Achievement, Learning and Well Being through Collective Bargaining – OPSBA June 12, 2014*)

OPSBA's representatives, together with the Crown, are currently meeting with representatives from numerous education unions to establish what issues will be bargained centrally. These unions include:

- Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) Teachers
- ETFO Education Workers
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) Teachers
- OSSTF Education Workers
- Canadian Union of Public Employees
- Two additional bargaining tables (EWAO and OCEW) representing groups of unions established under provincial legislation.

As always the content of negotiations discussions are confidential and OPSBA will not be bargaining in the media and only communicating with Trustees in private sessions.

Resources from “Tweets” you may find interesting

@Usih_TDSB: Technology Changing How Students Learn, Teachers Say <http://t.co/wpAy2m4gUU>

@Ms_Paradis: A helpful resource for teachers, parents and families: Children's Mental Health Ontario - FAQs About Getting Help <http://t.co/PDeRKY6HXg>

@HFRP Organizations are integral partners in supporting outcomes for families and children: <http://ow.ly/FC2Av> #anywhereanytimelearning

Worth Repeating

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](#).

[North Toronto Collegiate Institute](#)

Jan 13 7:00 PM

[International Studies \(IS\)](#)

[Northern Secondary School](#)

Jan 15 6:00 PM

[Advanced Placement \(AP\)](#)
[Gifted \(G\)](#)

Let's Draw the Lines Together

The Toronto Ward Boundary Review is currently being conducted to ensure that each resident in Toronto is being represented at Toronto City Council. For Toronto and East York areas, the meeting will take place Saturday, January 10 from 9 am to 12 pm at the Trinity St. Paul's Church (427 Bloor Street West). Learn more about the Toronto Ward Boundary Review project at www.drawthelines.ca



2014-15 Premier's Awards for Accepting Schools

Nominations are now open! Download a [nomination form](#) and start your submission today. Deadline: February 20, 2015, 5 pm EST

2015-2016 Minister's Student Advisory Council

Applications are open for students in grades 7-12. Deadline is February 28, 2015 by 5 p.m. EST [Start your application](#)

TDSB Board and Committee Meetings

Mon, Dec 15 4:30 5050 Yonge St Audit Committee
Tue, Dec 16 9:30am 5050 Yonge St Inner City Advisory Committee
Wed, Dec 17 7pm 5050 Yonge St Regular Meeting

Dates to Remember

2014-2015 School Year Calendar

TDSB's school year calendars are on Google Calendar (add to yours!). Elementary: <http://t.co/SRsxJzPYgL>
+ Secondary: <http://t.co/s1sWVP0naB>

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



TDSB Budget Challenges

(Information from the TDSB documents)

We welcome more than 232,000 students and 160,000 life-long learners at 588 buildings across the city. As the largest school board in Ontario, we face a number of unique budget challenges, including an aging infrastructure and changing enrolment, whose impact can be felt in classrooms and schools across our system. In addition, we face the increasingly complex needs of our growing urban communities. Current funding for school renewal barely covers the emergency repairs and health and safety issues in our schools.

Enrolment

The TDSB represents approximately 12.5% of students in Ontario. According to the Ministry of Education, the TDSB has experienced the largest enrolment decline among GTA school boards between 2002 and 2012 as more families move out of the city. Fewer students mean less money for our schools. While school staffing is based on the number of students in a school and is adjusted as enrolment changes, many other costs are less flexible. These include facility costs (utilities, maintenance), information technology infrastructure, and transportation services. We do not receive any funding for maintaining extra classroom space that results from declining enrolment. In 2013, the TDSB experienced an increase in elementary enrolment for the first time in many years and future year projections show a continued positive trend.

Funding Gaps

The TDSB offers a number of programs and services that make a big difference for students – things like parenting programs, outdoor education, lunchroom supervisors, and student nutrition programs. These programs are not fully funded by the Province. Much of the funding through the grants we receive is tied to specific Ministry initiatives – things like full day kindergarten and class size caps, but the actual cost of these programs is often more than what the Province gives us to pay for them. Salaries and benefits are benchmarked from 1998 data – the funding we receive does not match the actual salary and benefits in the provincial collective agreements. The gap is over \$45M for teachers alone. In addition, the funding does not support supply costs for school administration – these are significant, and like the teachers, should be supported through provincial funding allocation. Although the board tries to offset through revenues from International Students and leases, grants for English as a Second Language, French as a Second Language, Learning Opportunities and Declining Enrolment are used to help offset the funding gaps.

Information Technology

Ministry funding for classroom computers has not kept pace with today's IT realities. In 2009-10, there was a decline in per pupil funding and the levels have remained unchanged since then – funding went from \$46.46 for elementary students and \$60.60 for secondary student in 2008-09 and since then has been \$34.52 for elementary students and \$45.03 for secondary students. We spend over \$30M and receive less than \$10M for IT equipment.

Special Education

The cost of providing Special Education support that TDSB students need is \$17.4 million more than the funding we receive and this gap is getting bigger every year. For 2014-15, the Province has cut special education funding by \$7.2 million. The Province only announced these cuts in April 2014 and expected boards to work with these reduced funds next school year.



Cuts of this size need to be shared in advance to allow boards to carefully think through how the changes will be made. The Province should be held to the same standard of transparency and financial management that is expected of school boards. We will continue to focus on offering strong programs and services and are committed to ensuring that the impact of these cuts on students is minimal. It is becoming increasingly difficult to do this as our funding continues to be cut by the Province.

Capital and Renewal

The TDSB's priority is to provide students with the best learning spaces we can for their success. Each year we submit a capital plan to the Province that sets out how we will manage our aging infrastructure, a \$3.2 billion capital renewal backlog and increased enrolment projections for the future. Our system has close to 600 schools, 202 of these are in critical condition and 41 schools need extensive renovations. The TDSB is in the unique position of having to sell properties to support growth pressures created by new development. In most schools boards, growth pressures are fully supported through government funding and Education Development Charges. When we sell a property, we are expected to fund the growth pressures created by new development. This is not sustainable. We need access to development charges to build the space we need to respond to the pressures created from development.

Toronto is the fastest growing municipality in all of Ontario; the TDSB must have the same access to provincial funds to support enrolment growth as all other schools boards. Over the last few years, we have made significant budget reductions in order to put the Board in a stable financial position. With enrolment increases expected in the years to come, we are confident that balanced operating budgets can continue in future years if funding remains stable. Capital is now our main area of concern.

Education Development Charges

The ongoing challenge for the TDSB is determining how to fund capital requirements. Unlike other Ontario school boards, the TDSB is required to address the majority of infrastructure renewal and enrolment growth pressures from its own sources, which means selling or leasing existing property to generate revenue. In most schools boards, growth pressures are fully supported through government funding and Education Development Charges (EDC). From 2008-2013, the TDSB received less than 5% of Ministry Capital Grants even though the TDSB supports 12.5% of students in Ontario.

EDCs provide school boards with funds to purchase school sites and cover all related site preparation and development costs that result from growth. School boards must meet several conditions before being eligible to require developers to pay EDCs. The first condition is that the board must show that the number of students that it needs to accommodate is larger than the space available. The TDSB does not meet this condition because there is space across the system. However, city intensification plans mean that many neighbourhoods are growing and putting additional pressure on schools in areas that are already full and the pressure continues to grow. New development has significant impact on existing schools and EDCs do not consider residential intensification. City of Toronto planning information indicates that there are applications for an additional 277,000 new residential units across the city. Based on the current Toronto Catholic District School Board's EDC rate, if the TDSB was treated equally, it is estimated that this projected growth would generate nearly \$300 million of much needed revenue to meet the capital needs of the Board. The 277,000 residential units are expected to yield 19,000 projected elementary TDSB students and 10,000 projected secondary TDSB students.

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Trustee
Shelley Laskin

Ward 11, St. Paul's

In Ward 11, St Paul's we know projections include more students than our schools can handle. Staff will continue to develop options for longer term solutions to the projected over-capacity for many of the elementary schools in the area. They continue to review the current data for all schools, discuss emerging issues, and confirm/revise/add studies that will become the refreshed document. But as education funding is a provincial issue, please let our MPP know that you expect the TDSB to be funded appropriately so we can provide the staffing and school buildings our students deserve.

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