

Ward Forum

Tuesday, October 29, 2019

Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute – Library

DRAFT Meeting Notes

Hosted by Trustee Shelley Laskin – TDSB Ward 8

Trustee Laskin kicked the meeting off with the Land acknowledgement, welcome, and introductions.

This first Ward forum of the year has no formal speaker. It is a meet & greet, an opportunity to meet each other, to map out the rest of the year. Trustee, Staff, and others in the room are available to answer questions, and address concerns.

Among those in attendance: TDSB Superintendents of Education John Chasty, Curtis Ennis, and Andrew Howard; Representatives from the PIAC (Kaydeen Bankasingh, John Bakous) and FSLAC (Lynne Leblanc) Advisory Committees. Schools represented included - Glenview Sr P.S., Davisville Jr P.S., Lawrence Heights M.S., Forest Hill Jr. & Sr. P.S., Lawrence Park C.I., John Polanyi C.I., West Preparatory Jr. P.S., and Baycrest P.S.

Handouts

- Overview of [Schools in the Ward](#)
- [OPSBA/TDSB Local Government Week Resource- October 21-25, 2019](#)
- [Invite to Ward Forum #2](#) – Long-Term Program & Accommodation Strategy (combined with Trustee Chernos Lin – Ward 11)

PIAC Update

Kaydeen Bankasingh and John Bakous explain the role of the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) which advises the Board of Trustees, and supports Parent Engagement (both School Councils and parents/caregivers at large).

Everybody is invited and encouraged to attend the Ready – Set – Engage Conference on November 16.

For more information on PIAC see www.torontopiac.com and the TDSB website ([here](#)).

The PIAC Representatives work together with Trustee Laskin to determine topics for Ward Forums – topics for the Forums on April 28 and June 2 have not yet been set. All in attendance were asked to suggest topics for future Ward Forums. Among the suggestions received:

- Transition to grade 9: how can parents support their children to be successful during this major transition - developing good study habits, getting comfortable in a larger fast paced environment
- Advantages & Disadvantages of the semester vs non-semestered systems
- Updates and other significant elements in the secondary review
- Understanding and implementing the SIP and tips for working with the principal

June 2:

- Updates on any key (policy) transitions or changes for 2020 school year

FSLAC Update

Lynne Leblanc provided an update on the French as a Second Language Advisory Committee (FSLAC). French programming in the TDSB is slated for major changes in the upcoming years. FSLAC was actively involved in the preceding French Review, and continues to provide advice about the changes.

For more information on FSLAC visit the Committees' web page on the TDSB website -

www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac - and sign up for the newsletter. Ward 8 has a vacancy for Alternative Representative(s) on FSLAC – everybody interested is encouraged to contact Lynne and/or Trustee Laskin.

Current issues

Please sign up for Trustee Laskin's weekly updates. They provide a wealth of information, and are posted on her pages on the TDSB website: www.tdsb.on.ca/Ward8.

- **Labour Negotiations**

Trustee Laskin provided an update about the Collective Agreement negotiations. These negotiations happen both at the Provincial level and on certain topics locally with individual School Boards. In Secondary education (high schools), the Provincial proposals re: class sizes are a major topic. A recent development is the proposal to limit the (average, Provincial) class size increase from 22 to 25 (instead of the originally proposed 28). This would still have a major impact (compare: even if the current provincial average is 22.5, TDSB is at 23.6).

Both the Elementary and the Secondary Teachers could be in Strike position by the third week of November – but that does not necessarily mean that job action happens right then.

The TDSB provides updates on the negotiations on its website at www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Labour-Negotiations.

Question: Why is education not an essential service? Answer: There are pros and cons to that suggestion, as it is decided at the Provincial level, please contact your MPP and/or Union leadership.

- **Board Meeting:** At the Board meeting, discussions are about specific recommendations made at committee. If one is interested in underlying reports, check out the Board Committee materials. Many (like the French Review and school-level policies) are featured at the Program and School Services Committee (PSSC). See the Board website at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom> (including Agenda & Minutes)
- **Optional Attendance:** there are no changes to Optional Attendance for the 2020-2021 school year, and registration starts soon. The policy is currently under review but will not affect next year.
- **Optional Attendance Review:** Consultations as part of this Review will start shortly (first week of November), including at least 4 public meetings. It will reflect on criteria for Optional attendance, including boundaries. Check out the Consultations section on the TDSB website: www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Policies-Procedures-Forms/Policy-Consultations.
- **Secondary Program Review:** a wide ranging and comprehensive Review of Secondary Programs is underway, with monthly updates at the Board's Committee of the Whole, and a final report slated for June. Partly tying into Optional Attendance, this wide-ranging Review looks at specialized programs, location of programs, school organization (e.g. time tables, and semestered vs. non-

semestered), and other aspects. Some changes may take many years to roll out.

Question: How do parents provide input? Answer: There will be public meetings, focus groups, and an online survey. Students themselves will also have an important voice: what works for them and what does not, and what do they think can help their academic success and well-being.

For more information see www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Secondary-Program-Review.

- **French Programming:** Trustee Laskin summarized the changes coming to French programming. This includes exciting improvements to Core French education, consolidation of all intensive French Programming into French Immersion (with JK and grade 4 entry points), and greater equity and access across the Board. More information is in the Q&A: [here](#).

The last cohorts for Extended French will start in September 2020. JK French Immersion will start in September 2022 (a double SK & JK cohort will start French Immersion that year).

An important aspect of the French Programming Recommendations was Recruitment and Retention of French teachers. TDSB is very active on this front already, including abroad. Another part of the implementation concerns Transportation – most other School Boards do not provide it for French programs, but TDSB has done so for many years. One issue is how removing transportation may affect access and participation.

Q & A

- *Is there a push towards semestered or non-semestered schools?*

There is no push, but it is being examined in the Secondary Review. Most schools in Ontario are semestered. There are pros and cons to both models: e.g. Experiential learning (like COOP) is difficult to schedule in non-semestered schools, and switching into a new school is easier in a semestered system. People do find the half-year gaps problematic in for example Math. Some schools have a hybrid model, which has shown increased Math scores.

An ongoing, associated discussion is Assessments - should we change the model especially in grade 9 and 10? Students say the current model does not work well for them, so perhaps we need to change it to alleviate stress and anxiety. The Secondary Review may also look into those issues.

Suggestion: Better coordination between teachers regarding workload can also help.

- *How is student voice considered?*

Students' voice is recorded in various ways, including the Student Census (every three years) and local School Climate surveys. The Census showed, for example, that 57% of students did not feel they had a caring adult in the school to go to. This was an eye-opener that has been worked on extensively since.

With the last Census in 2017 (next one 2020), some schools are doing a mini-census or surveys to inform their School Improvement Planning. As a school board system, a lot of work has been done in recent years on Mental Health, as well as transition between schools.

- *What does the Parent & Community Involvement Policy Review entail?*

Staff is working on a plan. The idea is to have a Consultation period of at least 90 days. PIAC will be consulted, hopefully School Councils can weigh in.

Trustee Laskin is also finalizing a list of School Council Chairs and their contact information. This can be used to distribute information, as well as for networking: from speaker suggestions to tips on how to build a new Kindergarten Playground, and from borrowing a popcorn machine to suggestions on how to deal with local Administrators.

- *Will the Fundraising Policy be reviewed?*

This review is expected for the coming year. It is typically a big conversation with strong opinions. One question is: *how much fundraising is enough?* A major issue for many schools is playgrounds: the TDSB has a program and schedules, but there is no provincial money provided for playgrounds.

- *Do schools have access to Section 37 money?*

Paid for as part of real estate development, this money is set aside for community needs. It is controlled by City Councillors, not the School Board. It therefore comes down to contacting your local Councillor. These monies vary considerably between Wards though, as well does their use from one Ward/Councillor to another.

- *What is the status of the new Davisville P.S. school building? Can the school be JK – 8?*

The TDSB and Trustee Laskin have not heard of new changes or further delays. The only item discussed at the moment is adding 5 more rooms, given expected enrolment increases.

The planned capacity will be needed for JK – grade 5, with middle school grades going to Hodgson.

- *What is going on with kids taking courses outside of the School Board, for example privately?*

This is not a new issue, but it can indeed affect school staffing if students take fewer credits. The Board cannot force the issue; it is allowed to be a part-time student. More and more ‘players’ seem to come in providing credits, competing with each other. There are concerns about the level and/or rigour of such external courses – in the past the Ministry has been asked to ‘Asterix’ such courses on transcripts, but that went nowhere.

- *Is there any news regarding mandatory e-learning as announced by the Government?*

No details have been provided to the School Board. The experience with existing TDSB e-courses is that available capacity fills up really quickly. It definitely works much better for some – it does not work for all. Do not expect an easy course, people have reported that online courses were their hardest courses. Major concerns about the compulsory nature of the courses and who would be administering them. School boards have made these concerns known.