

WebEx Meeting for School Council Chairs/Co-Chairs
April 28, 2020

Along with many school council chairs, we were joined by Superintendents Curtis Ennis, John Chasty and Andrew Howard; Executive Superintendent Sandy Spyropoulos and Heather Johnson, Social Work

Shelley thanked everyone for taking the time to join in to the WebEx – she noted that School Council Chairs would be receiving the following later this week –

1. Letter to Council Chairs and Co-Chairs
2. Letter re Specialized School Policy
3. FAQ's School Council Meetings During Emergency Order

Shelley also noted that a letter to all parents from Director John Malloy would also be coming this week touching on a number of issues.

- Summer Learning is being developed under a number of options:
 - Face to face
 - Remote only
 - Hybrid
 - Details should be up on the Board website next week
- Public Health decisions determine Ministry actions – schools closed until at least May 31st
- Parent Resources for FSL will be posted this week
- Updating Health & Wellness site regularly
- No exams for high school students – parent letter will include details on assessments
- Fulfilled approximately 90% of device orders by the end of the week – 10% more next week
- Family Violence rises during pandemic – social work staff trying to provide refuge from these situations
- Student engagement continues to be a critical priority - support staff – lunch and aquatics staff will help to engage
- Best practices – lots of great ideas i.e. Yoga, poetry cafes will be shared
- Board funding - GSN's – 1st week of May
- ThoughtExchange Software will be used to solicit feedback from parents/guardians – Andrew Howard spoke to its effectiveness used for Senior Team meetings
- Webex (same software as for this meeting) is being provided for School Council to use

Kaydeen provided a PIAC update

- PIAC and parents have had quite a few conversations
- Would like to ensure all school communities are kept informed
- Keeping business going, decisions etc.
- Looking at how they can support school communities
- How to support families – parents, families, administrators kept aware of different circumstances

Why is the system not setting up expectations?

Leaving it as personal choice as teachers engage with their own students

John Chasty:

- Remember that it was never an expectations prior to this pandemic
- Some teachers are traditional – some more comfortable with digital platforms
- Using Google Classroom/Bright Space (Board supported)
- Decision is left to judgement & comfort of teacher
- Some finding this a huge learning curve
- Mental Health of staff and students also important
- There is a lot of collaboration – strengthening & growing – more each week

- Teachers are best judge – like whether to make phone calls or send paper packages

Curtis Ennis:

- mentioned that some teachers are following Union directive
- Principal is maintaining relationships with all staff
- They are very forthcoming
- Employee Assistance Program continues to support

College of Teachers has no expectation for digital learning

Staff, like families are dealing with all sorts of situations. We need to understand that is what makes different situations challenging.

Heather Johnson spoke to Mental Health Support being provided

- Teachers are new to virtual teaching
- Everyone is working from home in an emergency pandemic situation
- New to everyone
- For students and families
 - Some don't have devices
 - We are offering resources weekly
 - Resources are needed for children with a variety of special needs

Informal opportunities for parents to meet being provided – hearing about some great ideas

- Virtual coffee with principal
- Open mike
- Hallway meeting
- Online spirit days
- Dress up as characters in storybook/ engage students and parents

If parents would like more informal opportunities, please speak to your Principal

Graduations

- staff meeting this week and decision will be communicated but likely postpone until fall

If you have suggestions please share with principal and staff

- addresses fact that professional support staff continue to be available to support
- If parent needs to get in touch with social worker contact principal

Student well being

- Feelings of loneliness
- Not connected to friends
- Not feeling part of community
- Grades 7-12 can articulate
- Younger children – we can we hear their voices?

How are you understanding best practices – what is working & how can we improve?

- Through openness, transparency and communication
- Best practices are being tracked

Superintendents and principals meet 3 x week

- Tracking and looking at sharing information
- Sending out system-wide tweets from schools

- Amazing collaboration

Executive Superintendent Sandy Spyropoulos notes she meets daily with Superintendents

- Some principals are sending out newsletters
- Teachers with no home class are supporting others
- Send questions to Trustee with suggestions

How can parents help?

John Chasty explains GO IT – had 50 schools before job action & pandemic – STEM thinking
Yes, if businesses would like to donate to schools there is a mechanism available

What about volunteers who wish to support?

- One shot guest is OK
- If repeating visit needs criminal check as volunteer guest

Parents on the call expressed the desire to see all teachers use some form of on-line where there could be interaction with students and students could see each other

Relationships are critical & important. Shelley noted that the Director and Senior staff are working with education partners to determine next steps as emergency remote learning continues

Great that TDSB has identified needs for technology. How will they be replaced if broken/damaged?

Shelley confirmed devices were wiped. System responsibility to return them with the programming that was on them and in the condition they were borrowed.

Differences in what is happening in Private Schools were discussed

Andrew Howard pointed out that equity is not the same – no equity issue at private schools – most students have their own devices and teachers experiences with online learning - vastly different than public system with 583 schools

Shelley wraps up:

- Currently no expectation in system for online learning – supports are being provided to educators to gain expertise and discussions are happening centrally
- There were gaps in expertise before – exacerbated during this time but PD is being provided
- Some students are disengaged & falling behind no matter what is being provided to them – principals are working with teachers to reach out to try and ensure all students are engaged
- While there are challenges ahead, system continues to work on how to do things better and will be asking parents directly – watch for letter this week!
- And lastly, thanks all for logging in – and asks Chairs/Co-Chairs to continue to reach out