**Virtual Ward 5 & 8 Forum – Right to Read Report & PIAC Elections**

**December 14, 2022**

**MEETING NOTES**

***Meeting*** ***(held on the Zoom platform):***

**Meeting hosts:** Trustee Shelley Laskin (Ward 8/Eglinton-Lawrence and Toronto - St. Paul’s) & Trustee Alexandra Lulka (Ward 5/York Centre).   
**Presenters:** Maria Lee & Sara Herten-Greaven (McMurrich JPS); Maran Shona & Esther Lightening (Oriole Park PS)  
**Other Staff:** Superintendents ﻿Roni Felsen (Learning Network/LN 06), Andrew Howard (LN 05), Dominic Giorgio (LN 12), Kurt McIntosh (LN 11), Marwa Hamid (LN 08); Latha John (Parent and Community Engagement Office/PCEO); Wilmar Kortleever (Shared Services Liaisons). Regrets: Denise Humphreys (Superintendent LN 04)  
**Attendees (total #: 43):** Parents/Guardians/Caregivers; Community Members; (Vice) Principals, Teachers, other school & TDSB staff;

After the land acknowledgement (by Superintendent Hamid), **Trustees Laskin & Lulka** welcomed everyone.

**1. Ward 5 PIAC Elections**

First item on the Agenda was the election of two parent/caregiver member representatives for Ward 5 for the Board’s Parent Involvement Engagement Advisory Committee (PIAC). Three nominations were initially received. With two of these candidates present for the available two vacancies, **Zena Shereck** and **Sandreen Porter** were acclaimed. Sandreen (currently School Council Chair at Downsview Secondary School, several other parent volunteer positions, licensed financial professional, officer in the Canadian Forces) and Zena (School Council member at William Lyon Mackenzie School, parent also at Dublin Heights Elementary School; former member and Co-Chair on PIAC) both provided a brief introduction.

**2. Classroom Implementation of the *Right to Read* Report**

Superintendent Howard introduced **Maria Lee** and **Sara Herten-Greaven**, two teachers who work with all Kindergarten and grade 1-3 teachers at McMurrich JPS on all different forms of literacy – closing gaps resulting from unfinished learning in the last few (COVID) years, and implementing the implications of the [Right to Read Inquiry Report](https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/right-to-read-inquiry-report).

The presentation (see associated document) illustrated elements of the McMurrich literacy program for the 2022/2023 school year, and touched on the following subjects:

* Right to Read investigation: the school system fails to support certain marginalized students in Ontario.
* In Spring 2022, the Ministry of Education released their ‘Effective Early Reading Instruction’ document. In October 2022, the TSDB released a ‘Instructional Strategies to Support Teaching and Learning in Reading’, which builds upon the strategies in the Ministry document.
* One of the main programs used by Ms. Herten-Greaven and Ms. Lee is from UFLI – the University of Florida Literacy Institute. The 2 main goals of this program are to support teachers in their development of the knowledge and skills necessary to teach reading effectively, and to support developing leaders, especially those struggling with early literacy skills.   
  The program provides an explicit and systematic phonics program that (re-)introduces students to foundational reading skills. It provides teachers with pre-determined and pre-planned lessons and it offers a very well rounded UDL - which is universal design for learning opportunities in a predictable sequence which is important.

The sequence for this program is phonomic awareness, visual drills, auditory drills, blending drills, new concepts, word work, irregular words and connected texts.

The ultimate goal is to enable students to acquire each skill needed and learn to apply each skill with automatically and confidence.

* An example UFLI program provided teachers with lessons containing Concepts, Slide Decks, Decodable passages, home practice activities, and additional activities – usually two-day programs, all available online for free.
* Ms. Lee & Ms. Herten-Greaven provided several examples of their class work.

Superintendent Felsen introduced **Maran Shona** & **Esther Lightening** from Oriole Park PS, also presenting a new, different approach to learning, addressing the science of reading and the insights of the Right to Read report.

The presentation (see associated document) is based on insights gained among other things from two TDSB training sessions on effective early reading instruction, as well as cooperation with colleagues at Brown JPS and Davisville PS. It touched on the following subjects:

Ms. Lightening:

* The Science of Reading – including Scarborough’s reading rope, a key model of reading acquisition: it illustrates the independent but interconnected strands of not only *Oral Language Comprehension* (background knowledge, vocabulary, syntax/morphology, literacy concepts, and verbal reasoning/pragmatics), but also *Word Reading skills* (phonological/phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, vocabulary/morphology, decoding strategies, and sight word recognition).
* Phonological awareness – oral language skills that are needed before a student even gets exposed to print. TDSB has provided meaningful assessment tools to use, as well as graphics showing the trajectory of skills that are needed.

Ms. Lightening provided examples of this phonological awareness at the word & syllable level, and how to incorporate them in lessons plans. Using names for syllables.

* Phonemic Awareness – the sounds that letters make. Specifically, what does your mouth do when you say a sound: e.g. by looking in a mirror at your own mouth while pronouncing certain sounds.
* Making connections between sounds and letters. Putting the letter (the grapheme) to the sound (the phoneme) – including examples from grade 1 (first letter sounds) and grade 2 students (first and last letter sounds).

Ms. Shona:

* Shifts in reading instruction.
* From Word Wall to Sound Wall (example: vowel valley, consonants).
* Small group instruction (focus on phonological awareness, phonics or decoding skills; systematic sequencing; review of previously learning skills – also, like the McMurrich teachers, using UFLI resources).
* Strategies: Word mapping (no more memorizing words); Word Chaining (sequences of words with one sound changing).
* Significant impact of the new approach is already visible.

Principal Quimby:

* Amazing example of a grade 1 student correcting Principal on the pronunciation of the word milk.

**Presentations Q&A**

* Q: How to keep parents & families informed to provide support from home?   
  A (Esther Lightening): the TDSB has developed a parent/caregiver guide on how to help children with reading at home. It is very practical and useful for everybody.   
  [www.tdsb.on.ca/portals/0/earlyyears/docs/TDSBEarlyReadingInstruction\_Family\_CaregiverGuide\_Final.pdf](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/portals/0/earlyyears/docs/TDSBEarlyReadingInstruction_Family_CaregiverGuide_Final.pdf).
* Q: Are there programs in the French streams as well?   
  A (Superintendents Howard & Felsen): Resources for French programs (immersion as well as core) have also been developed. The Early Reading in French (La lecture Précoce) site is at <https://sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/tdsbfsl/home/la-lecture-pr%C3%A9coceearly-reading>.
* Q: How is support provided if there are many teacher changes during the year?  
  A (Superintendent Howard): Teachers leaving is a reality. It is primarily the responsibility of the school Administration to find a replacement – hopefully one consistent person, which is always the goal. Sometimes it can be difficult, as in our current state we (along with the entire province) encounter extreme shortages of occasional teachers. Even with teacher changes, though, consistent programming and support should be in place, often facilitated by teachers from different classes in the same grade cooperating.
* Q: Is this happening in all Wards?   
  A (Superintendent Hamid): yes, the Right to Read Report recommendations, supports, and programs are rolled out across the system. (Superintendent Giorgi): Implementation may vary a bit from school to school based on local differences, programming and staff, but it is implemented everywhere.

Trustee Laskin thanked the presenters wholeheartedly for the insightful information they provided.

**3. UPDATES**

* PIAC Ward 8 Representative Kaydeen Bankasingh (also on behalf of Co-Rep Anshu Grover).
* Thanks and appreciation on behalf of parents & caregivers for the presentations and all the creative and innovative work that is being done in the classrooms.
* Congratulations to Zena and Sandreen on their acclamations to PIAC.
* Parent Reps on PIAC are working hard, collaboratively across the city, to ensure that school communities, parents, and school councils have access to information and resources that enable them to engage your communities, enable parents to work closely with their administrators and teachers. and to bring wonderful opportunities to school communities.
* The PIAC website was recently renewed at <http://www.torontopiac.com>. It includes easier and better access to resources, and has been improved re: AODA accessibility.
* The PIAC Fall Parent Conference was postponed and will now be held in the Spring of 2023 (May 5).
* Trustee Laskin:
* One key recent focus has been student and school safety. The Chair and Director of the Board have met with the Mayor and the Police, and further meetings are scheduled, because a lot of what is happening in our schools is of course a reflection of what is happening in communities. As a Board, we can only do so much, unless we have support from everybody around us. The Chair of the Board has also met with the Minister of Education, with one of the key topics raised being resources and support. Because it is about the people that make the difference in our schools, and community programs can also have a huge impact. For example, covering permit costs, so more programs can be held in our buildings.
* Many people are looking forward to the winter break, as it has been a challenging Fall with some work stoppages and the threat of more, and also Covid still within our schools along with flu and other respiratory illnesses – all having an effect on staffing levels as well. The Superintendents already referenced the challenge of occasional staff shortages. Continuity is also an area of attention at the board level, after some changes at the senior leadership level.   
  In the meantime, some really positive things are happening, like indeed teachers and schools taking the Right to Read report seriously and already implementing change. Also, just earlier today, students from 12 or more high schools came together in a fabulous event to celebrate Hannukah. Recently, our Centre for Black Student Excellence won an award.
* Superintendents:
* Kurt McIntosh: both LN11 schools in Ward 5 have are strongly engaged with their community, e.g. through the natural environment. With connections made through the National Science and Engineering Research Council, partnerships have deepened with the Black Creek Community Farms, providing students the opportunity to take science from inside the classroom to outside.
* Marwa Hamid: Northview Heights is bringing back their 12 days of giving. The school supports student-selected organizations and initiatives in the immediate area, like homeless youth through Stella’s Place, an organization supporting young adult mental health, and north York harvest food bank.
* Domenic Giorgi: Two high schools in Ward 5 have recently done a great deal of work around student voice. William Lyon McKenzie bringing students together, and Downsview Secondary School just finished a large, successful student-led event, the Black Brilliance Conference, that attracted students from as far as Nova Scotia, the GTA, and also South London.
* Andrew Howard: All 13 Ward schools from LN 05 are of course amazing, but one highlight is a project from three schools feeding into each other: John Ross Robertson, Glenview Middle School, and Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute. This is a pilot with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre, through which schools work with teachers, and the system superintendent for indigenous education, working through action items that we can then hopefully share with other schools. Similarly, the three schools are working together shaping their Codes of Conduct.

**For more information, questions, ideas and concerns - always feel free to contact Trustees Shelley Laskin (**[**Shelley.Laskin@tdsb.on.ca**](mailto:Shelley.Laskin@tdsb.on.ca)**) and/or Alexandra Lulka (**[**Alexandra.Lulka@tdsb.on.ca**](mailto:Alexandra.Lulka@tdsb.on.ca)**).**