

# Trustee Update

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## Welcome Back!

I hope everyone had a lovely summer, filled with fun and relaxation, and that you and your families are ready for the start of a new school year!

I've had a lot of emails and calls over the last week and a half and want to thank each and every parent, guardian and community member for reaching out. I noticed some common concerns in those emails and have included information below that I feel might be helpful to families. As this update is fairly long -- please accept apologies in advance! ***It includes information on our Ward 11 Superintendents, Class Sizes and September reorganization procedures, bussing, and a schedule for my upcoming ward-wide coffee mornings.*** I am also working on scheduling some evening ward forums on a variety of topics; please stay tuned for topics and dates in an upcoming newsletter.

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### WARD 11 SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM:

With the many reductions made by our board last spring as part of our budget, our senior leadership teams have been reorganized. I was disappointed to no longer be working closely with Beth Butcher, Louie Papathanasakis and Diana Panagiatopoulos. Ms. Butcher and Mr. Papathanasakis have moved into different learning networks within the TDSB and are supporting different areas. Ms. Panagiatopoulos has been centrally assigned and will be working on a portfolio that includes student success and e-learning. I wish them all well in their new endeavours and am sure they will have positive impacts in their new positions.

I am pleased to announce that we have a new senior leadership team overseeing our Ward 11 schools. Our new team will include Executive-Superintendent Sandy Spyropoulos and two Superintendents of Education (SOE's), Andrew Howard and John Chasty.

Mr. Howard is a familiar fixture in Ward 11, where he worked as both a principal and a

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Academy, Hodgson Middle School, Maurice Cody Junior Public School, Northlea Elementary and Middle School, Rolph Road Elementary School, Thorncliffe Park Public School, Leaside High School and Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute. It's wonderful to be able to continue to work with Mr. Howard and even better to have him overseeing even more of our schools!

Mr. Chasty is an experienced superintendent and former principal who brings a wealth of knowledge to Ward 11. He will be overseeing the more northern section of our ward where schools include Bedford Park Public School, Blythwood Junior Public School, Denlow Public School, Dunlace Public School, Harrison Public School, John Fisher Junior Public School, Owen Public School, Park Lane Public School, Rippleton Public School, St Andrew's Middle School, Sunny View Junior and Senior Public School, Windfields Middle School, Northern Secondary School, and York Mills Collegiate Institute. Mr. Chasty has already been a terrific asset to our schools in the first two weeks, handling early September challenges with efficiency and care.

I believe we are in very good hands with this senior executive team! They are planning to attend my first coffee morning, Tuesday, September 24th (details below in this newsletter). I hope many of you will come out to meet them as well as meet others involved in Ward 11 schools.

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### **CLASS SIZES:**

I have had a number of calls and emails regarding class sizes and the cuts to classroom teachers by the Province over the last two weeks. Below is a primer on class sizes, averages and caps, how staffing is allocated, and what happens in September once we have actual counts of students in classrooms (as opposed to projected numbers from the preceeding spring).

School boards are funded by the Province of Ontario based on student enrolment. Each September, TDSB staff look at enrolment projections and adjust the level of school-based staffing needs based on actual seat counts tabulated during the first weeks of September. In some schools some classes are larger than anticipated, and in others, some may be smaller. Board decisions about school-based staff allocations must take into account legislative requirements including the Ministry of Education's class size regulations, which put limits on class sizes or averages, and Collective Agreements with teacher federations which lay out further parameters.

Each spring, staff allocation decisions are approved by the Board of Trustees based on **projected** school enrolments in order to be ready to open schools in September and implement the staffing processes as defined by Ministry requirements and collective agreements. Staffing timelines for the employee groups are prepared in consultation with the appropriate bargaining unit representatives. Each elementary school has a staffing committee where the board-wide allocation is distributed according to local school decisions. What follows are the parameters for staffing and class sizes in each school-

age division:

**Full Day Kindergarten (FDK):** A system average of no more than 26.0 students per class. A cap or maximum of 29 students in any class. The Board is permitted to exceed the cap in 10% of Kindergarten classes if there is no purpose built kindergarten space available or for program purposes. All Kindergarten classes except those with 16 or more students are required to have a teacher and a Designated Early Childhood Educator (ECE). Classes of 15 or fewer students are required to have a teacher only.

**Grade 1-3:** A cap or maximum of 20 students in any class. The Board is permitted to exceed the cap in 10% of Grade 1-3 classes up to a maximum of 23 students.

**Grade 3/4 Combined Grade Classes:** A maximum of 23 students in any class.

**Grade 4-8:** Classes are required to have a system average class size of 23.24 students based on collective agreements with ETFO but are actually being funded by the Ministry of Education at a system average of 24.5 students (at an extra cost of \$9.5M to the TDSB).

**Grade 9-12:** Last spring the Provincial Government announced a plan to reduce the number of high school teachers by increasing the average class sizes from 22 to 28 in Ontario high schools over the next four years. The government requires each school board to reach these higher averages across individual boards through attrition (i.e. retiring teachers, who are not replaced).

As you may have heard, the Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, recently announced the provincial average for high school class size for 2019-20 will be 22.5. It should be noted that this is a **province-wide average, across ALL school boards**. Based on the current TDSB's secondary teacher attrition rate, the TDSB's average high school class size for 2019-20 will be 23.6 students, up from an average of 21.9 students last year. School boards historically have had different class size averages and different teacher attrition rates and therefore they will reach the four year class size average of 28 students at different stages.

You may be wondering why the TDSB's averages are higher those of the province, and also why you have heard that some classes are much, much larger than even the TDSB average. You may also have heard that sections of high school classes are full, overflowing and yet some staff have been laid off -- something that seems at odds with with the Minister of Education's comments.

How do we reconcile all of this? First, it is important to remember that the class sizes everyone is talking about are averages. Some classes are much smaller, requiring others to be much larger. Second, we have collective agreements that place class size caps based on course level. For example, the existing collective agreement with OSSTF (our secondary school teachers union) places class size caps on classes at the Academic Level at 30, classes at the Applied Level at 23, and classes at the Locally Developed level at 14. Each secondary school is permitted to exceed the cap by 10% in 10% of classes. Once these parameters are met, we arrive at an average.

On top of that, the TDSB was given significant reductions to the number of teachers that are not covered by the Ministry attrition funding through cuts to other grants that funded additional teachers in our system. For example, our Local Priorities funding was discontinued this year - this accounted for grants to pay for a significant number of teachers in central positions such as learning coaches. As a result of the attrition funding not covering these types of positions, these teachers (who were always associated with home schools but were temporarily posted centrally), have returned to their schools, and more junior teachers have, in fact, been laid off. This has led to additional staffing changes in our secondary schools.

### **AVERAGES AND CAPS -- What does this mean?**

Averages and caps are Ministry-mandated, and are sometimes bound by extra parameters based on collective agreements. It is important to remember that a 'System Average' measures all of the classes in that category across the Board, whereas a 'Cap' is a measurement pertaining to each class in that category. We have hard caps in the primary grades, but in Grades 4-8, we have a TDSB system-wide average, meaning that in some schools, some classes may be as low as 20 and as high as the mid 30s.

Please know that some of these overly large classes may change within the next two weeks to meet the expectations noted above once schools reorganize (details on the process of reorganization is outlined below).

In secondary schools, the impact of higher system-wide averages is resulting in course cancellations, larger class sizes and combined level courses. Each TDSB secondary school will be offering all compulsory courses; however, when a section of a compulsory course is cancelled, all remaining sections of that compulsory course will be larger. The staffing reduction will not only impact class size and course selection, but will also result in fewer supports for students who need them.

Remember, the number of teachers allocated to schools is directly dependent on the number of students. As a system, we do our best to plan for the new school year, but there are always factors such as new or departing students that might affect how classrooms are organized. Every September, the TDSB reviews actual student enrolment in our schools (compared to the spring's projections). This is the month where adjustments to teacher allocations are required in order for the board to be compliant with class size regulations and collective agreements.

### **SEPTEMBER REORGANIZATION**

For elementary schools, the Ministry requires the Board to identify a "count date" in the month of September where the class sizes must be adjusted to become regulation-compliant based on the enrolment of that date. For 2019-20, that date is September 13 in our elementary schools. Adjustment or re-organization in some cases means the movement of students among classes but may also include the creation of an additional

class via the allocation of an additional teacher, or the cancelling of a class via the removal of a teacher allocation. Adjustment activity takes place in the week following the count date.

For secondary schools, adjustment to teacher allocation also occurs in September. Typically, enrolment at secondary schools takes a couple of weeks to stabilize as students sometimes change schools between the start of school and the third week of September and many students change classes. It is for this reason that secondary teacher adjustments occur after this point.

In the first week of high school, there are always a number of cases where students need to change their timetables because they do not get the classes they require and many students do not always receive their top choice courses. This year, due to changes in class size averages in our highschools, this situation is much more prevalent. Guidance counsellors are doing their best to accommodate as many requests as possible in as timely a fashion as possible. In addition, we have had a few classes in a few schools that have reached as high as 40 or more students. This will change in the next few weeks to meet the rules outlined above. Please note that secondary teacher adjustment also occurs in February/March to address second semester class sizes. In the secondary panel additional teacher allocation may mean the re-organization of some classes and timetable changes for some students. **Please know that we do want to ensure that students' post-secondary pathways are not negatively impacted by this process. If your child has not been placed into a compulsory class for post-secondary pathways please have them see Guidance right away.**

Reorganization is challenging for students, parents, and staff. Where reorganizations are required, students will be supported as they transition through these classroom changes to ensure a successful and rewarding school year. Thank you in advance for your patience and cooperation. You will hear directly from your school's principal if a reorganization is required that affects your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with your principal.

### **BUS DRIVER SHORTAGE:**

The Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) has received an update from Stock Transportation letting us know that despite their best efforts, there continues to be a driver shortage now impacting 24 routes in Stock Transportation's East, West and North Divisions and affecting a very small number of Ward 11 students. We appreciate your patience. For questions, contact Toronto Student Transportation Group at 416-394-4BUS (416-394-4287) or e-mail [transportation@torontoschoolbus.org](mailto:transportation@torontoschoolbus.org). Parents are also encouraged to check the delay portal for the latest information through this link: <https://busplannerweb.torontoschoolbus.org/Cancellations.aspx>.

If you are experiencing problems connecting with Student Transportation, please try TSTG's temporary new phone line for the month of September to contact the call centre. You shouldn't get a busy signal using the new number at 647-790-3829.

**COFFEE MORNINGS ARE BACK! September 24, 9:15-11:15**

Please join me for my first 2019-2020 ward coffee morning! These are informal roundtable discussions open to community members, parents and caregivers. We are often joined by Superintendents and occasionally a principal or two! These meetings are a great chance to network and information share about what's happening in the Board and our Ward 11 schools. Coffee mornings run from 9:15-11:15 am upstairs at the Longo's on Laird in the kitchen. Coffee, snacks and great conversation!

Mark your calendars: Upcoming fall coffee morning dates!

- Tuesday, September 24
- Tuesday, November 12

*Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin invites you to*

# **DON VALLEY WEST** **COMMUNITY COFFEE**



**Tuesday, September 24, 2019**

**9:15 - 11:15am**

**Leaside Longo's**

**(upstairs in the kitchen)**

***93 Laird Drive, in the Leaside Village Plaza***

## **SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR 2019-2020**

For information about important dates and holidays for the upcoming school year, please refer to the [2019-20 School Year Calendar](#).

The official school year calendar for the Toronto District School Board runs from September 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, inclusive.

First day of classes for all students is September 3, 2019

The last day of class for elementary students is June 25, 2020

The last day of class for secondary (full year) students is June 23, 2020

The last day of class for secondary (semestered) students is June 23, 2020

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Yours truly,

Rachel Chernos Lin

Ward 11 Trustee, Toronto District School Board



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