

Trustee Update

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Mid-March Update:

It's been a busy winter season at our Ward 11 schools. Staff and students have had wonderful learning experiences and opportunities for growth through events such as Chinese New Year, Black History Month, Pink Day, the 2019 TDSB Equity Conference (for staff and students), OPAL play days and winter carnivals in the snow. And the snow... well, this winter has brought its challenges, with multiple days of bus cancellations and even an official TDSB snow day. It is safe to say, most of us are ready for spring!

I was a pleasure for me to meet many parents and constituents in late January, at my first coffee morning. Two Ward 11 Superintendents, Diana Panagiotopoulos and Andrew Howard, were present, as well as Executive Superintendent Beth Butcher. We all enjoyed a stimulating group discussion about a variety of topics, including the different roles of trustees and superintendents within the TDSB. In addition, attending parents and caregivers elected new Ward 11 representatives to two central board committees – the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) and the French as a Second Language Committee (FSLAC), with the following results:

PIAC: Wilmar Kortleever (Representative); Hafsa Esmail (Alternate)

FSLAC: Charles Zhu (Representative); Elaine Sun (Alternate); Wilmar Kortleever (Alternate)

As your trustee, much of my time is spent in committee and board meetings, liaising with parents and superintendents, and attending as many school events as possible. This final week before March Break is a busy one, with board and school events alike. Highlights so far this week included attending Holland Bloorview's launch of its inspiring Capes for Kids Campaign at Northlea EMS, and Parent Council meetings at Marc Gameau and Hodgson Middle School. I am looking forward to meeting more parents tonight, **Thursday, March 7 at my Budget Ward Forum (details below)**.

Please read on for important updates on a multitude of topics including upcoming ward forums and parent meetings, the Yonge Eglinton PART, snow removal policies, and more.

JOINT WARD FORUM: TONIGHT -- THURS. MAR. 7, 7pm, Hodgson Middle School

Each year, trustees are required to pass a balanced budget for the TDSB. Throughout the past two months, staff and trustees have been working together to determine the drivers for our budget, in terms of focussing our priorities and ensuring they are in-line with our [multi-year strategic plan](#). At this point in time, we are looking for your feedback on these drivers, so that once the Ministry announces our funding (most likely in late March or early April), we will be in a position to best allocate these precious resources. As you know, our Board offers a rich diversity in programming. Should we see significant reductions to our funding, we will have very challenging decisions to make in terms of programming and services offered.

With this in mind, Associate-Director Craig Snider will present a draft of these drivers at a Thursday, March 7th. You will have a chance to ask questions about the budget process, learn about fixed and flexible costs, and provide us with a sense of your priorities. Please note that this is not the only chance to give feedback -- [there are online feedback forms on the TDSB website](#) and parents can delegate at the Board in April. However, this in-person forum is a terrific opportunity to learn and to ask questions of the group that manages the budget process. Trustee Shelley Laskin and I very much hope to see you there!

JOINT WARD FORUM: THURS. MAR. 28, 7pm, Cosburn Middle School

Topic: "Finding the Balance: When 'healthy' eating and exercise puts your child at risk"

How do messages about health impact your children and families? Join our panel as they share their perspectives on navigating messaging about health, recognizing when eating and exercise behaviours may be harmful, and learning how to support young people who have a challenging relationship with food, exercise and body image. We will hear from parents, clinicians, and individuals with lived experience of an eating disorder. This panel is open to all family members who have an interest in learning more about food and weight preoccupation, disordered eating, and supporting healthy lifestyles within their families.

Guest Speakers: A panel comprised of parents, doctors, therapists and staff from the National Eating Disorder Information Centre at Toronto General Hospital.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! UPCOMING COFFEE MEETING DATES:

I have scheduled several upcoming coffee mornings and one evening (in addition to the evening ward forums mentioned above). These "coffee" events are informal gatherings where parents and constituents are invited for a roundtable-style discussion of information sharing, best practices and interesting conversation related to education in our ward. We often have superintendents and sometimes even principals who drop by, so these are fun and engaging events. I hope you can join us!

Coffee Mornings: March 26 and April 30, 9:15am to 11:30am

Coffee Evening: April 1, 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Location: Upstairs at Longo's, Leaside Location, 93 Laird Drive

YOU'RE INVITED! PARENTS AS PARTNERS CONFERENCE 2019

The Parents as Partners Conference 2019 is on Saturday, March 30 and all parents and caregivers are welcome. This free conference – planned by parents, for parents – includes a variety of workshops and resources to help parents support their children with respect to achievement and well-being at school and at home. This year's keynote speaker is Karl Subban, a former TDSB principal and the father of five children, including three NHL hockey players. To support registered participants attending the conference, transportation, food and translators will be provided, as well as a free day camp for children ages 4-12. **Registration is now open at www.parentsaspartners.ca.** This is one day you won't want to miss!

UPDATE ON THE YONGE- EGLINTON PROGRAM AREA REVIEW -- PHASE 2

One of the studies in the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy that is being conducted this year is the Yonge-Eglinton Program Area Review Phase 2.

The Program Area Review (PART) process looks at the programs offered within a community or grouping of schools and identifies program gaps or space needs. A review may involve looking at a range of options to increase access to programs including the establishment of new schools, introduction of new specialized programs or possible changes to grade configurations.

The purpose of this particular review is to develop further solutions to the continuing enrolment pressures at the elementary schools in the vicinity of Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue, in particular Eglinton Jr PS, which has 604 students on a small, constrained site of 1.6 acres with a facility utilization rate of 110%. As noted in the approved plan for study, this review will also determine the future program to be delivered within the Bannockburn building.

The next steps for the Yonge-Eglinton Program Area Review Phase 2 will be to conduct PART meetings in April and May 2019. The PART will include both administration and parent representatives from each of the involved schools, including several Ward 11 schools. The PART recommendations will then be presented at public consultation meetings in May. Following that, a report will go to Board in June 2019 for decisions on the proposed accommodation solution(s).

To learn more about the long-term accommodation strategy process, click [here](#).

SCHOOL COUNCIL WEBINARS

The Parent and Community Engagement Office is a terrific resource for parents and school councils. This year will feature a series of webinars on topics related to running effective school councils. All webinars will be available via YouTube. Links are below but will not go live until the date listed.

- 1) The first webinar, "Basics of School Councils", has already happened, but it is still available to watch through the following link: <http://youtu.be/7CJ9OK8PwVw>. Whether you are new to School Council, or looking for a refresher course, this webinar will help you. We explore the basics of Regulation 612 (governing school councils), elections, funding and budgets. It's never too late to go back to the beginning.
- 2) School Council Bylaws -- Tues., Mar. 26, 2019, 7:00 p.m.; <http://youtu.be/HdKeeFxlzIs>; An effective School Council needs a firm foundation. This webinar will take participants through the need-to-know of writing School Council Bylaws. Whether you're looking to update your current document or to write a new one, this workshop will keep you focused on what's important - and how to get there.
- 3) School Council Effectiveness -- Wed., Apr. 10, 2019, 7:00 p.m.; <http://youtu.be/LGMxJGulPQk> School Councils are most successful at engaging their families when they work effectively. This webinar examines how communication, committees and volunteers can best connect with your school community. For more information, please contact Michelle Munroe at 416-397-3529 or michelle.munroe@tdsb.on.ca.

SNOW REMOVAL POLICY

You may be aware that the City of Toronto is undertaking a blitz of snow removal this week in and around priority areas, including schools. This will come as a relief to many as we have had a particularly snowy winter, presenting TDSB staff, students and families with plenty of winter weather challenges. I know many of you often wonder how snow removal works at the TDSB. What follows is a general outline of our snow removal operations, as provided by central TDSB staff:

"Snow removal at TDSB schools is performed by 3 different parties; snow removal contractors, in-house trades staff and on-site Caretaking staff. Each school has a snow removal map posted in the Caretaking office outlining who performs what work; this map is also available on the TDSBWeb under the Facility Services website - Site/Floor plans section.

Typically, parking lots are plowed by contracted staff and they are called out when there is 5 cm of snow on the ground. This standard matches the standard used by the City of Toronto. In house trades staff will assist site based caretakers and plow snow on long pathways, some public sidewalks and remove excessive snow from school sites as required. In addition, they will plow parking lots and driveways when the snowfall is below 5 cm. At some schools, they will also park the snow from the paved play areas that manages an established criteria as follows:

- Schools with 6 or more portable classrooms
- Schools with students having mobility issues
- Schools with unique geographic features/drainage issues

When these criteria were established in 2013, staff worked with our insurer to understand the liability issues for both plowing and not plowing these areas. We also surveyed other District School Boards to determine what level of service was provided to paved play areas, and at the time, the majority of Boards who responded did not plow the paved areas.

At the present time, there are 45 TDSB schools that receive this service. Our coterminous Board, the TCDSB, does not plow these areas, with the exception of pathways to portables and if the area in question is used for after-hours/weekend parking.

Should you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Executive Officer Steve Shaw at steve.shaw@tdsb.on.ca or System Facilities Officer Faris Mansur at faris.mansur@tdsb.on.ca."

POLICY CONSULTATIONS

At any given time, there are usually one or more policy consultations going on at the TDSB as policies regularly come up for review. The TDSB seeks public input on all policy reviews. **Currently, the TDSB is reviewing the Home Instruction Policy (P060).** As noted on the TDSB website:

We Want to Hear From You - The objective of consultation is to gather public input regarding options, alternative courses of action, as well as to identify unintended effects for various participants and to find solutions. We would like to know your thoughts about our policy decisions by inviting you to our policy consultations. Please click on the policy of your interest to see the current draft. You are welcome to provide your comments, including suggestions on the wording and provisions of the draft policies, questions or recommendations using the contact information below.

Home Instruction Policy (P060) - To establish the Board's commitment to providing home instruction services for all eligible pupils in accordance with the requirements of Ontario Regulation 298, Operation of Schools – General under the Education Act. Drafts March 15, 2019 Draft Policy Contact: Ron.Felsen@tdsb.on.ca.

To learn more about the policy review process and to check out what's up or coming up for review, click [here](#).

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Kindergarten Registration has begun. We look forward to welcoming you and your child! You may choose to register in person at your local school or by using our new online registration system. Children who will be four by December 31, 2019, can start Junior Kindergarten in September 2019. To learn more, click [here](#).

School Year Calendar 2018-2019

The official school year calendar for the Toronto District School Board runs from September 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, inclusive.

The last day of class for elementary students is June 27, 2019.

The last day of class for secondary (full-year) students is June 25, 2019.

The last day of class for secondary (semestered) students is June 26, 2019.

2018 - 2019 Dates to Remember: Official Holidays and PA Days

Remaining PA Days & Statutory Holidays:

March Break March 11 to 15, 2019

Good Friday April 19, 2019

Easter Monday April 22, 2019

Victoria Day May 20, 2019

Elementary School PA Day June 7, 2019

Secondary School PA Day (Full Year Schools only)* June 26, 2019

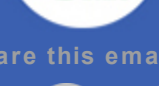
Secondary School PA Day June 27, 2019

Board-wide PA Day June 28, 2019

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and restful March Break!

Yours truly,

Rachel Chernos Lin



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