



Ward 11 Coffee Morning – September 28, 2022

MEETING NOTES

Meeting (held on the Zoom platform):

In attendance (total: #37): Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin; Ward 11 Superintendents Howard (Learning Network 05) & Felsen (Learning Network 06); School Administrators & School Council members; Other TDSB Staff (including Wilmar Kortleeve, Shared Services Liaison); Janice Barnett (Ward 11 Rep on PIAC/Parent Involvement Advisory Committee); Parents/Caregivers/Guardians.

Note: a collection of links and a list of upcoming/past events (info that posted in the Zoom chat) is included below.

After the Land Acknowledgement, Trustee Chernos Lin welcomed everybody. The "Community Coffee" meetings are informal gatherings where parents and constituents are invited for a round table-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.

Updates:

- **Back to School:** everybody is very excited that most people are back in school, and many activities and events are restarting.
- Superintendent Howard: several schools are undergoing **reorganizations**: either adding educators or re-aligning classes based on updated enrolment numbers. Nobody likes to see kids being moved, but it is an exercise that happens each year in all Ontario school boards to balance schools and make learning most optimal for all kids across the system. Please contact your school administration with questions or concerns.
- Trustee Chernos Lin: tonight (Sept.28) is the first full **Board meeting** of the year.
- Trustee Chernos Lin: everybody is welcome at my next **Ward Forum on October 3**, which is about pupil accommodation and planning, in Ward 11 and across the TDSB, including how we deal with the impact of major developments in certain areas of the Ward.
- Trustee Chernos Lin: we have received a lot of questions and feedback about the new **Central Student Interest Programs** – which used to be called the specialized schools and programs. Updated information about the programs, the application process and information sessions is to be posted on the Board website at the end of this week.
- Trustee Chernos Lin: among my recent **visits** was one to Fraser Mustard Early Learning Academy, which is a really amazing, vibrant, kindergarten school. It is also the site of a **new Early French Immersion program** that opened this September. Opening this program came out of the recommendations of the French Review, where one of the recommendations was increasing equity of access to French programming. The Thorncliffe community has been bused to numerous different locations over the years so this site fulfills that aspect of the review in terms of equity of access.
I also visited Northern Secondary School recently for an event called **Freedom Day**, with amazing speakers.

Q&A/Roundtable:

- With regards to **reorganizations**, Superintendent Howard: initial staffing levels in September are based on projections that are made in the Spring, based on historical patterns in the schools and communities. The pandemic has led to a lot of instability in the numbers. It is better this year, as we see a lot of families coming back from virtual school to in-person learning. Others are returning from living out of the city or from private schools.

Staffing levels are further impacted by many rules and restrictions based on government policy and collective agreements, impacting class sizes for example through class size caps for grades 1-3.

The reorganizations take place as the numbers go from projections to 'bums in seats', sometimes leading to extra teachers assigned to a school, sometimes to teachers being moved from a school with lower enrolment to a school where class sizes need to be reduced. The process typically starts in the 3rd week of September, with students this year moving in the week of October 3 – which is indeed a month into the school year, but the quickest it can be done. No lie: it can be hard on kids, families, as well as educators. But schools really do a great job transitioning kids, with many plans in place to make them feel comfortable in their environment.

Q (Sarah): is there a **quality assurance process** that looks at the projections? How accurate are they?

A (Superintendent Howard, Trustee Chernos Lin): TDSB is known to do very accurate projections. Because of the pandemic the numbers have been off a bit in the past years, but typically the numbers are pretty much bang-on for both the system as well as individual schools. The planners use historical trends, census data, numbers of new Kindergartners coming in, birth rates, as well as residential development numbers. At the school level, the projected numbers are used every year to come up with a 'school model' of teachers and classes. There should be parent involvement through a Staffing Committee: sometimes together with staff, sometimes separate.

- Q (Connie): are there neighbourhoods where people are not **guaranteed school attendance** (English language) at their local school?

A (Trustee Chernos Lin, Superintendent Howard): The general rule is that students have access to the school for their catchment area, which can affect school student numbers after the Spring projections (you can find your local school and middle school/high school pathway through the 'You're your School' feature on the TDSB website www.tdsb.on.ca). However, in the last number of years there have been accommodation pressures that have led to kids from new residential developments being transported to other schools, which is why you sometimes see notifications on big boards near new developments. The TDSB is working very hard on improving capacity in development areas, but it is very difficult due to the lack of space and the need for government funding. Much more of this will be discussed at the October 3 Ward Forum.

- Superintendent Felsen: **Secondary school staffing** is also affected by changes, but somewhat to a lesser extent and in different ways because the rules are different. Some schools have had large class sizes this

year, and we have already added teachers in some places. Sometimes this leads to splitting large classes, sometimes to collapsing small classes, but we try not to cancel any classes because that affects student's choices and options. High School classes have maximum size targets based on collective agreements, which for example include that (full-time) teachers can teach 6 classes a year, but the total number of students cannot exceed 180. Something else that happens is that some students in grade 12 are already at 24 or more credits, meaning they need only a minimum of 6 more instead of 8 to graduate, so you see some 'shopping' happening in the first few weeks with students dropping courses.

- **TTC/Transport:** Some students have very long travel times to get to schools, including Windfields (where attendee Ivy's daughter goes), and Leaside High School. Can the TTC be approached to increase busing capacity?
Trustee Chernos Lin: we can speak to the ttc, and have in the past, including about Leaside High School (bus 56). When we ask, they typically will track the ridership and assess need. Please contact Trustee Chernos Lin with the bus numbers. Often concurrent school (principal/council) advocacy helps as well.
- **Open Houses:** the understanding is that many/most of the High School Open Houses will indeed be in-person, perhaps supplemented by online/virtual sessions.
- **Optional Attendance:** this is a term that is no longer being used because it was confusing. The new name for this is 'Out of Area Attendance'. It is a process that lets students apply at schools that are out of their automatic catchment area. Availability is dependent on the space at the intended school: some will be closed for out-of-area attendance, or limited. Reasons that people choose to go this route vary: for some it is about a specific program available at certain schools, or social aspects, looking for a smaller/larger school, or other. The Board's goal, however, is have students attend their local school: to have quality programs for everybody, no excessive travel times for students, and an equitable distribution of students across the system. These are also considerations that are part of the **Secondary Review** that the Board is doing.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** thankfully, many X-Cur activities have restarted at schools. It needs to be noted that many depend on teachers volunteering their time out of school hours. This may affect the number and kind of activities being organized. Thankfully, most (including sports, arts, leadership, clubs) seem to be returning, also of course because teachers are passionate about them. Parents can volunteer for school extracurriculars (after police check), but there always needs to be staff supervision.
Please note that there are different forms of extracurricular activities. Some schools (through councils, or permit holders) have external providers come to the school, which can involve sometimes substantial fees. Also, recent news articles about certain after-school activities being cancelled or scaled down, had to do with city-run activities (like swimming lessons) that are faced with staffing shortages.
- **Graduations:** Grad ceremonies are expected to be 'back to normal' – in person.

- **Bannockburn:** Bannockburn school is currently being renovated for re-use as a TDSB school come September. In the past years the site had been leased to a private school, but it will open as a K-3 French Immersion Centre in September. It is out of the Ward 11/Learning Networks 05&06 area, but it is expected to affect certain areas that are currently in the John Fisher catchment. The intent is to try and organize before- and after care at the location – which also depends on interest expressed by parents, to reach a certain critical mass.

11:00am: Trustee Chernos Lin thanked attending staff for all their work and concluded the meeting.

For more questions, always feel free to contact Trustees Chernos Lin (Rachel.ChernosLin@tdsb.on.ca). Also a reminder: for local questions, make sure to reach out to your local Principals and Administrators.

LINKS & EVENTS

PAST EVENTS

Thursday, September 29, 6-8pm: School Council Virtual Town Hall Conversation

For all parents, including those on School Councils.

Learning about tools, resources and upcoming opportunities for School Councils.

RECORDING available on the PCEO YouTube Channel

(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9gvsGUiLZklU8VYSnH-Sbg>) , at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gn2AsLf5t64>.

Mon.Oct.3: Ward 11/Don Valley West Ward Forum - Long Term Program & Accommodation Strategy

Presentation & Meeting notes at www.tdsb.on.ca/ward11

UPCOMING EVENTS

October: Islamic Heritage Month: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Home/ctl/Details/mid/42863/itemId/22>

October: Somali Heritage Month: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Home/ctl/Details/mid/42863/itemId/21>

October 22/23: Parents & Caregivers as Partners

Annual Conference with speakers & workshops for all parents. Virtual this year, but with exciting pre-conference in-person events on both days at TDSB Outdoor Education Centres/Schools as well as several Toronto Museums.

Information & Registration: <https://parentsaspartners.ca/>

Pre-Conference (on site) sessions: <https://parentsaspartners.ca/Pre-Conference-Sessions>

November 19/27: Annual PIAC Ready-Set-Engage: Bridging the Gap Conference

Organized by the Board's Parent Involvement Advisory Committee. Together with the PCEO (Parent & Community Engagement Office)

<https://www.torontopiac.com/> (check out the brand new website!)

Beyond 8: Choices for Grade 9

A few of the events coming up:

- * Nov.1: Grade 8 to 9 Transition Information Session for Grade 8 Families
- * Nov.3: Student Interest Program Information Session for Grade 8 Families
- * Nov.7: Centralized Student Interest Program Online Application is available
- * elementary school transition nights, high school Open Houses

Information at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Going-to-High-School/Beyond-8> (including a 'Choices for 9 Student video)

Next TDSB Board Meeting: Wed. October 26 (4:30 - but public part often starting 7pm - make sure to check the Agenda).

Live at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Live-Webcast-of-Meetings>.

Agenda & Meeting Info: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Agenda-Minutes>.

A few useful links for people who want to engage with the TDSB:

* **TDSB Board website:** www.tdsb.on.ca (including newsletters to subscribe to & social media to follow)

* **PIAC (Parent Involvement Advisory Committee)** - with parent membership from all across the TDSB)

Ward 11 members: Janice Barnett / Charles Zhu

Info: www.torontopiac.com / Meeting info at [https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-](https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Advisory-Committees/Statutory-Advisory-Committees/Parent-Involvement-Advisory-Committee)

[Involved/Advisory-Committees/Statutory-Advisory-Committees/Parent-Involvement-Advisory-Committee](https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Advisory-Committees/Statutory-Advisory-Committees/Parent-Involvement-Advisory-Committee) (next meetings October 18, November 15).

* **FSLAC (French as a Second Language Advisory Committee)** - also with parent membership from across the TDSB). Ward 11 members: Charles Zhu / Divya Chandra

Info: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac>.

* <http://www.TDSBHub.ca> - **Parent Engagement website from the TDSB's Community Support Workers (CSWs)**, supporting 150 Model Schools across the TDSB (but much of the website information is applicable for all schools/parents, including many of the meetings)

- calendar: <https://sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/csws/calendar>

* **PCEO (TDSB Parent & Community Engagement Office) Youtube Channel**

with several recorded workshops & recordings of many past events

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9gvsGUiLZklU8VYSnH-Sbg>

Ward 11 Info

Webpage Ward 11/Don Valley West (Trustee Chernos Lin): <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/ward11>

Superintendents in Ward 11:

Andrew Howard: andrew.howard@tdsb.on.ca (Learning Network 05)

Roni Felsen: roni.felsen@tdsb.on.ca (Learning Network 06).

(map of Learning Networks in TDSB Learning Centre 1: https://www.tdsb.on.ca/portals/0/docs/Map_LC1.pdf)