



Ward 16 Meet & Greet

Meeting Date/Time: October 21, 2021, 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Forum: Zoom, hosted by Trustee Aarts

WARD FORUM NOTES

Attendees:

Trustee: Michelle Aarts (Ward 16, Beaches – East York).

Staff: Nadira Persaud (Superintendent Learning Network 24), Ian MacPherson (Community Support Worker), Wilmar Kortleever (Shared Services Liaison/notes), several Ward 16 Principals. Regrets (conflicting meetings): Belinda Stronge (Superintendent)

Advisory Committee members: Kate Leuschen Millar (TDSB Parent Involvement Advisory Committee/PIAC Rep for Ward 16), Madelaine Hamilton (PIAC Alt.Rep Ward 16); Diane Montgomery (Vice-Chair, TDSB Special Education Advisory Committee/SEAC)

Parents-Caregivers/Students/Staff/Community members: a total of 42 people attended the whole or part of the meeting.

1. Welcome & Introductions

After the land acknowledgement, Trustee Aarts welcomed everybody to this first meeting of the school year. It is intended to make introductions and connections with School Councils, in realization that not all schools will have elected their Councils yet. Indeed, some people sent their regrets because they have School Council meetings this same evening, or are attending both (perhaps partially). Unfortunately, the meeting calendar is packed.

School by school, all attendees introduced themselves. A large majority of the 26 schools in Ward 16 was represented by either a School Council member, a (Vice) Principal, or both.

Trustee Aarts herself represents TDSB Ward 16, Beaches-East York (which is Ward 19 on Toronto City Council), which encompasses schools from Coxwell to Victoria Park, and from the Lakeshore (south) to O'Connor and Eglinton (north). At the Board, Trustee Aarts sits on the Governance & Policy Committee (Vice-Chair) and the Planning & Priorities Committee. She Co-Chairs two Advisory Committees: Inner Cities Community Advisory Committee ([\(ICCAC\)](#)), and the Community use of Schools Community Advisory Committee ([\(CUSCAC\)](#)), and is a member of the Environmental Sustainability Community Advisory Committee ([\(ESCAC\)](#)) and the Special Education Advisory Committee ([\(SEAC\)](#)). Externally she is a Director of the Ontario Public School Boards Association ([\(OPSBA\)](#)) and (as a volunteer role outside the Board) is a member of the [Ontario Active School Travel Council](#).

Superintendent Persaud heads up Learning Network 24, which comprises 26 schools. Partnerships with parents are pivotal to ensure the success of all students. Given the fact that we are living in still such uncharted waters, now more than ever, we need to hold on to the relationships to be able to forge ahead and create a newly imagined way of school and schooling. So welcome to each and everybody in attendance.

2. tdsbHUB

Ian MacPherson is a TDSB Community Support Worker (CSW). CSWs are assigned to certain schools in our Board, Model Schools, to connect families to resources. They have a particularly important role in engaging School Councils. Their role has also evolved, so they (24 of them across the system) deserve a huge shout out as they have rolled and shifted with the pandemic. They have moved online, found new ways to connect, and helped streamline the system.

Ian introduced a new resource that was developed over the past years: tdsbHUB – www.tdshHUB.ca. Much of the content has been developed by workshopping with parents & caregivers. CSW's work directly with the 150 Model Schools (which are determined based on the Learning Opportunities Index/LOI score), but many of the resources that have been developed are of use to all parent & caregivers in the Board. Some highlights at tdsbHUB:

- [Homepage](#) (with a highlights slideshow that is updated regularly)
- [Calendar](#) (bringing together events and activities from across the Board, as Trustee Aarts had been advocating for)
- [Survey](#) (for parents & caregivers in Model Schools)
- [School Council Library](#) (searchable by month, or by toolkit as they are being developed)
- [School Community Resources](#) (including a map searchable by school, connected to the City of Toronto 211 tool).

Q&A (R.R. to Ian MacPherson): if existing resources are not listed on the Community Resource Map, there is an easy way to reach out to the City's 211 team and get those resources added. School Councils and parents can make valuable contributions to the 211 community mapping.

Q&A (C.S. to Ian MacPherson): Translation of the tdsbHUB pages is available via Google Translate. The tdsbHUB Toolkits themselves have not yet been translated, but that is the next step.

3. School Improvement Planning (SIP) – reflection on 2020/2021 initiatives, and looking forward to 2021/2022

This part of the meeting is a follow-up to a Ward meeting Trustee Aarts held together with Trustee Jennifer Story.

Trustee Aarts gave a brief overview of the School Improvement Planning Process – also see accompanying slideshow.

- The School Improvement Plan (SIP) is a set of goals to improve student achievement, developed in partnership with families & community to support, organized in three pillars:
 - Equity
 - Well-Being
 - Achievement
- The SIP guides Activities, School Budget Planning, Professional Development, and positive changes around the school and in the classroom (and hopefully extending into the community?)
- All School Improvement Plans will look different per school, but included in the SIP should be Data (such as the student Census, academic information like EQAO/Cat4 scores, school surveys), Goals, Responsibilities, Resources, Evaluation & Refinement

- Involved are the Principal (Administration), a SIP committee (staff, parents, school council, support workers, relevant community resources), School Council, and Community Consultation
- Fall is for Analysis, Prioritization, and Planning; Spring is for Reflection and Communication; with throughout the year Learning & Implementation, Monitoring & Measuring.
- Resources
 - [PIAC SIP presentation](#) (with case study -Aretha Phillips, 2019)
 - [TDSB School Improvement Process](#)
 - [TDSB Multi-year Strategic Plan](#) (to be updated this coming year, including consultation with staff, parents, and the community)
 - Ontario – [School Improvement Planning Handbook](#) (for Principals, but containing very useful information)
 - Ontario - [K-12 Effectiveness Framework overview](#) (2013) (currently under revision)
 - Ontario - [School Effectiveness Framework](#) (2013 document) -A support for school improvement and student success
 - Consultation: [Development of proposed Kindergarten to Grade 12 \(K-12\) education accessibility standards](#) (closed Nov 1, 2021)

Superintendent Persaud alerted School Councils that the ministry will shortly be releasing the School Boards Improvement and Equity Plan. TDSB has also created its own Learning Recovery Plan, taking lessons from the past 19 pandemic months, also to include elements in the School Improvement Plans. It is still about student achievement, equity, and well-being, with the underpinning of equity threaded throughout in terms of everything that we teach and learn, with voices and access.

School Improvement Plan work has been going on, taking into consideration of course that Administrators have been very invested into ensuring that students & staff are safe and healthy during Covid. Formal visits with schools are starting shortly, to really look at where the data is to drive our goals and the learning that staff has to engage in to address where we see some gaps. One big recent success has been the reading scores in elementary, looking at equity gaps.

Q&A (S.G & R.R. Trustee Aarts): **involving the community** is still somewhat hard given the restrictions on in-person meetings due to Covid. It has been interesting to see that with the use of Zoom and online meetings, much engagement has actually gone up. Some meetings that used to attract only a dozen people, now attract hundreds. It varies from school to school what brings parents out. In the past, for example, at Crescent Town school, events focused on student achievement, like poetry nights or math nights, brought out parents more than a traditional School Council meeting. So incorporating elements that the community values might help. Parent/Caregiver surveys might help focus meeting content and events to engage families.

Q&A (E.W., Trustee Aarts): Our council has incorporated “**nothing for us, without us**” – work done for racialized people should not be solely implemented by people who are not themselves racialized and locked out of the discussions. School Council make-up should be reflective of the community. One mechanism is affinity meetings, as held at George Webster as well as other East York schools, which are meetings for any group of marginalized people, in a safe space, to discuss an issue that they are facing. Examples: racialized transit to school, or why people are part of School Council (or why not, or why no longer).

Q&A (G.C., Trustee Aarts): How does neighbourhood gentrification impact model school status? **Model School status** (which comes with additional funds & resources) is based on the learning opportunity index (LOI), which is

a set of calculations based on student/family census and demographic data by postal code. This is not just based on the neighbourhood, it also looks at the students that attend the school. Because who lives in a neighbourhood is not necessarily who goes to the local school. At the secondary level there is a program as well, but not through the Model Schools program.

LOI data is reviewed every 3 years, and the Inner City Advisory Committee is actually doing some research into LOI, and other measures of determining need, such as comprehensive data that the City of Toronto uses to determine community supports. Trustee Aarts is looking for trustees and the public to get a better understanding of the LOI system, which has been in place quite a long time and has been quite successful. But Model Schools areas are not the only places where people with needs live – more affluent areas also have pockets of poverty.

Q&A (K.M, Trustee Aarts): Using the three School Improvement Planning pillars also in the Safe & Caring Schools **Committee** can be interesting, as you learn more about the perspectives also from teachers and staff. The Safe & Caring Schools committee and the Safe & Caring School Committee are two places where parents can participate. Two other Committees with place for parent involvement are Budget, and Staffing.

Q&A (George Vlahos, R.R., Trustee Aarts): Secord school provided some **examples** of how the impact of the pandemic was included in the 2020/2021 School Improvement Plan goals. Crescent Town school intends to carry over the theme of 'Identity' this year, with great communication between parents and Admin developing the SIP. This also touches on School Council membership and involvement, as experienced by a Community Support Worker: many parents are interested in contributing and being involved, but are taken aback by the 'paperwork' involved with Councils. Some of the changes in parent engagement due to the pandemic have actually led to more substantive participation, for example around School Improvement Planning, in addition to previously perhaps more dominant things like fundraising and social events.

Q&A (Kate Leuschen Millar, Trustee Aarts): it is important to **reflect on previous year's School Improvement Goals**. It is part of accountability, and improvements can be used as a celebration, as a milestone. One additional idea is 3-year planning, which does not have to be onerous and can be important for continuity. Parents Engaged in Education, as well as PIAC, have valuable resources for this, which may feature in a future Ward meeting.

Q&A (R.R., Trustee Aarts): **Playground progress** has unfortunately suffered from the pandemic, in part because increased costs of construction. Some projects have actually been withdrawn from tender to get better control of the process, but staff numbers are limited. If you are on the list, your project is coming and Principals can follow up with our Facilities Leads for updates. School yard and school grounds improvement has a renewed focus within our Sustainability office, lead by Richard Christie, who is amazing. We will also see many more trees coming to school properties and a focus on removal of asphalt and more dynamic green spaces in the coming years.

4. Closing

Trustee Aarts thanked everybody again for attending. It was great to see faces, but hopefully at some future point also in person again. As School Councils get established, Superintendents Persaud and Strong will collect contact information, and Trustee Aarts will send another e-mail around to engage in School Council Networking.

Please send any questions that you did not see answered to Trustee Aarts (Michelle.Aarts@tdsb.on.ca), so she can answer or reach out to staff for more information. Please stay tuned for upcoming newsletters and further meetings.

5. Some additional links, events, and resources:

- Parent Involvement Advisory Committee / PIAC:
<http://www.torontopiac.com>, <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Advisory-Committees/Statutory-Advisory-Committees/Parent-Involvement-Advisory-Committee>
- TDSB Community Advisory Committees:
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Advisory-Committees/Community-Advisory-Committees>
- TDSB Hub:
 - <http://www.tdsbhub.ca>
 - [tdsbHUB SIP video](#)
- TDSB Learning Opportunities Index:
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/research/research/learning-opportunities-index>
- TDSB Model Schools:
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/Model-Schools-for-Inner-Cities/What-is-a-model-school>
- Parents & Caregivers as Partners Conference (October):
<https://parentsaspartners.ca/>
- PIAC Conference (November 27/28):
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Conferences/PIAC-Conference>
- PCEO YouTube Channel (contains recordings of many parent involvement events, including Conference recordings):
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9gvsGUiLZklU8VYSnH-Sbg>
(a recent Post-Secondary Information Session for families is here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJYoMQI-iVQ>)