



WARD 3 VIRTUAL WARD FORUM

Meeting Date/Time: October 27, 2021, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Forum: Zoom, hosted by Trustee Patrick Nunziata

WARD FORUM NOTES

Attendees:

Trustee: Patrick Nunziata (TDSB Ward 3, Etobicoke – Lakeshore)

Staff: Debbie Donsky (Superintendent, Learning Network 19), Erin Altosaar (Superintendent, Learning Network 20), Peter Chang (Superintendent, Learning Network 30); Shameen Sandhu (TDSB System Leader for Mental Health & Professional Services), Sara Zimmerman & Alice Rubin-Vaughan (TDSB Psychological Services); Wilmar Kortleever (Shared Services Liaison), Ward 3 Principals.

Advisory Committee members: Felicia Seto-Lau (Co-Chair, TDSB Parent Involvement Advisory Committee/PIAC).

Parents-Caregivers/Students/Staff/Community members: a total of 28 people attended the whole or part of the meeting.

1. Welcome & Introductions

After the land acknowledgement, Trustee Nunziata welcomed participants

2a. PIAC Elections

Wilmar Kortleever (Shared Services Liaison) explained the election process. At the time of the meeting, three candidates were nominated for two positions on the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC): www.torontopiac.com. After introductions by the candidates, eligible voters were sent a ballot via e-mail to vote on the online Electionbuddy platform at www.electionbuddy.com.

The three nominated candidates (Eleanor Antoncic, Lauren Tedesco, Saira Somani) gave a brief introduction about themselves and their interest in PIAC. The election process started at 7:30pm and closed 8:30pm.

Results: All 13 voters cast their ballots (one test ballot was spoiled), and the elected PIAC Representatives for Ward 3 were:

Lauren Tedesco

Saira Somani

Everybody who considered PIAC membership and/or nominated received a heartfelt thanks for putting their name forward and for their commitment to TDSB Parent Engagement.

2b. FSLCAC Elections

During the meeting, one person expressed interest in joining the French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee (FSLCAC) www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. After a brief introduction, Katherine Fisher-Laxa was acclaimed as the representative for Ward 3.

3. Superintendent Updates

Superintendents Altosaar and Donsky provided various updates:

Coming out of the pandemic, schools are more and more starting to get back to 'normal', including extracurriculars (although still in limited numbers to limit mixing cohorts) and music. There is hope that the pools will open soon as well. Staff and students are excited to be back.

Discussion: Jennifer (Parent), Superintendent Donsky, Trustee Nunziata: The **Pathway for Secondary French Immersion** is still being reviewed. With Richview C.I. at capacity, a program at Lakeshore C.I. was proposed as an option. The pandemic has slowed the process, which is also part of the Secondary Program Review. An exact timeline is not yet known. Trustee Nunziata strongly supports a French Immersion program at Lakeshore C.I.

More schools in the TDSB will be offering early French Immersion. Recent signs going up at schools about the early French Immersion Program are about registration starting in November. They do not mean that the local school will necessarily offer French Immersion on site (TDSB offers guaranteed access to the French Immersion program for those applying on time, but not a specific location).

4a. Mental Health & Well-Being – Presentation by Sameen Sandhu

Shameen Sandhu, TDSB system leader for mental health and professional support services, provided a presentation about Mental Health & Well-Being. See attached/accompanying Presentation slideshow, including additional Resources. Among the topics covered:

- Mental Health & Well-Being Intersect & Layer – 8 dimensions of Wellness
- Social Determinants of Health
- Social Inequities & Mental Health
- Mental Health & Stigma
- Emotions, Feelings and Stress
- Honoring Resilience & Growing Coping Skills
- The Power of Small Steps

4b. Dyslexia Awareness – Presentation by Alice Rubin-Vaughan & Sara Zimmerman

Alice Rubin-Vaughan and Sara Zimmerman, TDSB psychologists, provided a presentation about Dyslexia – it is Dyslexia Awareness Month. See attached/accompanying Presentation slideshow. Among the topics covered:

- What is Dyslexia?
- Myths about Dyslexia.
- Early Signs
- Structured Literacy
- The Ladder of Reading
- How to help the striving reader
- How to Help at Home
- Right to Read Inquiry: Student Voice (video clip)
- Learning difficulties and Mental Health
- What a student with learning difficulties may need
- Resources: International Dyslexia Association: www.idaontario.com, Reading Rockets: www.readingrockets.com, Integra Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Program: <https://www.childdevelop.ca/programs/integra-learning-disabilities-and-mental-health>.

Discussion: Jennifer (Parent), Larissa (Parent), Superintendents Donsky & Altosaar, Psychologist Zimmerman, Trustee Nunziata: Awareness is very important. Many people, including parents and teachers, do not know the signs of Dyslexia or other Learning Disabilities/Needs. Some people are struggling and for the longest time only hear ‘bright but lazy’, and/or even have to resort to private assessments. We need to spread the information and awareness. Learning disabilities and dyslexia also need to be de-stigmatized. It’s just a different way of thinking and learning.

How to share/spread the word: Senior staff learning walks at schools (especially early intervention in Gr.1 and SK, but also later grades for people who fall through the cracks); school councils and school administrators working on pedagogy with the teachers in their schools; and, additional content included in qualification courses for teachers. Advocacy is needed. It’s important to get information from the experts like Sara & Alice, but personal experiences and stories like the ones shared by Jennifer & Larissa during the meeting

are also important. Where are the resources, for example if Reading Recovery stops past grade 1? People should not have to spend their own money, even if they have the means to do so. This is a big equity issue.

5. 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>, French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee (FSLCAC): www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac.
- TDSB Hub: <http://www.tdsbhub.ca>
- 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>
- Parents & Caregivers as Partners Conference (October): <https://parentsaspartners.ca/>
- PIAC Conference (November 27 & 28, 2021):
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Conferences/PIAC-Conference>