

## Ward 16 Council Meeting – February 2, 2012

### Meeting Notes

Present (as per Sign-In sheets): Adam Beck: Rita Gallippi (P); Beaches Alternative: Jesse Clarke; Bowmore: Lilian Hanson (P); Bowmore: Kyle Duncan; Duke of Connaught: Katy Dockrill; Earl Haig: Liz Hayes (P); Earl Haig: Barb Fine; Earl Haig: Kate Wallis; Gordon A. Brown: Donna Terry; Kew Beach: Shannon Morrison; Kew Beach: Andrew Slonosky; Presteign Heights: Eva Vasilakakos; Presteign Heights: Hilary Romkey; Secord: Lisa Moser (P); Secord: Anastasia Poulis (VP); Secord: Parvin Akhter; Secord: Brad Collicott; Secord: Athiya Parveen; Secord: Priyafosh Roybhwann; Secord: Heather Saunders; Secord: Heather Tormey; TDSB: Roula Anastasakos (S); TDSB: Anne Kerr (S); TDSB: Catherine Dorton; TDSB: Cathy MacKenzie; TDSB: Sheila Cary-Meagher

(P) Principal; (VP) Vice Principal; (S) Superintendent

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. Welcome: Heather Tormey, Secord ES School Advisory Co-Chair
2. Overview of Host School: Lisa Moser, Principal Secord ES
  - school dates back to 1915
  - building was renovated in 1995 to accommodate 14 new classrooms
  - aging port-a-pak and community centre now located on site
  - community centre houses Neighbourhood Information Centre; counsellors available M-Th, 9AM-5PM
  - other programs available at Secord ES: Child Development Institute kindergarten program (formerly CRECHE); Early Years Parenting Centre; preschool and school-aged daycares
  - Settlement Education Partnerships Toronto (SEPT) workers visit school regularly
  - 650+ students currently enrolled at Secord ES in Grades JK-5; 11 kindergarten classes, 4 special education classes
  - school community very diverse; more than 30% of students' first language is other than English
  - proud member of Model Schools for Inner City
  - nutrition programs: nutritious breakfast, healthy snack and hot lunch, all prepared daily by parents/community volunteers
  - parents actively engaged in school activities – classroom volunteers, School Advisory Council, etc.
  - School Advisory Council goal: to grow parental involvement; activities largely parent-focused
  - school-wide One Plant per Classroom initiative recently introduced
  - grant monies recently received from Green Apple and Canadian Tire; funds to be used for school garden, dishes for nutrition programs, etc.
3. Special Presentation – ***K-8 Schools: An Overview***: Gen Ling Chang, Coordinating Superintendent, Teaching and Learning; Lisa Moser, Principal, Secord ES; Liz Hayes, Principal, Earl Haig PS

#### Gen Ling Chang - Coordinating Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

- no specific grade configuration guarantees student achievement and/or social adjustment
- student success is the result of collaborative teaching and strong leadership
- decisions re school grade configurations are based on a number of factors including: school size, projected enrolment, transportation costs, number of school transitions, fiscal constraints, etc.
- *pros* for K-8 school configuration: curriculum delivered/grades assessed in Grades JK-8 more coherent/consistent; students are subjected to fewer educational transitions; students/siblings are able to attend same neighbourhood school; older students mentor younger students
- *cons* for K-8 school configuration: existing school/school yard size, building design, facilities (i.e. gym, science lab, lockers, etc.); limited operating budget
- for more information, please see Gen Ling Chang's PowerPoint presentation attached

### Lisa Moser - Principal, Secord ES

- Principal at Earl Haig PS when school began transition, i.e. year 1 as school went from JK-5 to JK-6
- grade configuration change was parent driven; parents desired a more emotionally nurturing, family-like atmosphere for children where older children could mentor younger children
- TDSB decision was result of extensive consultation with both the Earl Haig PS and neighbouring school communities
- biggest challenge: lack of funding available for books, lockers, furnishings (i.e. size appropriate desks, chairs, etc.) required for students in Grades 6-8

### Liz Hayes - Principal, Earl Haig PS

- Principal at Earl Haig PS as transition continued, i.e. years 2 and 3 as school went from JK-6 to JK-8; NB\* transition now complete
- all stakeholders (i.e. teachers, students, parents) appear to be happy with new grade configuration
- advantages: relationships established between young adolescents and classroom teachers over the years JK-6,7,8 shown to positively affect student learning; opportunity for cross-curricular studies shown to be critical to student engagement; overall tone/atmosphere at school very positive (i.e. older students mentor younger students, act as peer mediators, volunteer in school office, etc.; students of all ages have voice in school government, etc.)
- challenges: funding for books, lockers, furnishings, technology; scheduling for lunch program due to larger number of students; school yard safety due to both number and age/size of students; managing of Grade 6-8 “at-risk” students

### Q&A/Comments

- (1) Strong school administrative leadership at Earl Haig PS was critical to successful school grade reconfiguration.
- (2) How do schools which are transitioning from JK-5/6 to JK-8 deal with rotation?
  - while class rotation helps to prepare students for high school, full rotation in Grades 6-8 is not considered to be healthy learning model
  - ability to offer rotation is dependent upon staff expertise
  - as school staffing is directly related to enrollment, schools must organize themselves
- (3) As most schools will require significant capital improvement in order to accommodate Full Day Kindergarten and/or a grade reconfiguration, how will student learning be affected by construction, etc.?
  - average timeline for capital improvement project is 2 years (i.e. from initial drawings to project completion)
  - during “construction” phase, student learning will take place in portables located on site; or, where this is not possible, students will be bused to an suitable location
- (4) FDK to begin at Earl Haig PS in September 2013. When will planning begin?
  - “behind-the-scenes” planning has already begun
  - timeline for retrofitting of school site is largely dependent upon the specific improvements required; NB\* project timeline is less than 2 years
- (5) Capital improvements/retrofitting of schools re FDK, all sounds very expensive. How can TDSB afford to do this?
  - costs associated with FDK implementation are funded by provincial government (i.e. FDK costs not paid out of TDSB facilities maintenance budget)
- (6) Aging port-a-paks at Secord and George Webster pose health and safety concerns. When will this issue be addressed?
  - Principals, Superintendent and Trustee very aware of this issue
  - implementation of FDK and/or grade reconfiguration at Ward 16 schools will likely result in physical changes at both Secord and George Webster; port-a-pak issue will be dealt with at that time
- (7) If schools change from JK-5/6 to JK-8, local middle schools will no longer be required. Does this mean that middle schools will close?
  - TDSB decisions re changes to school grade configurations are only made after community consultation with both the subject school and its neighbouring schools
  - Ward 16 schools north of Danforth Avenue undergoing this process now
  - Ward 16 schools south of Danforth Avenue will be undergoing this process next year
- (8) What are advantages/disadvantages of middle schools?
  - children have opportunity to make new friends (advantage for some, disadvantage for others)
  - teachers have opportunity to teach in pod-like environment; teaching/learning “blocks” reduce need for rotation; “block” learning environment shown to improve student achievement

- specialized programs, i.e. shop, home economics, music, guidance, etc. are now limited
  - difficult to generalize advantages/disadvantages as each school and its staff is very unique
- (9) If parents would like to change the grade configuration of their child's school, what can they do?
- engage entire school community (i.e. parents, teachers, local business people, etc.); talk it up in the school yard; hold community meetings; conduct surveys, etc.
  - figure out what they want and why they want it; identify pros and cons based on common sense rather than research
4. School Reports – none
5. Environmental Coordinator Report: Catherine Dorton
- student/teacher support of EcoSchool program appears to drop off in Grades 6-8 (i.e. Middle School years); JK-8 school grade configuration may help to promote program continuity
  - re One Plant per Classroom initiative > still waiting on donations; in meantime, planning to propagate existing plants (i.e. Philodendron, Rubber Plant, Spider Plant and Snake Plant); six Ward 16 schools have committed to implementing this initiative; while Secord ES will replant classroom plants outdoors in Spring 2012, it is hoped that other schools will encourage students to volunteer to care for their classroom plant at home in July/August, and then return it to the classroom in September
  - re Grants > to date, 5 or 6 Ward 16 schools have received \$500 Canadian Tire Grant; 3 or 4 schools will use monies to purchase plants for One Plant per Classroom initiative
  - re EcoSchools > Richard Christie, Senior Manager Sustainability has offered to speak at staff meeting and/or SAC Meeting of Ward 16 Middle Schools; presentation lasts about 25 minutes, Q&A about 10 minutes; if interested, please contact Catherine to arrange
  - re Arboretum project > continuing to seek funding
  - re Green Globes initiative > all Ward 16 schools have been provided with classroom tracking sheets (see attached); tracking sheets help students/teachers monitor energy use/conservation; to encourage use, Catherine is planning some kind of *friendly competition* between schools; more info to follow
6. Superintendent Report: Roula Anastasakos, Anne Kerr
- Kindergarten registration for 2012-2013 school year now underway
  - registration for Elementary Academies now open; options include: Boys' Leadership Academy, Girls' Leadership Academy, Vocal Music Academy, Sports and Wellness Academy, Health and Wellness Academy; for more information visit <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=10552&menuid=32033&pageid=27366>
  - Primary/Junior report cards go home between February 10-16, 2012; Parent-Teacher Conferences to be held February 17, 2012
  - Parent Census to be completed by parents of students in Grades JK-6 and returned to TDSB Research Department between February 10-29, 2012; information provided will be used to support student programming
  - deadline for applications for Optional Attendance is February 17, 2012
  - staffing process, IEP/IPRC placement process for 2012-2013 school year about to begin
  - community meetings for schools where FDK to be implemented in September 2012 will be held between March-June
  - March Break – March 12-16, 2012 (inclusive)
  - Anne Kerr is retiring after 41 years; Sheila and all Ward 16 Council Members wish Anne all the very best!!
7. Trustee Report: Sheila Cary-Meagher – none
8. PIAC Report: Kate Wallis
- on behalf of PIAC, Kate would like to thank everyone who lobbied the City of Toronto to save our school pools in January 2012 (i.e. Bowmore/Fairmont, Duke/SH Armstrong, Earl Beatty, Glen Ames and Gordon A. Brown)
  - School Council Appreciation and Information Evening will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 9, 2012 at North York Memorial Community Hall, 5110 Yonge Street; contact Kate if you would like to go but did not RSVP before January 26<sup>th</sup>

- for more information about Parent Involvement Advisory Committee, please visit <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=91&menuid=4060&pageid=3384> or <http://www.torontopiac.ca/home>

9. FSLAC Report: Sheila Cary-Meagher

- NB\* Ward 16 FSLAC Rep needed; contact Sheila or Cathy for more information

10. New Business:

The next Ward 16 Council Meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at East York Collegiate Institute, 650 Cosburn Avenue. The "theme" for this meeting will be *Parental Engagement* when Sheila will welcome a very special guest - Chris Spence, Director of Education.

**Please forward all questions/concerns raised by your respective school communities on this issue to Cathy at [cathy.mackenzie@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:cathy.mackenzie@tdsb.on.ca) as soon as possible** so that they may be shared with our speakers/special guests in advance of the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.