

School Council Meeting
6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, March 26, 2019
Northern SS Library

Present: Andy A., Helen A., Stephanie C., Rita C. (co-Chair), Scott D., Samir F., Sue F., Gillian G. (Principal), Cynthia H., Edith J., Peggy J., Nancy L., Jenn M.(Teacher), Adam M. (Principal Designate), Tania O. (co-Chair), Sylvia P., Linda R., Melissa R., Stephanie S. (Teacher), Judy S.

Regrets: Gail A., Brian B., Susan B., Shital D., Tanya G., Diba H., Kasi K., John L., Cathy M., Vlad M., Reuben N., Bam P., Njeri R., Shellie S., Steve S., Kaan Y.

Invited: Rachel Chernos Lin (TDSB Ward 11 School Trustee)

Meeting called to order: 6:35pm

Welcome/Introductions: Adam Marshall, Principal Designate and Rachel Chernos Lin (TDSB Trustee) were introduced and welcomed by Council Chairs.

Minutes:

- January minutes (23/01/2019) were previously reviewed by committee members
 - Minor revisions
 - clarification re: SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) involvement- under “3A)”, it should read “Melissa R., who is a TDSB SEAC representative, mentioned that any parent can observe meetings of TDSB’s SEAC, or can contact her for additional information” instead of “Melissa R. mentioned that any parent can get involved with SEAC”.
 - formatting of bullets- under “4) Note:” should read “A, B, and C will be linked” instead of “Both B and C above will be linked”
 - Correction of Irene Andiranopolitis to Irene Andrianopolitis

Motion to accept: Melissa R.

Seconded: Judy S.

Minutes Approved - 100 %

- February minutes (11/02/2019) were previously reviewed by committee members
 - No revisions

Motion to accept: Scott D.
Seconded: Stephanie C.
Minutes Approved - 100 %

- A suggestion was made to circulate minutes in Word for incorporating revisions. After discussion and vote, it was decided to continue with current practices.

Educational Mysteries Revealed:

Rachel Chernos Lin (TDSB Trustee - Ward 11)

- Personal background
 - Mother of three girls in grade 5, 8, 11
 - Previously involved at Northlea (Council, committees, and fundraising)
 - Lobbied to change regulations on education development charges
 - Approached by Gerri Gershon and Shelley Laskin to run for trustee
 - Began first term as trustee on December 3
- Reasons for running
 - Believes the Board needs people who are committed to public education
 - Likes working with like-minded people to make changes
- Goals
 - Wants to get more supports in place for students (like Skylark)
 - Wants to provide more Professional Development (PD) for teachers in differentiated education
- What does a Trustee do?
 - Three major components:
 - A. Mandated by Education Act to pass a balanced budget
 - B. Responsible for policy and direction of the Board
 - C. Liaison between parents and the Board
 - helps parents find correct channels for their concerns
 - visits with principals, superintendents to hear what's happening

No actual authority to implement change directly for a student or school

- How does a Trustee work within the Board?
 - There are 22 trustees for the TDSB (12 are new in 2018-19)
 - In addition to participating on the Board Committee of Whole, trustees also must participate in 1 of 3 standing committees: Governance, FBEC (finance, budget and enrolment), and PSSC (program and school services).

- Rachel sits on PSSC, which includes:
 - Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC)
 - French as a second language
 - Mental health
 - Black student achievement
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Early Years Advisory Committee

1. What is happening with de-streaming?

- The Board is committed to ensuring that no student is limited in terms of their career choices. The Board is also looking to close gaps in achievement.
 - TDSB research strongly supports the notion that integrated classrooms are beneficial for all students.
 - Rachel emphasized that professional development of teachers will be critical to the success of integrated classrooms.
 - Integration is already happening at some schools. Most students in the TDSB will be in the academic stream for 2020/21 academic year
 - At Northern, there are only 1-2 sections of applied, so this will affect a small number of students. There is no intention to remove gifted or core sections.
 - Current director has made a push to have additional hires and central staff who are literacy coaches in the elementary school so that students will have stronger literacy skills by the end of grade 1.
 - Homeschool program (HSP) is also to be phased out in later elementary years so that slower learners are not stigmatized by being separated out
 - Current provincial government has indicated that it will change the math component to raise achievement levels
- What are Council's concerns?
 - Some asked why better supports and interventions in Grades 1-8 would not be a more effective way to "close gaps" than destreaming Grades 9 and 10.
 - Some had a concern that pushing all students to take classes at an academic level could overwhelm students who may already be struggling academically.
 - Concerns were raised (and acknowledged) that de-streaming classes will be problematic with larger classes unless the lack of resources available to teachers to support their students is sufficiently addressed.
 - Council member questioned if it's helpful to put all students on an academic path leading to university, when some may be more interested in a path that leads to college trades.
 - The term "closing the gap" was deemed as a poor choice of phrasing by some because since it does not clarify that the gap will be closed by raising low achievement. "Closing the gap" by dropping scores of higher achievers by offering less effective education is not desirable or acceptable.

- What are teachers' concerns?

- class sizes are going to be so large, due to destreaming, inclusion, and Ministry changes, that teachers cannot teach effectively and all kids will be disserved.

- it is good not to shut the door on pathways too early, but proper supports need to be in the classroom to allow it to succeed.

2. The proposed provincial changes to education - what can we do?

Rachel says impact of proposed cuts on Secondary are profound for teachers and students. All schools will potentially experience detrimental programming issues (loss of electives, clubs, sports), but it will be most prominent in smaller schools. She is also deeply concerned about mandatory e-learning.

The Government directive was released March 15 and says that it is interested to hear feedback from education stakeholders. She is encouraging all stakeholders (parents/teachers/communities) to write letters to the Premier, Minister of Education and their local MPPs to express their concerns about the proposed cuts. A protest is scheduled for April 6.

Rachel thanked the NSS Council for meeting with her. She encouraged council members to sign up for her newsletter to learn about upcoming events: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/ward11/Ward-11/Trustee-Chernos-Lins-Newsletter>

She can also be followed on Twitter <https://twitter.com/rchernoslin?lang=en> and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TrusteeChernosLin/>

Global Competencies:

Gillian Gibbons and Stephanie Signorile

Gillian and Stephanie presented on how global competencies are being incorporated into educational opportunities within the TDSB. The purpose of introducing students to global competencies is to provide students with the skills that they will need to be successful in life.

Five Competencies (see attachment for a detailed summary)

1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
2. Communications
3. Collaboration and Leadership
4. Creativity, Inquiry and Entrepreneurship
5. Global Citizenship and Character

Professional Development day was used in the fall to focus on how to introduce the concept of global competencies into the classroom and how to develop lessons. Staff experienced and developed activities together to get people to think differently.

Operational Matters:

Funding Requests

Scott D.

A funding request had been made by Colin O'Connor to purchase a bike repair tool kit. Colin would like to teach students the basics of bike repair in a bike club. As the request was for less than \$1000, the request was approved.

Co-chair Report

Tania O.

Next council meeting (April 24) will be "Getting to Know You" with Mr. Marshall and an open forum for parents to discuss and ask questions about educational changes at Northern. June 5 council meeting will wrap up the year and plan for the fall (review the proposed budget, elections, fundraising, plans for programs in 19-20).

GAC Committee Report

Melissa R.

Melissa updated Council on the school-wide programs that GAC has organized:

- Enrichment/AP/Scholarship night was held on February 20th. The event was well attended with over 100 attendees.
- Study Skills workshop on March 28, intended for all students regardless of their program of study. Teachers from many areas of study contributed toward the content from different angles.
- Teen Stress/Anxiety workshop will be held April 11th, presented by Melanie Stassis and Lisa Kreindler; the event is open to both students and parents. It includes practical tools for recognizing stress and how to manage it.

Principal Report / Wrap Up:

Gillian Gibbons

Gillian introduced Adam Marshall, who will be taking over as Northern's principal. She noted that the transition has been smooth.

Gillian discussed the potential impact of the proposed provincial changes to secondary education. The Ministry of Education has proposed changing the 'cap' for average class sizes from 22 to 28. Because not all class sizes are the same (for example, there are lower caps legislated for tech and special education), more commonly taken classes may reach a size up to 38. Despite projected enrolment having increased from last year, due to the increased 'cap' to class size, it is anticipated that course sections and selections will be fewer, reducing the number of teachers needed to run them. As well, to be able to reach the average class size of 28, elective classes will need higher enrolment in order to run. Fewer teachers would also impact clubs, sports teams, and the availability of extra help for students. Flexibility to change courses would also be potentially lost. At this point, it is projected that there will be 20 fewer teachers at

Northern next year; those placed on surplus will be announced April 5. As library and guidance allocations have not yet been disclosed, and funding and enrolment is finalized May-Sept, some staff may be recalled so exact numbers of staff being cut is unknown. Transitional funding as well as retirement will also be factored into TDSB planning to try to soften the transition.

Gillian opined that many schools are in a precarious position; many electives will be cancelled and oversubscription to classes will be an issue come September until staffing allocations are sufficiently addressed. Smaller schools will be more severely impacted; Northern has a little more flexibility due to its size.

Gillian also expressed great concern about the proposal of '4 mandatory e-learning classes', starting in 2020-21 for incoming Grade 9 students. The courses would not be run by the TDSB, and it is not clear who will be administering these courses or how the four credits will be required.

Gillian clarified that these proposals are to be finalized on May 31, and the TDSB is in discussion with the ministry about the changes. The government welcomes parental feedback, so parental engagement would be especially valuable at this time.

Regarding graduation, Gillian informed Council that since the auditorium at Northern is too small to accommodate the graduating class, faculty and family members, this year's graduation ceremony will be held again at The Brickworks. Unfortunately, catering and venue rental costs are high, so Northern will be charging a \$75 fee for attending the graduating ceremony. It will also offer financial assistance to families in need so that no student is unable to participate. The fee will cover the cost of the graduate and two guests. Graduates can purchase up to two additional tickets for guests. The size of the graduating class limits the number of venues that can be considered for the ceremony. It is the best option of many that have been considered. School Council may want to include fundraising for graduation in future years, as this is likely the pattern for future graduations.

Lastly, Gillian discussed ongoing upgrades being done at Northern: new bleachers on the third floor, cooling units being installed in the South Gymnasium, roof repairs (above third floor hallway) and preventative leaking measures (by library) and a refresh of the administrative offices.

Farewell:

Tania O.

Tania thanked Gillian for all she has done over the past two years as principal at Northern. A thank you gift and cake were presented to her.

Meeting adjourned: 8:50pm

Next meetings: April 24, June 5