

School Statement of Needs – Section 1

Name of School: Northern Secondary School

Area:

Superintendent: Ronnie Felsen

Trustee: Rachel Chernos-Lin

School Council Chair/Parent Representatives: Omar Becerril and John Bakous

The parent section of the School Statement of Needs document is to be developed annually in the fall by the parent representative in consultation with the school community and the trustee (when available). The superintendent will complete his/her section when it becomes known that there may be a principal vacancy. The School Statement of Needs document shall reflect needs that are specific to the school and community. Please see the attached SSON Parent User Guide which is also found at www.torontopiac.com.

To be completed by Parent Rep(s)

School & Community Needs (placed in rank order)	Comments
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Capable and determined leader to ensure student success with a proven track record of **focusing on student achievement**, and creating a **caring, collaborative, community** environment that **empowers all stakeholders** (students, staff, and parents) to improve student **achievement, enrichment, belonging and well-being**.

We need a Principal who:

- has experience with, understands, and will actively support a diverse range of student needs by implementing a diverse range of research-based, targeted solutions;
- is approachable, open, and honest, and values, encourages and supports input from students, staff, and parents;
- is actively committed to improving achievement of all types for all students throughout the school, with a focus on helping each student to seek and fulfill their educational and personal potential;
- understands and advocates for and fully supports programs for special education, special needs, and at-risk students;
- is flexible, creative, and innovative, and will consider and apply 'out of the box' solutions that help break through gridlock and bureaucracy, to better meet the diverse needs of our students;
- is committed to maintaining and enhancing Northern's wonderfully diverse, broad, and deep academic offerings, course selection, and extra-curricular activities and opportunities;
- is sensitive to and supportive of student well being, including learning and social needs & mental health issues – within the school and through collaboration with on-site and external school resources;
- encourages a culture of staff and student excellence, learning, continuous improvement, and sharing of knowledge and best practices and resources, in order to better meet each student's individual and often diverse needs and aspirations;
- actively supports learning, extra-curricular activities and experiences, and community building beyond the classroom, including extra curricular experiences led by teachers and community-wide events/projects to create school spirit, a sense of community, and promote life-long learning.

COMMENTS

We are a large and diverse school with nearly **1800+** students and **100+** staff. We have an inclusive community where students form friendships and mix freely across diverse communities in academics and extra-curricular activities. Our school has students from an enormous range of social, cultural and economic backgrounds, including many at-risk and low income students. Approximately **58%** of Northern students have a learning exceptionality (deaf and hard of hearing [**2%**] + LD [**24%**] + gifted [**32%**]). Our students benefit strongly from our Tech and Commerce programs, our Academic Resource and Core programs our Gifted Program, our Academic, Enriched and AP level courses, etc.

With such a diverse and at risk population, and with general and increasing levels of stress and anxiety for all young people, well being and mental health issues need proactive support. With the loss of Lumenus, a well-known on-site resource that supported at-risk students and made a significant contribution to Northern school life, the school needs to develop collaborations with other agencies to support student well-being and life long success.

Our school has a rich and robust multitude of clubs, teams, events and activities organized by students, staff and parents that foster a sense of school spirit, giving and community. This breadth, variety, and depth of opportunities are integral to Northern's culture and to the full development and well-being of all students. Opportunities for a diverse range of extra-curricular involvement in music, drama, art, athletics, and clubs include activities ranging from United Way week, to integrating DHH students into football, to AP classes that are open to all students, etc. Continuing to foster an atmosphere that creates a safe and vibrant environment where parents are included, staff are inspired and empowered, and all students feel included, challenged, and supported is very important to us so that all students feel safe and supported and able to explore their options, pursue their unique and diverse interests, and reach their full potential.

We need a Principal who can:

- multi-task and manage multiple, often conflicting priorities calmly and with tact and diplomacy;
- find flexible (not rule-bound) creative solutions that make student needs a priority;
- manage the volume and complexity of the IEP administrative process and implementation and be empathetic to the challenges and very diverse needs inherent in this process;
- respect, support, and continue to innovate and enhance Northern's very diverse and broad academic and extra-curricular programs and offerings;
- share parents' and students' priority needs that high school be a place where positive habits of well-being and achievement are developed so that high school is an effective launchpad that equips each student with the ability to become a healthy, independent adult, capable of coping, making good decisions, and supporting themselves financially;
- understand and communicate the implications of proposed changes by the TDSB to parents so they can engage meaningfully in feedback requested by the TDSB;
- find creative and effective solutions to address ongoing aging building and infrastructure issues.

The size and complexity of the school requires a Principal who is a highly capable administrator, with strong interpersonal skills and sensitivity.

Northern is a large school with many academic programs and extracurricular activities that can beget day-to-day and other challenges, but these are also the strength and beneficial essence of what Northern offers to our students.

More than half of our students have IEPs and there are challenges and a significant workload associated with creating them and a need for guidance and leadership in ensuring their effective implementation.

Parents are accustomed to and appreciate receiving regular information (i.e. Principal's weekly emails and communications from teachers, etc.). Parents are helpful and necessary partners in improving outcomes for our students.

SCHOOL STATEMENT OF NEEDS – SECTION 2

To be completed by the Superintendent of Education

Academic needs, based on school data and the Vision of Hope

Comments

Verification that School Statement of Needs is developed according to agreed process

Parent Representative (Please Print)

Parent Representative (Signature)

Date

Superintendent (Please Print)	Superintendent (Signature)	Date

SCHOOL STATEMENT OF NEEDS – PARENT USER GUIDE

What is the School Statement of Needs (SSON)?

- This is the form completed by the school council/parent representative of every school each fall.
- It outlines the parent/community priorities for the school that the superintendent will use to identify a principal if one needs to be appointed. It is a record of the main priorities of the parent community and the school board for that specific school.

What is it used for?

- It is this form that will be used by the superintendent if a different principal needs to be appointed. This new form replaces the previous “Principal Profile” that school councils completed annually, as per the Ministry of Education’s “*School Councils – A Guide for Members*” document.

Who completes the SSON?

- Any parent/guardian who has a child in the school and who has been chosen by the school council/parent community can complete the SSON after consulting with the parent community.

When is it completed?

- Every school in the TDSB should complete the SSON and give it to their superintendent by November of each school year.

Where do we find the form?

- Your current principal and/or superintendent will have a copy of the form.
- You can also find the form on the PIAC website at www.torontopiac.com.

What happens if my school community receives a principal new to the school?

- If a principal returning from a leave, or as a result of a central transfer, is appointed to your school (your superintendent will know this), your superintendent will contact the school council chair to confirm the name of the incoming principal.
- If your school has a principal vacancy, and will be receiving a principal through transfer or vice principal promotion (your superintendent will know this), you will need to select 1 – 2 parents to represent the views of the school community.

How do we choose the parent representatives?

- They must be a parent/guardian of a child in the school. Remember, they are not choosing the incoming principal. They are representing the school community's priorities.

What do the parent representatives have to do?

- Review the SSON completed in the fall to ensure it reflects the school community priorities.
- Discuss this with the superintendent before s/he begins the search for a principal.
- Meet with the superintendent who will present a recommended candidate (on paper) to you and describe how s/he meets the school priorities in the SSON. If your trustee is available, s/he can join this meeting.
- If you have concerns that the candidate doesn't meet the school priorities, you should discuss this with the superintendent. It is possible for the superintendent to consider other possibilities.
- Once a candidate has the support of the team, you, the superintendent and your trustee, if s/he is available, meet the candidate to discuss the school priorities.

How do we decide what to put on the form?

The form is just a record of the school community's priorities. Each school has its own culture in addition to the common goals of improving student achievement and well-being, as well as parent and community involvement. Consultation with the parent community can take place at a school council meeting or a meeting specifically designed for this reason. Consider the following suggestions:

- Consult as widely in your community as possible.
- Publicize this item on your school council agenda so parents will know when and where it will be discussed. A fall meeting is recommended.
- Translate this information so non-English speaking members will be aware.
- Consider holding a separate meeting for this task either at the school or in the community.
- Consider inviting your superintendent and trustee to a meeting to discuss your school's priorities.
- Consider including feedback from students and teachers.

What are some examples of school and community needs/priorities that could be listed on this form?

- true parental involvement including innovative ways to promote a diverse School Council
- support for the highly valued range of unique programs (e.g. Arts, health and wellness, student leadership, equity, special education, etc.)
- community partnerships
- communication of School Improvement Plans, school budget, school safety plan and school staffing proposals (elementary) to parents, the School Council and the school community.
- visible administrator who actively interacts with students and school community.
- support and positive change for special needs students within the school including support for implementing IEP's

Do the parent representatives get the final say?

- While parents can suggest the superintendent consider other individuals that might better meet the school priorities, the superintendent makes the final recommendation. Trustees make the final decision, as all transfers and promotions Principals and Vice Principals must be approved at a Board Meeting.

How much time does it take to be the parent representative?

- Probably about 4 – 6 hours over a number of days

Do I need to be available during the day?

- While daytime availability can be helpful, it is NOT mandatory.

What happens if a principal returning from leave or centrally transferred is appointed to my school? Is there a meeting with the principal?

- Yes. As part of the incoming principal's entry plan, there will be a meeting to discuss the school priorities.

How else are parents involved in the new policy?

- Interested parents can volunteer to be on interview teams for teachers applying to become vice-principals. This is NOT for VP for your own school but for the TDSB in general.

How much time does it take to be involved in vice-principal interviews?

- You must be available for one full day from 8:00 until 4:00 (this will usually be in November or February).
- You must attend one training session (once/year, usually in January or February) that will be in the evening for approximately 2 hours.

Why are parents involved in vice-principal interviews?

- Parent involvement in education increases student performance. How VP's and P's include parents in the school is very important.
- Parents do not evaluate a candidate's educational training and experience.

- Parents give feedback to the team about the candidate's inclusion of parent and community involvement.
- Parents do not ask their own questions in the interview. They comment on how the candidate includes parents and community in their answers.

How do I volunteer for vice-principal interviews?

- Email the Parent and Community Involvement Co-ordinator at info@torontopiac.com

Who should I ask if I have other questions?

You can ask your principal, superintendent or your PIAC ward representative. You can also email PIAC at info@torontopiac.com .

Once your school has completed the entire process, please have the parent(s) most involved complete the PIAC survey found on our website at www.torontopiac.com. PIAC will use this information to help advocate for improved parent involvement at the TDSB.