



Thursday, November 21st, 2024

### CO-CHAIR'S REPORT

1. Thank yous

Thank you to all members of the parent community who have donated to our annual fundraising campaign, and to council members who helped to run it.

Thank you to Shelley Laskin for welcoming members of the Northern Community to her Ward Forum on October 28th.

2. Welcome

A warm welcome to all members of the Northern Community who are joining us today.

3. Ward Forum: Northern was well represented at the ward forum on October 28th. It was a good opportunity to meet our school Superintendent (Jennifer Chan) and hear about upcoming items coming to Board Committees.

4. Council Code of Ethics

As part of our onboarding process, all voting members have been asked to sign the Code of Ethics that forms part of our constitution. There is a lot to look at in the early days, and this is an important document.

5. Committee Terms of Reference

Committees have filled out Terms of Reference for the year. This helps with allocating resources and setting our priorities for the year. Parents and caregivers are welcome to join committees that interest them.

6. School Trustee: On November 4th, there was a by-election for Ward 15. Congratulations to Rachel Chernos Lin, who was elected as the new city councillor. This may be a good opportunity for Council to ask for assistance in getting development funds for improvements to our outdoor space. Unfortunately, Rachel's win leaves the school trustee position for Northern vacant. The TDSB will now have to make a decision about how that position will be filled. That decision will go to the TDSB in December. They have the choice of either appointing a trustee or holding a by-election. The text below is from Shelley Laskin's most recent update:

## **Filling the Vacancy in Ward 11**

With the election of Rachel Chernos Lin to Council, representing Don Valley West, the Trustee position in TDSB Ward 11 is vacant. Congratulations to Rachel!

With respect to Trustee matters, Trustee Farzana Rajwani will oversee the following schools: Fraser Mustard Early Learning Academy, Thorncliffe Park Public School, and Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute. I will be supporting the remaining schools in Ward 11 in addition to the schools in Ward 8.

A vacancy on a school board must be filled unless the vacancy occurs within one month before voting day in the next regular election. Pursuant to section 221(1) of the *Education Act*, “if the office of a member of a board becomes vacant before the end of the member’s term, (a) the remaining elected members shall appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy within 90 days after the office becomes vacant, if a majority of the elected members remain in office, or (b) a by-election shall be held to fill the vacancy, in the same manner as an election of the board, if a majority of the elected members do not remain in office”. Pursuant to section 221(5), “a member appointed or elected to fill a vacancy shall hold office for the remainder of the term of the member who vacated the office”.

In other words, a vacant seat can be filled either by appointing someone who is qualified or by holding a by-election. The decision is made by the Board of Trustees.

If a school board decides to fill a vacancy by appointment, we must appoint a person who is eligible to serve on the school board and who is willing to accept the appointment. The legislation does not set out a process for making the appointment. It is up to the board to determine how we will decide who to appoint.

If a school board decides to hold a by-election, the municipal clerk is in charge of conducting it. The board does not decide when the last day to file nominations or voting day will be. These dates are determined by the clerk. The clerk must set nomination day within 60 days after the by-election was ordered by the board. Voting day will be 45 days after

nomination day. The costs for a by-election are borne by the board - I have heard estimates from \$400K to \$600K.

**We anticipate a report will come to the board for us to make a decision at the December Board Meeting on December 11.**

7. SEAC Town Hall. Also on November 4th, the Special Education Advisory Committee held a town at which students, parents and caregivers were invited to share their views about barriers to accessing education for students with special education needs. We heard from 45 delegates on the 4th and also received a number of written and video presentations. Some themes from the event:

- There is a need for clear communication from the TDSB about the special education options that are available and the steps required to access them. Families are often referred to the Special Education Plan which is a dense and lengthy document that can be difficult to understand if you are not well versed in education terminology.

- Families are noticing an increasing tendency to place students in integrated classrooms without meaningful support. As one delegate put it, integration without support amounts to abandonment of both the student and the teacher.

- Some families noticed that their newly enrolled students are being placed in segregated classrooms based on their diagnoses alone without any conversation with the family or any contact with the new student. Automatic segregation was seen as being unwelcome by these families who felt that integration would be a more helpful option for their students.

- Some families spoke very highly of student experiences in programs that had appropriate supports in place. Northern hosts some of these programs, and we regularly hear how grateful families are to have access to programming that includes necessary and appropriate supports.

8. Grade 8 Open House

Northern's grade 8 open house will take place on Wednesday, November 27th. We don't know if interest will increase or decrease for next year now that the Technical and Commercial Boundaries are no longer available for entry to Northern. It is possible that we will see strong interest in the Technical spots that will remain available to be assigned by lottery to any student in the TDSB. It is also possible that there will be less interest as this is no longer a guaranteed pathway to Northern. There will be an opportunity for School Council to be involved in the open house, and we welcome the involvement of interested parents and council members. Please reach out if you would like to attend as a welcoming parent voice.

9. School Statement of Needs (SSON)

We have a draft School Statement of Needs which has been circulated to voting members of council. Our next step is to share with the parent community for comment. This document will then be submitted to the Superintendent and will be consulted in the event that there is a need to hire a new principal at Northern. When reviewing the document, please think about the things that you value most about Northern and the top issues that we face. Are these adequately reflected in the document?

10. Courtyard and Back Field

Thanks to Keith and Rob for joining a tour of the courtyard and back field. We are aiming to develop a wish list of items that might be suitable to apply for development funds once the new city councillor is in place. Rachel Chernos Lin has committed to having a conversation with us once she has the necessary information. Items of note:

- the bleachers could be a useful student space, however the wooden benches are currently deteriorating, and in some cases are missing. Some students do eat lunch there, but when the weather is warm, wasps can be a significant problem making the lower parts of the bleachers uncomfortable.
- The retaining wall around the back field is deteriorating in several spots and is leaning towards city sidewalks.
- The running track has some sections that are not in good repair. A rubberized track would be nice to have, however we would need to prioritise the various areas of need and determine which items would most improve the student experience and/or safety.
- School administration had set aside some money to provide student access to the courtyard. There may be a need for parent advocacy on this matter, and we will keep you updated as more information becomes available.

11. Caring and Safe Schools Committee

This committee is working to ensure that all staff and students know what to do in the event of an emergency during the school day. Information folders will be reviewed with staff on the PD day on November 29th and will be placed in each classroom and some communal spaces. The committee is exploring the possibility of running a lockdown drill during non-instructional time. They are exploring what needs to be communicated to students as well as parents and guardians.

Emergency response kits are in the works with some details still to be worked out.

There was no additional information available about the bathroom murals project. Student reps will report at the next meeting in February.

12. School Improvement Process

The Parent and Community Engagement Office has developed new suggestions for School Councils regarding participation in the School Improvement Process. Their suggestions are new this year, and may require a significant time investment. We welcome any volunteers who would like to explore this process.

13. Upcoming School Events

United Way Fashion Show: Dec 5-6

Winterlude (music showcase): Dec 12