

Trustee Alexander Brown – Ward 12, Willowdale

This is my first official *Trustee* UPDATE. So, I thought I'd give you a bit of my background, and encourage you to **contact me** if you have any other questions. Email: alexander.brown@tdsb.on.ca

- I am an ESL Teacher (English as a Second Language);
- I worked at the Board of Education in Osaka Japan for 12 years and for 22 years in total as a teacher;
- I speak English & Japanese, studying Mandarin (slowly);
- I graduated from McMaster University, and have an interest in the connection between science (my major) and music (my passion).

As your trustee, my interests are in students, parents and the schools that define our communities. Our schools are community hubs. And our children spend the most formative years of their lives developing skills, enriching their minds and building close relationships with principals, teachers and classmates. We need to ensure that the TDSB provides the best and safest learning environments possible so that all students can enjoy their education experiences.

Over the course of the next four years, I want to hear your thoughts & ideas, consult with you on a regular basis, encourage participation in board and school related initiatives, talk, learn and offer assistance and guidance if you have questions or come across some puzzling aspect of public education, TDSB or provincial legislation. **I'm here to help you, support you and involve you.**

At the beginning of March, 2015, my new website will be online. It can be accessed at www.trusteebrownward12.com. I want it to function as a hub for up-to-date information about what's going on in Ward 12, at the TDSB and in the province. As it develops (and it is not yet perfectly functioning), it will become a useful resource for parents, students and the community. I look forward to getting your feedback on how I can improve it.

Warm Regards,

Alexander

[For a list of all Trustee committees click here.](#)

MARCH 2015

Upcoming Events

**Registration For
Spring/Summer
Recreation Programs**
– March 10 – For
more [information click
here.](#)

**Regular Board
Meeting**
March 11th @ 7pm
5050 Yonge Street
Operating Budget will be
approved.

**Summer School Camp
Information**
March 23, 2015 @
[SUMMER CAMPS](#)

**SPECIAL EDUCATION
CONFERENCE**
MARCH 28th @ Earl
Haig SS.
A Joint [PIAC/SEAC Event](#).
Workshops,
Marketplace,
Networking. (see below
for more information)

AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH @ THE TDSB

"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education" Martin Luther King, Jr.

February 28th marked the end of the TDSB's African Heritage Community Celebration held at Earl Haig Secondary School. I brought greetings from the Board of Trustees to the student and parent participants. Awards were given to the winners of the student art contest with the theme: A Continuum of Excellence...Past, Present, and Future. Students also participated in the African Inventor's Museum and in a secondary symposium with Equity Commissioner Jean Augustine.

[For more information about African Heritage Month click here.](#)

WALK TO SCHOOL & TRAFFIC SAFETY

Over the past eight weeks I've been meeting with school councils and principals and finding out about some of the challenges that schools are dealing with. One of the most common and troublesome is traffic safety at the schools at the start and end of each school day. I'm committing myself to working with parents, school administrators, students and city officials to work on collaborative solutions to the problems. Students are taking an interest because they know the dangers of crowded streets and people trying to hurry to work in the morning. I encourage student participation as the best form of self-advocacy. Accidents can be fatal.

I also include an attachment in this email to a flyer about Walking to School. It may be a useful resource.

I will keep you informed of any initiatives that develop so that we can all share the ideas and make them work throughout Ward 12 schools and beyond. **And I ask all parents who drive their children to school to be cautious and try to work with school councils to be part of the solution to make our schools safer and healthier environments - inside and out.** Thank You for Your Cooperation!

NEW PHYSICAL HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

On February 23, the Ministry of Education released its revised Health and Physical Education curriculum - also called The Sex-Ed Curriculum - to be implemented for September 2015. As with any new curriculum, there will be many questions that need to be answered to help us understand the benefits and address our concerns.

To support you in finding answers, I'm including these links to the [Ministry of Education website](#) which includes the full curriculum

[The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education, 2015 \(revised\)](#) and
[The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9-12: Health and Physical Education, 2015 \(revised\)](#)

(cont'd)

These resources were developed specifically for parents:

- [A Parent's Guide to the Revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 1 to 12](#)
- [A Parent's Guide: Human Development and Sexual health in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 1-6](#)
- [A Parent's Guide: Human Development and Sexual health in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 7-12](#)
- [Quick Facts for Parents: Learning about Online Safety, Including Risks of Sexting](#)
- [Quick Facts for Parents: Learning about Healthy Relationships and Consent](#)

I hope that we can have conversations about the new curriculum. Your feedback is important. I will provide more helpful information and links as they come to me. Also, here is a link to a document called: [MYTH & FACT](#); And an article from the [Huffington Post](#).

CHILD CARE PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Ontario Government launched an advertising campaign to raise public awareness about child care options in the province. The campaign's objective is to support and empower parents, so they can choose child care that suits their family's needs. I've included the website address to the Ontario Government's Child Care Public Awareness Campaign. Go to this site: ontario.ca/childcare
I'm also attaching a link to the [TDSB Policy on Child Care Facilities](#) just for your information.

THE WILSON REPORT

The Wilson Report didn't come as a shock to me as a new trustee. I was looking forward to some constructive feedback and recommendations about what could be done about the "culture of fear" at the TDSB - But that didn't happen. Instead the Ministry of Education decided, without constructive conversation, to impose 13 directives to be dealt with in 30 days by a board that is effectively 50% new. It was a bit chaotic but we addressed the directives head-on. The report was supposed to address "dysfunctional" relationships at the board but ended up focused on getting us to fast track a list of schools for closure or sale.

The Wilson report doesn't effectively tackle the problems it was meant to, but it does create some new ones. It is also an opportunity however for parents and public education supporters to learn more about the underlying problems that the board of Trustees has to deal with regarding the lack of capital funding for our school facilities and the ban on collecting Education Development Charges from developers. It highlights the need for careful planning going forward – especially where we have crowded schools like those in Willowdale. And we can't afford to lose valuable properties that we may need in a few years' time. The average price of a house in Toronto is over One Million dollars, so land is not easily replaced.

I'm including a few links as attachments in this email. One is for the [Wilson Report](#) and another is a summary of the actions taken by the board in [response to the report](#). If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at alexander.brown@tdsb.on.ca

SUMMER SCHOOL / SUMMER CAMPS

Summer school information coming soon!

Full

summer school information will be posted the week of [March 23, 2015](#).

Registration Opens: May 4, 2015

Program Dates: July 6-July 31, 2015

Exams/Culminating Activities: Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Program Hours: Mon-Fri, 9am-3:15pm

Attendance: Students must attend all classes. No accommodations will be made for family vacations.

The TDSB provides a wide range of enriching summer programs for students of all ages. Are you looking for activities to keep your children busy during the summer? Find information about [summer camps](#) being offered around Toronto. Please connect with the contact listed for program information and registration details.

BUDGET

What is the TDSB's plan to balance the budget?

Working together, Trustees and staff have developed a [responsible plan](#) to address the \$16.5M projected shortfall. The TDSB's balanced budget plan has a minimal impact on students and the classroom, despite ongoing provincial funding cuts. The plan includes a list of proposed cost savings and revenue generating activities. We are balancing this year's budget using last year's provincial funding numbers. We still have to see how much of this balanced budget the province will support when they announce the grants for student needs later this year.

I've included a [FACT SHEET](#) to provide greater understanding of the budget process, as well as a [STAFF ALLOCATION](#) fact sheet. We have not held a budget consultation meeting in Ward 12 so far this year because of constant schedule changes brought about by the Wilson Report and Ministry of Education Directives. If there is a will to have a public meeting for information and for a chance to ask questions and voice opinions, by all means let's do it. I will work with the Ward Council Steering Committee to set something up. Please find more information about the current Ward Council Steering Committee below. Contact me at: alexander.brown@tdsb.on.ca or visit www.trusteebrownward12.com

PARENT INVOLVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PIAC) UPDATE

Our PIAC representative for Ward 12 is Eva Rosenstock. Eva has been representing our ward at PIAC for several years and is a committed member of the parent community. Thank you for your concern and commitment Eva. If anyone is interested in learning more about PIAC or becoming a PIAC ward representative email me at: alexander.brown@tdsb.on.ca

March 2015 Trustee Alexander Brown

Ward 12

I'm including a few links about PIAC for your convenience.

The PAIC website can be found at: www.torontopiacc.com and for all of the PIAC meeting dates you can go to: [PIAC – How to Get Involved](#) (meeting dates).

One other very **important PIAC announcement** is the **SPECIAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE** being held on Saturday March 28th from 8am to 2:30pm at Earl Haig Secondary School. This is a joint PIAC / SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) event. [Click Here for Flyer](#). Workshops will include Individual Education Plans, transition planning, technology, assessment and more. It is also a great opportunity to network with other parents, educators, agencies and the trustee. I will be there if you want to speak to me directly. I look forward to a great turnout.

To register go to

www.tdsb.on.ca/parentconference

Child minding service will be provided by trained staff. The day will be programmed with fun filled activities such as arts and crafts, Lego, building and reading stations. There will also be a special surprise guest for the children. All children will be offered a vegetarian or non-vegetarian breakfast, lunch and snack.

For more information contact (416) 397-3529 or email outreach@tdsb.on.ca

Ward Council Meetings

On February 5th, 2015, I held the first Ward Forum and invited the community. Some of you may not have gotten notice and I apologize for that. The focus of the meeting was to inform people about the Wilson Report and the Ministry Directives to the Board. The Chair of the Board, Shaun Chen, and the Director of Education Donna Quan both attended. We also talked about future ward council meetings and formed a Steering Committee. For more details I've attached the minutes of the meeting in the body of the email. Future Ward Council meetings will be announced in advance electronically and will be posted on school bulletin boards.

The Steering Committee: Lucia Stanizzo; Ann Blanchette, Meredith Laird; Eva Rosenstock (contact info included in meeting minutes)

Tentative dates for Ward Forums: April 14 or 16th 2015; September 2015 Late Fall - November 2015; End of February 2016
These dates will be firmed up and each meeting will take place at a different school throughout the ward.

Possible Topics for presentation & discussion: The new "SEX-ED Curriculum"; the Budget; Class Sizes & Class Caps; Report Cards; Immunizations and Health Issues; Model Schools for Inner Cities; Technology for Special Education; Traffic Issues and Finding Solutions. IF YOU HAVE A PREFERENCE or A SUGGESTION contact me at: alexander.brown@tdsb.on.ca

To contact the Steering Committee Members directly by email see **Meeting Minutes** attached to this email.