

EYCI School Advisory Council
Monday, November 25th, 2024

Present: Stephen Morris, Michael Atzemis, Amber Taylor, Mark Peacock, Raymonde Lievens, Susie Tsianos, Popi Caravasilis, Christina Lagoudontis, Sharon Connolly, Christopher Fardis, Kelly Vetira, Maria Marchese

1. Call to order: 6:30pm

2. Approval of agenda: motion proposed by Susie Tsianos, seconded by Christina Lagoudontis.

3. Approval of minutes: motion proposed by Amber Taylor, seconded by Susie Tsianos

REPORTS

4.1. Student Governance (Judy)

Semi-formal: will take place at the Toronto Botanic Gardens on February 13th, 2025. A few details – finding a DJ, organizing a photo booth and general decorations for the event – remain to be accomplished.

White Ribbon Day: opportunity to donate is available via School Cash Online, proceeds being donated to the Red Door Women's Shelter. There will be displays at school on domestic violence and resources to help women threatened thereby.

Talent Show: auditions for the Talent Show (Dec. 20th) will take place this week. The Show is scheduled for Dec. 20th.

4.2. Principal (Steven Morris)

Numeracy initiative: Mr. Morris announced a numeracy initiative for grade 9 students to boost mathematical skills. The initiative involves staff training for teachers involved.

Black Students' Association: Mr. Morris was particularly pleased with the school's Black Students' Association which has become an exemplar for other such Associations beyond EYCI. The BSA is hosting a convention on 28th November which will include workshops and the expected attendance/participation numbers exceeding 100. Representatives of EYCI's feeder schools and from other TDSB schools have been invited to learn about the EYCI model which has proven most successful.

Police incident: Mr. Morris described the recent incident involving the police at EYCI, about which he informed the school's community in an email to the community. In response to enquiries as to why the school was not locked down during the police, Mr. Morris explained that the option was discussed repeatedly (with the police, with the school's TDSB superintendent and with representatives of the safe schools team), but none of those consulted deemed that the situation warranted a lock down. As the police were concluding their investigation, EYCI suffered a school-wide power cut, and although TDSB protocol requires a school evacuation on such occasions, Mr. Morris thought, and again the above consultees agreed, that evacuating the school buildings might occasion concern, if not panic, amongst students who might falsely conclude that the evacuation be connected to the police investigation. Consequently, no evacuation was ordered.

Quest for a new VP: after announcing, in the previous meeting, his aim to secure a new (third) VP for EYCI, Mr. Morris was less than sanguine about the prospects of success. In discussions with the TDSB, it has transpired that the Board might envisage supplying a temporary VP during the busiest times of year, but Mr. Morris finds this offer unsatisfactory as a significant fillip to meeting the school's needs.

School numbers: the number of students has increased by nearly 100 this year which brings the student population to about 1100. Mr. Morris sees room for further expansion given the school building's capacity for approximately 1600 students. Some of the increase will, in all likelihood, ensue from the Board's reorganisation of French immersion programming which will see a larger number of pupils coming to EYCI's F.I. stream.

Auditorium: the new sound equipment for the Auditorium has been delivered to the school, and word on installation is awaited. Installation will hopefully be completed prior to semester 2.

4.3. Teachers' representative: Christopher Fardis

Of note, amongst the activities and accomplishments at EYCI, Mr. Fardis mentioned the following:

- grade 9 Geography: a trip to downtown Toronto was undertaken with the aim of looking at various urban renewal and environmental projects in the area.
- Remembrance in Action Day: December 11th, to draw attention to violence against women (including an optional assembly as part of the White Ribbon campaign).
- Black Students' Association convention: 28th November, as also noted by Mr. Morris in his report (see above).
- Winter Concert: takes place on December 10th, commencing at 6:30pm.

4.4. Guidance (Michael Atzemis)

Mr. Atzemis issued two pieces of advice to students:

1. that those who wish to make changes to the semester 2 choices they have made contact their respective guidance counsellor as soon as possible so that waiting lists can be made. This is especially applicable to grade 12 students who might otherwise be missing requirement.
2. college/university application should be completed and sent off by the end of the winter break. This is before the deadlines for such applications, but experience shows that getting the application out of the way in December lightens the load on students in January.

The Grade 8 Open House takes place on Wednesday, Nov. 27th, from 6:30-8:30pm in the Auditorium. It is open to parents/caregivers and students who are interested in attending EYCI after their graduation from middle school.

The Principal was delighted to introduce Kelly Vetira who is the school's Newcomer Settlement Worker. Kelly is at EYCI all day on Wednesdays and Thursdays and welcomes drop-in appointments as well as scheduled appointments. Kelly can be reached by email at kvetira@tno-toronto.org or by calling 647-296-0174.

Maria Marchese, who is responsible for senior students' English and ESL education, introduced a new online Lexia programme for students who wish to improve their English reading skills. Currently four students are enrolled in the programme.

Ms. Marchese also elucidated EYCI's participation in Indigenous education which includes grade 11 English (which all students take) with its Indigenous focus. Grade 9 visual arts also focuses on Indigenous art. In the discussion which ensued, it became apparent that EYCI has one of the highest

Indigenous populations of any TDSB school. There are 12 currently enrolled students who identify as Indigenous, though there is also an unspecified number of Indigenous students who do not currently self-identify as such. Because of its relatively high number of Indigenous students, EYCI is an Aanse School which participates in a project offered by the Urban Indigenous Education Centre.

4.5. Student Success: no report.

4.6. Co-Chairs (Amber Taylor)

After the previous meeting, Nick Moutafis circulated a draft of the questions to be included in the school's statement of needs survey. The survey will be sent out by the school on Tuesday or Wednesday (Nov. 26th/27th) and will remain open to those who wish to fill it in until Dec. 8th. The survey consists of multiple-choice questions and is anonymous, though those wishing to be entered into a gift-card draw are required to enter their email address when filling out the questionnaire.

Innovation Grant: some suggestions were floated about the topic of a talk/workshop for which Council might apply for a TDSB Innovation Grant (see minutes to previous meeting for details). Two suggestions were made: (i) something pertaining to concerns about students' use of social media; (ii) something which raises awareness of and informs parents/caregivers about sex trafficking (which is also the theme of workshops and talks currently available to EYCI students (through, e.g., the TDSB's anti-sex-trafficking symposium (Nov. 7th) and a sex trafficking workshop to take place on Dec. 11th). After exploring the availability of certain speakers, Amber Taylor will write the grant application.

New Business: given the time constraint of the meeting, it was agreed that “new business” will be postponed to a subsequent meeting.

4.7. Treasurer: nothing to report thus far. Council's allocation of money is thus far untouched.

The meeting ended at 8:15pm with a motion to adjourn proposed by Christina Lagoudontis and seconded by Amber Taylor.

The next meeting of the Council is to take place on January 27th.