

IPS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Date: May 27, 2020

Time: 6:00pm

Facilitator: Laura-Maria Nikolareizi, IPS Exec Council Co-Chair

In Attendance

School Council: Laura-Maria Nikolareizi, Walid Al Hajj, Joseph A. Hagopian, Jennifer Yeung, Yulia Skripaleva, Tendai Mhute

Regrets: Salma Hussain, Lili Dronjak

IPS Principal – Scott Woolford

Guest Speaker: Nicole McSweeny (Social worker)

Chair's Opening Remarks

Good evening everyone, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for coming out tonight. I hope that you and your families are staying safe during this unprecedented time. I want to take this opportunity as well to thank the parents, students, teachers, Principal Scott, staff and my colleagues on the executive council for all of us pulling together and working as a community to ensure that our children have a somewhat easy transition with distant learning. I know it has been challenging but we are all in it together. So thank you.

Before I introduce tonight's speaker I would like to acknowledge Tendai as our official minute taker and Joseph as our time keeper because I know that we have a lot on the agenda to cover tonight and I want to make sure that they are addressed. Also can we go around and take attendance and if everyone can introduce themselves by first and last name so that Tendai can record the names that would be appreciated. Also Scott can you assist in this process as well. Thank you.

Now I would like to introduce Ms. Nicole McSween, TDSB, Social Workers and she also works directly with the students and families at IPS. Nicole will be talking about "Health and Wellness" for families. We ask that families first listen to her presentation and that will be followed with Q&A which we need to cap it at 3

minutes because again we have a lot of items on the agenda tonight. Nicole the floor is yours.

GUEST SPEAKER NICOLE MCSWEENY

Approval of Minutes

February 24 2020 Parent Council Meeting Minutes

- Move to motion – Walid
- Approve – Tendai

All in Favour - Motion Carried

Forum

Chair acknowledged receipt of a letter from a group of 18 parents regarding their concerns around teacher placement. Chair acknowledged the 18 parents by name.

The Chair asked if anyone from the called names would like to speak to the letter. The Chair also reminded the protocol and procedure that this meeting cannot be recorded.

The Chair asked 5 times if any of the parents on this email letter wished to speak to the letter. The Chair also invited the actual writer of the letter and creator of the email address to speak to the letter.

The Chair also mentioned that as per the content inside the letter that she did reach out to Nigel Gariffe, TEF Union Rep for Ward 3 and 14 at 5:50 pm today at the request of the 18 parents who requested he be a part of the meeting. The Chair said that Nigel was not aware that his name was in the letter or that there was a meeting tonight. The Chair told Nigel that his responsibility is to represent the teachers and the school council represents the families. The Chair informed the 18 families that it was an awkward moment because Nigel had no idea what was going on.

The Chair also informed families that she had been in communication with the School Superintendent and School Trustee regarding the letter from the 18 families and they advised the Chair that Principal Woolford was in compliance with respect to teacher placement. They also advised the Chair that the Executive Superintendent, Associate Director, Director, and Chair of the board also did their

own investigation and again Principal Scott has followed the partnership between TDSB and ETF policies and procedures for teachers placement.

Chair reiterated the question for parents who penned the letter to speak to it, and further asked the writer of the letter to address the correspondence.

Parents were not willing to speak to the letter. There was confusion expressed around the contents of the letter by Connie Shepherd.

Chair read the letter

Connie Shepherd asked if there would be new teachers being hired for the fall

Amanda Chalmers, a parent, wanted to understand what the school year would look like in September post covid and inquired about teacher placement. She wanted to understand why there wouldn't be consistency, she said that as a parent how it's confusing to understand why kids can't have any consistency.

Chair: I agree ...

Clara, a parent, commented that having more stability for the Fall would have been helpful. I would feel more comfort knowing my child would have the same teacher in the Fall as this would help with a sense of reassurance for them.

Chair: The Chair asked Principal Scott if he would like to speak to the letter that was written.

Principal Scott: Said yes he would like to speak to the letter and he had a powerpoint presentation walking the families methodically through the teacher placement process without breaching the confidentiality around the contract that the teacher and principal both sign.

Mr Woolford began to explain the process (at this point) Connie S. Said something at this point - LM requested to allow Mr Woolford to complete his response and explanation of the protocol.

Connie then spoke asking why there wouldn't be any continuity in the Fall. Would there be new teachers in the Fall, did teachers get their first pick,...

Scott responded: He was the only one privy to the teachers' choices, also going according to collective agreement. He talked about how process works etc

Teachers would submit their placement requests to Scott. Then taking into consideration the predicted student numbers (grade and number per grade) and the qualifications of each teacher, placements are then determined.

Janet Fry said she wasn't a part of the parent group that penned the correspondence but supports the idea of continuity with teachers. She said she

would want her daughter to have the same teacher as well. She asked about teacher placement in the Fall a

Tracy – responded that the information being asked was confidential. As a teacher she didn't expect that this process was somehow public information and didn't understand why hiring and confidential matters about this were being discussed – she did not want this discussed.

Mark Farmer. I understand its confidential but wanted to understand why continuity could not be considered

Scott responded with how process works and reiterated

Sheetal Jani. My son is going into grade six. We wanted him to stay with his current teacher. He has done very well with her. With all the uncertainty, why put in more uncertainty. We strongly feel it will help him going into such a crucial year.

Chair: The next letter that the Chair acknowledged was a letter from Janet Fry (parent) who would like to see Mathletics implemented at IPS because Mr.B used it for her daughter's class. The Chair reminded Janet (Parent) that Tendai(Advocacy Chair) brought this item to the attention of the executive council which was then forwarded to Principal Scott to find out if they are on the vendors list for TDSB. The Chair informed the parent that Mathletics is not recognized by TDSB at this point and time. But the Chair is happy to have a dialogue about it at the September School Council meeting. Then Janet (parent) was not clear on how money was being spent at IPS and the Chair informed her that first off we disclose all financials at school council meetings that are held monthly. Next, when it comes time for the wish list from the teachers and administrators that is always presented at the school council meetings held monthly again for families to give input and see a breakdown on how the money is being spent. The parent acknowledged that she does not attend those meetings.

The Chair said within the next 2 or 3 weeks we will be working to send out the financial statement for families to see how money comes in and how it is spent because it is all about transparency. The parent (Janet) was pleased to hear that.

Amer Chaudry & Connie asked about Safe and Caring Schools also if we (IPS) belong to the category of Progressive Schools which would allow for further reduced class sizes.

LM to Tendai – Advocacy-

Tendai I wasn't aware of it but will look into it

LM any other questions

LM – Lets move on to next item on the agenda, The Principal's Report

Principal's Report

Sheetal Jani had a question about Transportation on the ferry in September and also asked about when parents can claim items left behind at school before Spring Break.

Amanda Chalmers wondered if kids can bike to school in lieu of taking the bus.

Scott advised that once direction was received from TDSB then he would be able to communicate how both transportation and picking up of items will be handled.

Financials

The Chair spoke on behalf of Lili, Treasurer and Walid Vice Chair regarding the financials. We currently have over \$15,000 dollars in the account. Around \$7-8 thousand was through direct individual and corporate donations.

The Chair also informed that we have hired an accountant to manage the books since we are a not for profit organization under the Lighthouse Foundation organization.

The Chair asked parents if they are part of a large organization that has the ability to donate then to reach out to us to learn more on how they can donate to support the school.

Advocacy Report

Enridge has chosen an alternate route for their pipeline. They have chosen LakeShore; abandoning their plans to dig up Queens Quay

Further Questions

Shawn V. He would like to get a chance to get together to continue the discussion.

Motion to Adjourn – LM

Motion – Tendai

Second - Jen

Meeting Adjourned

From: Concerned Parents of IPS <concernedparentsofips@gmail.com>

To: ipsschoolcouncil@gmail.com <ipsschoolcouncil@gmail.com>; LAURA-MARIA NIKOLAREIZI
<Removed to protect data>

Cc: <Removed to protect data>

Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020, 11:13:32 PM EDT

Subject: Re: Request for Information to be Shared at IPS School Council Meeting

Dear Farah,

Thank you for your email and for bringing Laura-Maria's question(s) forward.

Dear Laura-Maria,

Thank you for reaching out.

In terms of having a representative speak on behalf of the group, we do not think this is a fair request, as this will put one or many parents in an uncomfortable position. Many in the school community are not feeling safe to speak up individually about their concerns, which is why this group is the voice of many parents.

Similar to the manner in which all communications and responses received between this group and the TDSB, we ask any questions or concerns to be sent directly to this group email account. Our voice is collective and our letters have been a collective effort.

Attached are the letters which have been sent over the past month to various levels within the TDSB, and we believe that by reading these letters, the School Council will have a clear understanding of the request and concerns from the group of parents.

Our understanding of the teacher placement process was shared by IPS Teacher Union Representative Nigel Barriffe. We would encourage you to reach out to him for any clarification

needed regarding this process and the large percentage of teachers who were not given their first choice when that was an option, and would have been consistent with our request for continuity of learning. He has explained to us that teacher preferences are listed in order of 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and are not simply a random list. It is also our understanding through the dialogue with TDSB administration that these assignments are final unless there is reorganization due to school population in mid to late September. Again, this process can be clarified with Nigel Barriffe, whose contact information is included below.

Perhaps for an open and transparent dialogue, with factual information, where all parents can be present, an invitation to Mr. Barriffe to attend tomorrow's school council meeting could be extended. He would be able to answer any questions regarding the placement process, as teachers are unable to answer these questions directly.

We look forward to having this matter presented as an agenda item at tomorrow's School Council meeting. We trust the School Council will read the statement prepared as requested, as it summarizes the communications exchanged with regards to this matter. As indicated in our prior email, please find attached 16 communications that have occurred to date, between Concerned Parents of IPS and TDSB.

We appreciate your quick reply, your time and effort in representing the voices of all IPS parents on the School Council.

Sincerely,

Concerned Parents of IPS

Nigel Barriffe,

ETT Executive Officer

Political Action and Public Education Liason

TDSB Ward 3 & 14

(416) 708 8261 (cell)

(416) 393 9930 ext. 227 (ETT Office)

On Tue, May 26, 2020 at 5:32 PM Farah Tabassum <Removed to Protect Data> wrote:

Hi Everyone,

Laura-Maria who is IPS's chair of school council reached out to me because I was a familiar name on the parent list on the email that was sent to school council.

Laura-Maria and I spoke about the email that was sent to school council yesterday. She asked if there is a parent from the group who would be willing to speak on behalf of the group, so that a dialogue could happen.

Some other points Laura-Maria mentioned was she thought teachers list their three choices in no particular order and teachers are assigned to teach classes from one of the choices from the list. I said that the group letters sent said teachers listed their preferences in order and most teachers did not get their first choice when they could have. I suggested it may help if a teacher could be asked these questions.

Laura also thinks teacher placements can change up to the week before school starts. I am not familiar with the rule around this, so again, it may help to have someone who can speak to this.

We also had a good discussion about ways school council and parents can help our kids come back to school. She said TDSB is making mental health a priority. And she suggested an advocacy committee of council could work maybe with parents in the school and look at this further. This might be something that can be talked about at tomorrow's meeting.

I have copied Laura Maria on this email and she has said that parents can contact her.

(lauramaria@rogers.com cell: 647-703-7378)

Thanks,

Farah

From: Concerned Parents of IPS <concernedparentsofips@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 11:15 PM

To: ipsschoolcouncil@gmail.com <ipsschoolcouncil@gmail.com>

Cc: <Removed to Protect Data>

Subject: Request for Information to be Shared at IPS School Council Meeting

Dear IPS School Council Members,

We are writing to you as a collective group of IPS parents, representing 18 families from grades 4 and 5, to inform you about an issue that was brought forth to our School and TDSB administration. We have come to realize that the matter not only impacts the families who brought forth this issue, but it may also be of concern to other families within IPS.

It is our understanding based on the "School Council - Guide for Members from the Ministry of Education", that:

"School councils are now able to make recommendations to their principals and school boards on any matter. Principals and school boards, in turn, must consult with school councils on a variety of matters that affect student learning. They must also consider recommendations made by school councils and report back to the councils on how they plan to act on their advice." p. 11/112

*Further, " Ontario Regulation 612/00, which confirms the advisory role of school councils and clearly states that their purpose is to improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. This regulation also clarifies the role of school councils and establishes **their right to express their views on any issues** that are important to them." p. 14/112*

This issue is clearly important to many parents and it is our request that the School Council, as the elected voice of the IPS parent community, share this concern with the wider school community.

In light of the role of School Council to represent parent voices and within the premise to not single out any particular parent(s) from the group, we are asking that the attached communication be read aloud in its entirety by a school council member at this Wednesday's (May 27th) School Council meeting.

We would also request that the contents of the attached communication be documented in the minutes for those parents who are unable to attend. We will forward all communications that have occurred to date, between Concerned Parents of IPS and TDSB, to the attention of the School Council by Wednesday.

Thank you for being our voice to share parent concerns within the school community.

Sincerely,

Concerned Parents of IPS

May 1, 2020

Dear Mr. Woolford, Ms. Long and Ms. Donaldson,

We are writing to you as a collective group of concerned parents from the Island Public/Natural Science School. Our children are currently in grade 4 and 5 and their teachers are Ms. Sybille Parry and Ms Elizabeth Ahrens.

Our goal is that our children will be given continuity of their learning when they return back to school. It is our wish as a parent community to see that decisions regarding teacher class placements for upcoming school years be founded on healthy collaborative partnerships amongst teachers that foster equitable educational and learning opportunities for all students.

It has come to our attention that there are currently two open positions posted at IPS; one for a 4/5 teacher and another for a 5/6 teacher. These are the exact two classes for which we are asking for continuity. A complete change in staffing and new teachers to IPS does not take into account the well being of our children, especially during these unprecedented times of living through a pandemic.

In light of this information, we are asking that a hold be placed on any hiring or filling of either position, until such a time we are able to talk or virtually meet with the Principal, School Superintendent and Trustee regarding our concerns.

The 2019-2020 school year has been fraught with many challenges that have disrupted our children's well being, as well as the continuity of their education. These have included teacher union negotiations, potential city worker strikes and now, the closure of schools due to Covid-19. It is no surprise to say that the school year has presented significant challenges for both teachers and students.

We would like to start off by communicating to the school administration, that despite these challenges, Ms. Parry and Ms. Ahrens have been consistently exceptional educators throughout the school year. They both have provided a rich learning experience for all of the children in their classes. Both have built a strong sense of class community and even through the challenges, have continued to provide organized, consistent, engaging and comprehensive educational lessons based on the curriculum. We believe that with their continued efforts, our children's well being and educational needs will be fully addressed in the upcoming school year.

We, as parents, are writing to the school administration because we would like to request that our children be provided the opportunity to continue their learning and education with their current teachers. These teachers not only understand these students best, but also know exactly where the class left off in the curriculum when their education was disrupted and shifted from in person learning to online learning. We believe their knowledge of students' individual needs, in addition to their understanding of what material will likely need more review in the new school year, will make them best suited to teach this cohort of students. Further, they have met with students daily and are prepared to support their well being as they return to school.

One of the most important factors for consideration is the **social and emotional well being** of students. These students started out the school year as a class community and we believe our children will benefit from being able to come back together again, with their current teacher, to be able to process this experience of living in unprecedented times. As no one knows for sure at this time whether students will be returning to school in September, and without the guarantee of a school year free of further Covid related disruptions, we believe having Ms. Parry and Ms. Ahrens continue to teach these groups of students will be of significant benefit.

Given that two grade 5/6 classes are part of the staffing model for the 2020-2021 school year, we believe that our request can be accommodated.

In summary, we strongly believe that our children's well being, continuity of education, growth and learning, will be best served by having them continue their education with their current teachers. As such, we would like to request that our children's teachers, Ms. Parry and Ms. Ahrens, teach the grade 5/6 classes at the Island Public/Natural Science School.

We look forward to a timely response - as hiring is scheduled for May 5. We are addressing this letter to the school's Superintendent and Trustee, due to the tight timeline on internal hiring.

We are asking that a **hold be placed on any hiring or filling of either position**, until such a time we are able to talk or virtually meet with the Principal, School Superintendent and Trustee regarding our concerns. We are available for such a meeting, at your convenience, on a weekday or on the weekend.

With gratitude for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Concerned Parents of IPS

Phillips-Long, Jane <Jane.Phillips-Long@tdsb.on.ca>

Mon, May 4,
5:54 PM (2 days
ago)

Good Afternoon Evening

Trustee Donaldson and I thank you for your email. We do hope that you and your families are well during this unprecedented time.

We all can agree that the well-being and re-engagement of our children will be key priorities as we return to school. In fact, they are key factors now while we serve students and families in this remote learning environment.

In my discussions with my administrators across my Learning Network we will be developing re-engagement strategies with all schools when we reopen in order for teachers to assess prior learning and provide opportunities for re-teaching and to continue to ensure that the social and emotional needs and wellness needs continue to be highlighted.

At Island Public School, you are already well prepared for this through the wellness and engagement work already conducted by staff through professional learning communities. As you know they have been working through Dr. Tranter's work on "The Third Path" that focuses on the relationship approach to student well-being and achievement. Student engagement and academic work are also tracked closely for every student and opportunities are created for students to engage in clubs , activities and with peers in the school.

The selection of teacher assignments is determined by teacher preference and teacher qualifications required and finalized by the Principal of each school and follows very specific timelines that are agreed upon under our Collective Agreement between the school board and our union partners. These processes cannot be halted by myself, Trustee Donaldson nor the Principal.

The class and teacher placements will be shared with the community when finalized.

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Mr. Woolford will be contacting you to speak with each of you to provide further insight into what student re-engagement into the bricks and mortar school will look like at IPS .

Best regards

Jane Phillips Long

Spyropoulos, Sandy

May 4, 2020,
10:39 PM (2 days
ago)

Good evening everyone.

Thank you for your email.

I am aware that Superintendent Phillips-Long responded to your letter earlier this evening.

Regards,

Sandy

May 4, 2020

Dear Ms. Long,

Thank you for your email response to our letter requesting continuity for our children's education and well being.

A number of parents have a few follow up questions to your response and we have compiled these together so that they can be addressed by you and Mr. Woolford collectively to the group.

The parent community at IPS has not been informed in any formal manner of communication about the school's approach to student well being and achievement through the "The Third Path". If IPS teachers have already been trained in some capacity related to this approach and have been working using this methodology with their students, **would they not be in the best position to move forward into the next school year with their existing students?**

With respect to teacher assignments being determined by teacher preference as well as teacher qualifications, we were hoping that a few points could be clarified for the parent group.

Our understanding is that the posting for the IPS teaching positions were for educators who were qualified to teach in the Junior division, and that no further specialty qualifications were advertised. **Did the teachers currently in the 4/5 and 5/6 positions not meet the qualifications requested through the posting?**

With respect to teacher preferences, can you confirm that all three teachers currently teaching the 4/5 and 5/6 classes did not request continuation of their current teaching assignments?

We understand that there is a process that is followed each year to assign teachers to their positions, but do believe that these are unprecedented times and exceptional circumstances where continuity of education needs to be prioritized. We believe grades 5 and 6 are critical learning years for children and that this group of children will be best served by being able to continue their learning with their current teachers for the reasons discussed in our prior letter.

Thank you again for taking the time to respond to our letter. Taking into consideration the limited amount of available time of all parents in this group, we ask that you reply to all three questions (as identified above) collectively in writing by email. We have copied Ms. Spyropoulos to keep her informed of the communication received thus far, as we had engaged her earlier today (before the end of the working day) when we had not heard back to our initial letter. In the spirit of transparency, we ask that she remain engaged on all communications related to this matter.

We look forward to hearing from you further.

IPS Parents

Phillips-Long, Jane <Jane.Phillips-Long@tdsb.on.ca>

Wed, May 6,
4:16 PM (17
hours ago)

Good Afternoon

Thank you for your email.

The Third Path has been a resource document that has informed the School Improvement Plan and helped shape the wellness goal for the school for the last several years. IPS staff have been reviewing and implementing the practices in the classroom for a number of years. I know that there have been events held at the school whereby parent feedback has been sought.

All teachers have participated in this learning and an established wellness culture has been established in the school where every student's academic and social emotional progress is tracked , monitored and actioned upon based on student needs. Any staff that may be new to a school most certainly would be selected based on a strong academic and wellness focus and would be continuing with this learning and student tracking.

With regards to teacher assignments, after the staffing model is approved, the Principal determines the teaching assignments of each teacher taking into consideration their preferences, abilities, qualifications and experience. To ensure the privacy of our staff, I am not able to provide you with the specific information you are requesting.

Many students across the TDSB and at IPS will be returning to school with new teachers in their classrooms. Re-entry and re-engagement strategies will be created by the school with the input of the staff and from the parent community in accordance with the guidelines we receive from the Ministry of Education and Toronto Public Health.

Mr. Woolford is calling all the parents whose names were attached to this email and will also begin to engage with the initial steps for re-engagement of students when we return to the school

If you have further questions, please contact Mr. Woolford.

Best regards

Jane Phillips Long

May 7, 2020

Dear Ms. Donaldson,

We are reaching out to you as our elected official for TDSB. We are writing to follow up on the request that was put forth by Concerned Parents of IPS to the Director of Education and the Chair of the Board, which you were copied on. We are strongly advocating that the administration reconsider staffing assignments so that the well being of our children is prioritized. We truly believe that adding your voice to ours will result in positive change.

We have appreciated your support at our School Council meetings, as well as your recognition of the importance of parent engagement and active involvement in our school community. It is at this time that we are asking you to demonstrate your support and commitment to our community by adding your voice to ours, to advocate for our children.

Respectfully,

Concerned Parents of IPS

May 7, 2020

Dear Dr. John Malloy and Ms. Robin Pilkey,

We are writing to you to ask for your assistance with an urgent matter that we have brought to the attention of the Island Public/Natural Science School's and TDSB's administration. We have attached for your reference:

1. The IPS Parent Group's original letter of concern dated May 1st, 2020
2. The IPS Parent Group's updated letter (with additional parent signatures), dated May 3rd, 2020
3. Ms. Phillips-Long's reply dated May 4th, 2020 as well as Ms. Spyropoulos' reply, also dated May 4th, 2020
4. The IPS Parent Group's response letter to Ms Phillips-Long, with further questions, dated May 4th, 2020
5. Ms. Phillips-Long's reply dated May 6th, 2020

Parents initially contacted school and TDSB administration on May 1st, voicing a request to pause decisions impacting teacher placements in the upcoming school year, such as hiring new staff. We requested that in light of the current pandemic and the resulting disruption to the existing school year, that teachers currently teaching the Grade 4/5 (Ms. Ahrens) and 5/6 classes (Ms. Parry) be given the opportunity to continue teaching their current cohort of students the following school year.

The response received from Ms. Phillips-Long was, "The selection of teacher assignments is determined by teacher preference and teacher qualifications required."

It has come to our attention that a letter was sent, on behalf of IPS staff, to TDSB administration and to Superintendent Ms. Phillips-Long on April 28th by their Union Representative, Mr. Barriffe. The letter outlined concerns teachers had with their preferences not having been taken into account, as well as the impact this would have on the continuity of education and well being for students in the upcoming school year.

In light of the above information, we believe that the fundamental principles upon which the assignment of teacher placements are based, namely teacher preference and teacher qualifications, have not been honoured or adhered to by administration in a manner that is consistent with the Board's process.

Teacher Preferences

Mr. Barriffe shared that both Ms. Parry and Ms. Ahrens requested to continue teaching in their current assignments for the next school year. In fact, the majority of teachers at IPS requested their current placement for the next school year, which aligns with our request for continuity in education, especially during these unprecedented times. In addition to this, he shared with us that not only did Ms. Parry and Ms. Ahrens not have their choices

met, but that schoolwide, more than 80% of IPS teachers did not receive their first or second choice which they submitted on the Staff Preference form. He also communicated that a model was put forth by staff to TDSB administration, whereby teaching positions could have been assigned in a manner where almost all teachers could have had their first choice.

Furthermore, Mr. Barriffe informed us that, as outlined in his letter sent on behalf of teachers, that there were significant gaps in the administrative consultation process with teachers. We would encourage you to obtain a copy of this letter to understand the specific details around this concern.

Teacher Qualifications

Our understanding is that the posting for the IPS teaching positions were for educators who were qualified to teach in the Junior division, and that no further specialty qualifications were advertised.

Furthermore, the majority of teachers asked to remain in their current positions, which would indicate that each of the teachers already possess the teaching qualifications required.

Request for Continuity

We, as parents, do not believe that the current staffing decisions reflect the best interests and well-being of students and staff members of the IPS community.

We understand that there is a process that is followed by administration each year to determine teaching assignments (namely, teacher preference and qualifications). This process has **not** been followed in deciding teacher placements for next year. These are unprecedented times and we strongly believe that it would not be to the benefit of students or staff if unnecessary staffing changes were imposed.

We request that you take action to address these concerns, ensuring administration does not move forward with hiring of posted positions.

We are confident that you will take our concerns to heart and rectify the current situation so that teacher placements align with teacher preferences along with parent requests for continuity of education.

We look forward to a timely response that addresses the current expressed needs of the IPS community of parents and we trust that corrective actions will be taken so that there will not be a need to engage our local MPP or external media communications in this matter.

Respectfully,

Concerned Parents of IPS

Chair <Chair@tdsb.on.ca>

Thu, May
7, 2:01
PM

to John, Sandy, Stephanie, Jane

Hello Island School Parents

On behalf of the Board, thank you for contacting me and sharing your concerns with the staffing model at the Island School.

As trustees are not involved in staffing decisions that are made at any individual school, I encourage you to continue to speak with your Superintendent, Jane Phillips Long as she has direct oversight over the school about the concerns you have raised. I am sure she will be able to provide more insight into how the staffing model was developed by the principal. If you feel she is not addressing your concerns, please contact Executive Superintendent Sandy Spyropoulos. I have cc'd her on this email. I would note that this is a process that is normally done in consultation and discussion with parents, though not necessarily who the assigned teachers will be.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Regards,
Robin Pilkey
Chair

Spyropoulos, Sandy

Mon, May
11, 9:08
AM

to Chair, Stephanie, Jane, John, Scott, nbarriffe@ett.on.ca, Sandy

Good morning everyone,

Thank you for your email. I hope you and your families are doing well and keeping safe in these challenging times.

Having reviewed the concerns you have raised around the staffing process, I would like to address these by sharing some information with you.

With regard to the teacher preferences, the data that was shared was incorrect. While normally this type of information is between union members and the Principal, I feel it is important that we correct this misinformation as it has caused concern about the integrity of the process and has diminished trust. In your letter you indicate that "schoolwide, more than 80% of IPS teachers did not receive their first or second choice which they submitted on the Staff Preference form". I have reviewed the teacher preference forms and 50% received their first or second choice and 19% received their third choice bringing the total of staff that received a listed preference to 69%. In finalizing the teacher assignments based on the overall needs of the school, Mr. Woolford consulted with the teachers taking into consideration their preferences, abilities, qualifications and experience and spoke with those teachers who were not assigned one of their top three choice as required in this staffing process.

Recognizing that students may need time to get to know their new teachers, please be assured that all the teachers at IPS are committed to meeting the academic, social and emotional needs of all students. Furthermore, it's my understanding that all teachers are engaged in ongoing school-wide professional learning focused on student well-being and engagement which will continue to support students' overall success and wellness.


As we continue to serve our students and families in this remote learning environment, our priority remains our students' mental health and well-being. Our focus will be on supporting transitions and developing strategies to ensure a smooth re-entry and re-engagement of our students and families when our schools open.

In closing, I am aware that Mr. Woolford has personally contacted all parents listed on this email distribution list and the parents were appreciative of his call.

Should you have further questions, please don't hesitate to contact him.

Kind regards,

Sandy

 **Sandy Spyropoulos**
Executive Superintendent
Learning Centres 1 and 4
Toronto District School Board
5050 Yonge Street
Toronto, ON M2N 5N8
416-395-3903
sandy.spyropoulos@tdsb.on.ca

May 12, 2020

Dear Ms. Pilkey,

We are compelled to write to you again as the response provided by Ms. Spyropoulos was unsatisfactory and did not address the fundamental pillars of our request: student well-being, continuity of education, parent voice, teacher preferences and teacher qualifications.

We understand that the numbers presented can be interpreted differently. Even if we went forward with the data presented in Ms. Spyropoulos's response, where 50% of the teaching staff were placed in positions that were their 1st or 2nd preference, how is it acceptable for the other 50% of teachers to NOT have received their first or second choice? This is especially disconcerting in light of the fact that according to the letter that was put forth by the union representative, it WAS possible for 90% of teachers to have had their 1st preferences, while meeting the necessary qualifications.

Furthermore, the two teachers for whom we had initially advocated, fall into the 50% who did NOT receive placement in their 1st or 2nd choice, when both are qualified. Once again, we wish to highlight that the current postings for their positions did not ask for any qualifications beyond that of Junior Division. We have brought forth a number of questions with respect to the newly posted positions and the qualifications of teachers already within the school to hold those positions. Despite our multiple attempts, these questions continue to remain unanswered.

Of all years, we cannot understand why this year, continuity of learning, which is paramount to our childrens' well-being is NOT the number one factor being addressed in the received responses. We understand that the TDSB is working towards a "Student Re-engagement plan", however, we cannot comprehend why continuity, where wanted, and where possible, would not be step one in this plan. **It shows a complete disregard for teachers choices, teacher qualifications, parents' voices and the Board's own process.**

We are extremely disappointed with the response we have received to date with what we believe is an unwillingness of the TDSB to respond with action to our core concerns.

We believed the Toronto District School Board stood on the foundation of advocating for the best interests of their students, encouraged parent engagement and respected the voices of parents. We are a community of parents who are collectively advocating for our children. The responses we have received to date from Mr. Woolford, Ms Phillips-Long and Ms Spyropolous indicate that parents' voices and students' well-being are not the basis on which decisions are made within the Board. We also reached out to the School's Trustee, Ms. Donaldson but did not receive any response.

We have done our due diligence, finding and presenting our facts through letters as directed by TDSB policy. We trust that reaching out to you will ignite the action required, whereby there will not be a need to engage a broader audience.

Respectfully,
Concerned Parents of IPS

Pilkey, Robin

May 12,
2020, 4:10
PM

to Kathy, me, John, Stephanie

Hello

On behalf of the Board, thank you for contacting me again. I am sorry that Executive Superintendent Spyropoulos was not able to address your concerns to your satisfaction.

Based on this, I have cc'd Associate Director Kathy Witherow on this email and included your letter of concerns so that she may contact you directly to resolve these issues. She reports directly to Director Malloy and has oversight over Learning Centres 1&4. which The Island School is part of Learning Centre 4.

Again, I thank you for taking the time to write and for your great commitment to the Island School.

Regards,
Robin Pilkey
Chair

Witherow, Kathy

May 15, 2020,
9:54 AM (11 days
ago)

to Sandy, Jane, Scott, Stephanie

Good morning everyone,

I hope you are doing well in these very challenging times. I have reviewed the concerns you expressed in your letters as well as the process used at the Island PS for staffing.

The Principal, Scott Woolford, followed our TDSB procedures and consulted with the School Council Co-Chairs through the Staffing Committee with regard to the creation of the staffing model at the Island PS. Mr. Woolford also, consulted with teachers and took into consideration their preferences, abilities, qualifications and experience and spoke with those teachers who were not assigned one of their top three choices in accordance with this staffing process. Ultimately, it is the Principal's decision to determine final teaching assignments based on the staffing model created, as outlined in the Collective Agreement. As well, Mr. Woolford has called all parents on this email and has heard their viewpoints and reassured them that they will continue to work together to support their children.

I realize that we are not in usual times and the current school closures due to the pandemic have created uncertainty and a lack of connection for many students with their teachers and classmates. Principal Woolford will be working with staff in the coming weeks and into the Fall on a transition plan with a focus on the importance of supporting relationships between educators and students across the school. The social-emotional well-being of students is a priority. I have confidence that the staff and school leadership will work with parents to provide support and practical strategies to make the transition back to school a joyful experience for all students.

Sincerely,

Kathy Witherow
Associate Director

May 21, 2020

Dear Ms. Pilkey,

We are compelled to write to you again as the response provided by Ms. Witherow was unsatisfactory. The core questions continue to remain unanswered:

- 1. Why, when 90% of teachers could have had their 1st preferences honoured, while meeting the necessary qualifications and where this would have provided continuity of education and enhanced well being for students not only in the Junior Division, but across the school, were the requests denied and continue to be denied?**

Ms. Witherow wrote about how the TDSB process has been followed to create the staffing model. No one is questioning the development of the staffing model. We understand that the projected enrolment numbers help structure the number and type of classes needed at the school.

No one is questioning whether the teachers were CONSULTED about their preferences. It really becomes a moot exercise of ticking the administrative box if the CONSULTATION does not result in a meaningful decision that honours the request of the majority, which in this circumstance, encompasses the wishes of the majority of both teachers AND parents.

The question of teacher qualifications has been brought up in several communications by the TDSB. The two postings by TDSB did not ask for ANY qualification beyond that which the two teachers already hold. They are both exceptional teachers who possess ability, qualifications and experience to continue teaching the Junior Division as they had requested.

- 2. Why is the TDSB putting forth that qualifications was a reason for which the new hirings were needed when the postings did not ask for ANY additional qualifications above what the current teachers already possess?**

We understand that ULTIMATELY it is the principal's decision to determine final teaching assignments based on the staffing model created, as outlined in the Collective Agreement. Again, we would like to emphasize that no one is questioning the staffing model.

- 3. What this really comes down to is that the principal's ULTIMATE decision in the assignment of teachers for the 2020-2021 school year, has disregarded the voices and wishes of the majority of both teachers AND parents. Why? How is this acceptable?**

The disregard of both teacher and parent voices displayed by administration speaks to a larger more concerning issue that has been evolving at the School and ultimately will need to be

addressed. It is not the purpose of this current communication to address this, but we bring it up now, as we are conscious of how intertwined this issue of disregarding voices is, with those that are currently affecting the school climate.

We wish to emphasize to the Board once again, that the request being made was in light of the fact that we are currently in the midst of a pandemic. These are unprecedented times. We hoped that the Board would have taken into consideration these circumstances, given the many changes our children have already endured.

It is important to note that the United States has set up an Education Recovery Task Force whose mandate is to look into the re-entry of students into schools in September, similar to the Student Re-Engagement process being put together by the TDSB. One of the recommendations the US Task Force is looking to make, is to keep as many children with their current elementary teachers to support their well-being when they return to school.

We are extremely disappointed with the responses received to date from Mr. Woolford, Ms Phillips-Long, Ms Spyropolous, Ms. Witherow as well as the lack of response from Trustee Donaldson. The responses indicate that parents' voices and students' well-being are not the basis on which decisions are made within the Board.

Respectfully,
Concerned Parents of IPS

Witherow, Kathy

Sun, May 24,
6:54 PM (2 days
ago)

to Jane, Sandy, Robin

Good evening,

As a follow up to the email sent to Chair Pilkey, I want to clarify that the decisions about staffing, as well as the September transition plan for the school, are the responsibility of the Principal, not trustees.

I encourage you to set up a time to speak with the Superintendent of the school, Jane Phillips-Long. Jane is in the best position to work through the issues you have presented in your latest communication.

Sincerely,

Kathy Witherow

Dr. Kathy Witherow | Associate Director | Leadership, Learning & School Improvement | Toronto District School Board | 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, M2N 5N8, ON | kathy.witherow@tdsb.on.ca

May 25, 2020

Dear Ms. Witherow,

In response to your May 24th communication, we do understand the staffing process as well as what would be done under normal circumstances to plan for the September Transition. This has been outlined several times. Again, our point is that we are in a pandemic and nothing in education is how it has ever been before.

Further, we initially reached out to the Superintendent of IPS, Ms Jane Phillips-Long, on May 1, 2020. Her response cited teacher qualifications and preferences as the premise by which teacher placement decisions were made, however we learned soon after that this was not the case. She has also been directly copied on almost all communications, to which she could have taken initiative and responded, if she had wished to actually address the core issues. She instead chose not to respond. We have followed all the communication protocols outlined by TDSB. It is due to the lack of response to our concerns that we felt the need to escalate our communications, again as per TDSB protocol.

Now that all the deadlines for teacher placements, interviews and hirings have passed, we are being redirected by TDSB administration to address our concerns further with Ms. Philips-Long, who chose not to address the core concerns from the beginning.

It is evident from all of the responses, that no level within the TDSB administration has taken responsibility to actually investigate the concerns raised by parents.

The lack of accountability within the TDSB administration has been astounding.

Respectfully,
Concerned Parents of IPS.

Chair

Mon, May 25,
9:43 AM (1 day
ago)

to Stephanie, Kathy, Sandy, Jane

Hello

Thank you for contacting me again.

If you have questions regarding Dr. Witherow's response, the best person to speak to about that is Dr. Witherow.

As a trustee, I do not have not be able to effect any change at a specific school, which is why I continue to encourage you to continue to share your concerns with Dr. Witherow, Exec. Superintendent Spyropoulos and Superintendent Phillips-Long.

I am confident they are taking your concerns seriously.

Regards,
Robin Pilkey
Chair