

Thurs, Oct 22

Bowmore School Council Meeting

Q&A for Bowmore Administration

1. **Is there a way for virtual students to take part in some of the virtual activities ? eg scientists in classroom.**
 - No, Virtual Students are not a part of our roster at Bowmore, even though it is their home school. Teaching staff are not expected to provide teaching instruction to students in the Virtual School. Please see above. Council has set aside \$2K in the proposed budget to try to connect the virtual and in class (seeking suggestions)

2. **My question is if the school is considering the option of putting plastic shields between kids that share desks? Specially important during lunch time.**
 - Currently, the School Board does not allow the use of shields between desks. There are numerous reasons including a) the cost of such shields, b) equity issues within the school and between schools, and c) the time needed to clean these by caretakers.

3. **I was talking to a friend whose kids are in the TDCSB and apparently they are getting desk shields in all of their classes. Which I think is a great thing, especially during lunch and snack time in the younger kids' classes. Do you know if the TDSB will be doing the same? If not, are we allowed to donate / raise money to purchase things like desk shields, tents or blankets or something else to stay warm for winter outdoor learning? I'd love for the kids to be able to be outside as much as possible in the winter months too. (Obviously not when it's -30 out.)**
 - The TDSB does not allow fundraising for these items. Students and staff will be outside as much as possible throughout the winter. Families are encouraged to send their children dressed to spend time outside in all kinds of weather.

4. **Is there a status update on the areas that were marked as “permit requested” on the map we got in the first week of school — the city playground, tennis courts, and wading pool area. Is there anything parents can do to move this along, if we’re still waiting?**
 - We have permission from the City to use the entire Fairmount Park. This includes areas like the wading pool, tennis courts, and second playground, with the understanding that these will still be shared spaces with the community. We will keep the recess and lunch boundaries the same, but open up these other areas for outdoor classroom purposes starting sometime next week.

5. **What happens if schools or classrooms need to shut down due to covid - are all teachers set up on brightspace and ready to pivot to online learning?**
 - That is the expectation, Google Classroom OR Brightspace along with required synchronous meetings via Google Meet, the length of which differs by grade level.

6. **Is it possible to set up non-binary bathrooms? I know of a couple of students that are uncomfortable with the current situation. Already two in Sr building.**
 - Investigating possibility in Junior building. Jamie and Brianna spoke to this topic at the meeting.

7. **I would also like to ask about HEPA filters. I understand that the TDSB is not permitting fundraising for the purchase of hepa filters. What is the reason for this? Can parents privately**

donate? Risk of transmission increases in the winter when windows are closed and the air is dry.

- “TDSB staff have identified 37 schools that will be receiving these air purifiers starting next week. The schools that were selected to receive this donation do not have mechanical ventilation systems in place and are in the highest risk neighbourhoods for COVID-19 (Q5) as identified by Toronto Public Health. Earlier this week, Principals of the 37 schools were informed that they will be receiving air purifiers as part of this donation. Facility Team Leaders (FTLs) and Head Caretakers at these schools have conducted surveys of instructional spaces and classrooms to determine suitable location(s) to place the purifiers. Principals will work with FTLs and Head Caretakers to install the air purifiers once the units have been delivered by Danby next week. In addition to this donation, the TDSB is currently looking to source additional air purifiers/HEPA filters to use in other classrooms without mechanical ventilation or with limited ability to provide fresh air. Once these units are procured, they will be installed in schools based on need. We are in the process of finalizing the criteria for determining which schools/classrooms would receive HEPA filters, but the criteria may include things such as the classroom ventilation, class size vs. space available, infection risk rating, etc.”
- Again, our criteria for whether a room gets a unit is based on the availability of ventilation, either natural or mechanical. Here are some examples:

1. Rooms with full mechanical ventilation would not get a HEPA unit (*Duke of Connaught has full ventilation*)
2. Rooms with operable windows would not get a HEPA unit (however, this will be revisited should funding become available) (*Duke of Connaught have operable windows which open and close*)
3. Rooms without operable windows, with limited ventilation (exhaust only), would qualify for a HEPA unit,
4. Rooms without operable windows or full mechanical ventilation would qualify for a HEPA unit

In terms of distribution, we have prioritized schools in the TPH Q5 list for first delivery, then our congregated sites, then based on LOI until all rooms in category 3 and 4 are complete. Should we have any remaining units they will be distributed to rooms in category 2.

- At this time, we are not accepting units which are either donated or purchased through school council fundraising. As per the Ministry of Education Fundraising Guidelines:
- Funds raised for school purposes:
Should not be used to replace public funding for education; and
Should not be used to support items funded through provincial grants, such as classroom learning materials, textbooks and repairs or for capital projects that significantly increase operating costs.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/Fund2012Guideline.pdf>

8. COVID - has there been any discussion on how a student was at school the day they found out they had a positive test

- Student was asymptomatic and taken out of school the day before the positive test results. Result wait times vary greatly depending on where you go for the test. Pop up clinics (e.g. Crescent Town) are less busy than large hospitals.

9. Regarding webinars any chance of including mental wellness strategies

- We can add it to the list of suggestions for webinars

10. Can you give an example of what the covid relief fund will be used for?

- The ‘Get Real Movement’ program, scientist in the classroom, webinars

11. Who gets to use the existing chromebooks in the school and how is that decided?

- Much of the school's technology was redistributed for use around the school board during the school closure. The devices that remained are in use on a daily basis. The Chromebooks are available for all classes but generally used with the Grade 3 and up classes. Some of the intermediate grades have access to HP laptops and surface tablets. Use of these is done by sign-up system.

12. Are all the teachers aware that the chromebooks are available for use?

- Yes, although the number of devices is more limited this school year. We have received 24 new Chromebooks and have ordered 50 more. 20 iPads are also in use, mainly for primary students.

13. My son says his class hasn't used them at all this year and he's missing them, so I'm wondering if they're available for any teacher to book, or how does that work.

- - Please speak with your child's teacher.

Equity and Social Justice Committee

About: The Equity and Social Justice Committee's role is to engage Bowmore community members, including parents/caregivers and families, teachers and administrators in an ongoing examination and reflection needed to make positive changes in the practices that result in inequities and exclusions at Bowmore Road Public School.

The 2020/2021 priorities are an Equity Transfer of Funds and a Social Justice Webinar Series.

Committee Leads: Koreena Audette, Marycarmen Lara-Villanueva and Cindy Perry

Social Justice Webinars for Families:

Scope: Educational talks centred around social justice and equity with a focus on anti-racism and framed within an intersectional lens; led preferably by Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) facilitators

Target audience: Parents, caregivers and family members of school aged children in Bowmore. Other schools will be invited to attend our webinars.

Goals: To create a space for parents, caregivers and families to learn about anti-racist parenting, as well as parenting strategies to foster a critical consciousness anchored in a desire towards a just future, one where ALL children can thrive.

Delivery Method: 90 min sessions over Zoom Platform. Webinars will be free to attend. Registration will be required. ***Will do our best to provide accommodations under request***

Potential themes/topics for 2020/21 School Year: Anti-Blackness and Children's Media, Combating Homophobia and Transphobia, Understanding Neurodiversity & Challenging Normalcy, Unlearning sexism: Towards a Feminist Parenting, Parenting for Liberation, Eurocentrism in Curriculum and Families' Role in Combating it, School Councils and Reframing Parent Engagement, Children's Literature and Anti-Racist Parenting, Parenting for Reconciliation, Ableism and Parenting, Talking to Children about Gender and Sexual Diversity

We created [this survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VB5333B) to help us decide what will be the topics for our series. Please take a minute to complete it! <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VB5333B>

Equity Transfer:

In an ideal world, all school councils would have access to equal funds, to be used as each council sees fit. The equity transfer is a small attempt to undo some of the inequity that Bowmore School Council contributes to when it makes the decision to fundraise, something that we can do in part because of higher average family income and more parents who can volunteer their time to fundraise. Equity transfers take place between other councils on the board; this is not a new idea, however last year was the first year that Bowmore did this. The decision was made last year to transfer a portion of the budget to a nearby model school.

A Model School is one of 150 schools as determined by the TDSB Learning Opportunities Index (LOI). The LOI ranks each school based on measures of external challenges affecting student success. The school with the greatest level of external challenges is ranked number one and is described as highest on the index. More information is available here: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/research/docs/LOI2020.pdf>. Bowmore is currently ranked 403/473, i.e., among the 15% of TDSB Elementary Schools that are most advantaged.

Last year it was discussed and agreed upon that the transfer would be anonymous from both sides, i.e., other than the few people directly involved in the transfer at Bowmore, it would not be disclosed to the Bowmore community which school was the recipient of the transfer, and the transfer would be deposited anonymously in the receiving school's account.

The funds that are given to the receiving council are given without restriction, with the receiving council determining what they are used for, just as our own council determines how our funds are used.

Questions + Answers

Below are questions we have received from parents and families:

Q. Could you provide more information about the social justice webinars and who they are available for? I am also interested in social justice learning opportunities for the younger grades.

A. The webinars would be available to anyone in the community, including those without children at Bowmore, who registers for the event. They would be directed at adults who are caregivers to children of various ages. We can consider providing webinars that are for both parents and children together to do adult and child exploration together of challenging topics, if there is an interest.

Q. Could we get a bit more insight on how the \$8000 on social justice webinars are going to be spent? What is involved in the webinars? i.e. how many sessions? Are the speakers going to be paid?

A. Where possible, we will leverage internal TDSB resources, which would not require a speaker payment; we did this last year for the session about Talking to Kids about Race. We are likely to have at least one webinar that can be done in the same way this year, but for many of the topics, there may not be an expert within the TDSB who is available to provide the webinar. In these cases, we plan to seek out external BIPOC experts who can provide a webinar on the topic. These speakers would be paid for their time to prepare and deliver the webinar according to their regular rates. We expect that these fees will be \$400-\$800 per session. We have not confirmed or booked any speakers yet. We plan to offer a session every 6-7 weeks. We will

determine the themes of the sessions for the 20/21 school year based on the survey above as well as availability of speakers.

It will take a great deal of work to plan for these webinars, and it is challenging to assess how many we will be able to do this year. If funds remain in this budget line at the end of the year, we can continue the work into the next year.

Q. If Bowmore doesn't do any fundraising this year then how will the equity team be able to do \$10 worth of equity initiatives next year?

A. If the allocation is not fully spent in 2020-2021, we can carry them over to the following school year. If funds are not available next year, we will pivot to other equity work.

Q. I'm trying to understand why we would pay for these initiatives, if they are about equity should they not be free of charge so they are available to schools that don't have funds from fundraising to pay for them?

A. The webinars will be free of charge to attend. We believe in paying speakers for the work they do in our webinars, unless it is part of their TDSB job, particularly when it comes to external Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) speakers. There has historically been an expectation that equity and anti-racism work done by BIPOC should be free labour. We reject this idea and believe this very emotional and intense free labour needs to stop.

*****If you want to learn more and/or would like to be involved, reach out by email
koreena.audette@gmail.com *****

*****Are you on Facebook? Join our group! Caregivers Talking to Children About Race
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2427836244199043> *****