



TO: City Councillor Candidates

CC: Irene Atkinson, Gordon Foster, Jeffrey Freeman, Noel Kent, Marcela Saitua, Robin Pilkey, Linda Torry, Sarah Doucette, Cheri DiNovo, Amelia Dennis, Jane Phillips-Long, Donna Quan, Carla Kisko, Angelos Bacopoulos

SUBJECT: Your Commitment to Public Education in Toronto

October 20, 2014

The “Fix Our Schools Campaign” seeks your commitment to quality public education in Toronto. As parents and concerned citizens, we advocate for safe, well-maintained buildings for all TDSB students.

Marcus Gee’s editorial in the Globe & Mail from June 2014 (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/toronto-is-ignoring-the-public-school-system-at-its-own-peril/article19271342/>) argues that the public education system is critical to the success of Toronto yet rarely gets the attention it deserves from our civic leaders. We agree with Marcus Gee’s sentiments and urge City Councillors to work for better public education in this city.

Here are three issues we would like to highlight:

1. **Working Relationship with the TDSB.** The TDSB currently has a backlog of \$3.5 Billion of repairs and maintenance in its 600 schools. Approximately 100 of these schools currently operate at below 60% utilization. Creative partnerships between the TDSB and the City of Toronto are needed to address these issues.

How would you facilitate the building of an effective working relationship with the TDSB?

2. **Green Space.** The TDSB provides a significant amount of green space to Torontonians. Indeed, this green space has been recognized as a valuable City asset by City Council.
 - On November 13, 2013, City Council passed motions to ask City Staff to look at ways to ensure TDSB green space is not sold off in areas with few other green spaces and also to work with the TDSB to alter the province’s capital funding of TDSB schools.
 - On June 18, 2014, the TDSB resolved that the Director of Education, Donna Quan, work with both City of Toronto staff and appropriate provincial government representatives on funding and preserving these valuable green



spaces.

At the moment, there is no reliable ongoing funding from the City to the TDSB except for Section 37 money that is from time-to-time provided for TDSB green space maintenance.

How would you propose that the City share in the costs of providing these valuable green spaces to Torontonians?

- 3. Development.** The City of Toronto recently approved the building of 7,000 condo units yet the TDSB will receive \$0 in Education Development Charges from these new developments because of provincial regulations. As well, there is a disconnect between the approval of new developments and the availability of space in local public schools. Indeed, City Planners do not currently need to take into consideration local public school space in their assessments of development proposals and there seems to be no mechanism in place to bring the TDSB into the decision-making process.

What would you do as City Councillor to align the City approval process for new developments with the availability of local space in public schools?

As a candidate to become a Toronto City Councillor, please provide us with answers to the three questions outlined above.

Kind regards -
Jennifer McLean & Krista Wylie,
- on behalf of the "Fix Our Schools" Campaign