

PAC Notes - October 24, 2013

In Attendance: Parent Classroom Representatives: Laura Edwards (Pres 2), Julia Henderson (KG 2), Lara Okihiro (Pres 1), Parents: Li Shu, Mark Manger, Jane Kidner, Lara Arabian, Anver Emon, Kathy Mile
Staff: Karen Venneri , Francesca Dobbin, Iyana Browne-Gordon , Sylvie Brown

1. Introductions – Karen Venneri (KV)

2. Parent Advisory Committee Terms of Reference and Member ship – Karen Venneri (KV), Francesca Dobbin (FD)

- See document ***PAC Terms of Reference Oct 2013.Attach.1***
- FD discussed background of ELC, how PAC was developed and reviewed the PAC Terms of Reference
 - Briefly, previous to the ELC opening in 2003, there were three centres on campus operated by three separate parent board of directors. Through a consultation process with the University, the parent boards decided that UofT should hold the license to operate the new child care centre and assume the responsibility for the financial and human resources management of the ELC. The ELC is a department within the Division of Human Resources & Equity, and the ELC's Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) allows parents to provide advice to the management staff on program policies, services and initiatives provided by the ELC.
 - In 2011, the PAC Terms of Reference were revised with the role of parents divided into Classroom Representatives, see document ***PAC Classroom Representative Role.Attach.2***
 - Classroom Representative roles were clearly defined
- Reviewed Classroom Representative List
 - See document ***PAC Representatives 2013-14. Attach.3***
 - We have room representative vacancies. KV will put out a notice to those classrooms asking for a parent volunteer.

3. Program Updates – Karen Venneri (KV), Iyana Browne-Gordon (IBG)

- Infant/Toddler – KV
 - Busy summer filing spaces. With the large number of children in the preschool/kindergarten rooms withdrawing to attend kindergarten in their home schools we had more spaces to fill. It took a little longer to fill the spaces because of staggered start dates.
 - Some of the staff has transitioned into other rooms to develop their skills and a few other staff has left to pursue other paths in their career.
 - UofT Bulletin wrote an article & photos about our 10 year Anniversary BBQ. It was great to be acknowledged by the greater UofT community
 - This winter we will continue the joint partnership with the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education and our preschool age group.

Q: What research are the Kinesiology students conducting?

A: The students are implementing activities with preschool children. It is a practical application for the students to learn about preschool children's physical development.

- **Preschool/Kindergarten – IBG**
 - **Summer Programming**

All of our preschool and kindergarten programs at Glen Morris and OISE developed a summer program to enrich the children's interests during the months of July and August. Some of these experiences included:

 - Community walks
 - Library visits (Lillian Smith; Spadina Library; Palmerston)
 - Weekly water play events
 - Special (in-house) program events & centre visitors
 - 1 TTC trip – Art Eggleton Park
 - 1 Bus trip – Humber Arboretum

All of the special visitors were very engaging – the children particularly liked the magic show and bubble dance party. We hope to bring them all back for summer 2014.
 - **Increased Parent Engagement in Program**

Over the spring and summer months there was a large amount of parent participation and engagement in the preschool/kindergarten programs.

 - Volunteers on field trips
 - Cooking experiences in the classroom
 - Music activities
 - Donations of equipment/toys
 - Celebration sharing experiences
 - Sign language – songs experiences

We will continue to brainstorm additional ways for family engagement as we head into 2014.
 - **Developmental Progress Reports**

Preschool/Kindergarten staff is currently working on developmental progress reports for the children. These reports are due for submission in mid-November. Once reviewed by the supervisor, they will be distributed to families in late November. In addition to focusing on the development of children's strengths throughout the year, developmental goals will also be set to guide the practice of our RECE's.
 - **Music/Instrument Exploration**

We have a musician currently working with Preschool 1 once a week. She is piloting songs and musical instrument exploration for kids. Over the next few weeks, she will be

visiting all the preschool/kindergarten programs. We are hoping this will be an ongoing relationship. So far, the children have enjoyed the experience.

○ **FUTURE IDEAS/PLANS**

Enrichment Programming:

- **Music Student – Royal Conservatory**

We are looking to resume our relationship with the Royal Conservatory of Music. We hope to have a student practicum in the winter session

- **Yoga – www.123kidsyoga.com**

I will be meeting with the owner of 123 Kids Yoga next week. She offers yoga programs that encourage children to use their imagination while integrating yoga poses with songs, music, and storytelling, games in a structured, non-competitive, fun and relaxing environment. We hope to start this November.

- **Sign Language – Nathalie Meth, parent**

Over the last year, a parent has introduced singing with sign language and the children have been really responsive to it. The staff has gained greater interest in incorporating it into their daily programs. Nathalie has offered to train interested staff and provide us with resources.

- **Outdoor Curriculum/Environment/Nature – Sinead Rafferty, RECE**

Sinead, one of our RECE, recently returned from an educational leave. She studied environmental studies as it pertains to children in childcare. The K/G program is piloting an outdoor classroom – which focuses on environment and nature. It provides longer periods of outdoor time and facilitates further discussion regarding our environment, human imprint and nature. The children have been exploring various parts of UofT natural/green spaces. This has sparked interest in the staff of other programs. As such, next year Sinead will host a PD workshop on how all the teachers can embed this into their programs as well.

NOTE: If anyone has additional ideas please speak to me.

Q: Will there be kindergarten registration at the ELC this coming year?

A: The ELC will not be registering children for kindergarten for September 2014 as we will no longer have a relationship/partnership with Huron Street Public School.

All schools will be offering full day kindergarten as of September 2014. Home schools have to offer before and after school child care if enough parents want it. Parents need to inform the

school when registering that they require child care. As we receive more information regarding registration for kindergarten, we will inform parents.

Q: Will the ELC eliminate the kindergarten age classes? What will the rooms look like?

A: We will not be licensed to accept any kindergarten age children as of September 2014. Our license will be changed, capping it at preschool age (0-3.8 years old).

The Ministry of Education, Early Years Division is proposing to change the teacher/child ratios and this will impact how we will configure our classrooms. At this time, we do not know what the ratios will be or what the new age groupings will be, but the ELC will be losing 6 spaces overall by the end of the summer 2014.

Q: Would you open another infant room?

A: We do not know as of yet. With the ratios as they are (3:1), running an infant program is expensive. The teacher/child ratio would need to be adjusted to make the funding formula for an infant program work. Having older age groups with higher ratios (10:1), such as kindergarten children help offset the cost of an infant program.

4. Financial Statement & Summer Closure Update – Francesca Dobbin (FD)

- See document **May – Sept.2013 Financial Stmt.Attach.4**

A) Quarterly Financial Statement – May - September 2013 Statement

The financial statement reflects actual revenue and expenses as of September 30, 2013

- Reflects 42% of the budget year.

Revenue: 87% Fees, 7% City of Toronto Wage Grants, and 6% Student Life Subsidy (SL)

- Overall revenue appears down by only 1% because the full year SL subsidy was received in June, but actual revenue is down 4% as a result of lower than 97% projected enrolment to date.
- Although full day kindergarten at Huron starts in Sept. 2014, we are already experiencing the effect of full day KG, as more children left this summer to attend their home school.

Expenses: 88% Salaries & Benefits, and 12% Program costs

- Overall expenses to date are within budget projections
- Casual staff expense is usually higher in the first 5 months of the year because it is when staff takes most of their vacation time, and this cost should even out by the end of the year.

(a) Equipment repairs / replacements and Facilities & Service costs

- Commercial fridge (10 years old) repaired in August and we need to purchase a new freezer.
- Quote to repair and replace some of the flooring and hope to offset some of the cost through Toronto Children's Services Health & Safety funding.

(b) Projected in year budget surplus is \$39, 473 (target is \$30, 000 - \$40, 000 / year).

- SL subsidy received in June makes the year to date surplus much higher than projected, and this will even out as the year progresses.
- We started the 2013-14 budget year with no deficit, and with an accumulated contingency fund of \$127, 715 to deal with market influences on enrolment, unpredictable staff replacement costs, and expenses related to replacement of major equipment / furnishings used by the children.
- As we project forward there are still some financial unknowns and challenges such as wage increase amounts, enrolment and possible changes in legislation.

B) Partial Summer Closure Update

In 2013 we had 26 spaces (6 infants, 10 toddlers, 10 toddler / preschoolers)

- In place since 2011, 2012, 2013 and we are currently reviewing it (savings, cost, and operational needs)
- \$24, 700 staff replacement cost savings / year = additional 1.25% fee increase
- Major building maintenance and equipment repairs are scheduled during this time, eliminating the cost of premium rates charged for work that would need to be done on evening and weekend shifts so that children are not placed at risk during operational hours.
- Toronto Children's Services prefers full closure vs. partial closure
- Looking at other possible options like a 5 day full closure in the 3rd week of August (no classes last 2 weeks of August), but no decision will be made without further discussion with families, staff and union.
- Parents will be informed of decision in December 2013.

Feedback from a few parents:

- U of T Camp cohort offered to preschool children is firm on 4 years of age rule to register
- Option of 5 day full closure in the 3rd week of August presents a problem for faculty and staff who need to prepare for the start of the academic year in September.
- Forgo the partial summer closure and add the 1.25% fee increase on top of the annual planned increase fee, but a significant fee increase would be a financial challenge for ELC families currently on a wait list for a municipal child care subsidy to assist them with their fees.
- Parents need to have notice of the partial closure days for 2014 by the end of December, so that they have adequate time to plan for it. Camp registration starts in January/February/March.

Q: Have all the spaces been full during the summer closures in the past?

A: Yes they have all been full.

5. Other Business

- Fundraising
 - Mabel's Labels as a fundraiser. The centre registers with the company. When parents, friends, family make purchases from company, they select the ELC and the proceeds will go to the centre.

Q: What would the fundraised money be used for?

A: The money would be used for program enrichment. Fund raising is more successful if parents know specifically what the money raised would be used for.

Q: What is the Parent Engagement survey used for?

A: When a child enrolls at the ELC and again when the child moves up to the preschool program, parents are asked to fill out a parent engagement survey. Staff refers to these forms when planning for the classroom and involving parents in activities based on their interests and talents.