



Councillor Paul Ainslie

Toronto City Council
Scarborough East - Ward 43

Chair, Scarborough Community Council
Chair, Government Management Committee
Chair, Toronto Public Library Board

January 13, 2012

Dear Government Management Committee Members,

I am asking you to support the following recommendation:

1. The City Manager be directed to request the Ontario Provincial Ministry of Education begin to include within the Provincially mandated curriculum, a full course on municipalities and neighbourhoods.

The local community is where good citizenship begins. Students of every age can contribute to their community through participation in community projects and volunteer work.

Local government is an important dimension of community. Decisions, made by Mayor, Chief, or Reeve and their Councils affect the daily lives of students. For example, students rely on the fire department to keep their homes safe. They need safe water and adequate sewage disposal for good health. Students use facilities such as public libraries and swimming pools provided by local government. They travel on roads and walk on sidewalks maintained by local government.

Decisions made by Boards of Education affect students' everyday lives. For example, the textbooks that students read are provided by the board of education. Health Region Boards make decisions about allocation of resources that influence the health care services available in local committees.

Many of the services provided by local government are practical, concrete and real, even the youngest child can understand and relate to them.

Local government occurs close to home, so there may be opportunities for students to meet elected officials, to observe or read about council meetings, and to debate local issues. These real-life experiences can help create a sense of connection to the democratic process. They can build and strengthen students' commitment to citizenship, both as a participant and as a leader.

Students will benefit from learning more about local government. They will have a better understanding of how their community works, and they may come to realize that their participation in local government as a voter or elected official can make a difference.

Communities and the Province as a whole will also benefit when students learn about local government. The students of today are the Mayors/Reeves, Councillors, School Trustees of tomorrow. They are the people who will lobby for change, lead delegations and vote in the years ahead. The better that young people are prepared for these roles, the stronger our communities will be.

Sincerely,

Councillor Paul Ainslie
Scarborough East Ward 43

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