

POD MEMBERS: TIMOTHY, KELLY, RANDY, ADAM, MELISSA, CHRISTINA, SAMANTHA, ANEET

### OCTOBER UPDATE

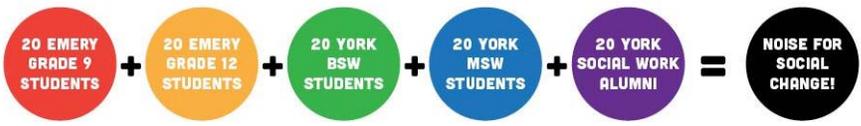
When asked; *What is your favourite part of our NOISE meetings so far?* a couple of fellows replied, "realizing that we all have stuff to contribute" and "that we are more comfortable together now". Weekly debriefing and engaging in popular education activities have been so valuable for our pod in team building. Fellows in our first meeting, were already eager to share their ideas and as a result, we saw a number of key themes that arose.

Following the next week, fellows drew art work and wrote words that represented a chosen theme that we had discussed previously and that had resonated with them the most. What we recognized was how these themes interlock with one another, which helped us to create discussion on how we may be able to narrow in on a dominant issue. Last week fellows discussed how the issue of youth "skipping/failing classes" at Emery and how this perpetuates the "misconceptions people have of Jane and Finch" as their primary topic of concern. Brainstorming through the use of a word map allowed us to consider ways in which we can best support the students of Emery who are experiencing challenges and barriers to their educational experience and how this may help to reflect Jane and Finch in a way that represents, in the words of one fellow, "the real Jane and Finch".

Our pod agreed that our next meeting would be a show and tell day, where we present to each other our ideas and the research we've conducted. We have also discussed potential community outings to plan for that relate to our topic. Fellows have suggested that we create a survey to be conducted at Emery to get more information on the issue of skipping/failing classes. Overall, every fellow has contributed to weekly rich discussions. It is so exciting to see how we have and continue to grow as a pod to make NOISE happen!!!

**NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**





@NOISEFORCHANGE



POD MEMBERS: BRION, CHIARA, ERIK, HOWAYNE, ISTAHIL, JAVON, JIMMY, LADAN, RACHEL, SEVGI

OCTOBER UPDATE

The month of October has been a period of relationship-building based on the foundations of trust, respect, honesty, humility, and a celebration of our multiple strengths and subject positions. Through a variety of ice-breakers and team-building exercises, we have also become more attuned to the complex dimensions of community and youth experience.

Two critical features in the month of October was the planet earth exercise and the group profile seen above. In the planet earth activity, Emery Youth and York students had an opportunity to interact in a decision-making process that involved collaboration, consensus, and cooperation. The object was two-fold. The first component was to critically engage the pod in how we as a group are going to make important decisions about community involvement, action, and potential civic participation. The second component was to illustrate that, although York students are participating in the project, we are looking to the values, experiences, and realities of the youth as a critical wellspring of knowledge toward decisions and change.

The group profile recorded above provided the pod with tangible patterns and themes for social action, which we, as a group, will now seek to develop and mold into a youth-led and inspired community project. More to come.

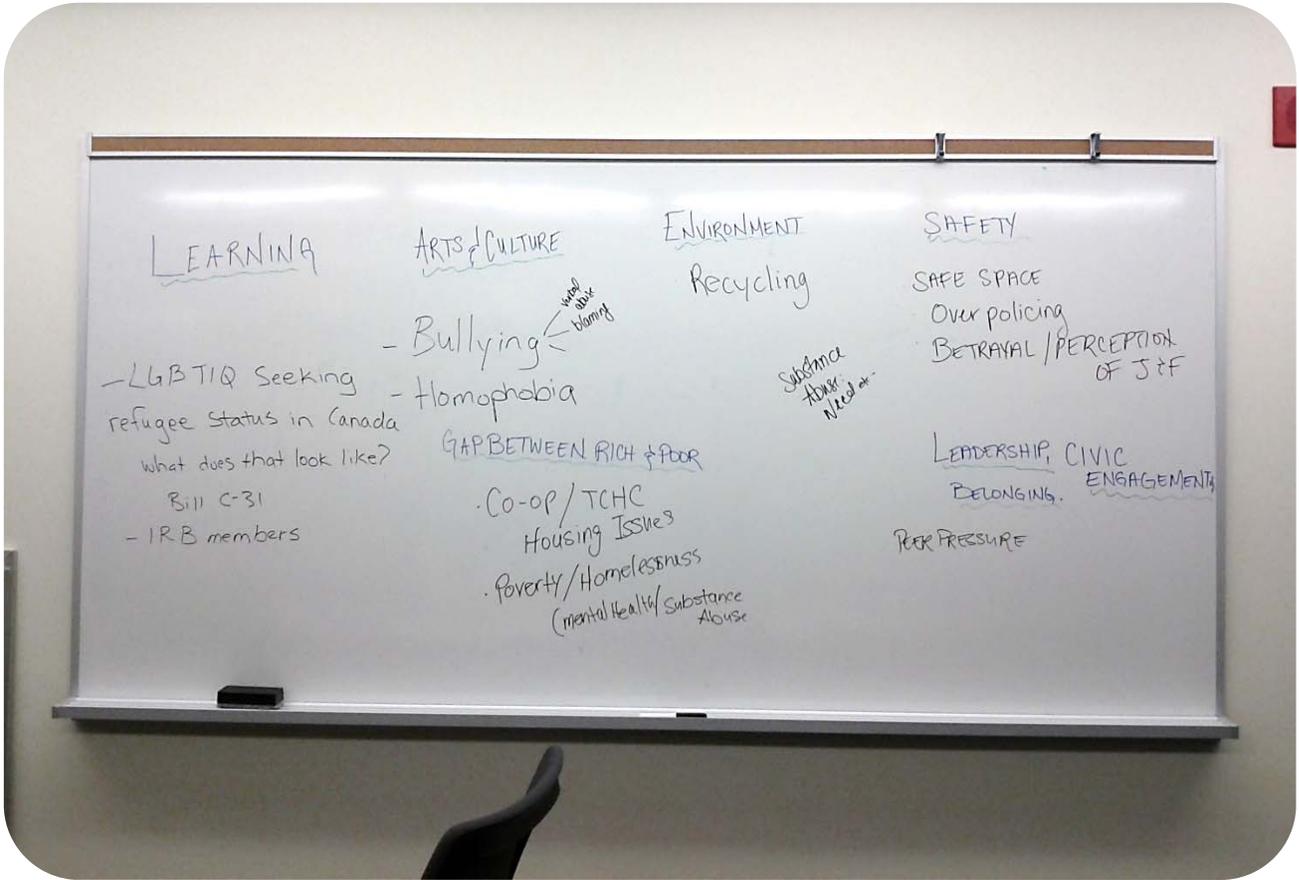
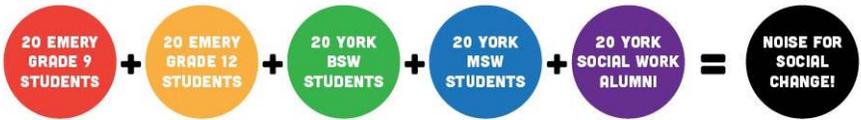
@NOISEGAERIK

Erik Wexler, Graduate Assistant



NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT





POD MEMBERS: EUNA, GLORIA, KANIKA, MERONA, MONA, NATASHA, TIANNA

OCTOBER UPDATE

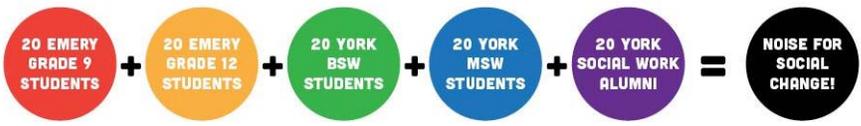
With two pod meetings, we started building a relationship by creating a comfortable, welcoming and friendly atmosphere. As the beginning stage of team building, we mainly focused on establishing trusting relationships, deepening communication and fostering team spirit. After discussion, we all agreed to encourage and motivate each other in a genuine and supportive manner in order to keep up the momentum. Our pod helps each other open up our heart and mind to bring about change in the Jane/Finch community through the NOISE Social Action Project.

As the picture depicts, our pod is moving into the planning stage to decide one theme we will work on. Two high school students from Emery Collegiate Institute have played an active role in sharing the community issues with the other members and helped us get a real sense of what is happening in the community. They addressed the community issues through the lens of youth, culture, race, and gender while revitalizing our pod's energy levels.

Our pod is working towards crystallizing and actualizing our vision of change. Small changes make a big difference. So far, we have made two steps forward moving towards finding our voice and getting it heard. As part of the innovative and exciting social action project, our pod will continue to make small steps through open communication and active engagement.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT





POD MEMBERS: AFAQ, ANDY, DANIEL, HATICE, JANELLE, LAILA, SARAH, TRAIAN

### OCTOBER UPDATE

Within the first ten minutes of all of our pod members meeting each other, you could almost visibly see everyone’s nervousness dissipate. It was quickly replaced with an excitable, vivacious energy that made each fellow feel glad that they joined the NOISE project. In fact, our pod connected so quickly that from the first meeting on we spent much of our time laughing until our cheeks hurt – a bond that typically takes a long time to form between people. Personally, I feel so fortunate to be able to work with such amazing people. Everyone brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the pod and, even more importantly, everyone not only respects that, but optimizes many opportunities to learn from each other. Although we are not yet sure of what our community action project will be, our momentum is big, so we are certain it will be great.

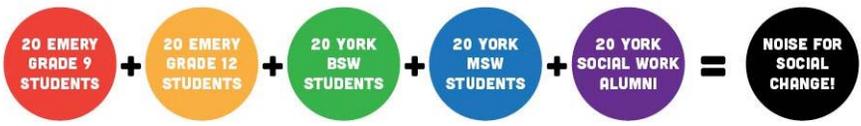
In addition to all our laughing, we have discussed our many interests, concerns and aspirations pertaining to the Jane/Finch community. Themes that became prevalent in these discussions are safety, music and belonging. We know these will be incorporated into our final project, but how exactly these manifest is what we will spend the next month discussing.

Our pod started with four youth fellows from Emery, one grade 9 student and three in grade twelve, as well as three BSW fellows, one in first year, one in third and one in fourth. Recently, we just added one more BSW fellow. We excitedly await to meet the newest addition to our team this Tuesday.

Above is a photo of our pod as we race each other in a 10-minute competition to determine who can find the most amount of community resources in the Jane/Finch area. We enjoy lots of activities like this together as it puts our high energy to constructive use!

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT





POD MEMBERS: AVNEET, BASHIR, DEOPAUL, FAISAL, JESSAMYN, NAYANTHI, SADIA, SARAH, TASHEKA

OCTOBER UPDATE

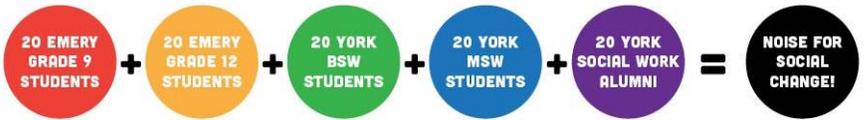
Our pod has been making excellent progress over the four meetings we have had so far. We started out with three BSW fellows (Sarah M., Sarah B. and Nayanthi) and two youth fellows (Deopaul and Faisal). We gained a new youth fellow (Avneet) at our third meeting, and then two more youth fellows by our fourth meeting (Sadiah and Tasheka). So far our meetings have been taking place at York and all pod members have been really accommodating in making the trek to campus to meet! We are aiming to hold our next meet at Emery C.I. to allow the Emery students to show the York students their space.

So far our meetings have included a lot of ice breakers and team building exercises, including some games led by both youth and BSW fellows, which have been a lot of fun! In addition, we have had some great discussions around our values and goals, group decision making processes, and potential themes or issues for our project. As a group we have been looking at the Toronto Star's "Vital Signs" report and reflecting on how the issues raised in the report are, and are not, relevant to the Jane/Finch community. The youth fellows have shared some terrific insights into the issues they see as important to themselves and their community.

For our next steps we hope to continue with the momentum our pod has been building, work towards choosing an issue to focus on, and dive into the research process!

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT





POD MEMBERS: ALIA, IRINA, JUSTIN, MILLICENT, AND RACHEL

### OCTOBER UPDATE

We are all excited about the prospect of being a part of the NOISE Project. The NOISE Project is a chance for high school and social work students to share ideas about how to promote community engagement in Jane and Finch. We had not let our small group size (of five) diminish the amount of energy we are able to foster at our meetings. For the first couple meetings, we had a series of ice breakers and team building activities that assisted in learning about one another. I tried to convey a message that if we can work collaboratively and share responsibilities the work load can be drastically reduced. My group members have been more than willing to partake in offering to take notes and actively participate in all our activities. For instance, one group member took the initiative to compile a reference binder with a sign out sheet, pod notes, and Jane/Finch municipal statistics. Needless to say, I was floored and appreciative of each member’s contribution thus far.

Mid-month we were going through a bit of a bumpy road as our single MSW student was unable to attend two meetings. As a small group, it is extremely difficult to handle absenteeism because we depend on input from everyone. In the preceding days, our MSW student chose to discontinue as her schedule did not give her the flexibility attend NOISE meetings. As a group, we proceeded to utilize the Semester Planner as a guide at our meetings.

We managed to conduct research pertaining to Jane/Finch through locating services that are available to community members. We brainstormed ideas about what community means to us personally and the ideas that came up were: People, family, unity/reputation, support, history, friendship, difference, respect. Throughout all of our meetings we have tried to keep a consistent vision and mission about how we anticipate our project developing.

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



20 EMERY GRADE 9 STUDENTS + 20 EMERY GRADE 12 STUDENTS + 20 YORK BSW STUDENTS + 20 YORK MSW STUDENTS + 20 YORK SOCIAL WORK ALUMNI = NOISE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE!

**Group Values**

- Equal opportunity for everyone to speak
- Respect opinions
- Listen – focused on person speaking
- Right to pass
- Timely response – within 24 hours
- Keep group informed via email, text update, pod meetings
- Appropriately handling conflicts/differences
- Be punctual
- Stay committed to project/group
- Open-minded
- Ask questions
- Welcoming/safe environment
- No judgment
- Inclusive space
- Teamwork/collective identity – supportive environment
- Remain engaged in project
- Share responsibility of work

**Don'ts:**

- Bash other ideas/put people down
- Interrupt
- Use profanity
- Be absent too often

- Use language that may offend
- Make assumptions

**Recipe for Successful Team Building**

**Ingredients:**

- 5 cups of open communication
- 2 litres of working together
- 2 cups of support
- 1 cup of responsibility
- 1 cup of equality
- 1 cup of togetherness
- 1 cup of cooperation
- 1 ounce of fun
- A pinch of selflessness
- 5 cups of cooperation
- 2 teaspoons of diversity
- 4 grams of cohesiveness
- 5 tablespoons of love
- 7.5 cups of support
- 4 ounces of effectiveness

**Recipe:**

- Preheat oven to 360 degrees
- In a bowl, combine 2 cups of support with 1 cup of responsibility, 1 cup of togetherness, and 6 cups of cooperation. Slowly add 5 cups of communication while simultaneously stirring the other ingredients in the bowl. This creates a strong foundation for solid group work.
- In a separate pot, bring 2 litres of working together to a boil. While boiling, add a pinch of selflessness. Selflessness is a crucial element in the recipe for successful team building so that the group can rise above all things.
- Take the ingredients from the bowl and pour into the pot. Add 1 ounce of fun and 4 ounces of effectiveness so as to put a smile on everyone's face and keep all members of group engaged in the project.
- Slowly pour 7.5 cups of support into the pot while mixing ingredients.
- Put butter on the surface of a baking pan so that the cake can come out strong and enriched.
- In the pot, you should have a cake batter prepared – now pour the cake batter from the bowl into the buttered baking pan and place in the oven.
- Bake for 30 minutes until the team is a strong unit.
- While the cake is baking, prepare ingredients for the icing.

- Mix together 1 cup of equality with 2 teaspoons of diversity. Add 4 grams of cohesiveness until the icing is an unbreakable topping.
- After 30 minutes, take the cake out of the oven and let cool for 5 minutes before spreading the icing. Cooling for 5 minutes is important so as to ensure that all ideas are digested and reflected upon.
- Spread the icing fully, covering all surfaces of the cake to prevent external infiltrating forces from impeding positive group work.
- Lastly sprinkle 5 tablespoons of love on the cake so that everyone continues to enjoy the project as the team continues to grow.
- Bon Appetite.

**Critical:**

- reflecting
- analyzing
- immediate
- different/other perspectives

**Youth:**

- students
- 12-17
- 18-25

**Engagement:**

- getting ahead
- being committed
- interested
- excited
- passionate
- sharing ideas

**Central Concepts:**

- youth at the centre of the project
- empowerment
- working with youth
- youth voices heard
- bottom up approach
- no assumptions
- youth hold valuable knowledge - experts
- youth are leaders
- capable of creating change
- the future of tomorrow
- research
- enacting/creating change

**POD MEMBERS: ASHLEY, DYLAN, KAREN, KERESA, MIRIAM, MUNIRA, REBECCA, SUPRIYA**

**OCTOBER UPDATE**

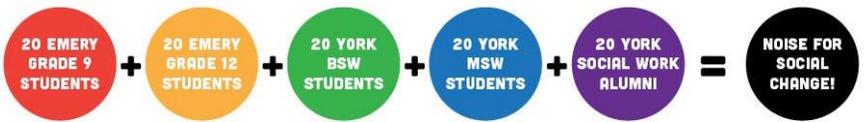
Exciting, innovative, and stimulating. These three words are synonymous with the NOISE for Social Change pilot project. Just three pod meetings deep thus far and the effects of the meetings are wide-reaching. The content being explored and the relationships being built make the prospects of creating a meaningful social action project empowering. Throughout these early meetings our pod has focused primarily on learning about each pod member so as to build rapport and have a better understanding of the individuals that we will be spending every Tuesday night with. Solid relationships will ultimately lead to better and more effective communication throughout the year. As the picture depicts, our pod collectively established the overarching values that will guide our practice, deconstructed the terms and meaning of "Critical Youth Engagement," while creating a "Recipe for Successful Teambuilding." All of these elements will underscore our future work as a pod and were therefore critical elements to discuss prior to constructing our social action project.

Our pod has progressed with regards to content and idea formulation, but also with regards to pod members. Quite excitingly our pod welcomed a new grade 12 and grade 9 student at our last pod meeting. With more students from Emery Collegiate Institute, our social action project will be more well-rounded and representative of the Jane-Finch community.

Underlying all pod meetings is a fun energy so that a welcoming safe space is created. So far we have established a great vibe among pod members and our team-builders will continue to create a stronger unified pod capable of enacting great change in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood.

**NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**





POD MEMBERS: ALEXIS, ALIAH, CAMERON, EDEN, HALIMA, JULIAN, KATHRYN, KEVIN

### OCTOBER UPDATE

The Noise project has been under way for the last two months. Since the Emery students have been coming to meetings there has been a significant change in the energy coming into the project.

As time has passed the sentiment that the Emery students would like to have more of a sense of community in their school has become boldly apparent. Each meeting and every youth I meet from the school touches on this theme in one way or another. It is clear that Emery Collegiate has the capacity and knowledge already and that is so clear when you mention the topic of basketball. Our group has begun to discuss how the skill and knowledge set of basketball can be applied to other areas in the school.

Although the initial intention of this project is to focus on the Jane Finch community the Emery students have been referring to the community as Emery Collegiate. Many of the youth in the last pod meeting shared that if Emery Collegiate had some upgrades in particular (new desks and lockers) that perhaps people would begin to take more pride in being a member of the school. Another area identified is around youth's desire to have more of a parent presence in the school.

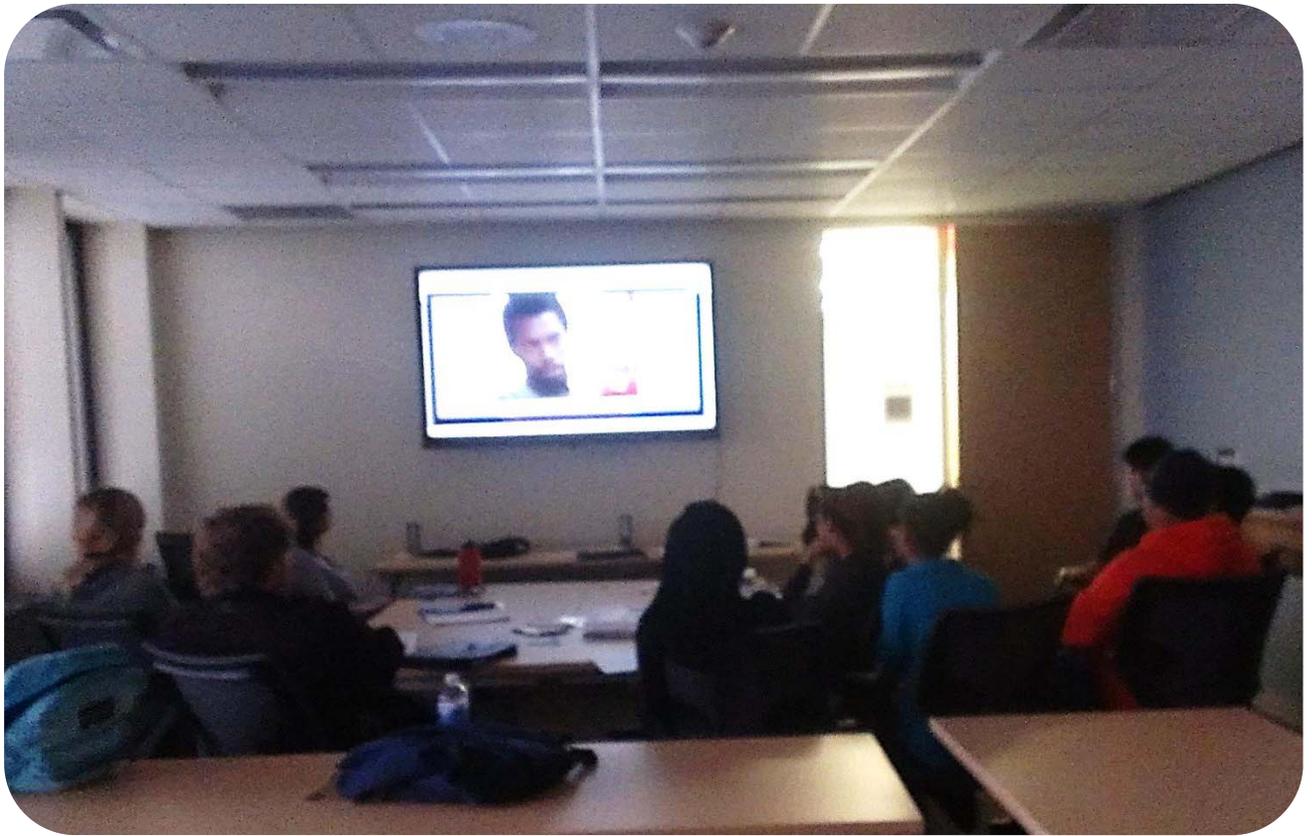
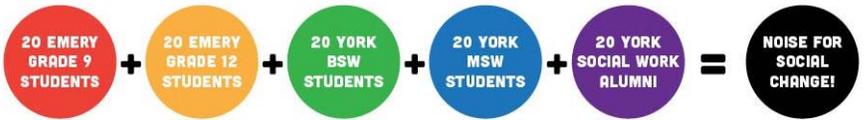
There have been many examples of teachers that the youth felt embraced the importance of community spirit. I am looking forward to seeing how this will unfold and I have full confidence that the youth in this project will continue to bring beautiful creative ideas to begin to enhance spirit, and connection in the school.

In the photo above the group is screening a documentary film called 'Home Feeling' that was made by African film maker Jennifer Hodge thirty years ago. The film followed West Indian families and individuals living in the Jane Finch community. The group then discussed how things have changed in relation to topics such as police presence, community engagement and police profiling in the community. The film maker passed away shortly after the film was made however there are many other individuals in the film that may be still living and perhaps they might be significant future community partners in moving this project forward.



## NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT





POD MEMBERS: ALEX, DISHA, GUILLERMO, KATARINA, KIRANJOT, SHANNON

### OCTOBER UPDATE

My involvement with the NOISE project has been underway for the past couple of months. Thus far my group has only met a couple times due to some difficulties in scheduling meetings. However, I can feel a real sense of energy and commitment from both the Emery and York POD members.

Our POD has thus far focused on getting to know each other. We have played a number of icebreakers and team builders, which have resulted in some great laughs and stories. I believe that this is so vital to building a collaborative and productive team. Laughter and teamwork in my opinion go hand in hand! Besides sharing laughter and eating pizza I feel that our POD is coming up with some great conversations surrounding the themes identified in the Toronto Vital Signs Report. However, when the youth discuss what Jane-Finch means to them they discuss Emery. This is the part of their community that they believe attention needs to be directed towards. It is this voice that I think is essential our POD responds too.

After a collaborative meeting between mine and Sarah's POD the group discussed a desire to focus on Emery. Emery is where the youth derive their sense of community. To take pride in their school will help change the identity or the way they and the community view Jane-Finch. A specific focus was on implementing some upgrades (specifically new desks and lockers) within Emery Collegiate. We have only just begun the beginning stages of the planning component outlined in the learning guide and I cannot wait to see what ideas our POD comes up with!

To conclude, I would like to say I am having a blast with the NOISE project and my POD. I think we are going to see some great things come out of our time together!!!!

**NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATIVE  
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

