

ANNUAL REPORT
**ADVISORY
COMMITTEE
ON EQUITY**



OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



Committee Members

Please refer to the membership chart 2020-2022 for a list of the members.

ACE Co-Chairs (Two-year term ending 30 November 2022)

Ayan Karshe (she/her)

Deepika Grover (she/her)

Activities and Achievements 2020-2021

Since ACE's annual report to the board for the 2018-2019 school year, the committee has strengthened its organizational structure, and provided relevant and meaningful feedback to trustees and staff with an enhanced focus on anti-oppression, and anti-racist perspectives and, where possible, an application of a trauma informed lens. The key changes made to membership and meeting structure in 2020-2021, prompted long time ACE member, Trustee Campbell, to remark on the increased member engagement and more "insightful" conversations throughout the year. He credited the active co-leadership of the co-chairs, coordinators, and committee members.

A sample of ACE's activities and achievements are as follows:

Governance

ACE met during the first and subsequent school shutdowns. Its intention was to be a bridge between the District and communities and to provide a space to centre critical conversations about the individual and intersecting inequities being unveiled by COVID-19 and their impacts on students, staff, families and community partners. In doing so, ACE seamlessly and successfully transitioned from meeting in-person to virtual meetings, during periods that ACE typically does not meet, namely the months of June to August.

- ACE co-chairs collaborated with Board Services to substantially revise the agenda structure, in order to create more space for in-depth conversation, participation, and engagement between ACE members, staff, and community partners.
- ACE tested its three tiered membership model. This model was developed to enable greater accessibility and engagement, as well as to establish a fluid mechanism to replace members in the event that priorities had changed due to family, work and other life commitments.

This new model, combined with the new virtual format and a newly structured agenda, contributed to enhanced consistency of ACE members' participation in meetings, noticeably higher quality discussions, and ensured that quorum was always easily met.

- Ms. Seema Lamba, ACE representative on the Committee of the Whole (COW), attended all meetings and contributed regularly on behalf of ACE members, in addition to delivering the COW report at ACE meetings.

Advice

- ACE's contribution was also essential in shaping the District's Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap, Mental Health Strategy and the District's preparation for the review on police involvement in schools and human rights policy consultations;
- ACE offered critical feedback on the *Valuing Voices-Identity Matters! Student Survey*, including reports on student suspension rate and the analysis of disproportionality and disparity in Grade 10 credit accumulation;
- ACE demonstrated exemplary leadership and substantive revisions for Policy P. 146.HR. Equitable Recruitment, Hiring and Promotion Policy; and
- ACE worked to build awareness of the specific needs of different minoritized people and different communities newly attending the Canadian public school system and the role of various community partners in supporting them (i.e. OCISO, RAJO Project)

Plans for the 2021-2022 School Year

- Use the Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights Roadmap to guide the work of ACE;
- Establish sub-committees aligned with forthcoming policy development and policy review processes, as well as emerging equity issues and, where/as necessary, propose recommendations for the COW;
- Co-develop inclusive approaches to enhance intersectional, equity and anti-racism analysis in the development and review of OCDSB's policies and to strengthen community engagement and feedback opportunities;
- Further center student and community voices within ACE meetings, sub-committees, and deliberations;

- Create space for ongoing conversations with staff regarding the implementation of the Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights Roadmap's commitment to identify and address systemic barriers that impact student and staff success and well-being;
- Connect and collaborate with other OCDSB committees, councils, and advisory bodies where necessary; and
- Continue to be a demonstration of how to facilitate spaces for uncomfortable, necessary conversations, and support culturally-appropriate and responsive co-learning space within systems.

Attachments/Links

- Evidence of the committee's membership campaign
- ACE Membership Chart
- Minutes confirming the election of the co-chairs
- 2021-2022 ACE Meeting Schedule

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board seeking Community Representatives for the Advisory Committee on Equity



The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) is seeking five (5) Community Representatives to serve on its Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) for a two (2) year term, ending November 30, 2020.

We are seeking 3 individual members and 2 community members representing community associations, agencies, groups and organizations.

Community representatives play a critical role in identifying barriers and opportunities to equitable access, opportunities, and outcomes. This enables ACE to advise the Board of Trustees on fulfilling its commitment to provide an equitable and inclusive educational and work environment to support student and staff success and well-being.

ACE meets 6–8 times per year and its meetings are open to the public.

If you are interested and have...

- a strong interest and commitment to student achievement and well-being;
- knowledge and understanding of the link between equity and inclusive education;
- an enthusiastic approach and ability to motivate and support others;
- the ability to work effectively and collaboratively with representatives from various communities who may have diverse opinions and perspectives;
- the ability to think critically and strategically;
- the ability to exercise tact, diplomacy and respect for others; and,
- the ability and willingness to attend meetings during the academic year, and to serve a two (2) year term.

Then please tell us...

- Why are you interested in being a member of ACE;
- How do you identify yourself: First Nations, Metis or Inuit, Racialized communities such as African, Black or Caribbean origins, Lebanese, Chinese, South Asian; Faith Group; Person with Disabilities, a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ communities, a Newcomer (in Canada five years or less), Immigrant or Refugee or an ally to one or more equity seeking group.
- What knowledge, skills and experience do you bring to ACE in one or more of the following: a parent; two way engagement with equity seeking communities; equity and inclusive education, public education; public policy and/or communications; and,
- An indication of your commitment to serve a two (2) year term.
- If submitting your interest as a community organization, association or agency, please include a letter from the organization's Executive body.

**All applications must be submitted by 28 August 2019 to ace@ocdsb.ca
Please check our website www.ocdsb.ca for more details.**

Join a dedicated team committed to: *TOGETHER: WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE*

ACE Accomplishments include:

- Drafting motions to advise Trustees to collect and disaggregate identity-based data and to ensure supports are in place for students who could potentially disengage, be suspended or expelled and subsequently leave school early (2016); to undertake a qualitative study to collect data on students, parents, staff and other stakeholders experiences of racism in the OCDSB to inform future strategies to address racism (2017); and to explore funding to support mental health through an equity lens especially for students who self-identify as First Nations, Inuit and Metis and for male students of African descent (2019);
- Providing a diversity, equity and inclusion lens on district priorities such as: the budget, exit outcomes, strategic plan, identity-based data collection, graduation rates and early school leavers and suspension rates; accommodation reviews, complaints' resolution policy, mental health strategy and ensuring OCDSB's hiring page include a statement about OCDSB's commitment to build a representative workforce;
- Recommending Islamophobia sessions in schools prior to the arrival of a large number of Syrian students to prepare and to support staff for the culture shift in their schools;
- Co-Founders of A Date with Diversity Learning Event and Community Forums which engages students, parents and staff on how to foster academic success and promote well-being; and,
- Establishing the Excellence in Equity Awards to recognize students, staff and community partners who are contributing to support the OCDSB to fulfill its commitment to build an equitable and inclusive learning and working culture.



OCDSB's Advisory Committee on Equity Membership Chart – 2020 - 2021

INDIVIDUAL - VOTING MEMBERS (4)	Alternates	Members at Large Members who able to participate in discussions and working groups, however, they are not eligible to vote	COMMUNITY GROUP MEMBERS – VOTING MEMBERS (7)	Non-Voting Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayan Yusuf Karshe (co-chair) Nasrin Mirbagheri-Javanfar Bronwyn Funicello Deepika Grover (co-chair) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (no designated alternate for Ayan) Seema Lamba Elizabeth Sweeney Carrie-Lynn Barkley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bob Dawson Edil Adan Ahmed June Girvan Yazhuo Zhang Breanna Pizzuto Megan Wills Said Mohammed Elaine Hayles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chandonette Johnson-Arowolo Jaku Konbit Maria Teresa Garcia Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) Kahmaria Pingue Parents 4 Diversity Ryan Doucette Young Leaders Advisory Council Larissa Silver Youth Services Bureau 	<p>Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rob Campbell Justine Bell <p>Student Senate Representative Rotating student assignment</p> <p>Indigenous, Human Rights and Equity Division</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dorothy Baker, Superintendent of Instruction Jacqueline Lawrence, Diversity & Equity Coordinator Sue Rice, Instructional Coach <p>Federation representative(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Wildman – Ottawa Carleton Elementary Occasional Teacher's Association (OCEOTA) <p>Post Secondary Representatives Professor Awad Ibrahim University of Ottawa</p>
			<p>(Membership on hold due to pandemic pressures):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicole Parsons Tungasuvvingat Inuit 	<p>Committee Representatives Sue Cowin, SEAC Inini McHugh, IEAC</p> <p>Board Services Team Leigh Fenton, Committee Coordinator</p> <p>Staff in attendance: Ken Mak Jeannine Bradley Rana Kais Laura Sosnow David Sutton</p>

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY REPORT

November 26, 2020

6:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

Voting Members:	Ayan Yusuf Karshe, Nasrin Mirbagheri-Javanfar, Seema Lamba, Bronwyn Funciello, Nicki Dunlop, Carrie-Lynn Barkley, Deepika Grover, Elizabeth Sweeney, Chandonette Johnson-Arowolo (Jaku Konbit), Maria Teresa Garcia (Ottawa Community Immigrant Services), Ryan Doucette (Young Leaders Advisory Council), Kahmaria Pingue (Parents 4 Diversity), Larissa Silver (Youth Services Bureau)
Non-Voting Members:	Rob Campbell (Trustee), Chris Ellis (Trustee), Lynn Scott (Trustee, ex officio), June Girvan, Yazhou Zhang, Ruth Sword, Megan Willis, Said Mohammed, Sonia Nadon-Campbell (Special Education Advisory Committee, Alternate), Inini McHugh (Indigenous Education Advisory Committee), David Wildman (Ottawa Carleton Elementary Occasional Teachers Association)
Staff and Guests:	Justine Bell (Trustee), Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction), Mary-Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Melissa Collins (System Principal, Equity), Colin Anderson (System Principal), Joan Oracheski (Manager, Research, Evaluation and Analytics Division), Nicole Guthrie (Manager, Board Services), Jacqueline Lawrence (Equity and Diversity Coordinator), Sue Rice (Equity Instructional Coach), Sharon Martinson (OCDSB Educator), Maxine Awedalla (Delegate), Kyrstin Dumont (Co-Chair National BIPOC LGBTQ2 Youth Mental Health Convention), Leigh Fenton (Board Coordinator)

1. Welcome

Acting Chair Deepika Grover called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. She acknowledged that the meeting was taking place on unceded Algonquin Territory. She expressed gratitude to the Algonquin people for the privilege to live and work on their land.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Nasrin Mirbagheri-Javanfar,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

3. Community Voice (Delegations)

3.1 R. Maxine Adwella, Mental Health and Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) Students

Ms. Adwella, the Executive Director of National Collaboration for Youth Mental Health (NCYMH), introduced Ms. Kyrstin Dumont, the co-chair of the “National BIPOC LGBTQ2 Youth Mental Health Convention”, who will launch the virtual convention on 3 March 2021. Ms. Adwella encouraged OCDSB students and staff to attend the conference. Ms. Adwella’s delegation highlighted content for potential five-year workshops and training programs against racism and systematic discrimination, available to communities, corporations and educators through NCYMH.

4. Presentations

4.1 The Development of a Human Rights Policy (C. Tanner)

Human Rights and Equity Advisor Tanner reviewed a presentation on the development of a foundational human rights policy for the District. She noted that there are existing policies and procedures that address some aspects of human rights, such as anti-discrimination and harassment and some types of accommodation, however there are opportunities to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights by developing a policy that will have primacy over other policies that will include recognition of fundamental human rights principles, define a human rights complaints mechanism, and define a process for accommodation requests. Her aim is to work in a collaborative way with students, parents and caregivers, employees, and community stakeholders to develop a transparent and accountable human rights policy and complaint procedure that serves the District’s stakeholders.

During the presentation and in response to questions, the following points were noted and recommendations made:

- Consultation may include virtual focus group meetings, written submissions, a public forum and an anonymous ThoughtExchange survey to create safe spaces to engage in conversation;
- Incorporate the human rights policy into the curriculum and define the language associated with the policy, for example, the words “equity”, “poverty” and “discrimination” are terms which merit definition;

- Consult with educator networks and community stakeholders in an open forum style, encouraging representatives from each organization to join the discussion. A group meeting format may provide additional feedback rather than meetings with individual groups;
- Ensure that mental health organizations are a part of the consultation groups;
- Visit community centres to listen to input from new Canadians;
- Consider developing a conceptual scope question to measure whether the intended policy would eliminate possible exclusion, lack of opportunity or imbalances in the right to education;
- Engage directly with students with complex disabilities. Seek feedback from students and families who are not members of organizations or affiliates and who may not otherwise be heard;
- Refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's recommendations on balancing competing rights for the express purpose of drafting policies and procedures; and
- Consult with the Aboriginal Coalition of Ottawa which represents all Indigenous organizations in the city. Each agency within the coalition could be approached for feedback.

4.2 Report 20-085, Annual Report on Student Suspensions (2019-2020) (M. Giroux)

Your committee had before it Report 20-085, presenting the annual report on student suspensions in 2019-2020.

Manager Orcheski reported that suspension data is reviewed annually. The Safe Schools strategy is built on promoting positive student behavior by building relationships, establishing a code of conduct, and ensuring bullying prevention initiatives are in place. The Safe Schools framework governs reporting requirements. The Anti-Racism Act and accompanying data standards governs the collection, analysis and reporting of identity based data, including the requirement to calculate disproportionality and, or, disparity indices.

Manager Orcheski noted that suspension information has been consistent over the past several years. For 2019-2020, the overall student suspension rate was 2.2%, measured from September 2019 to March 2020, at which time the province mandated the closure of schools due to COVID-19. Approximately 10% of suspensions were mandatory in nature and approximately two thirds of suspensions were single-day suspension. She highlighted that in all cases the disproportionality and disparity rates are higher for Indigenous students and students with special needs. Ongoing efforts are being made to create safe

spaces that promote student engagement, safety and a greater sense of belonging.

During the presentation and in response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Some school teams are trained to understand restorative justice approaches. Superintendent Farrish noted that in discretionary suspensions, progressive discipline is utilized to care, correct and support the student. Embarking upon a restorative justice practice requires knowledge of Indigenous circles of support and accountability;
- There is a need to be sensitive towards the complexity of self-identification for a racialized person. The way a student identifies is not necessarily the same way they are viewed by staff;
- It was suggested that a record of the number of sharing and healing circles that transpired with Indigenous students, prior to suspension, be included in future reports;
- A concern was expressed regarding the parallel increase in intermediate school suspensions alongside the typical increase in mental health challenges for students in grades seven and eight. As some of the suspensions may be based on mental health challenges, these students may benefit from mental health interventions rather than being suspended;
- Nearly 90% of suspensions issued to students in 2019-2020 were of a discretionary nature. System Principal Anderson noted that there are six broad categories of conduct outlined in subsection 306(1) of the Education Act where a principal shall consider suspension: a threat to inflict bodily harm to another person, possessing alcohol, cannabis or illegal drugs, being under the influence of alcohol or cannabis, swearing at a teacher or a person of authority, committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property, and bullying, including cyber-bullying. He highlighted that the main reason for discretionary suspension was to uphold the safety of students and staff;
- The 10% of mandatory suspensions issued to students in 2019-2020, were related to possession or use of a weapon, committing assault requiring treatment by a medical practitioner, trafficking weapons, sexual assault, committing robbery, or supplying a minor with alcohol or cannabis, an unacceptable bullying risk to the safety of another person or any activity listed in subsection 306 (1) that was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression;

- Principals are required to use their discretion to consider the context of the behaviour, the circumstances of the individual student, potential biases, and whether the student will learn from the consequence;
- Concerns were expressed that students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other neurodevelopmental disorders, who regularly demonstrate severe tantrums and aggressive behaviours when irritable, are being suspended for these behaviours;
- Manager Orcheski explained that the Research, Evaluation and Analytics Division (READ) conducted the analysis of the data, and have benefitted from ongoing discussions with other research personnel from across the provinces undertaking the same type of analysis. A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was assembled from the community, composed of people who have experienced anti-Black racism, anti-Indigeneity, anti-Semitism, Homophobia, Islamophobia, Transphobia, Poverty/Classism, and Ableism/Disabilities. TAG met on 6 November 2020 to provide guidance and feedback to support the analysis and reporting of demographic data collected under the Anti-Racism Act (2017), and in accordance with the Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of System Racism (2018), as they relate to identified outcomes (e.g., suspensions, achievement, and streaming);
- The suspension data has not been disaggregated by school site; and
- Additional reports will be generated from the data, such as credit accumulation, achievement streaming and sense of belonging.

Committee members agreed that suspension data be kept on the agenda as a standing item.

5. Matters for Action

5.1 ACE Committee Appointments

Superintendent Baker and Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence explained the process for appointing members to the various positions.

a. Chair

Ms. Ayan Karshe nominated herself for the position of Chair.

The committee supported that notion that an ACE member may wish to stand as Co-chair. This collaborative seat could replace the requirement for an election of a Vice Chair.

Ms. Deepika Grover nominated herself for the position of Co-chair.

Ms. Karshe and Ms. Grover were declared the Co-chairs of ACE by consensus.

5.2 Community Involvement on Board Standing Committees

a. Committee of the Whole

Delegate Ms. Awedalla nominated herself for the position of Committee of the Whole representative for ACE. It was noted that committee representatives must be current members of ACE. A District-wide membership drive was initiated in the fall of 2019 and the orientation of new members was held on 27 August 2020. Ms. Awedalla requested that she be contacted following the meeting with information on ACE membership.

Ms. Nicki Dunlop nominated herself for the position of Committee of the Whole representative, by proxy, with the caveat that she would withdraw her nomination should a person of colour wish to hold the position independently.

Ms. Seema Lamba nominated herself for the position of Committee of the Whole representative.

With Ms. Lamba's consent, the committee was in support of electing Ms. Lamba for the position of Committee of the Whole representative and Ms. Dunlop as the alternate representative.

b. Committee of the Whole – Budget

Ms. Bronwyn Funiciello nominated herself for the position of Committee of the Whole, Budget representative.

Ms. Funiciello was declared Committee of the Whole, Budget representative by acclamation.

5.3 Ad Hoc Committee Appointments

a. The Advisory Committee on Extended Day and Childcare Programs

Ms. Nasrin Mirbagheri-Javanfar nominated herself for the position of The Advisory Committee on Extended Day and Childcare Programs representative.

Ms. Mirbagheri-Javanfar was declared The Advisory Committee on Extended Day and Childcare Programs representative by acclamation.

Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence encouraged the members to consider striking a membership subcommittee. The item will appear on the 28 January 2021 meeting agenda for further discussion.

6. Reports

6.1 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Baker announced that the *Valuing Staff Voices: Equity and Engagement Survey* will be undertaken in March 2021, led by a third party facilitator. The survey will be divided into two sections providing two different sets of data on identity within the organization, in addition to employee engagement

questions. Needs assessment sessions with staff occurred in October 2020, providing employees with the opportunity to have conversations about the topic of identity and engagement. Due to the level of interest in the sessions, an additional session has been scheduled for 1 December 2020. As part of the pre-survey work, a draft survey instrument was used in consultation with union executives and the leaders of employee affinity groups such as the Indigenous employee resource group, employees with learning disabilities, Black Educators Network, Rainbow Educators Network, Muslim Educators Network (MENO), and representatives from the Ontario Principals Council (OPC). Findings from the pre-survey discussions and the results from the upcoming survey will be used to develop a comprehensive action plan with focused responses on a system, department and school level.

Trustee Bell requested clarification on whether ACE can make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees to add an Indigenous voting member to ACE prior to the District's proposed advisory committee review. Trustee Ellis suggested that item be added to a future agenda for discussion. Ms. Hayles suggested that the topic be broadened to discuss the appointment of an Indigenous trustee to the Board of Trustees.

6.2 ACE Report, 29 October 2020

This item was deferred to the 28 January 2021 ACE meeting.

7. Standing Items

7.1 Update on District Review on Police Involvement in Schools

Human Rights and Equity Advisor Tanner provided a brief update on the District Review of Police Involvement in Schools:

- A call for proposals by facilitators was sent by invitation, with a closing date of 30 November 2020;
- Facilitators will be selected to support the process by mid-December 2020;
- Ayan Karshe, Kahmaria Pingue and Elizabeth Sweeney volunteered to sit as the ACE representative on the steering group for the Police Involvement in Schools;
- Two representatives from the Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC) and one from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) are a part of the steering group;
- The inaugural meeting of the steering group will occur on 16 December 2020. Steering group exercises are to include a literature review and determining questions for the review participants; and

- Consultation and engagement with review participants is planned for January 2021.

Human Rights and Equity Advisor Tanner noted that many of the points raised in the ACE meeting of 29 October 2020, such as compulsory training for school resource officers, community safety services, and the engagement of police in schools, will be addressed in the literature review. She confirmed that the ACE representatives on the steering group will provide the update to this standing item on the ACE agenda going forward.

On the subject of inviting a police officer to present to ACE, as was suggested in the ACE meeting of 29 October 2020, Ms. Sweeney commented that this invitation was the suggestion of one member and would require further discussion to achieve consensus from the committee.

8. Information

There was no new information presented.

9. New Business or Event Announcements

Superintendent Baker recognized Elaine Hayles for her contribution as the Interim Chair of ACE for many years. Her dedication to ACE has been exemplary and her advocacy within the community, commendable. Her voice has been a true sense of change not only for the committee's work but for the work of the District.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned the meeting at 8:38 pm.

Deepika Grover, Acting Chair, Advisory Committee on Equity

2021-2022 Advisory Committee on Equity Meeting Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
Thursday, September 23, 2021	Zoom Meeting	6 - 8:30 pm
Thursday, October 28, 2021	Zoom Meeting	6 - 8:30 pm
Thursday, November 25, 2021	Zoom Meeting	6 - 8:30 pm
Thursday, January 27, 2022	TBD	6 - 8:30 pm
Thursday, March 24, 2022	TBD	6 - 8:30 pm
Thursday, May 26, 2022	TBD	6 - 8:30 pm