

## INDIGENOUS EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

**September 16, 2021**

**6:00 pm**

**Zoom Meeting**

Members: Albert Dumont, Inini McHugh, Monique Monatch, Jo VanHooser

Indigenous Education Staff: Kris Meawasige (Indigenous Student Support and Re-engagement Coordinator)

Other Staff and Guests: Justine Bell (Trustee), Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Lynn Scott (Trustee), Sonia Nadon-Campbell (Special Education Advisory Committee Representative), Jennifer Michif (Guest), Julie Williams (Guest), Shannon Smith (Superintendent of Instruction), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Joan Oracheski (Manager, Research, Evaluation & Analytics Division (READ)), Sait Atas, (Research Officer, Research, Evaluation, & Analytics Division (READ)), Sue Baker (Acting Board/Committee Coordinator)

### **1. Opening (Elder Albert Dumont)**

Elder Albert Dumont opened the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

### **2. Student Voice**

There were no students present.

### **3. Community Discussion**

There was no community discussion.

### **4. Presentations**

#### **4.1 Report 21-046, Examination of Elementary and Secondary Program Pathways and Achievement Outcomes (M. Giroux / J. Oracheski)**

Research Officer Sait Atas and Superintendent Shannon Smith presented Report 21-046, Examination of Elementary and Secondary Program Pathways and Achievement Outcomes.

The report examines enrolment distribution in elementary and secondary programs and student achievement outcomes in relation to demographic data collected through the Valuing Voices – Identity Matters! Student

Survey conducted in 2019-2020. The information presented seeks to address the following questions:

- What is the representation of students across elementary programs English with core French (ENG), Early French Immersion (EFI), Middle French Immersion (MFI) and secondary pathways (academic, applied, locally developed)?
- How well is the system doing to support students in meeting high expectations in French, language, and mathematics (elementary panel) and English, math, and science (secondary panel).

The report aligns with the OCDSB 2019-2023 Strategic Plan; Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights Roadmap (2020); Grade 9 de-streaming of mathematics; the Annual Student Achievement Report (ASAR); the Anti-Racism Act (2017) and accompanying Data Standards (2018), and the QuantCrit Framework (Gilbert et al., 2018).

The report shows the program enrolment distribution for elementary students in grades 1 to 8, and mathematics for grades 9-10. For each group, enrolment patterns were similar over the past three years.

Disproportionality measures a group's over-representation or under-representation in a program, service or function. relative to their representation in the reference population. A value of 1 means equal representation relative to their representation in population.

In the EFI program, representation was lower amongst the English Language Learners (ELLs), students identifying as Indigenous, students with special education needs, students identified as Middle Eastern, students who identified as trans boy/man or two spirit, students with disabilities including addiction, autism, blind/low vision, developmental, learning, mobility, and speech impairment.

In the secondary applied mathematics group, representation was disproportionate for low-socio-economic status (SES) students, students identifying as Indigenous, Black students, students who identified as gender fluid, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and two spirit, and all disabilities with the exception of developmental and mobility.

Conversely, when looking at the elementary and secondary in the ENG program, the representation was higher for the same groups over the past three years. Both groups met the provincial standards.

Disparity measures group differences in outcome. Disparities in achievement outcomes were most pronounced for students with special education needs (excluding gifted). French (writing) showed the greatest variation and mathematics showed the least variation in outcomes across groups. Outcomes were generally higher for South Asian and White

(race), and generally lower for Indigenous, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern, and disability groups. In the secondary panel, there was great variation in English, mathematics and science with locally developed courses having the lowest outcomes.

Central departments, including Learning Support Services (LSS), Program and Learning, and Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights, are using an equity lens and sharing responsibility for the work.

LSS is taking the lead to reinforce conditions for learning to create positive relationships with a focus on mental health, and ensuring a safe, warm and welcoming environment.

Key strategies and next steps to support students in their learning includes the following:

Program and Learning K-12 Department:

- grade 9 de-streaming of mathematics and other compulsory subjects;
- detailed scope and sequence in all curricular areas in grades 1-8;
- literacy assessment field tests for grades 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, and 9;
- introduction of the intensive reading intervention program (kindergarten to grade 9) as part of the Summer Learning Program;
- Student Achievement Through Equity (SATE) inquiry to look at factors contributing to student success and creating situations to overcome barriers;

Learning Support Services Department:

- implementation of the Third Path - A Relationship-based Approach to Student Well-Being and Achievement;
- online resource to support the development of quality Individual Education Plans (IEP);
- mental health promotion and prevention (including Culturally Response Social-Emotional Learning Resource);

Indigenous, Equity & Human Rights Division:

- expanded partnership with Inuuqattigiit education hubs for Inuit students;
- expansion of Indigenous Speakers Series and credit-bearing courses for Rainbow Youth Forum and Black Student Forum;
- hiring of Gender Diverse and Trans Student Support Coordinator;

- expansion of reach ahead and summer courses to support Indigenous students, Black students, and English Language Learners (ELLs);
- introduction of Indigenous Languages (elementary and secondary);

Innovation & Adolescent Learning Department:

- creation of multi-credit packages for English as a Second Language (ESL)/English Language Development (ELD) students (grade 8 secondary schools);
- experiential learning to promote student engagement and create school-community partnerships;
- collaboration with the Indigenous Education team to create a multi-credit package to include land-based and language learning; and
- support new Canadians for granting credits for educational experiences that have occurred outside of Canada.

Identity-based data will be used to identify patterns and trends. A system-wide capacity to understand disproportionality and disparity and how to address these issues will be developed. Developing strategies which recognize the unique learning needs of students and shifting conditions to support the learning needs of all students is critical.

In response to queries from members of the Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC), the following points were noted:

- One goal of the Indigenous population is to revitalize their own languages, for example, Ojibway, Cree and Inuktitut;
- Although this question was not asked in the "Valuing Voices - Identity Matters student Survey", there are very few exemptions from French instruction granted to students who are learning their Indigenous language;
- The universal screening tool may be used to identify students who would benefit from Tier 1 intervention;
- Indigenous students generally had lower achievement rates compared to other students in the District, and they are over-represented in the ENG program and under-represented in EFI and MFI programs;
- students may apply for high school credits for sports or learning experiences obtained outside of secondary school through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Process (PLAR);
- although the age of the student, previous place of residence outside of Ontario or Canada, and lack of previous French instruction may be

considered when students apply for entry into the Early or Middle French Immersion programs, students are encouraged to enter French immersion programs if they are requesting them; and

- Additional information on the Valuing Voices - Identity Matters Student Survey can be found on the OCDSB website at [ocdsb.ca/cms/one.aspx?portalId+55378&pageId=30470354](https://ocdsb.ca/cms/one.aspx?portalId+55378&pageId=30470354).

Chair Monatch thanked staff for their presentation.

## **5. Reports**

### **5.1 Indigenous Education Team Update**

There was no report from the Indigenous Education Team.

### **5.2 Superintendent's Report**

#### **a. Update on Police Involvement in Schools**

Superintendent Farrish advised that the Board, at its meeting of 24 June 2021, approved a number of recommendations with respect to limiting the involvement of the Ottawa Police Services (OPS) in schools of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. Report 21-049, Presentation of the Policy and Practice Review of Police Involvement in Schools, provides background information to reflect the intended outcomes of the OCDSB practices when engaging with the OPS as well as a presentation of the impacts as shared by participants in the multiple consultation activities. The report also includes considerations and recommendations pertaining to the summary observations in each section. The following recommendations were approved:

"Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans, seconded by Trustee Penny,

- A. THAT the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board immediately and completely end its engagement with the School Resource Officer program.
- B. THAT the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) provides notice to Ottawa Police Service that as of 1 September 2021, the OCDSB shall only meet its minimum statutory obligations under the relevant provincial protocols and acts until further evaluation is complete.
- C. THAT the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) issue a formal apology, published on the OCDSB website, social media, and in the local papers, to the communities and students who have been harmed by the School Resource Officer program.

- D. That the OCDSB invite other Ottawa school districts, the City of Ottawa, Ottawa Police Services, and community partners representing equity-seeking groups and groups that experience discrimination and oppression, to work collaboratively through a process that is guided by a human rights based approach on improving services and supports for youth in crisis, in alignment with our shared commitments to The United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024 and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action;
- E. That the Chair of the Board write a letter to the City of Ottawa, including the Anti-Racism Secretariat and to Ottawa Police Services recommending that any savings accruing from a reduction in police services to OCDSB schools be redirected to support the development of alternative approaches to crisis intervention for youth in collaboration with community partners, and requesting a meeting to discuss further.
- F. THAT the Board adopt a do no harm approach as a guiding principle when an incident or a series of incidents arise that involve harm, especially related to anti-racism, human rights, equity, and inclusion.
- G. THAT the Board of Trustees reaffirm its commitment to incorporating an intersectional and anti-racism analysis lens as new policies are adopted and existing policies are updated.
- H. THAT the Board of Trustees commit to undertake anti-racism and decolonization training with support from Board Services."

Superintendent Farrish reported that Part A has been completed.

With respect to Part B, the District's ongoing involvement with the OPS has been limited to its minimum statutory obligations. OPS has advised that they will not continue the School Resource Officer (SRO) program and are considering other ways of supporting youth in their neighbourhoods.

With respect to Part C, the following formal apology was written and signed by the Director of Education, Camille Williams Taylor, and Chair of the Board, Lynn Scott. It was published in local newspapers, social media, and on the District's website, and read aloud to the Council by Trustee Scott:

"We apologize...

This year, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has been reviewing practices through an equity, human rights and anti-oppression lens. One important part of this work was a review of police involvement in schools through both the School Resource Officer (SRO) program and times when the OCDSB calls police to respond to incidents. Through conversations with students, families, community members, staff and administrators, we heard that both the presence of police and how and when they are used in schools can create a sense of fear, increased anxiety and vulnerability for some, and especially for students who identify as Indigenous, Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+ and people with disabilities. That's not okay, and we apologize to the students and communities who have been harmed.

We want every student to feel safe at school, and we recognize that will require changes in practice. The OCDSB has withdrawn from the SRO program and we are inviting other Ottawa school boards, community partners, the City of Ottawa and Ottawa Police Service to collaborate on new ways to move forward. We have increased budget funding to support further work in equity, anti-racism, anti-oppression and mental health supports. We are updating policies and procedures relating to Safe Schools to improve our practice and accountability, and developing both a Human Rights and an Indigenous Rights policy. We remain committed to strengthening our relationships with families and community through the creation of the Families and Community Engagement office.

The OCDSB is committed to ensuring that our schools welcome, include, honour and respect all students, so that every student can reach their full potential."

Superintendent Farrish advised that the District continues to consult about police involvement as it updates its policies and procedures for safe schools to ensure that policy direction aligns with the Board motions.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were noted:

- Schools will continue to call the police using 911, if needed in an emergency;

- Elder Dumont expressed the opinion that he supported having police in schools to encourage children not to be afraid of the police;
- The consultation process recognized that there was not an issue with the intent of the origins of the SRO program: to help build positive relationships and help students make good choices and be better able to assess risks. That objective was not being accomplished in a way that could be quantified and it was recognized that harms were being done with a police presence in schools;
- The structure of the SRO program was a barrier to engagement;
- Police and schools may be oppressive institutions for Indigenous people and others;
- Schools need to be places where dignity, well-being, and access to education is the focus;
- Restorative justice and restorative circles that focus on healing and resolving conflict were raised as possible ways to support reconciliation;
- One of the goals for the revision of the safe schools policies is to place a greater focus on informal restorative practices that could include a circle;
- The District wishes to promote actions that are educational, supportive, and healing. It is also looking at community circles in classrooms for discussions, making decisions, and resolving conflicts or feelings of exclusion;
- The District has staff who have been formally trained in the tenets of restorative justice to repair damage and help people be accountable; and
- There is a need for education on the Truth & Reconciliation recommendations.

b. Update on Plans for Orange Shirt Day

Superintendent Smith provided an overview of plans for Orange Shirt day on 30 September and Truth & Reconciliation Week on 27 September to 1 October 2021. She advised that a group of educators were brought together to do the planning, acknowledging that, as an educational institution, the District has a responsibility to further understand the truths of residential schools and spend time on the Calls to Action. They recognize that 30 September is a day



of mourning for Indigenous people. Although that day is not recognized by the Province of Ontario as a statutory holiday, staff and students may stay home on that day. Staff and students will be expected to participate in learning and resources will be made available to families and the community who wish to engage. Some aspects of the day will be live-streamed, for example, traditional opening exercises will be replaced with an opening provided by IEAC Chair Manatch with a land acknowledgement and a message to bring listeners to a space of reflection.

Mr. McHugh thanked Superintendent Smith and her team for encouraging community partners to come into schools. With respect to the addition of six itinerant educational assistants in support of mental health, Mr. McHugh queried whether any of them will be supporting the Indigenous team. Superintendent Smith advised that she will bring an answer to the next meeting of the Indigenous Education Advisory Council.

### **5.3 IEAC Report, 20 May 2021**

The Indigenous Education Advisory Council report of 20 May 2021 was received.

## **6. Information**

### **6.1 Update from Committee of the Whole, Budget**

The minutes of the Committee of the Whole, Budget and Special Board meetings of 15 June 2021 were provided for information.

### **6.2 Meeting Dates for 2021-2022**

The following meeting dates for the Indigenous Education Advisory Council were provided for information:

- 6 September 2021
- 21 October 2021
- 16 December 2021 (to be rescheduled to 18 November 2021)
- 20 January 2022
- 17 February 2022
- 19 May 2022

## **7. Closing (Elder Albert Dumont)**

Chair Monatch thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

Elder Dumont offered a closing at 7:58 p.m.