



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY

**October 25, 2018
6:00 pm
Mezzanine (2nd Floor)
133 Greenbank Road**

Members: Stacey Ann Morris
Nadine Clarke
Elaine Hayles
Harvey Brown

Staff and Guests: Erica Braunovan (Trustee), Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Chris Ellis (Trustee), Milo Salem (Student Trustee), Rob Campbell (Trustee Elect), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction); Michele Giroux (Executive Officer), Halcian Joseph-Clost (Strategic Business Analyst), Jacqueline Lawrence (Diversity and Equity Coordinator), Sue Rice (Equity Instructional Coach), Monjur Chowdhury, June Girvan, Bob Dawson, David Sutton, Ken Mak, Nicole Guthrie (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Welcome/Call to Order

Chair Morris called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Elaine Hayles,

THAT the agenda be approved.

-Carried-

1.2 Approval of the Minutes - 27 September 2018

Moved by Nadine Clark,

THAT Report 6, Advisory Committee on Equity, dated 27 September 2018 be received.

-Carried-

1.3 Matters Arising form the Minutes, Motion and Action Tracking

In response to a query from Ms. Hayles, Diversity Coordinator Lawrence confirmed that the April 2017 motion regarding data collection as listed on page 13 was correct. She added that the status of the motion is on-going and that qualitative data from stories and lived experiences were captured during the Black Youth Conference. More information will be shared with the committee in the coming months.

Superintendent Baker advised that the Research, Evaluation & Analytics Division (READ) is gathering evidence from community partners. READ is interested in both qualitative and quantitative data. Identity-based data will help provide a more precise measure of the suspension rates of black students.

Ms. Hayles queried how ACE will be involved in the collection of the qualitative data and community conversations and stressed the importance of a bottom-up approach.

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence shared that she had spoken with Business & Learning Technologies staff and confirmed that a polycom can be utilized by the committee to enable members to participate electronically.

Superintendent Baker sought clarification on Ms. Hayles' request for an organizational chart. Ms. Hayles indicated that the organizational chart should clarify the senior staff structure and outline all those staff directly or indirectly responsible for equity in the District.

In response to a query from Ms. Hayles regarding the Equity Steering Committee, Superintendent Baker noted that the Committee is currently comprised of District staff closely involved in equity work. The Equity Steering Committee was initiated at the end of the 2017-2018 school year and is chaired by the Associate Director. She added that staff involved in the committee are responsible for a variety of equity related initiatives and meet to ensure they are integrating and planning their work systematically. Staff on the Steering Committee have links to the Advisory Committee on Equity, the Parent Involvement Committee as well as the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee. She noted that outputs from the Steering Committee will be brought to ACE.

2. Community Voice

Ms. Girvan noted that United Nations Universal Children's Day is celebrated on November 20th each year to promote international togetherness, awareness

among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare. She noted that every child is sacred. The event will focus on the relationship of Indigenous children, black children and children of European descent. She noted that all of these children have often grown up with the shame of perpetuating racism.

Ms. Girvan noted that Human Rights Day will be observed on 10 December 2018.

Ms. Girvan added that on February 25, 2019 John Simcoe Graves, an icon of anti-racism in Canada, will be recognized on the anniversary of his birthday as a part of the events of Black History Month.

3. For Review

3.1 Long Range Agenda Items

The long range agenda was provided for information.

4. For Feedback

4.1 Strategic Plan Pre-Consultation

The OCDSB current strategic plan is scheduled to expire in August 2019. Over the next 3 months, the district will be actively consulting with stakeholders in order to gain input into the development of priorities for the next strategic plan. The consultation process has four stages: Pre-consultation (October/November 2018), Idea Exchange (November/December 2018), Developing Strategies and Action (January 2019) and Feedback on Draft Plan (May 2019). Staff has begun to engage stakeholders to get insight and ideas to encourage parent participation in the planning process.

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

- The idea exchange in November will be conducted through the Thoughtexchange platform. Stakeholders can participate at any time of day, from any location with internet access. Participants are able to share ideas and see and rank other ideas that are important to them;
- Thoughtexchange will be live for 4 weeks;
- The Thoughtexchange platform generates a report identifying key themes and issues;
- The District had close to 13,500 participants in the last strategic plan and anticipate an increase to 20,000 during the consultation for the 2019-2023 plan;
- The District will host forums and focus groups in January throughout the District in an effort to engage as many people as possible. Conversations will also be held with strategic, community business partners;

- All of the feedback will be prioritized and will help inform senior staff as they prepare a draft plan for review in May of 2019 with the goal of Board approval in June 2019;
- Members of many communities in the city have limited access to technology and have significant language barriers. The members queried how those parents will be able to share their ideas. Executive Officer Giroux noted that the District will use a multifaceted approach to reach out to the parent community. The District will use direct email, school council newsletters, websites, Synervoice, Zone meetings, communications with parent councils, trustee information sessions, local media and CHIN radio as well as paper documents in student's backpacks;
- The members encouraged the District to target communities that have been traditionally difficult to engage and host focus groups in those communities;
- Translation was identified as a concern and the District will be utilizing the service of a translation firm to provide translation over and above google translate;
- The members expressed the view that parents be provided with an explanation on the value of their participation (i.e. link to their child's success and well-being);
- A one-page document will be translated after the pre-consultation and will include reasons why parents should engage in the consultations and provide them with information and opportunities available for their participation ;
- Schools can be used as a space to overcome barriers to access to technology;
- The District will be working with Multi-Cultural Liaison Officers to help bridge communities and overcome some of the language barriers;
- The forums and focus groups must be welcoming and comfortable spaces where participants feel safe to share their ideas. The forums and focus groups could be conducted as part of a community meal as the notion of breaking bread and sharing in conversation is important in many cultures;
- The District has listed numerous community partners in its consultation plan and is open to suggestions of those that may not be listed;
- A discussion on the pre-consultation will be held with the Student Senate on 8 November 2018;
- The Thoughtexchange process will be differentiated by group - one for community at large, one for staff and one for students which will allow the District to better address the unique needs of each group;
- The District will investigate the possibility of a mechanism for self-identification within the Thoughtexchange platform but the priority is to ensure all are welcome to the process;

- Consultations with local experts Ottawa Local Immigration Partnerships (OLIP) and Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) are critical to reaching and understanding the issues with populations that are more challenged than others;
- Voluntary identification within the electronic idea exchange can assist the District in identifying where and which communities the ideas are coming from and which are not being engaged. For example, it will let the District know if it is reaching the Indigenous community, people of African descent etc.;
- If the District accommodates for voluntary identification, it must ensure participants can check as many different boxes that apply;
- The Thoughtexchange platform enables stakeholders to share their ideas, learn about the ideas of others, and prioritize all of the input;
- Staff can work with community members to input the data for those who may not have access to technology. A phone number will be provided in the contact sheet;
- Organizations like Nyansapo as well as others should be invited to participate;
- In response to a query regarding accessibility, Executive Officer Giroux noted that any participant may choose to work with staff to provide input at their local school or speak with staff at the central office. The Thoughtexchange platform is compatible with assistive devices;
- Ms. Hayles expressed support for the sample questions for the idea exchange;
- Ms. Girvan expressed concern that the priorities identified may not include those populations identified by the UN as vulnerable. Executive Officer Giroux advised that the consultation process and the results of ThoughtExchange are not the only source of evidence used by the Board in their decision making;
- In response to a query regarding participation bias and ensuring the voices of those traditionally unrepresented in this type of process are heard, Executive Officer Giroux noted that the Thought Exchange program can assess the weight of ideas better than a traditional survey;
- Mr. Chowdhury expressed the view that the communication to stakeholders should focus on the reasons why parents and community members should participate;
- The District will host forums and focus groups throughout the city. Staff are currently planning the events and are mindful of the places, spaces, timing and structure of the events to maximize participation;
- The members recommended that community groups be involved in hosting the forums; and

- Ms. Girvan suggested the District remember the mantra "nothing about us without us" as the consultation proceeds as it may help to diffuse any negativity associated with the consultation.

4.2 Review of PR.687.GOV Appointment of Voting Members to the Advisory Committee on Equity

Your committee had before it a draft of PR.687.GOV Appointment of Voting Members to the Advisory Committee on Equity. A draft of the individual member skills matrix was also included for review. The procedure and the matrix will provide the committee with background information and support to enable a decision upon the formation of a membership sub-committee.

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

- Policy P.008.GOV Advisory Committee on Equity states that ACE shall review its membership needs and as required create a Membership Sub Committee that includes the Chair and Vice-Chair, plus up to three (3) members, as nominated by the Committee;
- In response to a query from Ms. Hayles regarding the requirement for the posting of a notice inviting applications, Diversity Coordinator Lawrence responded that staff will work with the Communications team on a marketing campaign for various communication channels. The information will also help current members share information with their communities to help broaden the reach;
- Mr. Chowdhury suggested the District communicate and share the call for membership with those communities and organizations outlined in the minutes of the 25 September 2018 meeting;
- The membership sub-committee will review an applicant's resume, application form, and statement of interest;
- Executive Officer Giroux advised that the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) uses a similar matrix and process for appointing members;
- Members suggested that the application include some flexibility for applicants to provide a statement of interest in their own language;
- A long application may be a barrier to participation and the members queried the rationale for the inclusion of a resume and requested that the questions be used to applicants to provide similar information. Many potential applicants may not have a resume;
- Members suggested an alternative option to an online application. Superintendent Baker indicated that staff could assist with the data input and that interested applicants could call staff to provide assistance;

- Section 5.7 of the procedure states that applications will be evaluated using the skills matrix. Executive Officer Giroux suggested that text regarding bias removal and equity be added to this section;
- Superintendent Baker noted that the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) has a bias-free decision-making matrix and that it may be a helpful comparator;
- Ms Girvan expressed the view that the District invitation for participation and the related questions be written at a grade 5 or 6 level noting that education level can be a barrier to participation. She recommended that "Statement of Interest" be revised to "Tell us about yourself" or "why do you want to be a part of the committee?";
- Ms. Girvan expressed the view that the District took an extraordinary step in its recognition of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent and that it should be honoured in policy and procedure;
- Policy P.008.GOV advises that every effort shall be made to ensure that the four individual members represent the diverse demographic composition of the District and may be members of the following identities: Creed-based; Disability (e.g., physical, mental, and learning disabilities); First Nations, Métis or Inuit; Immigrants and newcomers to Canada; LGBTQ2S+; and/or racialized groups;
- Ms. Girvan expressed the view that the Ottawa community of persons of African descent seek equality and equity and must be a part of the conversation and included in membership criteria;
- The skills matrix can be used to seek and flag those members the membership sub-committee deems essential to ensure broad representation;
- Staff were encouraged to review the policies and procedures in other large School Boards like Durham, Toronto and York for elements of diversity and equity requirements;
- Membership criteria and the inclusion of an Indigenous representative and person of African descent could be addressed within the skills matrix and the application process;
- Ms. Clarke commented that many of the current members do not fit the criteria as listed in the policy and that for the past ten years the group has struggled with membership. She expressed the view that ACE needs to move forward with the establishment of a membership subcommittee and the campaign to attract new members. She requested that the matter of an amendment to the policy be added to the long range agenda for discussion at the 29 November 2018 meeting; and
- Trustee Ellis advised that procedures do not require Board approval. Procedures are approved by the Director's Executive Council based on policy set by the Board of Trustees and the language in procedure matches that of the policy.

5. For Decision

5.1 Establishment of an ACE Membership-Subcommittee

This item was not addressed.

5.2 Nyansapo Statement of Support

This item was not addressed.

6. For Information

6.1 Committee of the Whole Report

Trustee Blackburn noted that the 16 October 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting featured a discussion on the District's gifted program. She expressed the view that the motion passed at the meeting would provide parents who can afford to have their children independently assessed with choices other parents do not have. She advised that she tried to amend the motion to ensure equity, but was unsuccessful. She expressed the view that the motion if passed, would add significant costs to the budget. She noted the motion would be moving to the Board meeting on 30 October and encouraged members of ACE to share their views on the matter with trustees.

Trustee Ellis expressed the view that traditionally students of colour have been underrepresented in Gifted community and that the decisions the District undertook regarding testing and the introduction of tiered interventions have had a negative impact on the congregated gifted classes. He noted that congregated gifted classes have dwindled and that without further scrutiny and intervention the program will disappear which would preclude the inclusion of students of colour, Indigenous and/or low socio-economic status from participating as there will no longer be a program for students to attend.

Mr. Brown commented that there were 7 or 8 delegations which spoke to the gifted motion. He noted that of particular interest to ACE was a delegation from the Britannia area who spoke about low-income families and their entry into the congregated gifted program. He noted the Board approved the motion but did not address any of the delegates concerns. He expressed support for universal testing.

6.2 District Equity Update

a. Identity Based Data Collection Update

b. Consultations on Education Reform in Ontario

7. New Business

There was no new business.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

At the time of adjournment the following items remained as unfinished business:

- 5.1 Establishment of an ACE Membership-Subcommittee
- 5.2 Nyansapo Statement of Support
- 6.2 District Equity Update

Stacey Ann Morris, Chair, Advisory Committee on Equity