



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY REPORT

October 27, 2022
6:00 pm
Zoom Meeting

Voting Members: Deepika Grover (Co-Chair), Emmanuel Worlor (City of Ottawa), Seema Lamba, Ryan Doucette (Young Leaders Advisory Council), Carrie-Lynn Barkley, Bronwyn Funicello, Chandonette Johnson (Jaku Konbit), Elizabeth Sweeney, Inini McHugh (Indigenous Education Advisory Committee), Kathryn Owens (Youth Services Bureau), Olga Grigoriev (Tungasuvvingat Inuit), Donnielle Roman (Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization)

Non-Voting Members: Elaine Hayles, Lili Miller, Edil Adan Ahmed, Yazhuo Zhang

Staff and Guests: Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Justine Bell (Trustee), Rob Campbell (Trustee), Lynn Scott (Trustee), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Jacqueline Lawrence (Equity and Diversity Coordinator), Lorna Evans (Equity Instructional Coach), Tess Porter (Family and Community Engagement Coordinator), Sandy Owens (Manager of Information Technology), Nabil Ahmed (Student Support Coordinator - TERM), Patrice Hall Johnson, James Baker (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Welcome

Acting Chair Lawrence called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Superintendent Farrish acknowledged that the meeting was taking place on unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Anishnaabeg Algonquin Nation. She extended gratitude and sought to support and affirm their rights as the land's stewards and keepers.

3. Community Space: Updates in Supports for Students and Families, Announcements, and Delegations

During discussion and in response to queries, the following information was provided:

- At the recommendation of Mr. McHugh, the committee agreed by consensus that the agenda item 5. Community Space, be moved to item 3.;
- The committee recognized the results of the 24 October 2022 municipal election and congratulated those who were re-elected and thanked those whose terms would be concluding;
- A recommendation was put forward to invite Indigenous students to the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) meetings to share their experiences, and to discuss how ACE could assist with their academic success;
- Ms. Porter outlined her role as the Family and Community Engagement Coordinator and noted that the Parent Conference will take place on 5 November 2022;
- Mr. McHugh advised the committee on his work with the Inuuqtiigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families. He shared his experience in developing the Slatuniq Program, which is funded by the Child First Initiative and Indigenous Services Canada. Mr. McHugh recommended that there be Indigenous representation within the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Mr. McHugh volunteered to fill the role;
- Members shared support for Mr. McHugh's recommendation while exploring the legislative and procedural challenges that exist in creating a formal role within SEAC. It was noted that a representative from ACE could attend SEAC meetings as it is open to the public;
- Trustee Bell suggested that members bring ideas forward with respect to committee assignments that could be made at an upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting;
- In response to a query from Ms. Lamba who suggested that trustees could bring forward items from ACE at Committee of the Whole meetings. Trustee Scott and Trustee Campbell noted that while trustees do advocate for ACE, a balance is required with competing interests from other committees; and
- Mr. Doucette remarked that all ACE meetings are open to the public.

4. Membership Update

Acting Chair Lawrence advised that she had provided communications requesting that members submit their interest for the vacant positions on ACE.

4.1 Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

Acting Chair Lawrence advised that the position of Chair remains open. She further advised that she would continue to work in an acting capacity until the role is filled.

Ryan Doucette was acclaimed as co-chair or Vice-Chair (still to be confirmed). Mr. Doucette provided a brief description of himself and what attributes he will bring to the role.

4.2 Selection of Committee of the Whole Representative

Seema Lamba was acclaimed as the ACE representative to Committee of the Whole (COW) for her second term.

Deepika Grover was acclaimed as an alternate for the Committee of the Whole representative.

4.3 Selection of Committee of the Whole Budget Representative

Bronwyn Funicello was acclaimed as the ACE representative to COW Budget for her second term.

No names were put forward for the role of alternate representative for the Committee of the Whole, Budget.

4.4 Selection of Community Representative

Acting Chair Lawrence advised that the position of Community Representative remains open. She noted that Nasrin Javanfar has been the Early Day Care representative.

5. Equity Team Update

Superintendent Farrish advised about the upcoming Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Road Trip event taking place at Woodroffe High School on 9 November 2022.

Acting Chair Lawrence advised that questions pertaining to the By-Laws governing ACE should be answered by the new Board.

Acting Chair Lawrence reported that she had met with Paula Hall, Superintendent of People, Culture and Leadership, to discuss the shifts with equitable hiring. She noted that Superintendent Hall is willing to work with the Equity Team to provide an update to the committee. Acting Chair Lawrence advised that additional information will be provided once a meeting date is determined for this presentation.

Acting Chair Lawrence advised that Learning Support Services is willing to provide a fulsome report to address gaps that were identified by ACE with respect to students with disabilities and support for their independent living needs.

Ms. Grover requested that Superintendent Hall present a plan for the employment system review. She expressed concern regarding the procedure used by the vendor, as previous employment system reviews failed to identify systemic racism.

Ms. Evans advised the Equity Team had been working with the destreaming program and continue to be responsive to the needs of educators and principals. She noted that Kusha Dadui had planned a discussion panel for 17 November 2022.

Acting Chair Lawrence added that the Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Road Trip: Transforming Cultures for Students, Staff and Families event on 9 November 2022 will take place from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. She highlighted that the purpose of the event is to engage families and students in transforming the Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) with respect to equity, identifying barriers, and to encourage conversation on generating momentum in moving forward with the transformation of culture in the community.

6. Reports

6.1 ACE Report, 29 September 2022

Moved by Carrie-Lynn Berkley,

THAT the Advisory Committee on Equity report of 29 September 2022 be received.

Carried

Ms. Grover suggested that the entirety of the Zoom chat, discussing her reasons regarding her discomfort and resignation, be added to the minutes.

Ms. Miller expressed her concern regarding the lack of information regarding the behaviour of the trustee in the minutes. She characterized the events as a violation of the safe space. She expressed concern regarding the continued involvement of the individual who she alleges engaged in disrespectful behaviour. She expanded by suggesting that clarification on what is a safe space should be provided. She further noted her dissatisfaction with any suggestion that the Chair could benefit from meeting management training. She commented that the suggestion is a form of victim blaming. Ms. Miller asked if the safe space is guaranteed as she does not feel she is able to speak openly.

Trustee Scott highlighted that the Chair does have the ability to prohibit inappropriate behaviours from participants, but noted that it is not always an easy task. Trustee Scott advised that she has spoken with staff seeking support for advisory committees to assist in managing incidents like this.

Acting Chair Lawrence suggested that this conversation be continued in a private venue.

6.2 Committee of the Whole

Ms. Lamba reported that the Committee of the Whole engaged in a discussion regarding a proposed policy committee. She noted that input was sought and that she expressed concern regarding the roles that advisory committees would play in policy review and development.

Ms. Lamba reported that the strategic plan update report highlighted the Board's accomplishments regarding cultural issues and that the Board is currently developing the new 2023-2027 strategic plan.

6.3 Advisory Committee Updates

No updates were provided.

Ms. Funicello suggested that the Advisory Committee on Equity become more involved in budget planning.

7. New Business and Event Announcements

In response to a query from Ms. Lamba, regarding a suggestion that ACE create a terms of reference, Acting Chair Lawrence advised that it would be considered at the 24 November 2022 meeting.

In response to queries from Ms. Lamba and Ms. Grover regarding the participation of non-voting representatives at the Committee of the Whole, Trustee Bell and Trustee Campbell clarified that the discussion primarily involved the eligibility of the Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC) and the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC).

8. Upcoming Meeting Dates

Upcoming meeting dates were provided for information.

9. Closing

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.