



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY REPORT

October 26, 2023
6:00 pm
Zoom Meeting

Voting Members: Ryan Doucette (Chair), Deepika Grover, Bronwyn Funicello, Seema Lamba, Nasrin Javanfar, Carrie-Lynn Barkley (Alternate), Chandonette Johnson (Jaku Konbit)

Non-Voting Members: Said Mohamed, Elaine Hayles, Donna Dickson (Trustee), Nili Kaplan-Myrth (Trustee)

Staff and Guests: Lynn Scott (Trustee), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Jacqueline Lawrence (Diversity and Equity Advisor), Juliet Robinson (System Principal, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives), Lorna Evans (Teacher, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives), Mark Slesar (Principal, Emily Carr Middle School), Reverend Douglas Kendall, Robert Hosselet, Oksana Kravets (Communications Coordinator), Mellissa Applewaihe (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Welcome

Chair Doucette called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of the Algonquin Homelands

Chair Doucette acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Homelands and thanked the Algonquin Nations for hosting the meeting on their land.

3. Community Discussion - Open Space

System Principal Robinson of Equity and Inclusion Initiatives, was introduced to the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) members.

During a community discussion, the following points were noted:

- ACE members noted their concerns for Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) students affected by the conflict in the Middle East. They requested information on coping strategies and supports that the OCDSB are offering to students;

- Schools are individually on alert for a rise in incidents or activities related to Islamophobia or antisemitism, and have noted an increase in student expression regarding events in the Middle East;
- School administrators and educators are balancing the need for sensitivity in allowing students to be their authentic selves while not condoning any unintentional harm or alienation of communities;
- In collaboration with community partners, the District is sharing and developing resources and also liaising with Learning Support Services (LSS) and the Mental Health Team to implement a holistic approach in supporting students;
- The OCDSB has launched a Safe Schools Reporting Tool that provides an anonymous reporting option for students. Educators are being vigilant to note any issues that relate to the conflict in the Middle East; and
- To follow up on the discussion, ACE members noted that they would like more information on the District approach to tracking Islamophobia and antisemitic activity, the disciplinary measures adopted in related incidents, and the use of social media by educators expressing their opinions.

4. Presentations

4.1 Bullying Intervention Plan Consultation (M. Slesar)

Principal Slesar provided a presentation on the consultation process for the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

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

- School administrators could benefit from training to enhance their understanding of the cultural needs of student communities within the OCDSB;
- It was suggested that The Spiritual Care Team could provide a useful resource to students involved in bullying incidents; and
- Principal Slesar noted that he will send a summary of the ACE feedback to members by email and offer the opportunity to provide additional feedback in response.

4.2 ACE Work Plan - Alignment with the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan

Chair Doucette noted that the meeting would focus on item 4.2 for the purposes of this meeting.

- a. Policy P.008.GOV Advisory Committee on Equity - Reflections for Discussion

ACE members divided into breakout groups to discuss Policy P.008.GOV Advisory Committee on Equity.

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

- It was suggested that members consider updating the policy objectives to reflect the ACE role in bringing an equitable lens to the direction of strategic plans;
- It was noted that the terms of membership for the Committee regarding voting members, non-voting members and additional representation should be structured to ensure members can support trustees with their expertise and knowledge on diversity and inclusion;
- Members noted that the policy should clarify different membership roles;
- It was suggested that the ACE should consider increasing the membership term from two years to four years;
- It was noted that creating specific sub-committees to work on issues to inform trustees could be an effective way for ACE to share the committee views; and
- Tracking how ACE input has been reflected in the work of the District could be considered.

5. ACE Membership Update and Sub-Committee Selection

Chair Doucette noted that the Committee would continue operating under the current membership until the fall of 2024. At that time, the ACE will launch a membership campaign and establish a sub-committee to review and appoint members.

Chair Doucette suggested that offering drop-in sub-committee meetings for other topics could provide an option to advance the work of ACE.

Chair Doucette noted that he would update ACE members on the Ad Hoc Policy Review Committee by email in the future.

6. Reports

6.1 Staff Report

System Principal Robinson provided a report. She noted that October was Muslim Heritage month, and the OCDSB had provided workshops to educators on creating an inclusive school environment.

System Principal Robinson noted that November is Holocaust Education Month, and that the OCDSB is providing resources, including an anti-hate toolkit, to assist educators.

6.2 ACE Report, 25 May 2023

Moved by Carrie-Lynn Barkley,

THAT the Advisory Committee on Equity Report of 25 May 2023, be received.

Trustee Scott noted that Trustee Dickson should be listed as a non-voting member.

Moved by Carrie-Lynn Barkley,

THAT the Advisory Committee on Equity Report of 25 May 2023, be received, as amended.

Carried

6.3 Committee of the Whole Report

Seema Lamba provided a report from the 12 September, 3 October and 17 October 2023 Committee of the Whole meetings.

It was suggested that ACE should consider requesting a presentation on suspensions.

6.4 Advisory Committee Updates

Chair Doucette provided an update on the Ad Hoc Policy Review Committee.

7. New Business and Event Announcements

Members noted that ACE should consider the timing of Committee of the Whole (COW) Budget meetings to ensure that the ACE representative can bring forward the committee perspective as necessary.

8. Upcoming Meeting Dates

The upcoming meeting dates were provided for information.

9. Closing

The meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Ryan Doucette, Chair

