

Indigenous Education Council

Algonquin Protocols

Pike Constitution

Algonquin People expressed their governance in the form of a Pike Constitution. The constitution contained the belief system under which the people lived their lives, treated each other and their environment. These protocols are a living document and will be revised as needed. The Algonquin protocols are broken down into sections which reflect the teachings of the Pike Constitution.

Definitions

For the purposes of the Algonquin Protocols,

Board refers to the Board of Trustees.

Community organizations, stakeholders or agencies mean organizations or associations which represent the interests of Indigenous communities.

District means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

Elder means someone who has attained a high degree of understanding of First Nation, Métis, or Inuit history, traditional teachings, ceremonies, and healing practices. Elders have earned the right to pass this knowledge on to others and to give advice and guidance on personal issues, as well as on issues affecting their communities and nations. Being an Elder is not age-specific, and very few people are accorded this title by their communities.

Senators have a special place in Métis culture, the Métis Nation of Ontario and in its governance structure. They are elected and highly respected for their knowledge, values, and experience. Senators provide presence at community events and meetings, and they help to keep Métis culture alive by sharing Métis traditions and ways of life.

Traditional Knowledge Keeper means a member of the community who has learned a specific area(s) of history, traditional teachings, ceremonies, and/or healing practices, and are supported by their community in their sharing of that knowledge.

Circle of Elders means the group of Indigenous Elder members of the IEC

Inclusive Education means education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

Indigenous is a term that includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

Algonquin is defined as Algonquin First Nations recognized under the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council and the Algonquin Nation Secretariat

First Nations people are the descendants of the original inhabitants of Canada who lived here for many thousands of years before explorers arrived from Europe. First Nations people identify themselves by the Nation to which they belong, for example, Algonquin, Cree, Mohawk, or Oneida. There are over 630 First Nations communities in Canada.

Métis means a person of Historic Métis Nation ancestry who resided in west central North America, and is accepted by the Métis Nation which is now comprised of all Métis Nation citizens and is one of the "aboriginal peoples of Canada" within the meaning of s.35 of the Constitution Act 1982.

Inuit means a person recognized by an Inuit community or governmental organization. The Inuit are the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic. The word Inuit means "the people" in the Inuit language of Inuktitut. The singular of Inuit is Inuk.

Algonquin Protocols Purpose

The governance begins with the temple of the pike. These bones are from the pike's head and represent purpose. Under the auspices of the Indigenous Education Council, the purpose is to provide guidance to the Ottawa Carleton School Board as it pertains to Indigenous education, well-being and achievement, and provide support to its Indigenous students, families and educators.

Vision

The second set of bones represents fire or vision. This refers to the IEC mandate which is to:

a) Collaborate with the District on the development of the Indigenous Education Board Action Plan;

b) Provide strategic advice on implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, specifically Calls to Action pertaining to education (62-63);

c) Assist and advise the Board of Trustees in its commitment to provide an equitable and inclusive education and work environment for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and staff;

d) Advise the Board of Trustees on any issue affecting First Nations, Métis and Inuit students' learning and well-being;

e) Act as a resource to provide authentic and current knowledge of First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspective to support informed decision making; and

f) Liaise with community stakeholders as needed by actively engaging parents and community partners to help provide an equitable and inclusive education and work environment for Indigenous students and staff.

g) Conduct activities which promote Indigenous education and the wellbeing of the Indigenous students and families in the OCDSB district.

Sovereignty

The third set of bones describes the canoe and the paddle. It represents destiny and every person's capacity to be in control of their path or sovereign over their own destiny. In the context of IEC this would represent a code of conduct. How each of us conducts ourselves during meetings and with each other. These include:

1. Make personal commitment to the emotional wellness and general health for all students of Indigenous ancestry.
2. Promote and defend Algonquin initiatives with the equal vigour that you would promote an initiative put forward by your own Nation.
3. Every voice at a meeting is respected and valued. When speaking, be mindful of the time you are using up. Others may want to speak and will only get to do so if time allows.
4. Show complete respect for the prayer and teachings shared by the Elder.

5. Do not interrupt a speaker. Always yield to the voice of the oldest or the youngest people who may have the floor.
6. Before proposing an idea or plan you want to incorporate into student activities, confirm that your proposal is in line with the ethics of the Host Nation.
7. Never raise your voice in anger at a meeting.
8. Be mindful of the fact that some people present, especially those of us in the winter of our time, may have pain issues and therefore we ask that you are patient and understanding of it.
9. Be respectful of the person facilitating the meeting.
10. The actions of the IEC are sovereign and undertaken for and by the Indigenous community. As such, there is no need for approval from outside of the Council.

Consensus Decision Making

In the Algonquin culture no one voice is more important than another. Decision making at IEC will be based on consensus. The members of the Council will discuss matters which require decisions and everyone has the right to be heard. If there is a situation where the Council cannot agree, the decision will then be turned over to the Council Elders. This Council includes the Facilitator, Helper, three (3) members representing Elders, Senators and Traditional Knowledge Keepers from First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities, plus the OCDSB Superintendent and the Indigenous Education Lead

Balance

The fourth set of bones represents the Crow and Seagull. They speak to the balance of right and wrong. This balance is embedded in the decision making processes of IEC.

1. Decisions will be made after the voices of all the members are heard and a fulsome discussion completed.
2. Consensus decision making is a goal of the council wherever possible. The process includes discussions around all sides of an issue.
3. The position of the moderator is responsible for ensuring all voices are heard and decisions are made by quorum.

Freedom

The fifth set of bones is assembled into the form of a butterfly. This represents freedom. Within the setting of the IEC this means the freedom to participate, the freedom to have a voice and to be heard. Participation in the Council shall be voluntary and open to individual residents of the District community and to stakeholder organizations with an interest in Indigenous education. While it is recognized that stakeholder organizations are making strong efforts to hire Indigenous staff, it is also acknowledged that this is not always possible and therefore non Indigenous staff representing Indigenous organizations will be welcome.

Policies

The sixth set of bones consists of scraping tools. This is an expression of the policies under which the IEC operates. These policies include protocols around infrastructure; how many members make up the Council; how members are appointed; how guests are welcomed and the processes around decision making. A list of members will be posted publicly at the beginning of each school year.

The OCDSB IEC is located on Algonquin territory. The importance of reflecting Algonquin participation, culture and beliefs of the IEC must underscore its actions and policies.

The Council of IEC may include up to seventeen (17) members. Three OCDSB representatives will advise and support the IEC.

The members shall include:

- a) One (1) Algonquin Elder/Traditional Knowledge Keeper
- b) Three (3) members representing Elders, Senators and Traditional Knowledge Keepers from First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities.
- c) One (1) member of the Algonquin community
- d) One (1) member of the First Nations community
- e) Two (2) members of the Métis community; and

f) Two (2) members of the Inuit community.

The OCDSB representatives shall include:

a) one (1) volunteer trustee approved by the IEC;

b) one (1) Indigenous education lead;

c) one (1) superintendent or designate;

d) at least two (2) and not more than three (3) grade 7-12 students; where possible each of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities would be represented; and

e) up to two (2) school based staff volunteers (one teacher and one education support worker) who identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit.

Members of the IEC shall have a two year term of office, beginning December 01 and ending November 30. To ensure continuity, term appointments may be done on alternate years.

The IEC recognizes the difficulty in acquiring members from each of the Indigenous communities. It is not a requirement that each of these communities have a representative on the IEC in order for the IEC to fulfill its mandate. These representative requirements are in place to ensure efforts are made to create a balanced Council made up of the Indigenous community and do not in any way restrict the IEC from carrying out its work.

Appointment of Members

The IEC shall select a Facilitator from among its nine members with a priority of an Algonquin member.

The IEC shall review annually its membership needs and, where there are vacancies; create a Council comprised of the Facilitator, Helper and one other member of the Council, plus the Superintendent and the Indigenous Education Lead. This Council will determine possible candidates and invite them to apply as a member.

IEC members will then listen to each candidate and select new members through a process of consensus.

When appointing new members to IEC every effort shall be made to ensure that they are:

- a) Parents/guardians of students enrolled in the District;
- b) Representatives of community organizations or agencies
- c) Residents of the school district.

Participants must have attended six IEC meetings during the course of one year prior to applying for membership. The attendance must be consecutive with no more than two absences. Each absence must be accompanied by a notice of regret. Absences of more than two meetings without accompanying regrets will disqualify the person from applying for membership.

The IEC will reach out to the school board district through board communications, Indigenous community networks and organizations to promote the council and invite participants to become members.

Participants

Community members will be invited by IEC to participate in the Council. IEC encourages the participation of community members, Indigenous community organizations and stakeholders. Participants can attend meetings and discuss items during the Community Discussion portion of the meeting. Issues which arise outside of the Community Discussion can be commented on however all decisions remain with the members of the Council.

Community members who wish to attend IEC meetings are asked to submit their request in writing at least a week before the upcoming meeting.

1. Community members/Parents/Participants can send an email request in order to receive a zoom link when meetings are held virtually or the agenda and related information when meetings are held in person. As members of the community it isn't necessary for them to outline their purpose. Identifying as community members will suffice. Community members/Parents may attend IEC meetings and participate in the Community Discussion portion of the meeting.

Appointment to Committees

Members of IEC will be asked to participate on the Committee of the Whole Committee and the Committee of the Whole Budget Committee. In the weeks leading up to

appointments, members will apply to the Facilitator, Helper and one member of the Council, plus the Superintendent and the Indigenous Education Lead. These names will be brought forward to the rest of the members at an IEC meeting designated for this purpose. IEC members will then listen to each candidate and Representation to these committees will be selected through a process of consensus. These representatives will serve a term of two years.

There may be occasions when the members of the Council are needed to fulfill other positions with the OCDSB. These positions will be filled in the same manner as the appointment to committees.

Vacancies

A vacancy in the membership of the Council does not prevent the Council from delivering on its mandate.

In the event that a member vacates his or her position during the appointed term, the Council may appoint another individual to the position for the remainder of the term.

To replace a member, the Council shall appoint another individual to the position for the remainder of the term.

Guests

In Algonquin communities, a person wishing to come into the territory had to make a request. In the case of IEC, a request to be invited into the Council has to be made. When guests request to attend the IEC the following steps must be taken:

2. The request must be emailed or in writing at least three weeks before the meeting.
3. The request must include their name, position, the reason why they wish to attend as well as what they plan to do with any information they are gathering.
4. The requests will be discussed and determined by the Algonquin representatives of the IEC.
5. Guests in the Council are asked expressly to listen and refrain from making comments.

Responsibilities

The seventh group of bones represents an axe which symbolizes responsibilities. One responsibility is to keep the axe sharpened. This is done through education which sharpens the mind. In this regard, the roles and responsibilities are tools which aid in the education of the group as a whole. Some of the Roles and Responsibilities of IEC Members include:

The Facilitator of IEC shall:

- a) Plan the agenda in consultation with the superintendent or designate;
- b) Chair the Council meetings;
- c) Act as spokesperson and representative of the Council in communicating with the Director of Education, Board of Trustees, media and the public; and
- d) Review the minutes before circulating them to members.

The Facilitator Helper shall assume the duties of the Facilitator when the Facilitator is absent.

Members of the IEC shall:

- a) Demonstrate a commitment to an equitable and inclusive education and work environment for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students;
- b) Act as a liaison between members of the IEC and their respective communities;
- c) Attend and productively participate in the IEC meetings; and
- d) Review all relevant material prior to meetings.

Communications

One person will be designated the IEC to speak with media and the public. The responsibility will fall to the Facilitator, or Algonquin Elder or another if these people cannot fulfill the communications responsibilities. If approached by the public or media,

other IEC council members are asked to refer questions to the communications designate.

Ethics

The eighth group of bones represents ethics. The ethics for IEC include a community based approach which empowers Indigenous families, students and OCDSB staff and faculty in removing barriers, providing opportunities, and recognizing the Indigenous approach to education.

The IEC will be comprised of first and foremost Indigenous community members, educators, and community organization representatives. IEC will acknowledge and recognize its location on Algonquin Anishnabe territory and will strive to include Algonquin members, ethics, and on ontology.

Environment

The IEC shall meet at least six times per school year.

All meetings of the Council shall be open to the public and held in a location that is accessible. The OCDSB does require email requests at least one week prior to the meeting in order to distribute zoom links when meeting are held virtually and agendas when the meetings are held in person.

Members of the public may provide comments or ask questions on any matter within the mandate and agenda of the Council during the Community Discussion portion of the meeting. Providing they have emailed the Board and informed the IEC of their desire to be present.

Notice of each regular meeting shall be provided to all members of the Council at least five days before the meeting. Notice may be by email, by telephone, and/or by posting to the District website.

Wherever possible, the Council shall conduct its business through a collaborative decision-making process to ensure all voices are heard. In the event that consensus cannot be reached, the Circle of Elders, the Facilitator, Helper, OCDSB Superintendent and the Indigenous Education Lead will consider all sides of the issue and come to a decision based on consensus.

The Community Discussion portion of the meeting is meant to be a forum for the Council to interact with community and deal with community concerns. There will be situations when discussions cover topics which are sensitive to the community. The Council reserves the right to take any Community Discussion in camera and have those discussions withheld from the meeting minutes.

Any minutes or documents generated by the IEC will not be released to the Board of Trustees or any other governing body until they have been approved by the Council.

If there is an actionable item in the minutes which needs a decision, the item should be discussed during the meeting and if necessary those items would be approved for an abridged minute's document by the Circle of Elders.