



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY REPORT

January 30, 2025

6:00 pm

Trustees' Committee Room

133 Greenbank Road

Ottawa, Ontario

Voting Members: Ali Shaker, Tabassum Khan, Rachel Hincke, Menasheh Speevak-Sladowski, Tejas Srinivas, David Sachs (Jewish Federation of Ottawa), Amy Awad (Muslim Association of Canada), Soufiane Koussih (Palestinian Canadian Congress), Inini McHugh (Inuuqatigit Centre), Mohammed Zakir Khan, Jason Glover, Chris Moran, Aisha Sherazi (Spiritual Care in Secondary Schools)

Non-Voting Members: Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Donna Dickson (Trustee)

Staff and Guests: Lynn Scott (Trustee), Julia Fortey (Trustee), Jesse Mark (General Counsel, Governance Services), Darren Gatley (General Manager, Governance Services), Kathy Mak (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Acknowledgement of Homelands

Superintendent Farrish acknowledged that the meeting is being held on the unceded, unsurrendered Homelands of the Anishinaabeg Algonquin Nation whose presence in Canada reaches back to time immemorial. She extended gratitude and sought to support and affirm their rights as the land's stewards and keepers.

2. Welcome/Engagement Agreements

Superintendent Farrish called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Superintendent Farrish conducted a roundtable of introductions.

3. Reports

3.1 ACE Report, 28 November 2024

Moved by David Sachs,

THAT the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) Report of 28 November 2024, be received.

Carried

3.2 Special ACE Report, 18 December 2024

Moved by Aisha Sherazi,

THAT the Special Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) Report of 18 December 2024, be received.

Carried

4. Orientation

General Manager Gatley presented the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) orientation. He provided an overview of the ACE policy, the ACE relationship with the Board and the membership roles to be elected and selected.

During orientation, the following information was highlighted:

- The Ubuntu principle originates from the southern part of Africa and was introduced into ACE policy by the outgoing ACE members. The principle promotes collaboration and fostering relationships to ensure individuals can collectively grow together;
- General Counsel Mark noted the importance of committee members working collaboratively together to create change and providing recommendations to the Board in collaboration with Trustee Blackburn and Trustee Dickson. He emphasized ACE members' influence in guiding the trustees in their work;
- Trustee Scott acknowledged the diversity of ACE members and the variety of expertise each individual brings to the committee. She added that the role of the Co-Chairs is to maintain a safe and welcoming space to ensure members are able to share their expertise and experience;
- Other advisory committees may seek input from ACE through the Co-Chairs either through an invitation to another advisory committee meeting or through a written request;
- Superintendent Farrish and Governance Services can provide support and guidance to the Co-Chairs of ACE;
- General Counsel Mark encouraged ACE members to review the ACE policy to understand the work of the committee and aid in the selection of Co-Chairs;
- The primary focus of ACE work is to provide input and recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The insight from ACE members will assist trustees to view their responsibilities with an equity lens; and

- Superintendent Farrish noted that the orientation slides will be distributed to the ACE members.

Two Co-Chairs will be elected annually for the committee and the responsibility for chairing the committee will be decided between the two elected Co-Chairs. In addition, representatives from the ACE committee will be selected to attend the Committee of the Whole (COW), COW (Budget) and Policy Review Committee to provide input on behalf of the committee and report back to ACE with updates.

ACE members can have the opportunity to propose additional items to the agenda by reaching out to the Co-Chairs prior to their regular agenda preparation. During the meeting, members of the committee will have the opportunity to propose additions to the Agenda during the “Approval of Agenda” item at the beginning of the meeting or during the “New Business” item at the end of the meeting.

Superintendent Farrish noted that outstanding agenda items will be reviewed for upcoming agendas.

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

- There is a significant time commitment to become an ACE representative to the Committee of the Whole (COW) and COW (Budget) as these meetings may not adjourn until 10:30 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. There may be one to two COW meetings each month and ACE rep can attend virtually through zoom;
- COW meetings provide an opportunity for trustees to engage on a topic with discussion. COW (Budget) is similar to COW meetings with the primary focus on budget;
- The Policy Review Committee meetings are held in the Trustees’ Committee Room (TCR) commencing at 6:30 p.m. and are less frequent than COW meetings;
- COW, COW (Budget) and Policy Review committee meetings are live streamed and posted online on the day following the meeting;
- Voting members of an advisory committee may provide a recommendation for trustees to put forward at COW for discussion and approval. If approved, the recommendation will be presented to the Board for a final decision at a Board meeting;
- Motions and recommendations created by ACE or any advisory committee are formalized in the minutes of the meeting that are submitted as the committee report. A motion contained in the committee report would need to be moved by a trustee for it to be discussed at a COW meeting;

- ACE representatives attending COW and COW (Budget) meetings will not have a vote at the meetings; however, ACE representatives will have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion;
- A proposed recommendation may be defeated at COW or Board meetings; however there is no appeal to that decision;
- Members of the public may voice their input and feedback to ACE through the delegation process that is available at each meeting. Applications to delegate are available on the website;
- The ACE committee is governed by the *Education Act* which requires the work to be done openly and transparently to ensure all discussions occur at the table. Members of the public can attend in person to observe the meeting if they wish;
- ACE is required to provide an annual report on its goals and achievements; and
- Subcommittees may be established to accomplish a task and report the results to the committee upon completion. The membership subcommittee is established annually to recommend new ACE members.

5. Upcoming Meeting Dates

Superintendent Farrish noted that the 27 February 2025 ACE will be rescheduled and the date will be shared with members upon confirmation.

ACE members are encouraged to reach out to Superintendent Farrish for inquiries regarding the committee and governance practices.

Superintendent Farrish noted that the ACE policy will be distributed to members through email.

6. Closing

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Mary Jane Farrish, Acting Chair