



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT

Thursday, November 15, 2018, 6:00 pm
Gloucester High School
2060 Ogilvie Road
Ottawa, Ontario

Attendees Present Monique Monatch, Nina Stanton, Gail Bowen, Falicia Green, Romaine Mitchell, Sytukie Joamie, Jo VanHooser, Pauline Mousseau, Raiglee Alorut, Nicole Parsons, Kris Meawasige, Nopimng Inini McHugh, Karen Baker-Anderson, Elena Abel, Tracy Coates, Emily Casey, Grace Macmillan-Sayers, Theland Kicknosway, Jordyn Hendricks, and Gannaboute Gagné, .

Staff Present Superintendent Dorothy Baker, Vice-Principal Jody Alexander, Vice-Principal Paula Reynolds-Hall, Instructional Coach Nancy Henry, Educational Assistant Lili Miller, and Committee Coordinator Amanda Rock.

Non-Voting Representatives Present Trustee Dr. Anita Olsen Harper.

1. Opening and Welcome

Vice-Principal Alexander called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m.

Monique Monatch acknowledged that the meeting was taking place on unceded Algonquin territory and thanked the Algonquin Nations for hosting the meeting on their land.

Monique Manatch shared a story about the light of life needing to be protected. In the past, animals and humans could communicate with each other when bad spirits were coming. They decided to hide the light of life within everyone's heart. Ms. Monatch expressed the view that the IEAC should listen to the smallest or youngest voices among the group, as the IEAC was formed for the benefit of the younger generation.

2. Establishing Membership of IEAC

Superintendent Baker advised that the Board of Trustees believes that the process for establishing the membership of the IEAC should be created by the Council. She noted that a process was deliberately left out of the policy to allow the Council to decide on the process for electing members.

Superintendent Baker noted that several people expressed interest in being members of the Council after the inaugural meeting on 18 October 2018 meeting. She emphasized that the IEAC has a minimum of six meetings per year. Superintendent Baker reminded the attendees of the IEAC member representation as the following:

- Three members representing Elders, Senators, and Traditional Knowledge Keepers;
- Two members representing the First Nations community (inclusive of one member from the Algonquin Nation);
- Two members of the Inuit community;
- Two members of the Métis community;
- One trustee representative (Trustee Anita Olsen Harper);
- One Indigenous education lead (Vice-Principal Alexander);
- One Superintendent (Superintendent Baker);
- At least two and not more than three student representatives; and
- A maximum of two OCDSB staff members.

Vice-Principal Alexander recalled the discussion from the 18 October 2018 IEAC meeting. She explained that voting and non-voting members are Board structures. She reassured the attendees that, regardless of what the policy states, everyone's voice is equal in decision-making within the IEAC.

Superintendent Baker advised that creating the process for electing members of the IEAC does not have a deadline. She noted that identifying key aspects of the process and how membership is defined may take time.

Superintendent Baker advised that 16 people have expressed interest in being members of the Council. She stressed that the circle of discussion remains open to anyone who attends the IEAC meetings. Vice-Principal Alexander added that there were a greater number of people expressing interest in the First Nations community member than any other role. She noted that there are fewer expressions of interest in the Métis community members.

In response to a query from Tracey Coates, Vice-Principal Alexander advised that the decision-making that determined the membership structure was based on public consultations and information gathering with various long-standing committees. Superintendent Baker noted the intent is to have the current policy

revised in two years. At that time, proportional representation could be considered based on the recommendations of the IEAC.

Sytukie Joamie suggested that the Council make a recommendation with regards to the First Nations representation outlined in the policy. He added that the Council should show respect to the Algonquin Nation by recommending that they have more representation on the IEAC.

In response to queries from Sytukie Joamie, the following information was provided:

- The current policy will remain unchanged until it is revised in two years;
- IEAC could decide that the Algonquin Nation be given priority as First Nations members; and
- Proportional representation can be considered for the Algonquin Nation.

Nancy Henry noted that not all First Nations communities use the language of 'Elder'. She added that 'Elder' means any individual who imparts spiritual guidance in a community. Vice-Principal Alexander advised that there was not more than one Algonquin Elder who expressed interest in being a member of the IEAC. She added that understanding voting or having consensus on issues is important for the IEAC to make recommendations. Monique Manatch suggested that there should be a focus on the circle and the inclusion of everyone's voice when voting and/or coming to an agreement.

Jordyn Hendricks expressed concern that there are other issues that can be addressed immediately such as the curriculum for Indigenous Education and the classroom experience for Indigenous students.

The student attendees emphasized that they do not have an issue with the First Nation representation in the policy. They noted that there are time-sensitive issues to address that currently affect Indigenous students. Jordyn Hendricks expressed concern that teachers do not know how to discuss sensitive topics.

Gannaboute Gagné added that teachers may call upon Indigenous students for clarification or more in-depth knowledge of certain topics. Mr. Gagné noted that there are times when Indigenous students do not know certain parts of their culture, do not know how to respond to teachers, and are left feeling inadequate. Some Indigenous students did not have an upbringing that surrounded them with their culture. Learning resources need to be created for teachers by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit groups. Gannaboute Gagné explained that there are teachers who do not teach certain topics in History classes to avoid making Indigenous students feel uncomfortable. He also shared that there is a lack of intervention by teachers and principals when Indigenous students are bullied. He mentioned that teachers have been reported to school administration for claims of racism and/or discrimination. Mr. Gagné stressed that school principals have been dismissive of reported racism and discrimination and teachers are believed more than students.

Falicia Green added that the Indigenous population is affected by mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression. Indigenous students being called upon in the classroom to provide fulsome responses to their history and culture is an added pressure. She supported Ganaabouté Gagné's suggestion of addressing the practice of teachers calling upon Indigenous students to provide knowledge in the classroom. Mr. Gagné stressed that these experiences affect Indigenous students throughout their school day and have an impact on how they identify as Indigenous in secondary school and later years.

Nina Stanton agreed that more workshops are needed for teaching Indigenous content in the classroom. She shared that Carleton University created a video about youth articulating the burden that is put on Indigenous students to teach their culture to their own classrooms. Superintendent Baker added that a similar video can be produced, by the District, as a resource on this topic in the future.

Superintendent Baker submitted that some teachers have fears of making mistakes when teaching course content. She noted that the Indigenous Education team has been working with teachers and the community to build capacity and connect teachers with resources that will help them in the classroom.

Sytukie Joamie expressed the opinion that teaching Indigenous youth about their culture should be a priority. He commented that teaching non-Indigenous people about Indigenous culture is the greater task. Raiglee Alorut shared that her grandchildren were told not to speak the Inuktitut language at their school in Ottawa. She expressed concern that her grandchildren will not want to identify with their Inuit culture and they no longer want to speak the Inuktitut language at home.

Ganaabouté Gagné suggested that the District have a mandatory workshop, with different Indigenous content, every school year. Superintendent Baker advised that every school has a School Learning Plan on Student Achievement and Well-Being where Indigenous Education can be embedded. The IEAC recommended that PA Days include school work spaces for students and teachers to be shown resources for teaching sensitive topics.

Kris Measwasige commended the students for sharing their experiences. He added that having circle discussions will amplify the voices of the students. Nicole Parsons expressed the opinion that cultural competency training is needed to fill the educational gaps for teachers. Ms. Parsons added that Indigenous culture needs to be infused at all levels of the District such as the School Learning Plan, the Board's Strategic Plan, and the IEAC. Superintendent Baker advised that focus groups will be held in January 2019 to help develop the 2019-2023 Board Strategic Plan. She shared that the IEAC is encouraged to participate in these focus groups.

Romaine Mitchell highlighted that the student attendees have given a mandate with their stories and suggestions. Professional development is one way to move the Council's recommendations forward.

Jordyn Hendricks reiterated that goal-setting is pertinent for the Council to accomplish meaningful work.

Monique Manatch identified the following three priorities:

- Goal-setting prior to the 17 January 2019 meeting;
- A group/body for students to report student-teacher incidents in the classroom; and
- Phrases that help students cope with being asked about their history and culture in the classroom.

Jordyn Hendricks added the opinion that ignorance stems from a lack of knowledge and a fear of teaching certain topics is not the sole reason why teachers are avoiding sensitive content.

In response to queries regarding the membership of IEAC, Superintendent Baker advised that the names of people who expressed interest can be provided at the 17 January 2019 meeting. She noted that the challenge of establishing the membership is that there are more people who expressed interest in becoming voting members than the policy allows. The positions for which only 1 person has expressed interest in can be confirmed at the 17 January 2019 meeting. Sytukie Joamie urged that the Council membership be established at the 17 January 2019 meeting. He expressed the opinion that the Chair of the IEAC should be an Algonquin Nation member. Mr. Joamie also suggested that sub-committees be formed to work on specific projects.

The attendees expressed interest in electing Albert Dumont as Chair of the IEAC.

Vice-Principal Alexander wished everyone a Merry Christmas. The next meeting is on 17 January 2019.

3. Overview of the components of the Board Action Plan for Indigenous Education

The Board Action Plan for Indigenous Education and goal-setting will be discussed at the 17 January 2019 meeting.

Superintendent Baker agreed to provide information to attendees on the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan Consultation Plan.

4. Closing

Following a closing prayer by Monique Manatch, the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.