



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT

Thursday, January 17, 2019, 6:00 pm
Gloucester High School
2060 Ogilvie Road
Ottawa, Ontario

Attendees Present Albert Dumont, Falcia Green, Sytukie Joamie, Jo VanHooser, Raiglee Alorut, Nopimng Inini McHugh, Anthony Debassige, Elena Abel, Jordyn Hendricks, Ganaaboute Gagné, Junior Ittusardjuat, and Trustee Chris Ellis.

Staff Present Superintendent Dorothy Baker, Vice-Principal Jody Alexander, Instructional Coaches Kareena Butler, Nancy Henry, and Kris Meawasige, Indigenous Student Support Coordinator Josh Lewis, and Committee Coordinator Amanda Rock.

Non-Voting
Representatives
Present Trustee Wendy Hough.

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m.

Albert Dumont shared a story about his snowshoeing experiences and explained that a partridge dug two holes in the snow. Albert reminded the Council what he has learned from one of those experiences is to be sensible in everything that they do and to be aware of their surroundings.

Albert Dumont gave an opening prayer of peace and thanks.

Superintendent Baker introduced Trustee Hough to the Council. She is the trustee representative assigned to the IEAC. Trustee Hough introduced herself and noted she has a postgraduate degree in Indigenous Education. Vice-Principal Alexander reintroduced herself and explained that the last meeting was important with regard to understanding some of the initiatives that the OCDSB supports for Indigenous education.

Kareena Butler and Josh Lewis introduced themselves as part of the Indigenous Education team at the OCDSB. Kris Meawasige and Nancy Henry reintroduced themselves as members of the Indigenous Education team.

2. Approval of the IEAC 15 November 2018 Report

The Indigenous Education Advisory Council report, dated 15 November 2018, was reviewed by the Council. A revision to the spelling of Ganaabouté Gagné's name has been made.

3. Establishing IEAC Membership

Superintendent Baker and Vice-Principal Alexander explained that many people have expressed interest in the First Nations agency representative role.

Superintendent Baker shared the names of individuals who expressed interest and asked the Council who they thought would be best suited for the First Nations agency representative role.

Anthony Debassige requested that the First Nation parent/agency role be renamed to Algonquin/Cree/Ojibway parent/agency. Superintendent Baker reminded the Council that policy P.140.GOV will be reviewed in two years. At that time, the Council may decide to revise the name of the First Nation parent/agency representative role. Trustee Ellis added that the IEAC can revise the entire structure should they decide it is necessary. Not all Nations have the same selection and appointment processes.

The Council agreed that their selection process for the different roles will be determined by a consensus.

4. Overview of the components of the Board Action Plan for Indigenous Education/Feedback

Vice-Principal Alexander told a story of her skiing. She explained that she saw a child who had fallen on the ski hill. She was the only one who stopped to help the child and guide her down the ski hill to her family. Vice-Principal Alexander reflected that she knows she is different from many people. Her compassion and thoughtfulness are core characteristics of her personality and she sees honouring children and their voices as being instrumental in her role as Vice-Principal of the Indigenous Education team.

Vice-Principal Alexander and OCDSB staff noted that following ongoing initiatives for Indigenous Education: The four main areas of focus area using data to support student achievement, supporting students, supporting educators, and engagement and awareness building.

The following was highlighted by the Indigenous Education team:

- The third annual Indigenous Youth Symposium was held on 11 January 2019 and it included 150 students, approximately 40 educators, and eight workshops;
- Teachers were learning with and from students;

- Schools are looking for an Indigenous safe space to gather such as the lodge at Gloucester High School;
- The Indigenous youth leadership camp engages community partners, knowledge keepers, and has cultural workshops;
- Student representatives of the IEAC have attended the youth leadership camp to connect with Indigenous culture;
- Instructional coaches of the OCDSB help to implement curriculum projects, coordinate event planning, and answer specific questions from educators;
- Instructional coaches support educators by identifying the appropriate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Elders to speak at schools;
- The school board can access many presenters through community partners; and
- The OCDSB has formal relationships with the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre (OICC) and the Wabano Center for Aboriginal Health.

Ganaaboute Gagne noted that he has met some of his closest friends at the youth leadership camp and that the event has had a lasting impact on his high school career. Falicia Green commented that the leadership camp has been instrumental with regard to how to guide younger Indigenous youth. Jordyn Hendricks supported her peers by stating that the event is an outlet to engage in Indigenous culture outside of a school setting.

In response to queries, the following information was provided with regard to the areas of focus:

- Albert Dumont and Sytukie Joamie have visited with schools to speak with students;
- The District matches school demographics to the most appropriate Indigenous presentations;
- The District works with nine community partners;
- Two percent of the District's students self-identify as Indigenous; and
- The work of Curriculum Services is directly related to those who self-identify.

Superintendent Baker noted that the Council will be a foundational piece to consider when reviewing the programs that support Indigenous students.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were noted:

- There may be Indigenous students in the District who are not being supported;
- Certain schools have a high number of Indigenous students but they are located in all schools across the District;
- The identity-based data collection will include Indigenous data and guide the process around the collection of this information;
- The Indigenous Education Team in curriculum services has a five-member team that supports Indigenous education;

- First Nation students should be identified more specifically as Métis, Cree, Ojibway, etc;
- More Indigenous safe spaces in schools are needed in different parts of the region;
- The Indigenous Youth Symposium is a positive start to providing students with more safe spaces to learn about Indigenous culture;
- The Original Voices Youth Council is a formal group for high school students in the District and was formed in April 2017;
- The Original Voices Youth Council is about building community for the students and providing an opportunity to learn about Indigenous culture;
- The language that is used to address Indigenous students can be disrespectful and needs to change; and
- The creation of a website to advertise the lodge at Gloucester HS may be an idea to consider.

Superintendent Baker further explained that the identity-based data collection will focus on how to store data, privacy issues, and how the data will be used. She noted that quantitative and qualitative data will be collected to address some of the intersectionality patterns. Addressing these issues will be important to many communities.

Vice-Principal Alexander explained the importance of short, medium, and long-term goals for the IEAC. During the discussion of goals, the following was noted:

- Leveraging technology for connecting to the lodge as a way for Indigenous students to support each other is an idea that can be explored;
- Wrap-around supports should be in place to support Indigenous students with complex needs; and
- An immediate contact person should be in place for students to connect with after peer presentations.

Student representatives Ganaabouté Gagné and Falicia Green expressed that leveraging technology is a positive step forward but does not replace that need for face-to-face interaction. They also noted that teaching Indigenous culture to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is important.

Raiglee Alorut told a story of how she struggled to get a university degree. She stressed the importance of supporting students in schools in whatever way to complete their education. Sytukie Joamie added that Indigenous people look out for the collective. It is important that the IEAC make as many connections in the community as possible to ensure that there aren't large numbers of students left without support.

Nopimng Inini McHugh made a recommendation that there be a system that has three levels of support at the OCDSB which include an Indigenous educational assistant, psychologist, and occasional teacher (OT). Superintendent Baker

shared that the District often has to refer to community partners due to a lack of resources.

Trustee Ellis noted that wrap-around supports and resources for the Indigenous team should be a discussion topic in the overall budget.

In wrap-up, Superintendent Baker clarified that the following were the main items of discussion:

- There is a lack of respectful language and communication when referring to the Indigenous community;
- Safe spaces for Indigenous students need to be considered in all four areas of the city;
- It is important to leverage the data that can be obtained from community partners;
- Student representatives are open to conducting supported student-led presentations at schools across the District;
- Leveraging technology and face-to-face peer presentations may be a means of connecting Indigenous youth with each other; and
- Intentional hiring practices to ensure Indigenous representation in support positions for tiered intervention is critical.

Albert Dumont shared that he has a lot of respect for the Assembly of First Nations chiefs and explained that the best national chief he has ever known, Ovide Mercredi, was a high school dropout. He stressed the importance of Indigenous youth receiving the best education possible.

5. Closing

Members from the Indigenous education team and the student representatives led a closing song.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.