



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY

April 25, 2019

6:00 pm

Trustees' Committee Room

133 Greenbank Road

Ottawa, Ontario

- Members:** Elaine Hayles (Community Representative), Harvey Brown (Community Representative), Jane Fjeld (Youth Services Bureau), Raigelee Alorut (Tungasuvvingat Inuit)
- Non-Voting Members:** Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Curriculum Services), Rob Campbell (Trustee), Jacqueline Lawrence (Equity and Diversity Coordinator)
- Staff and Guests:** Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Lynn Scott (Trustee), Chris Ellis (Trustee), Sonia Nadon-Campbell (Special Education Advisory Committee), Sue Cowin (Special Education Advisory Committee), David Wildman (Elementary Teacher's Federation of Ontario), Riaz Mostaghim (Spiritual Care in Secondary Schools), Jean Goulet (Spiritual Care in Secondary Schools), Johanna Jackson Kelly (Instructional Coach), Richard Fransham (Community Representative), Emhardt James (Community Representative), June Girvan (J'Nikira Dinqinesh Education Centre), Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), David Sutton (OCDSB), Amanda Rock (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. **Welcome**

Chair Hayles called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. Diversity and Equity Coordinator Lawrence acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Territory and thanked the Algonquin Nations for hosting the meeting on their land.

Superintendent Baker noted the OCDSB's mission statement as "Educating for Success - Inspiring Learning and Building Citizenship."

2. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by Jane Fjeld,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

3. Community Voice (delegations)

3.1 June Girvan, J'Nikira Dinginesh Education Centre

Ms. June Girvan delegated under item 7.1.

4. Review of Advisory Committee on Equity Report

4.1 28 March 2019

Moved by Harvey Brown,

THAT the ACE report of 28 March 2019 be received.

Carried

4.2 Review of Long Range Agenda

The long range agenda was provided for information.

In response to a query from Trustee Ellis, Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence advised that ACE is preparing for next year's annual report.

4.3 Motion/Action Tracking Report, Business Arising

The Motion/Action Tracking Report was provided for information.

5. Action/Discussion/Information Items

5.1 ACE Membership Update

Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence advised that the current ACE members met on 16 April 2019 to discuss the steps necessary to finalize the recruitment process for ACE members.

Ms. Lawrence noted that the following was considered:

- The importance of maintaining corporate memory;
- Whether ACE is an accountability or advocacy body; and
- The committee's influence on the community, commitments made, and the structure of its meetings.

Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence advised that the new slogan for ACE will be "Together we can make a difference". She noted that the Communications team will draft the branding for ACE's slogan.

During the ensuing discussion, the following concerns were noted:

- The importance of ACE members having clarity with regard to what members should be contributing to the committee;
- Engaging millennials and younger professionals to be ACE representatives; and

- Other communication tools may be needed to reach the younger community.

In response to a query from Trustee Campbell, Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that highlighting ACE's accomplishments will be a part of the recruitment process. The draft procedure focuses on the recruitment of new members. She submitted that there is a lack of understanding of the goals and function of the committee. She also noted ACE would like to ensure recruitment of parents who have children enrolled in the District with the hope that there is flexibility to include other family members to act as the parent/guardian.

Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence advised that seven of the eleven members have been selected to represent the following groups:

- Cree;
- First Nations, Métis, and Inuit;
- Racialized groups;
- Disability groups; and
- LGBTQ+.

Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that the membership is still looking for immigrant and newcomer members.

In response to a query, Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence advised that the following are the functions of ACE that align with the OCDSB's goals:

- Provide strategic policy and program advice and/or recommendations on matters of diversity which support equitable education access and outcomes, student learning and well-being, and the development of citizenship;
- Advise the Board of Trustees on the review, development, implementation, and monitoring of all policies and its equity strategy and programs;
- Advise the Board of Trustees on the identification and elimination of systemic barriers to providing bias-aware education, including power dynamics, discrimination and marginalization that may impact the lived experience of members of the school community;
- Liaise with community stakeholders by actively engaging parents and community partners to help create and sustain a safe and inclusive learning environment; and,
- Advise the Board on potential budget implications that may help or hinder its commitment to foster equitable and inclusive education.

Further discussion ensued and the following points were noted:

- The ability to participate in ACE meetings through teleconference call will be shared more vigilantly;
- The meeting's venue may need to include more community spaces as opposed to the OCDSB administration building;
- Increased communication is needed to inform the community that they are welcome to participate in the meetings;
- Indigenous and Black community groups have requested that ACE separate their specific identities;
- ACE anticipates that all eleven members will be recruited by September 2019; and
- ACE has one more meeting for the 2018-2019 school year on May 2019.

Harvey Brown noted that it is crucial that ACE receive feedback from educators with regard to the classroom experience.

Chair Hayles stressed that she would like to receive feedback on classroom stress and hiring processes from teachers without senior management present at a meeting.

The following information was provided in response:

- There are other mechanisms for teachers to provide feedback;
- Teachers are often represented by their federations;
- ACE is a space where everyone who speaks will be respected; and
- It is important for ACE to maintain a core structure.

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) representative David Wildman informed the committee that ETFO has a diverse membership and it is difficult for the bargaining unit to get fulsome information. Teachers are often reluctant to voice their experiences and opinions for fear of the information being shared with their employer. He also noted it is difficult to schedule a meeting with many teachers at the same time as they have other commitments.

5.2 Equity Resources (D.Baker, ext.8573)

Superintendent Baker circulated resources to ACE members and shared a PowerPoint presentation.

She suggested that ACE reflect on the following:

- The role ACE can play in providing input and feedback on some of the OCDSB resources;
- Streamlining the format of the resources; and

- The role ACE can play in a cyclical review of resources.

Superintendent Baker advised that Curriculum Services has drafted a series of one-page documents for educators to reference that include the following:

- Link to Ministry resources and to the OCDSB policies and procedures;
- Professional resources;
- Lesson plans and resources to embed in an educator's regular curricular day;
- Video links; and
- Upcoming community events.

Chair Hayles expressed concern that parents have difficulty accessing resources and noted that it is important that they are able to interact with these resources. Staff advised that there is an e-newsletter that is circulated every Friday and ACE members may be added to the distribution list. The e-newsletter contains outreach information and upcoming events during that particular week and month at the OCDSB. The equity pages on the District's website are also being revamped in the near future by Diversity and Equity Coordinator Lawrence and Instructional Coach Rice.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were noted:

- ACE may want to consider information they need to make a meaningful contribution to the 2020-2021 budget;
- Linking the budget's funding for equity initiatives to the five pillars of the current strategic plan may be an agenda item to consider for future meetings; and
- Budget presentations from staff need to be purposeful and in the context of the direct impact on equity and ACE.

Chair Hayles noted that the following question would be addressed at the ACE meeting of 23 May 2019:

In what ways does the budget impact equity initiatives in the District?

Trustee Campbell encouraged ACE to schedule a priority-setting session. Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence responded by stating that strategic planning is discussed at ACE.

6. Department Update

Superintendent Baker advised that a memo to trustees on identity-based data collection will be distributed in the near future and will include the following:

- Three key phases of the identity-based data collection;
- The first two phases are qualitative and will be completed by the end of the 2018-2019 school year; and
- The third phase is quantitative data collection slated to start in November 2019.

Superintendent Baker advised that the data collection is to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of students who have been historically marginalized. She noted that this will inform the District's practice and identify priorities. She shared the logo with ACE and the following feedback was noted:

- The colours brown and black could be included in the logo;
- The logo could have people in a circle formation;
- The font of the logo should not have shadowing to accommodate people with disabilities; and
- The logo could be translated into different languages.

In response to a query, Director Williams-Taylor advised that the community feedback sessions will be in May and June and be open to individuals who want to participate and who are not associated with an organization. Community members' shared lived experiences will be valued by the District. She highlighted that feedback on how the data should be used will be a part of those discussions.

In response to a query, Superintendent Baker advised that senior staff are aware of the community's questions and will be looking for feedback to finalize the identity-based data collection process.

In response to a query, Director Williams-Taylor advised that the District will have answers to the community's questions in Fall 2019. This will allow time for the community to process the information before the quantitative data collection begins in November 2019. She noted that the District wants the community to be fully informed. The process is not intended to be anonymous but information will be kept confidential. She added that the District is currently having discussions with other school boards and the Ministry to analyze the valuable lessons learned from previous identity-based collection initiatives.

Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence advised that the Black Youth Forum was held on 25 March 2019. Approximately 200 black students and educators attended the event which was planned by students for students. This event was intended to share students' lived experiences. The following were areas of focus at the forum:

- Black excellence;
- Mental health and self-care; and
- Systemic racism.

Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence highlighted the following:

- Students conducted research to develop the sessions;
- Students created an open-space experiential dialogue; and
- "Dear Educator" letters were written and shared by students.

Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence shared that the Black Youth Forum will be an annual event. She highlighted that since the Black Youth Forum, four students from the District were chosen to attend the Black Child and Youth Studies Conference in Toronto. The students were well-received and are invited to other events to share their "Dear Educator" letters.

Superintendent Baker advised that the District is awaiting technical documents that will be shared with ACE when they become available.

Staff and trustees shared their recent professional development (PD) experiences.

Diversity and Equity Coordinator Lawrence noted that she attended two equity conferences. She highlighted that Robin DiAngelo and Tina Lopez were in attendance and reflected that race needs to be addressed when an organization is spearheading equity initiatives.

Trustee Blackburn noted that she attended the OSSTF equity session and there were many staff members in attendance.

Trustee Scott advised that she attended the American Education Research Conference in Toronto noting that a number of sessions focused on equity. Student voices that were quoted in the research are similar to what was heard by the District's students at the Black Youth Forum. She expressed confidence that there is hope for the OCDSB to move in a positive direction and noted there is still a lot to be learned.

In response to a query, Superintendent Baker shared that information from conferences is forwarded to senior staff who forward it to their principals for information to be permeated throughout the system.

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Committee of the Whole

Harvey Brown recalled the motion from ACE that was presented to the Committee of the Whole on 16 April 2019 motion.

Moved by Jane Fjeld,

* THAT the Board explore funding to support mental health through an equity lens especially for students who self identify as First Nations, Inuit and Métis and for male students of African descent.

The motion was amended at the Committee of the Whole 16 April 2019 meeting:

Moved by Trustee Ellis,

A. THAT the Board direct staff to explore and report on funding to support mental health through an equity lens, with initial focus on students who self-identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit and for male students of African descent.

B. THAT the Board direct staff to evaluate, through an equity lens, barriers to access mental health services within the OCDSB, especially for students who self identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit and for male students of African descent.

June Girvan noted that her concern was raised when the female students at the Black Students Forum vocalized their concern for their male peers' mental health. She noted that the full dialogue can be referenced in the 28 March 2019 ACE meeting minutes.

Ms. Girvan clarified that her intent for presenting the motion was based on her observations and what she felt was needed based on those observations. She noted that the OCDSB adopted the Declaration of the International Decade of People of African Descent on 18 May 2019 and that the motion is complex in nature. She requested that the motion be deferred to a later date.

Trustee Ellis advised that the motion has been referred back to staff for further discussion and will be presented to the Board in September 2019. He suggested that ACE may want to provide clarity to staff with regard to the motion's intent and actions that need to be taken. He queried whether Ms. Girvan's intent was about awareness rather than funding to support mental health. Diversity and Equity Coordinator Lawrence advised that she will be working with the mental health lead to support students' access to mental health through an equity lens.

Trustee Scott noted that that the OCDSB mental health strategy will need to be reviewed in the near future.

Director Williams-Taylor advised that staff plan to re-frame the OCDSB mental health strategy through Learning Support Services (LSS). She noted the following:

- The role of identity informs and is implicated in the mental health experience;
- There needs to be an understanding of the roles and responsibilities that the school system plays in contributing to positive mental health for its students; and
- The District may need to improve the conditions for positive mental health of Black and Indigenous students.

Jane Fjeld added that the District may want to consider their role to include early identification for and referrals of at-risk students. She expressed the view that the District can make a positive impact by playing this role.

Ms. Girvan emphasized that she trusts staff will honour the adoption of the Declaration of the International Decade of People of African Descent.

David Sutton queried whether the District will address the issue of environmental conditions as the cause of mental health issues or whether a student simply needs emotional support. Chair Hayles noted this item as a topic of discussion for the ACE meeting of 23 May 2019.

8. New Business

Mr. Sutton advised that there was a Black youth presentation at Gloucester High School on 25 April 2019.

Raiglee Alorut advised that she attended an Inuit elders conference in Ottawa. The conference shared values of the Inuit people and how they lived prior to colonization.

David Wildman shared that OSSTF presented the movie "14 and Muslim" at one of their professional development events. Diversity and Equity Coordinator Lawrence noted that she is working to have that movie available to the OCDSB in the fall. She also highlighted that the Date for Diversity event will take place from 6:00-9:00 p.m. on 14 May 2019 at Canterbury High School.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Elaine Hayles, Chair, Advisory Committee on Equity