



# Indigenous Education Advisory Council

06.04.2019

---

Monique Manatch & Jody Alexander  
Indigenous Education Advisory Council

## Introduction

In 2015, Senator Murray Sinclair said, “Education got us into this mess and it is education that will get us out.” The Truth and Reconciliation Commission set Canadians upon a path to repair the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The OCDSB is committed to responding to the Calls to Action and as such has made efforts to work together with the Indigenous community in Ottawa towards supporting achievement and well-being of Indigenous students. With this commitment in mind, the creation of the Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC) is in alignment to achieve this goal.

The Indigenous Education Advisory Council Policy (P.140.Gov) met District approval June 25, 2018. The policy set a course to establish the advisory council in the 2018-2019 school year. The official composition of the IEAC was put forward in February 2019 - Albert Dumont, Jo McQuarrie, Sytukie Joamie, Monique Manatach, Inini McHugh, Benny Michaud, Jennifer Lord, Raigelee Alorut, Karen Baker-Anderson, Wendy Hough, Jody Alexander, Dorothy Baker, Falicia Green, Ganaabouté Gagne, Jordyn Hendrick, Lili Miller, Kris Meawasige, Kareena Butler and Josh Lewis. While the aforementioned hold seats on the Indigenous Advisory Council, all Indigenous students, parents/guardians, families, staff, and community members in the OCDSB are welcome to attend, provide input and feedback.

## IEAC's Mandate:

1. To collaborate with the District on the development of the Indigenous Education Board Action Plan;
2. To provide strategic advice on implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, specifically Calls to Action pertaining to education (62-63);
3. To assist 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;
4. To advise the Board of Trustees on any issue affecting First Nations, Métis and Inuit students' learning and well-being;
5. To act as a resource to provide authentic and current knowledge of First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspective to support informed decision making; and
6. To 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.

## Recommendations

The Indigenous Education Advisory Council recommends the following as priorities for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board: respectful language and communication; safe spaces for Indigenous students in all areas of the OCDSB, leveraging data from community partners, and conducting supported student-led presentations at schools across the District. All of these recommendations will form the basis for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year and will be included in the Board Action Plan for Indigenous Education. In addition, there was a request for the OCDSB to implement intentional hiring practices to ensure Indigenous representation across all staffing groups. This will be a priority in the 2019-2020 school year and IEAC meetings.

## Key Next Steps

### I. Improve Cultural Competency

- *Providing guidance to create an open environment for educating all staff, and Board of Trustees;*
- *Providing guidance to all to better understand diversity among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit;*
- *Incorporate Ownership Control Access and Possession (OCAP) principles regarding any research conducted with the Indigenous community;*
- *Smudging protocols in schools.*

### II. Creating Safe Spaces

- *Providing continuous support and advice in the creation of Indigenous spaces and programs consistently throughout the school board.*

## Review Policy

Much conversation around the composition of the Indigenous Education Advisory Council ensued in several initial meetings. The concern of the IEAC centered around understanding identity and representation of First Nation, Métis and Inuit community. The IEAC feels strongly the review of the composition of the Council is necessary following the two year period set out in the policy.

## Highlights

### I. Strong Indigenous student leadership

*Since the onset of the Indigenous Education Advisory Council, there has been strong interest and representation of Indigenous students eager to share their voices. Students regularly attend the IEAC meetings and provide valuable input and feedback to how the OCDSB might create culturally safe spaces for Indigenous students in schools across the district. Some suggestions include: addressing inappropriate language and stereotypes in schools; student-led workshops for other students to gain knowledge and understanding of Indigenous perspectives, history and contemporary issues; engaging with Indigenous cultural learning for Indigenous students outside of the school setting (eg. Leadership camp opportunities); cultural competency and safety training for educators, and more Indigenous safe spaces in schools across the District.*

### II. Community Representation

*Upon inviting community members, parents/guardians, families, students, agencies and OCDSB staff to attend inaugural meetings, there was plenty of interest that reflected a diversity of Indigenous people. It is evident from the great turnout of interested people, the establishment of the Indigenous Education Advisory Council is welcomed by the Indigenous community. Many people representing diversity among the First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities wish to give meaningful input to ultimately contribute to the achievement and well-being of Indigenous students and their families.*

## Conclusion

While the TRC set out 94 Calls to Action, it is the responsibility of all Canadians to act upon the Calls to Action to create more positive learning for the generations to come. The OCDSB will benefit greatly from collaboration with the Indigenous Education Advisory Council and the recommendations to enhance and improve learning opportunities for all students. It is through collaboration, the OCDSB and IEAC will see the repair of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and educators within the OCDSB.