



REPORT NO. 5, ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY

DATE: 24 May 2018

A meeting of the Advisory Committee on Equity was held this evening commencing at 6:20 p.m. in the Library of Lisgar Collegiate Institute, 29 Lisgar Street, Ottawa, with Harvey Brown in the Chair and the following also in attendance:

MEMBERS: Elaine Hayles, Community Representative
Cukwuemeka Ndukwe, Community Representative
Harvey Brown, Community Representative

Regrets: Jane Fylde, Joanne John, Nadine Clarke,

TRUSTEES: Chris Ellis

GUESTS: Tim Stanley, University of Ottawa
Stacey-Ann Morris, YLACC Young Leaders Advisory Council
Students: Student 1, Student 2, Darla, Alex and Maria

STAFF: Dorothy Baker, Superintendent of Curriculum Services
Jacqueline Lawrence, Equity and Diversity Coordinator
Patsy Agard, Principal, Lisgar Collegiate Institute
Carol Anne Burrows, Equity and Inclusive Education
Instructional Coach
Jody Alexander, System Vice Principal Indigenous Education
David Sutton, OCDSB
Jimmy Pai, OCDSB

1. Call to Order

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Elaine Hayles,
THAT the agenda be approved.

Trustee Ellis requested that the appointment of an ACE representative to Committee of the Whole be added to the agenda.

**Moved by Elaine Hayles,
THAT the agenda be approved as amended.**

- CARRIED -

3. Review of Advisory Committee on Equity Reports

a. Report 4, 26 April 2018

**Moved by Elaine Hayles,
THAT Advisory Committee on Equity Report 4, dated 26 April
2018, be received.**

- CARRIED -

4. Student Engagement: Student Voice in the OCDSB

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence and Superintendent Baker welcomed students from the Rainbow Youth Forum, the Indigenous Youth Symposium and the Black Youth Conference to share their lived experiences and what these spaces have provided for them. The students then answered questions from committee members.

Rainbow Youth Forum (Student 1 and Student 2)

- The Rainbow Youth Forum (RYF) was held on 9 November 2017;
- The RYF is celebration of diversity and is a day for students grade 9-12, staff and community to learn together. The RYF encourages safe and inclusive school environments by providing an opportunity to enhance knowledge and awareness about equity and diversity issues;
- Workshops and presentations build knowledge and understanding of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, as well as homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.
- The RYF is held in collaboration between the OCDSB and the Rainbow Service Provider's Network, which is a network of community agencies who promote inclusive services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Two- Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) youth;
- Community member bring together LGBTQ2S+ youth to learn and share from each other's experiences;
- The RYF helps build capacity for LGBTQ2S+ youth to advocate within their schools
- LGBTQ2S+ students are still not getting the support they need in the community and the school;

- Trans students do not see themselves represented in school spaces;
- Student 1, a trans male, commented on the importance of the RYF as a place he could speak openly about his transition and become more comfortable with his true self both physically and emotionally;
- Student 1 noted that coming out was difficult and that there is a lot of fear, and misunderstanding from a lack of education; and
- Student 1 expressed the view that the RYF was one of the best events he has ever experienced. He was made to feel comfortable, relaxed and welcomed.

Indigenous Youth Symposium (Darla)

- The District hosted the second Indigenous Youth Symposium on 23 March 2018. The goal of the symposium is to instill “Pride in Indigenous Identity & Collect Student Voice” to drive student instruction District-wide.
- Students from schools across the OCDSB participated in the symposium. Students listened to Keynote Speaker, Cody Coyote. They also enjoyed a performance from this dynamic role model. Cody shared his powerful message of resilience with District students.
- Students attend the keynote session then move to smaller breakout sessions offered by various Indigenous community partners including, Prairie Fire, Josh Lewis, Gabrielle Fayant, Justin Holness, Charlotte Qamaniq, Celina Cada-Matasawagon and Sally Webster. Students also participated in sharing circles where they discussed their needs in classrooms, schools and the District.
- Kiosks were set up featuring various community agencies that support students and families including: Wabano Wellness Center, Métis Nation of Ontario, Odawa Friendship Centre, Kagita Mikam, Minwaashin Lodge, and Ottawa Inuit Children’s Center
- The Indigenous Youth Symposium provided the indigenous students in the District a chance to meet each other, form bonds and listen and learn from one another;
- Workshops included powwow dancing, Inuit games, and smudging;
- A video booth was setup to capture student voice. Through the video booth students felt they were heard and that their views mattered;
- Students leave the forum and bring back the learning to their schools; and
- Vice-Principal Alexander noted that often urban Indigenous youth feel a disconnection to the land and a disconnection in general. The symposium provides them with an opportunity to connect with other indigenous student. The knowledge that they are not alone is important.

Black Youth Conference (Alex, Maria)

- The District’s first Black Youth Conference was held on 14 May 2018;

- The idea for the event evolved from the students of 6 District high schools who had been brought together to share their experiences with one another;
- During the planning the students were able to meet and network with other black students who have had similar lived experiences;
- The conference provided the students with an opportunity to listen and learn about each other and to hear their stories;
- The conference was entitled “A Day in the Life of a Black Student” and explored topics that were important to the black students; and
- The students were supported by the community. Black students who had graduated from District schools attended to provide their support and advice, Adrian Harewood from CBC attended to speak to the students as well as other successful leaders from the black community.

During the discussion, and in response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Trustee Ellis commented that he participated in the Black Youth Conference. He thanked the students for helping him understand the barriers faced by black students. He noted the students were articulate and well-informed and that the District must continue to listen to the students in order to better serve them;
- Student 1 advised that there needs to be more bullying prevention initiatives with an emphasis on education and awareness of trans, indigenous and black students beginning in kindergarten;
- Student 2 noted that a shift needs to occur from a reactive approach to a dynamic one that is focussed on inclusion from early years;
- In response to a query from Trustee Ellis regarding bullying, the students noted that it is often difficult to speak to teachers and staff to explain the bullying. Student 1 noted that some teachers have indicated that their confidence is a safe space through positivity stickers. Teachers must let their students know they are available and that discussions with teachers, friends and guidance councillors are important;
- In response to a query from Mr. Mak regarding a wish list for kindergarten teachers, Student 2 noted that conversations with parents are important. Books and other resources about transgender are available. It is important to avoid gender segregated activities, and heavily gendering language;
- Vice-Principal Alexander expressed the view that peer to peer bullying continues to be an issue in schools. Teachers and staff can unknowingly perpetuate ideas that otherness is not the norm and it is therefore important to make a systemic change;
- Student 1 noted that teachers often subconsciously relate in gender specific terms. She confronted a teacher about a boys’ versus girls’ competition and they had not intentionally made the suggestion but reacted in a positive way and offered other, more inclusive approaches thereafter. Student 1 noted that

- talking to teachers can help improve and build respect for gender, sexuality, colour and culture;
- Vice-Principal Alexander noted that a report on the Indigenous Youth Forum will be provided to COW in June 2018. A video from the forum was also prepared;
 - Superintendent Baker noted that the Rainbow Youth forum collects feedback through exit outcome cards. There is follow-up in schools after the event to note whether or not educators and administrators have witnessed a difference. Many of the observations are reported within the Measurement Report on Equity;
 - The Black Youth Conference was planned, organized and run entirely by the students. Many teachers and superintendents participated and made notes on what they heard. Student 1 noted that the school clubs are great but that communication regarding the clubs must be improved to broaden student participation. She noted the value of hearing peer journeys at the Rainbow Youth Forum;
 - Maria expressed the view that student voice is important, the Black Youth Conference could have been enhanced by hearing more adults discuss their experiences of living as a black person in Canada;
 - Instructional Coach Burrows advised that it is important for youth to hear stories of excellence from the adults of their respective communities. Student 2 added that more outside achievers should be brought into the schools. She noted that this can help shift the burden from teachers who may be uncomfortable with the subject matter and help ensure schools have the capacity to do the education work;
 - In response to a query from Mr. Sutton regarding recommendations to address issues within the District, the student noted the following:
 - The curriculum must be more inclusive and less white;
 - The history of residential schools needs to be explored and taught to every student;
 - Sex education needs to be expanded to include safety in same sex relationships;
 - Gender neutral washrooms are a necessity;
 - New teachers need to be educated and updated resources provided for them; context of lived experiences; knowledge of service providers, knowledge of human rights code;
 - More teachers of colour, sexuality and culture;
 - Dr. Stanley commended the courage of the students. He suggested that the language around bullying needs to shift and focus on violence as that is what bullying is. Physical assault must not be tolerated and comfort and support for the victims is required;
 - Dr. Stanley expressed the view that the forums are too late in the year for there to be meaningful change and positive responses. The Forums are an opportunity for teachers professional development hosting them earlier in the

- school year can help build and change the culture within the school and across the District;
- Student 1 commented that as a victim of bullying and violence that staff within the schools are ill-equipped to deal with the situations. He encouraged more professional development which would include victim support and comfort;
 - Maria expressed the view that the problem with bullying in schools is that the systemic root cause is not examined or dealt with;
 - In response to a query from Principal Agar regarding what the students would want their school to know about them, the students responded:
 - Each Indigenous person is different, each Indigenous culture is different, Indigenous people are not all the same;
 - The narrative around transgender is consistently harmful. Trans people are brilliant and powerful and the language needs to come from a place of empowerment;
 - Smart, educated black kids are not a needle in the haystack.
 - Maria noted that often as a black student the United States is used as a scapegoat and there is a general feeling that Canada is better. She noted that it is just not as bad and that all Canadians must take responsibility for the issues of racial discrimination that do exist in Canada;
 - Chair Brown commented on the similarity and commonality of all three groups on the panel. He commended the students for their efforts in pushing back against systems not built to support them; and
 - Diversity Coordinator Lawrence thanked all the students for their time and their important stories. She also thanked Ms. Hayles for the suggestion for the panel discussion of student voice.

5. Introduction to the Policy P.140.GOV Indigenous Education Advisory Council

Your Committee had before it Report 18-023 seeking input on the preliminary draft policy for the creation of an Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC).

During the discussion, and in response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Superintendent Baker acknowledged that the ACE meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Territory and thanked the Algonquin Nations for hosting the meeting on their land;
- It is expected that the IEAC will operate differently than the other advisory committees of the Board. The formal ways of the District may not apply to the Council. The Council must be formed and its business conducted in a way that makes sense to the Indigenous community;
- The District is working towards achieving the components outlined in the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*;
- Through the IEAC, stakeholders will have an ongoing mechanism to provide input and guidance for Indigenous education within the District;

- The Indigenous Education Advisory Council’s mandate would include:
 - To provide advice and input to the Board Action Plan for Indigenous education;
 - To provide strategic advice on implementing the truth and reconciliation calls to action;
 - To assist the Board in its commitment to provide an equitable and inclusive education and work environment for Indigenous students and staff; and
 - To advise the Board of Trustees on any issue affecting Indigenous students’ learning and well-being;
- The IEAC would be comprised of six (6) voting members of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and up to four (4) non-voting members including a trustee, Indigenous education lead, superintendent and, where possible, an Indigenous student;
- Indigenous parents, traditional knowledge keepers, elders, senators and partners have been informally consulted regarding the purpose and intent of the policy. The partners will remain an integral part of the District’s formal consultation process involving the broader community;
- Every school board in the province is encouraged to create an IEAC;
- The Ottawa Indigenous community is large and vibrant and has expressed significant interest in the IEAC. There is unlikely to be an issue with meeting the composition requirements as defined in the draft Policy P.140.GOV. The IEAC will provide Indigenous parents, elders, and knowledge keepers an opportunity to play a pivotal role in their children’s education;
- Dr. Stanley noted that rules of order are colonial concepts. He recommended that the IEAC start with decision making and ensure all voices are heard. He expressed the view that priority be given to the Algonquin nation;
- Mr. Mak expressed the view that section 4.1 of the policy is inclusive and encourages participation;
- Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that the policy guiding the formation of all advisory committees need to be reviewed through an equity lens;
- Trustee Olsen Harper expressed the view that the presentation of an annual report to the Board is inadequate. She added that the policy should have a mechanism for the IEAC to speak to the Board and specify the format;
- Ms. Hayles expressed the view that there should be more student members;
- Ms. Hayles stressed the importance of providing administrative support for the IEAC and all advisory committees of the Board;
- Mr. Sutton noted that a thorough review of Policy [P.065.GOV](#) Advisory Committees to the Board through an equity lens is required;
- Mr. Sutton queried whether or not resources will be provided to the IEAC to ensure they are able to achieve their mandate;
- Members queried the age requirements for the IEAC student members. Superintendent Baker noted that the mandate for the IEAC is Indigenous student’s kindergarten to grade 12. She added that the IEAC should consider student representation from grade 7 and up;

- Mr. Sutton noted that the age of the students is important and that the research indicates Indigenous student engagement drops in grade 6; and
- In response to a query from Dr. Stanley on who decides who is Indigenous, Superintendent Baker noted that in the District, students self-identify. Dr. Stanley expressed the view that the District may want to have a requirement in the policy requesting a letter of support from a Knowledge Keeper or Elder as a way of validating whether or not a member is Indigenous. Superintendent Baker noted that she will pose this question to community Elders.

6. ACE Annual Report

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that she is preparing the first draft of the ACE 2017-2018 Annual Report. She encouraged the member to provide her with feedback and input on next steps for ACE. The report will focus on the policy process undertaken this past year as well as the implications of the new Equity Education Action Plan.

7. ACE Representative to Committee of the Whole

Trustee Ellis noted that the Board had voted to provide ACE with non-voting membership at Committee of the Whole (COW) and Committee of the Whole Budget. ACE must now determine who the representative and the alternate.

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that not all of the members are present. She indicated that she would provide the members with a list of upcoming COW meeting dates and urge members to attend so that they may consider whether or not they would stand for appointment. The appointment of a representative and the alternate will be added to the first ACE meeting of the 2018-2019 school year.

8. Roundtable

During a roundtable discussion the following points were noted:

- Superintendent Baker thanked Principal Agar for hosting ACE and the students who spoke on the panel;
- Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that the Date with Diversity was held on 8 May 2018. She thanked ACE members for their participation and noted the event was well attended and featured student voice;
- Mr. Sutton wished to thank all members of ACE for their work this past year. He noted that the work of ACE is important and will help all students in the District;
- Trustee Ellis expressed his thanks to all members for their work. He noted that having a seat at the COW table should bring a new energy to the

- committee. He added that ACE will now have more opportunities to have their voice heard and can make a positive impact;
- Mr. Pai wished to add a discussion item to a future agenda entitled listening and building capacity. He expressed the view that a panel discussion with teachers would be of value for the members; and
 - Trustee Olsen Harper noted that the Special Education Advisory Committee had also discussed the IEAC and had some positive feedback on the policy. She added that she is excited about the work of the IEAC and improving the graduation rate for Indigenous students.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Harvey Brown, Chair (acting)
Advisory Committee on Equity