



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY

**September 27, 2018
6:00 pm
Mezzanine (2nd Floor)
133 Greenbank Road**

Present:

Elaine Hayles, Community Representative
Jane Fjeld, Youth Services Bureau
Nadine Clarke, Community Representative
Stacey-Ann Morris, YLAC

Donna Blackburn, Trustee

Anita Olsen Harper (on behalf of Erica Braunovan), Trustee
Tony Boonstra, Spiritual Care
David Sutton, OCDSB
Kassandra Cloutier, Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa
Kahmaria Pingue, Nyansapo
June Girvin, Every Child is Sacred
Dr. Tim Stanley (University of Ottawa)
Dahabo Ahmed Omar, Nyansapo
Magda Osman, Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre
Nicole Parsons, Tungasuvvingat Inuit
Cesar Ndema, Nyansapo
Richard Sharpe, Nyansapo
Dorothy Baker, Superintendent of Curriculum Services
Jacqueline Lawrence, Diversity Coordinator
Sue Rice, Equity Instructional Coach
Nicole Guthrie, Committee Coordinator

1. Welcome/Call to Order

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

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Elaine Hayles,

THAT the agenda be approved.

-Carried-

1.2 Approval of the Minutes - May 24, 2018

Moved by Elaine Hayles,

THAT Report 5, Advisory Committee on Equity, dated 24 May 2018 be received.

-Carried-

1.3 Matters Arising from the Minutes, Motion and Action Tracking

Chair Morris noted that the action tracker has been included for information and for accountability for action items.

Superintendent Baker advised that the Research Evaluation and Analytic Division (READ) will begin to formulate a process for identity-based data collection. The READ team plans to conduct focus groups and meet with the community.

Ms. Hayles queried whether or not the motion as listed in the tracker was correct and requested that the motion added to the October meeting as a discussion item. She noted that she was unaware of any action as a result of the motion.

Mr. Sutton expressed the view that the motion also contained a reference to consultation and community input.

Dr. Stanley noted that the primary intent of the motion was to convey the notion that racism does exist in the District and that it is important to gather and reflect upon the lived experiences of people from within the community of the school they support and serve. He expressed the view that the challenge would be to collect the data in a way that is safe for students. He noted the importance of collecting anonymized stories of lived experiences in District schools. The lived experiences can help the District better define the issue.

2. Community Voice

Chair Morris noted that Community Voices will be a long standing item on the agenda and they will serve as a placeholder for community groups and individuals to share their lived experiences.

2.1 Delegations

a. June Girvan, International Decade for People of African Descent

Ms. Girvan noted that the District formally recognized the United Nations International Decade of People of African Descent by passing a motion at the 22 May 2018 Board meeting. The District will hang a framed copy of the motion to honor the District's leadership with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights with respect to people of African at the 2 October 2018 Committee of the Whole (COW).

Ms. Girvan reminded ACE that the motion was an important step in the work of the committee and that the framed motion will serve to remind the trustees and staff of the commitment to develop and undertake work on the Equity Action Plan; reduce barriers to learning to improve equity of access and opportunity for students of African descent; intentionally adopt practices to create a safe and caring learning environment that respects, promotes, and protects the human rights of children of African descent; collect and use identity-based data to measure our progress and inform decisions on policy and programs that impact the education of students; and engage with parents and community organizations comprised of people of African descent in Ottawa to support their sense of belonging in the OCDSB education environment. Ms. Girvan noted that the District was one of the first school boards in the province to adopt and formally recognize the decade.

Ms. Girvan discussed the concept of afrophobia and noted that children are not born with afrophobia and parents and teachers are, often unknowingly passing it down. She shared Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and maintained that, one of the impact of afrophobia, children of African descent have difficulty self-actualizing.

b. Kahmaria Pingue and Dahabo Ahmed Omar, Nyansapo

Ms. Pingue shared that Nyansapo is a collective of African, Caribbean, Black Canadian (ACBC) individuals whose goal is to promote equity and inclusivity for ACBC students in education. She noted that Nyansapo, meaning "wisdom knot," is an Adinkra symbol of wisdom and intelligence, patience and ingenuity.

Ms. Pingue stated that Nyansapo aims to collaborate with the District to enable and uphold the commitment made by the Board

when it passed the motion to recognize the United Nations International Decade of People of African Descent on 22 May 2018.

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

- ACBC (African Caribbean Black Canadian) students are under-represented in graduation rates and overrepresented in correctional facilities;
- Nyansapo is committed to advocating for a culture of excellence and high expectations for ACBC students;
- ACE has played a significant role in the District's work on equity and inclusiveness as well as the diversity framework;
- Nyansapo is an advocate for educational equity and aim to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to the well-being and achievement of ACBC students;
- Nyansapo proposes adaptations to the curriculum to include ACBC history and ensuring that teachers are confident in teaching a reflective curriculum and the ACBC students see themselves in their school and teaching staff based on enhanced hiring practices of the District;
- The lived and shared experience of black students suggest ACBC students are subjected to harsher punishments;
- In response to a query from Mr. Sutton regarding the role of ACE in the work of Nyansapo, Ms. Omar hoped ACE would be a signatory on an informal agreement of support;
- Mr. Sharpe indicated that he has been recruited by Nyansapo to assist with moving forward an agenda of change at school boards in Ottawa. He noted that ACE is an advisory body and should be a sounding board for the black communities in Ottawa. Nyansapo engage and consult with the black community to organize around specific issues for the education of ACBC students. He stressed the importance of the collection of disaggregated data and hoped the Black community and Nyansapo can be involved in the establishment of the data collection process;
- Human resources and hiring are an issue. At present, black citizens are underrepresented at the staff level in District schools;
- Nyansapo have direct connections to black communities throughout Ottawa and as ACE is redefining the mandate of the committee and seeking members a partnership is timely; and

- Diversity Coordinator Lawrence indicated she would circulate an electronic version of the Nyansapo support letter to ACE for review.

3. For Review

3.1 ACE's Mandate (P.008.GOV - Advisory Committee on Equity)

During the discussion on ACE's mandate the following points were noted:

- Mr. Sharpe commented that with the addition of a community voice item on each ACE agenda, a seat at the Committee of the Whole table and a focus on recruiting community representatives, ACE can bring items directly to the Board's attention. He hoped that Nyansapo could also convey items to the Board;
- Superintendent Baker noted that through the work of Diversity Coordinator Lawrence the District has undertaken some significant work in Human Resources, assisting the READ team on identity based data collection and the formation of a steering committee for equity to assist in the formulation of an equity work plan;
- A plan for the methodology for data collection will be reviewed by a group of community partners;
- The District regularly collaborates with equity staff from the Toronto District School Board, Greater Essex Country School Board, Peel District School Board and the York Region District School Board;
- Ms. Hayles commented that an action plan for Equity must come from the community and not from the Board. She added that the District must focus on the issue of consultation and its true definition and hoped the District would begin to undertake more bottom up consultation of the communities;
- The District's recognition of the United Nations International Decade of People of African Descent, will ensure that elements of equity and diversity are built into the overall Equity Plan for the District;
- Dr. Stanley noted that there is anecdotal evidence to support the notion of higher suspension rates among black students. He expressed the view that many incidents of behavior and the escalation of behavior leading to suspension is the result of the student being called racist names. He queried how the District could further investigate the trend. He suggested that when a black student is suspended that additional anecdotal stories and staff self-reflection be captured to help further the goal of reducing the suspension rate among black students;
- Mr. Sharpe expressed interest in the methodology and the approach for the collection of racialized data and noted the importance of both qualitative and quantitative data and the collection of stories. He added that he was not confident that the correct questions will be asked and

encouraged ACE to work with the community and groups like Nyansapo to ensure that the consultation on data collection is a bottom up process; and

- Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that with an updated mandate, it is timely for ACE to find ways to connect to the full diversity of communities that are represented in District schools and attract new members.

3.2 ACE Annual Report

The ACE Annual Report for the Year 2017-2018 was provided for information.

3.3 Long Range Agenda Items

The long-range agenda was provided for information.

4. For Feedback

4.1 Review of PR.687.GOV Appointment of Voting Members to the Advisory Committee on Equity

Procedure PR.687.GOV Appointment of Voting Members to the Advisory Committee on Equity was provided for information and to help inform a discussion on the communication plan for member recruitment at item 4.2.

4.2 Communication Plan for Member Recruitment

The committee broke into small groups to answer several questions designed to assist the committee in expanding ACE's membership and increasing ACE's visibility in member communities.

The committee suggested the following local organizations be contacted to ensure ACE is representative of the full diversity of the District:

- Rainbow Service Providers Network
- Odawa Native Friendship Centre
- Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health
- Royal Ottawa Hospital
- Nyansapo
- Assembly of Seven Generations
- Kind Space
- Jaku Konbit
- Ontario Works for Youth
- Muslim Family Services
- RAJO Project
- Regroupement Ethnocultural des Parents Francophones de L'Ontario (REPFO)

- Youth Ottawa
- Tungasuvvingat Inuit
- Métis Nation of Ontario
- Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO)
- Jamaican Ottawa Community Association
- Trinidad & Tobago Association of Ottawa
- Federation of Black Canadians Ottawa
- Catholic Centre for Immigrants
- Lebanese and Arab Community Centre
- Asian and East Indian community groups

The committee discussed the following strategies to attract and sustain potential ACE members:

- attend community events
- attending meetings and speak to members
- change the ACE meeting format to be more action oriented
- ACE should be more consultative
- invite more diverse speakers to present community voice
- create a welcoming and safe space for individuals and community groups to share experiences
- communicate the mandate of ACE and convey the importance of participation
- investigate barriers to participation which include the timing of the meeting, the location of the meeting, and the communication of the meeting invitation
- connect with location community health centres, resource centres and community housing;
- focus on commonalities
- cultivate a feeling of belonging
- host ACE meetings in various communities and community spaces
- strengthen communications and share community activities and student voice
- gather and share best practices,
- focus on qualitative reporting
- use culturally appropriate sociometrics to evaluate the work of the committee and the District
- focus on the quantitative results (i.e. have the suspension rates for black students increased or decreased)
- advocate for students and help to diffuse situations prior to escalation

The committee also noted the importance of:

- maintaining communication, collaborating with diverse communities and remaining open to possibility;
- strengthening communications and the mechanism for sharing community voice;
- gathering and sharing best practices;
- supporting and maintaining a presence at events related to the mandate i.e., Black History Month, Rainbow Youth Forum and the Indigenous Youth Symposium;
- the collection of qualitative and quantitative data;
- the implementation of directives like the United Nations International Decade of People of African Descent;
- improving the graduation rates of diverse groups;
- the collection of experiences from both teachers and students;
- the creation of a diary of inclusion and equity; and
- the administrative support of Board Services as an indicator of legitimacy.

Mr. Sutton expressed the view that sustained community involvement will be the challenge. He noted that the commitment to ACE and continued attendance is critical to the work of the committee and must be conveyed in any information and invitations to potential individual and community members.

Ms. Hayles expressed the view that the committee be more flexible and allow for members to call-in to meetings using a poly-com.

Dr. Stanley expressed the view that it is important for potential members to see results. He advised that ACE focus on a specific issue over the course of the year. He encouraged those present to bring and share a story from the community at the next meeting of a student's experience with an equity issue that may or may not have been appropriately dealt with. He and Mr. Sutton agreed that it would be interesting to share those stories as part of the campaign to attract members on the District website.

Ms. Fjeld expressed the view that the strategy to increase ACE membership be focused on how the District can move the barometer on the issue of racism. She shared that the District must acknowledge the presence of racism and work to include the voices of community members.

5. For Decision

5.1 COW Representative

Diversity Coordinator noted that owing to the work of Trustee Ellis and his motion to the Board, ACE now have a seat at the Committee of the Whole. She encouraged members to nominate others or self-nominate to fill the vacancy. She advised that COW meet twice monthly and that the representative would have an opportunity to bring the ACE voice to the discussion and would then bring highlights of COW discussions back to ACE.

Voting members Jane Fjeld and Nadine Clarke respectfully withdrew their names from consideration for the position. The remaining voting members of ACE present advised they would review the time commitment and personal schedules before making a decision to accept the appointment. Ms. Hayles indicated that she could be considered as an alternate after the municipal elections on 22 October 2018.

6. For Information

6.1 Board Update

Trustee Olsen-Harper shared that the municipal election will take place on 22 October 2018.

6.2 District Equity Update

Equity and Diversity Coordinator Lawrence advised that the District will announce the name of the new Director of Education this fall. Director Adams will retire at the end of 2018.

Superintendent Baker noted that despite recent announcements by the conservative government, the District is committed to equity and the work of the committee and the District will continue.

Dr. Stanley noted that the provincial sub-committee on anti-Semitism had been disbanded.

Mr. Sutton expressed the view that the work of ACE is significant and during these times even more so and as such members must not let things out of their control derail the effort.

7. New Business

Ms. Girvin noted that the District will recognize the passing of the motion on recognizing the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent at the Tuesday 2 October 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting. A copy of the

motion has been framed and the District will hang the motion at the meeting. Ms. Girvin urged ACE members to attend the meeting and the ceremony.

Ms. Hayles requested a copy of the District's Organization Chart.

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence introduced the District's new Equity Instructional Coach, Sue Rice.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Stacey-Ann Morris, Acting Chair, Advisory Committee on Equity