

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY

October 24, 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), Sonia Nadon-Campbell (Special Education Advisory Committee), Susan Cowin (Special Education Advisory Committee, Alternate), Ryan Doucette (Young Leaders Advisory Council)

Non-Voting Members: Rob Campbell (Trustee), Chris Ellis (Trustee), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Curriculum Services), Jacqueline Lawrence (Equity and Diversity Coordinator)

Staff and Guests: Lynn Scott (Trustee), Ganaaboute Gagne (Student Trustee), Kenneth Mak (Vice-Principal), Leigh Fenton (Board/Committee Coordinator), Caretta Williams, Fatuma Samatar, Karim Mekki, Riaz Mostaghim

1. Welcome/Land Acknowledgment

Acting Chair Hayles called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. and acknowledged the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Territory. She thanked the Algonquin Nation for hosting the meeting on their land.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Ryan Doucette

THAT the agenda be approved.

Superintendent Baker requested that item 6.3 OCDSB Process to Address Suspension with Anecdotal Evidence be removed.

OCDSB Process to Address Suspension with Anecdotal Evidence be removed.

Moved by Ryan Doucette

THAT the agenda be approved, as amended.

Carried

3. Community Voice (delegations)

There were no delegations or expressions of community voice.

4. Review of Advisory Committee on Equity Report

4.1 26 September 2019

Move by Harvey Brown,

THAT the Advisory Committee on Equity report dated 26 September 2019 be received.

The members requested the following revisions:

- Trustees Blackburn and Scott be added to the list of attendees;
- Reference to Ms. Rice should be amended to Ms. Campbell;
- Amend the spelling of Chair Hayles on folio 4; and
- Bullet one of item 4.3 on folio 3 be amended to read "Trustee Ellis requested that the committee consider the addition of the Annual Student Achievement Report (ASAR) or student suspension report".

Move by Harvey Brown,

THAT the Advisory Committee on Equity report dated 26 September 2019 be received, as amended.

Carried

4.2 Long Range Agenda

The long range agenda was provided for information. The members requested the items be numbered in rank order of priority.

4.3 Action Tracking Report

The action tracking report was provided for information.

5. Action/Discussion/Information Items

5.1 ACE Meeting Dates and Locations

Information on upcoming ACE meeting dates and locations was provided for information.

5.2 The Importance of Public Education

Chair Hayles advised that she had requested this item be added to the agenda for discussion by ACE members and expressed concern about the future of public education.

Trustee Campbell commented that the requirement for students to take courses online may be open to the private sector and there is a lot still unknown particularly around the barriers of accessing online content by families equitably. He expressed the view that the primary purpose of public education is to create critically-minded citizens. Equity is at the core of public education and the reason why the province funds it. He added that ACE can act as a guardian for a strong public education system.

Ms. Fjeld expressed concern that ACE's role within the public education framework is limited but its relationship with the community can help galvanize the community in the event that it may be required.

Chair Hayles expressed concern that the results of identity-based data collection may highlight disparities in the black and indigenous communities that could raise questions about the efficacy of the public education system.

5.3 ACE Membership

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence provided the committee with the Membership Committee's report on ACE membership process (attached as Appendix A). Diversity Coordinator Lawrence shared the process the membership sub-committee will undertake to select the members from the 39 applications received.

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

- An orientation session for all ACE members will be held in December 2019. It was suggested that the orientation session be held at 440 Albert Street. Staff will confirm the availability of the facility;
- Applicants include racialized Africans, persons with disabilities, and two-spirit individuals;
- Many of the applicants live in the western part of the District;
- Some applicants did not provide information to assess their application and were disqualified from the process as a result;
- Many of the current members expressed interest in continuing with ACE and Ms. Morgan indicated that she would prefer to be a community member at large rather than a voting member;
- Diversity of the membership is required and the addition of alternates would be preferred to ensure quorum;
- Indigenous voices will be represented at the organizational level;

- ACE will extend an invitation to the Indigenous Education Advisory Council to seek a representative;
- Children's Aid Society (CAS) and Police Services have expressed interest in having a representative on the committee;
- Matrices will be used to review and shortlist the candidates. Candidates will be contacted and interviewed. A report recommending members will be presented to the committee for their approval;
- ACE is seeking representation from seven community organizations;
- Trustee Campbell queried whether or not any of the candidates or community organizations represented low socio-economic status;
- Trustee Scott advised that the appointment of a Chair would be the first order of business for the first meeting. She encouraged staff to request a short biography from each candidate to be provided to the membership;
- Mr. Doucette expressed concern about the structure of the community, particularly the member at large position and the mechanism for making decisions. Trustee Ellis noted that ACE can operate in an informal or consensus model which would include the voices of those who are non-voting; and
- The 23 January 2020 ACE meeting will be held at 440 Albert Street.

5.4 Appointment of Representative and Alternate member to Committee of the Whole

Acting Chair Hayles and Mr. Brown are the current ACE representatives assigned to the Committee of the Whole. It was suggested that the appointment of new representatives be delayed until the membership is confirmed.

Trustee Ellis highlighted the importance of the ACE representation at the Committee of the Whole and encouraged the members to attend and provide comments.

6. Standing Items

6.1 Identity-based Data Collection

During the discussion of Superintendent Baker's update on Identity-Based Data collection the following points were noted:

- On 16 October 2019, principals engaged in a half-day of training on an equity, diversity and inclusion model;

- Staff were joined by Renée Bazile-Jones of Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) who helped the District develop its equity and diversity training modules;
- The District equity learning plan will be shared with all staff. All staff will complete the training modules;
- All the principals were provided with the unconscious bias action plan at the end of the training session to encourage and support their understanding of their own biases and the consequences and possible actions that could be taken to address the bias;
- A representative from the Ottawa Black Educators Network (OBEN) shared that the newly formed organization was created to support all learners but with a particular focus on students of Caribbean and African descent. The representative shared that one of the OBEN's long term goals is to recruit Black educators and support Black parent engagement. The OBEN has encouraged input from the community and will be hosting a workshop on 23 November 2019 to support the District's efforts in identity-based data collection to ensure community participation;
- The identity-based data collection survey will be translated into several languages. Language and information on the identity-based data collection will be user-friendly to ensure the google translate option can adequately convey the message;
- The survey will be open for completion from 26 November 2019 to 13 December 2019;
- Multi-Cultural Liason Officers will be deployed to help parents complete the survey during the survey period; and
- Chair Hayles expressed the view that office administrators should also receive unconscious bias training. Superintendent Baker advised that staff plan to provide opportunities for all staff to access the equity and diversity training modules. She added that at the secondary level, professional development in November will be dedicated to equity.

6.2 Mental Health Strategy

Superintendent Baker advised that a report with the revised Mental Health Strategy will be presented at an upcoming Committee of the Whole Meeting. The document will be reflective of comments received by a number of advisory committees, staff and community organizations.

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

- Trustee Scott clarified that the ACE motion has been referred to staff for inclusion in their work on the mental health strategy. She noted the following actions have resulted from the ACE motion:
 - Consultations with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), ACE, and the Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC);
 - Exploration and application for funding;
 - A literature review on the barriers to accessing mental health services for Indigenous youth and youth of African descent;
 - Collaboration with community organizations;
 - Scaling up a peer to peer pilot project;
 - The creation of a youth advisory panel;
 - Focus groups with students who identify as Indigenous or African descent to learn about their experiences in accessing mental health services in schools and their community; and
 - A survey of staff on their knowledge of pathways to care in the school and the community.
- Ms. Alorut expressed concern that the implementation will be too late for many Indigenous students who are already experiencing delays in accessing support. She queried when students can expect action. Superintendent Baker noted that the mental health strategy is mandated by the Ministry. Staff will be creating a mental health framework for the District. Superintendent Symmonds and Dr. Petra Duschner will be invited to return to ACE to provide insight into the actions and timelines associated with the implementation of the Mental Health Strategy;
- Mental Health has been added as a standing item to the ACE agenda to ensure the conversation continues and actions are reported on;
- Trustee Scott commented that in agenda planning meetings members can request that staff attend ACE meetings to provide updates;
- Chair Hayles expressed the view that the ACE motion was tabled at COW but that no communication on its status was reported back to the committee; and
- Committee of the Whole and Board meetings are live-streamed and recorded and ACE members can always access the youtube recording of the meetings to listen to the discussion.

7. Department Update

Superintendent Baker noted that Indigenous Youth Symposium held on 24 October 2019 was well attended. She noted that the symposium featured workshops for both students and educators and featured a blanket exercise with an Inuit perspective. There were 27 community organizations present with tables that staff and students could visit.

Student Trustee Gagne provided a brief overview of the day. Indigenous students were encouraged to invite friends. He noted that the day ended with a circle in the gymnasium.

Ms. Nadon Campbell congratulated students on the event. She noted that it is important for Indigenous youth to see and celebrate their culture, for many grow up not knowing their culture.

Ms. Alorut pointed out that not all Indigenous students were invited. She suggested that rather than have Indigenous students invite friends, that an invitation could be extended to all Indigenous secondary students in the District.

Chair Hayles requested that a report on the Rainbow Youth Symposium to be held on 14 November 2019 be provided to ACE and IEAC that is reflective of student voice.

Superintendent Baker noted that the feedback from participants at events like the Indigenous Youth Symposium and the Rainbow Youth Forum is gathered and integrated into several reports used by staff. She indicated that staff could provide a one-page document consolidating the feedback. Diversity Coordinator Lawrence added that the students plan the events for the students.

Student Trustee Gagne expressed the view that it is important that the students have ownership of the events and that they not be overly institutionalized. He noted that the events offer students an opportunity to gain experience and are a day of celebration and joy.

8. New Business

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence presented Ms. Fjeld with a token of appreciation upon her retirement from the Advisory Committee on Equity. Ms. Fjeld thanked the members of ACE and expressed her admiration for Diversity Coordinator Lawrence and the work of ACE.

Trustee Scott advised that the 2019 Parent Conference and School Council Training Day will be held on 9 November 2019 at Longfields Davidson Heights Secondary School. She added that childcare is available on site.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Elaine Hayles, Chair, Advisory Committee on Equity