

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

**November 14, 2019
6:00 pm
Gloucester High School
2060 Ogilvie Road
Ottawa, Ontario**

Members: Raiglee Alorut, Inini McHugh

Non-Voting Members: Wendy Hough (Trustee), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction), Jody Alexander (Vice-Principal, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education), Jesse Kavanaugh (Student), Chantel Verner (Instructional Coach)

Staff and Guests: Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Ganaaboute Gagne (Student Trustee), Josh Lewis (Coordinator, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education), Nina Stanton, Kareena Butler, Leigh Fenton (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Opening

Vice-Principal Alexander called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Mr. Lewis opened the meeting with a smudging.

2. New Business

Student Trustee Gagne shared that both he and Student Trustee Wijeweera have been visiting schools to speak to students about their learning experiences. Through these visits, they have become cognizant that the 'Implementation of Indigenous Studies' Course, an Grade 11 English language course with an Indigenous focus, serves to deliver the greatest in-class appeal to non-Indigenous students. Some Indigenous students have expressed disparagement towards the program, as cultural context is rife with complexities. Ms. Verner is an Educator who leads the delivery of these courses. She responded that these courses were not designed to teach culture and the message provided at the outset of the course highlights that the teacher is not the expert. She added that in advance of every session, notice is provided to students describing the upcoming course outline. This disclosure of potentially sensitive material gives the student the opportunity to decide if the subject matter will induce anxiety or trauma. Vice-Principal Alexander encouraged Trustee Gagne to bring forth any further concerns heard from students. She noted that the program is being offered through the assistance of Indigenous Leaders and community builders.

A student requested an update on the plan to offer Indigenous language credit courses to preserve culture. Mr. Mitchell responded that one of the hurdles at this time is the lack of accredited instructors from the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) to teach the courses. A way forward is being created to have The Inuit Elder's Circle recommend to the OCT to recognize teaching staff, through their language fluency, and subsequently provide certification to teach. There is potential to have language credit courses offered at the high school level. Mr. Mitchell noted that Inuktitut is the first language being supported by the 'Elders circle' however the Ministry of Education is looking at this model for other Indigenous languages across the province. Mr. Mitchell presented this information at the Independent First Nations Language Gathering on 7 November 2019. In supporting curriculum, in some elementary schools 'talking circles' are part of the teacher's toolkit. Specific expectations in these circles include speaking to communicate and listening to understand by reading stories aloud and to hear the sounds of language in songs and poems.

Mr. McHugh suggested the Community Indigenous Educators meet with the District's Learning Support Services (LSS) Team, ideally before the launch of the school year. Vice-Principal Alexander plans to make this request to build relationships and develop knowledge towards common goals, group discussions and synthesis of ideas. A few members of the OCDSB Indigenous Education Learning Team recently had the opportunity to meet with LSS to discuss in-year strategy.

Mr. McHugh queried whether there was progress on staffing expansion for the OCDSB Indigenous Education Learning Team. Superintendent Baker responded that there has been new growth on the team, whereas the Equity and Diversity Team is staffed with one person. Trustee Blackburn established that expectations must be realistic within the climate of budget cuts to public education, noting that she would be pleased should the staffing complement remain at the current status quo.

Ms. Alorut inquired on behalf of several parents, wishing to learn more about the invitation process to attend the Indigenous Youth Symposium. Vice-Principal Alexander explained that the information is sent to all District Principals. The Principals from every high school invite four or more Indigenous students to use the day of learning to attend the Symposium. These invited students are encouraged to invite a friend, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, to attend with them. There were over 325 students who attended this year. A student expressed interest in changing the venue in coming years. Ms. Verner noted that Algonquin College, Carleton University and The University of Ottawa all have offered space in their venues for future Indigenous Youth Symposiums. She added that the exposure to post-secondary learning environments benefit high school students.

Student Trustee Gagne encouraged disclosure of the purpose of the video booth footage collected at the Indigenous Youth Symposium. Vice-Principal Alexander

acknowledged that consent from the students will be sought in advance of any video production.

3. Presentations and Discussion

There were no presentations scheduled.

4. Reports

4.1 17 October 2019 IEAC Report

The 17 October 2019 report was received. Vice-Principal Alexander thanked the council for their feedback and contributions to the Assessment Tool for Indigenous Education. A revised version of this document, along with the Board Action Plan on Indigenous Education will be presented to this group early in 2020. There was a request for an organization chart to accompany these important documents.

4.2 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Baker highlighted the following events and matters:

- The 13th Annual Rainbow Youth Forum on 9 November 2019 was a well-attended equity event;
- Indigenous Students on a cross-boundary transfer are encouraged to speak with their school's administration or guidance staff if they require support with transportation. Transportation applications are provided by schools for specialized circumstances. Trustee Hough suggested a contact telephone number be added to the District website; and
- A great amount of data is being collected by the school to support various initiatives. Discussions are ongoing with the District to address how best to use the collected data.

5. Information and Invitation

Vice-Principal Alexander wished everyone a Merry Christmas. The next meeting is scheduled to be held on 16 January 2020.

Mr. Mitchell mentioned that he has shared the work of IEAC at the Assistant Deputy Minister level and commented that he was proud of the advancements the council has made to date.

6. Closing

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.