



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

**January 16, 2020
6:00 pm
Gloucester High School
2060 Ogilvie Road
Ottawa, Ontario**

Members: Monique Monatch, Albert Dumont, Nina Stanton, Inini McHugh, Raiglee Alorut, Benny Michaud

Staff and Guests: Wendy Hough, Dorothy Baker, Jody Alexander, Ganaaboute Gagne, Chantel Verner, Kris Meawasige, Josh Lewis, Leigh Fenton

1. Opening

Vice-Principal Alexander called the meeting to order at 6:19 p.m.

Albert Dumont opened the meeting with a teaching.

2. New Business

Superintendent Baker announced that Ms. Alorut has accepted a position as the Strategic Planning Resource Adviser for the Ministry of Education in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Ms. Alorut said she will always go where she is most needed to improve the lives of her people. Superintendent Baker noted that Ms. Alorut has played an integral role on the Inuit Elder's Circle and wished her all the best for her next journey.

Mr. McHugh reported on the following items:

- He was grateful to have had the opportunity to meet and prepare a presentation for a psychologist and social workers who are part of the Learning Support Services (LSS) Team;
- He noted that five students in his program will be enrolling in post-secondary education at the end of the year, and requested additional information on the Prior Learning Assessment Review (PLAR);
- He recognized Geordie Walker, Principal of Hillcrest High School, for his dedication to the needs of his students; and

- He highlighted that only \$2.7 million dollars was allocated to Indigenous services in the 2018-2019 operating budget. He requested additional information on the funding formulas to support indigenous student learning and well-being.

Superintendent Baker acknowledged Mr. McHugh's contribution to improving student experience. She plans to invite Finance Manager Kevin Gardner to speak to IEAC about the budget, its connection to equity and the allocation of funds. She explained that grants from the Ministry are either *sweatered* (meaning they have to be spent on a certain program or in a certain way), or *unsweatered* (meaning the board has flexibility about how they spend the money). For example, some funds are allocated specifically for Indigenous Education as a part of the Board Action Plan. One way funds are allocated to the District by the Ministry of Education is through the examination of the number of self-identifying Indigenous students. Vice Principal Alexander referred to the current process for Indigenous self-identification; in consultation with the community, the former pamphlet format will be updated to a new self-identification card. Parents and guardians of children under 18 years of age are able to identify their children as having First Nations, Métis or Inuit ancestry. Students over 18 years of age are able to self-identify as having First Nations, Métis or Inuit ancestry. Superintendent Baker mentioned that there will be a future discussion at IEAC about the data that has been collected from the "Valuing Voices" survey focused on identity-based data collection.

3. Presentations and Discussion

3.1 Report 20-111, Supporting Indigenous Learners at the OCDSB

Vice Principal Alexander reported that the District had approximately 1400 self-identified Indigenous students in the 2018-2019 school year. Over the past three years the number of families who have chosen to self-identify as Indigenous within the OCDSB has remained constant. This number is consistent with that of the 2016 Canadian Census wherein the Indigenous population is reported at 2% in Ottawa.

The report was presented to the District's Director's Executive Council where Vice Principal Alexander had the opportunity to showcase the work of the Indigenous Education Team to senior staff. She explained that OCDSB staff across the District is on a learning journey spanning from awareness to adopting the Indigenous pedagogy into their classrooms.

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

- The addition of the Indigenous Student Success Coordinator (ISSC) in 2018-2019 increased the capacity of the team significantly. The ISSC, together with the Indigenous Student Success and Re-Engagement Coordinator (ISSRC) supported 33 schools (Kindergarten

to grade 12), worked directly with 638 students, facilitated 112 student circles, held 111 parent and guardian meetings, and met with 457 school staff;

- Efforts to support Indigenous students and to create a network of peers have resulted in the creation of a youth group, Original Voices, in the 2018-2019 school year;
- The 2019-2020 Board Action plan will include the implementation of a Ministry funded Indigenous Graduation Coach. The job posting will be circulated both internally and externally. The District is also posting two Graduation Coaches for Black Students;
- Mr. Lewis supported the notion of a graduation coach. He noted he is unable to visit all schools frequently enough to provide continuous high-level support to students and educators on a daily basis;
- Mr. Dumont recounted that he had heard on Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) radio that increasingly, more students are having difficulty reading and the Ontario Human Rights Commission has become involved. He taught his granddaughter how to read and spell using the Indigenous ways of learning where the characters in the alphabet were drawn like pictures. Ms. Alorut mentioned that in her community they sing the words instead of reading to play with the sound of the word;
- In the 2018-2019 school year, the shortage of occasional teaching staff had a direct impact on the delivery of professional development. Only 22% of the budgeted Ministry funds of \$56,845 was disbursed in the programming to support the implementation of a revised curriculum for history and social studies;
- Various peer-to-peer Indigenous mentorship programs exist within the city. The Indigenous School Mentorship program offers an opportunity for Carleton University students to work as peer mentors with Indigenous elementary and high school students in the Ottawa area, through involvement in the classroom, lunchtime or after-school programs and/or cultural clubs.
- Trustee Gagne attested to participating in afternoon co-op programs within the District, alongside two other First Nations high school students from South Western Ontario. They work with younger students at Fisher Park Public School and Summit Alternative to teach mathematics; and
- A request was made for a follow-up report detailing the results from the 2019-2020 Board Action Plan.

4. Reports

4.1 14 November 2019 IEAC Report

The 14 November 2019 IEAC Report was received by the council.

4.2 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Baker reported on the following items:

- Andrew Parent is the new principal of Gloucester High School and she is confident in his abilities to do outstanding work;
- Data is being collected on the English Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis and Inuit Voices (NBE3U/C/E) compulsory course. Eighteen of the twenty-five high schools are offering the course at all pathway levels. The goal is to offer the course at every high school by September 2021. NBE3U/C/E teachers are unable to meet for professional development at this point due to the labour unrest. All professional learning is on hold.
- A review of land acknowledgement in schools is underway to ensure that the articulation is not tokenism. Vice Principal Alexander and the Indigenous Education Team have made many presentations across the District on the meaning of land acknowledgements. Ms. Manatch queried whether the wording was developed independently and added that expressing a personal connection to land acknowledgement is important. Superintendent Baker responded that a land acknowledgement wording guide has been created in consultation with the community, however there are staff who internalize the acknowledgement and identify who they are in relation to the land. Trustee Gagne added that at Glebe Collegiate Institute, a land acknowledgment is part of the morning announcements on the public address system, spoken at the beginning of announcements and opens staff meetings. The words spoken are always different depending on who is delivering them. Mr. Dumont stated that he and Ms. Manatch have been working with the Canada Council of the Arts to help them with a customized land acknowledgement; and
- A survey regarding smudging was initialized to determine from principals which sites were engaged in opportunities for smudging for students, staff and/or community. Of the 96 respondents, 9 sites indicated that they were providing this opportunity. Creating a protocol for smudging is on Vice Principal Alexander's workplan this year. She plans to ensure principals are aware of available smudge bundle materials for First Nations and Métis students and teachers to use should they wish to smudge. Ms. Alorut requested more information

about a future policy for lighting the Inuit qulliq, the traditional soapstone lamps used in ceremonial purposes.

5. Closing

Mr. Dumont offered a closing at 8:16 p.m.