

On-line Questions from Advisory Council on Equity Members

4 June 2020

1. How does (the work of the committee) translate into support from Educator Allies in the White and non-BIPOC communities? Is one way the hiring and retention strategy of educators who support that represent the community (BIPOC)?
 - A. Equitable hiring practices, staff census and staff affiliate groups are intentionalized in the draft Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap. Currently, there is a Black Educators Network and Rainbow Educators network in place. Many schools both elementary and secondary have affinity student groups e.g. Black Youth Diversity Clubs, Rainbow Clubs, Indigenous Voices etc..whose voices also inform the work.
2. Most of our ESL students come from a very teacher centered educational system. I have heard from these families that they are very lost and they don't know how to help their children. What plans do we have for them?
 - A. The Equity team has been working with OCISO and OLIP to identify specific issues and strategies to support ELL students and families which include accessing the technology and platforms, communication and interpretation of information, etc...Translation of "how to" videos for google classroom and google meet have been developed in Arabic with more to come. Translation of key District communications has been undertaken. At the school level, staff and MLO's are helping to identify specific needs of families and addressing them. There are many challenges remaining and a communication and engagement strategy is identified in the draft Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap to specifically address ongoing support.
3. How do we get through to teachers that when they insist that students turn on their cameras during classroom meetings, that it increases inequity? Students may live in poverty and not want their teachers and classmates to see their homes, they may be in a situation where they have escaped abusers and not want to risk being located (these meetings can and have been hacked into), they may be living in Foster Care situations, they may still live with an abuser who tightly controls their access to internet and communications with outside individuals. Teachers are demanding that student's turn on their cameras and it is a violation of privacy.
 - A. Communication to educators around sensitivity and equitable practices has taken place. Students may choose whether or not to use video at their discretion.
4. Do you have the numbers of how many students are participating in Learn at Home? Are there some schools with lower participation rates? Please delve into the statistics on participants by group: Special education, English Language Learners, radicalized and indigenous.
 - A. We do not have the specific numbers disaggregated by group as some of those data points would be through the Identity-Based Data which is in progress. All schools reached out to families who were not engaging and connection was made with them all. There were a variety of reasons provided for not participating. There was a drop in engagement towards the end of June. The District will be monitoring participation rates as we head into September for any situation requiring an online component.

5. Inuktitut is many parents' first language. With 40% of the population living outside of their traditional territories and Ontario seeing a 65% increase in Inuit population within 5 years, there is a need to consider translation of documents/communications into Inuktitut as well.
 - A. Inuktitut has been identified by the Indigenous Education team as a critical language for translation.
6. What was the rationale in stating grades could be revised if the student demonstrated evidence of improved learning while at home. This does not take into consideration the varying schedules/availability to support that the elementary parent community is experiencing during the pandemic. How is this equitable?
 - A. At elementary, grades were based on assessment and evaluation as of March 13. Teachers were able to use professional judgement to determine if there was improvement on that assessment as a result of learning after March 13, keeping the variability of student and family ability to access in mind. The key in this was to ensure that students were not penalized following March 13. Educators were encouraged to personalize learning for students to optimize their success based on their individual circumstances.
7. What supports are available for students with individual education plans?
 - A. Learning Support teachers, Learning Resource teachers, Educational Assistants and central staff worked with classroom teachers and students in support of students with Individual Education Plans.
8. What type of support is available for students in French Immersion for whose parents do not speak any French?
 - A. This has been raised provincially as an issue and continues to be a challenge for parents who do not speak French. Early, Middle, and Core French teachers are available for support for students.
9. How is the Identity-Based Data Collection survey work acknowledged and incorporated?
 - A. This work very much informs the Equity, Human Rights and Indigenous roadmap going forward. The baseline data will be key in establishing measurements of success.
10. Does the Identity-Based Data Collection survey examine suicidal ideation rates in students?
 - A. It does not examine this specifically however within the disability section there was an option to identify mental health.
11. Will we have the availability to review either the raw data or unsuppressed data from the Identity-Based Data Collection survey?
 - A. There is a link on the OCDSB website under Valuing Voices to download the public use data file. This is a requirement of the provincial data standards.

12. Please explain the Equity and Diversity training in place for staff. Mandating this training is an extremely important point when it comes to student performance and inclusivity.

- A. Currently, there are two mandatory modules ~ Diversity and Inclusion Fundamentals and Unconscious Bias. In addition, there are on-line Equity Talks sessions facilitated by the Equity team, Indigenous Education session facilitated by the Indigenous Education team. Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy training is delivered to key educators and staff on an ongoing basis. Finally, there is a comprehensive approach to training outlined in the draft Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap.