

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY REPORT

July 23, 2020

6:00 pm

Zoom

Meeting

Voting Members: Elaine Hayles, Nicki Dunlop, Carrie-Lynn Barkley, Deepika Grover, Ayan Yusuf Karshe, Chandonette Johnson-Arowolo (Jaku Konbit), Meghan Wills (Parents 4 Diversity), Maria Teresa Garcia (Ottawa Community Immigrant Services (OCISCO), Nicole Parsons (Tungasuvvingat Inuit)

Non-Voting Members: Chris Ellis (Trustee), Lynn Scott (Trustee, ex officio), Rob Campbell (Trustee), June Girvan, Sonia Nadon-Campbell (Special Education Advisory Committee), Susan Cowin (Special Education Advisory Committee), David Wildman (OCEOTA)

Staff and Guests: Justine Bell (Trustee), Joy Liu (Student Trustee), Charles Chen (Student Trustee), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Jacqueline Lawrence (Equity and Diversity Coordinator), Leigh Fenton (Board Coordinator)

1. Welcome

In the absence of Chair Hayles, Carrie-Lynn Barkley called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Meaghan Wills,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

3. Review of Advisory Committee on Equity Report

3.1 Meeting Report 4 June 2020

Chair Hayles joined the meeting and assumed the chair.

Moved by Carrie-Lynn Barkley,

THAT the Advisory Committee on Equity Report of 4 June 2020 be received.

Carried

4. Action/Discussion/Information Items

4.1 Indigenous, Human Rights and Equity Roadmap

Superintendent Baker welcomed Mr. Inini McHugh to the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) and advised that he will be serving on as a representative of the Indigenous Education Advisory Council.

The committee had before them the draft for further consultation as a group. Superintendent Baker explained that mapping the Roadmap priorities began in the fall and is aligned with the District's 2019- 2023 Strategic Plan. The Roadmap will be informed by the various phases of data projects, including the Identity Based Data Collection project.

By an email from Coordinator Lawrence on 6 July 2020, the committee was encouraged to review and contribute written or verbal feedback on the draft document *The Indigenous, Human Rights and Equity Roadmap* which detailed the priorities to address systemic barriers that impact access, opportunity and outcomes.

Three questions were asked as part of the consultation:

1. How does the work outlined in the Roadmap help to further equitable access, opportunities and outcomes for all students?
2. How do we continue to engage the community?
3. What measures will tell you that we have made progress in shifting outcomes and culture?

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

- To see outcome differences, add more language on the magnifying and multiplying effect of intersectionality;
- Canvas existing staff for their feedback on discriminatory barriers in the workplace;
- People of African Decent should be recognized as a distinct group, according to the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and the District has adopted the proclamation. Therefore, in the title of the Roadmap, the reference to People of African Descent should be reflected;
- Is there a resource list for procuring coaches into individual schools? What criteria are featured in the hiring policies to validate “a minimum level of competence”;

- Explain how teacher competence in Equity or Indigenous Education translates into the creation of an effective curriculum to balance achievement and well-being;
- Present the school improvement plan to ACE to show how these goals are put into action;
- Revise the second bullet in the Indigenous Education Roadmap under the heading 'Programming and Support for Students' to read, "Redesign Social Studies, History and Geography, Grade K-12 English to include and represent Indigenous histories, perspectives and ways of knowing in content, resources and delivery";
- The introduction to the Roadmap speaks of dismantling and disrupting systematic and structural barriers that prevent everyone from participating, excelling and feeling valued. The integrity of the air quality in older, inner city schools must be addressed. Part of this map should examine the resources that exist in some schools and not in others (i.e. playgrounds and music rooms) through fundraising capabilities gained by parental education and income levels;
- Land-based Indigenous teaching must come from the community;
- In the "Securing Accountability" section, specify the parameters of a staff performance appraisal and indicate measures of consequence if the accountability is breeched;
- An Equity Scorecard will accompany the Roadmap in the final iteration of the document;
- The specific, measurable action items were appreciated in each of the themes of Indigenous Education, Equity and Human Rights;
- When considering engagement and connectedness, bring new ideas forward to meet families in their own communities;
- Avoid the Pan-Indigeneity approach to the Indigenous perspective. Oftentimes in policy documents, the diverse nature of Indigenous cultures is being lost. In the final Roadmap document the principal focus needs to remain on First Nations, Métis and Inuit with the caveat that all Indigenous Canadians can access services. Community partners are to be consulted in the review of the curriculum or policies and procedures specific to the Indigenous community;
- Mention the keywords 'anti-colonial stance' in the second paragraph of the Introduction section alongside the words "anti-racism and anti-oppression work";

- The development and implementation of new black studies courses was applauded;
- Consider if anti-racism training will create change at the rapid pace that change needs to be created. Part of the training must include the unlearning of privilege;
- Contemplate other effective models of delivering the curriculum rather than the use of limited resources to support the change of inherent covert or internalized teacher biases. Make space to prototype new models of curriculum development and delivery so that students might benefit from courses delivered by subject matter experts;
- A student voice maintained that investing in teacher training is a crucial part in dismantling structure. Teachers are in part responsible for student success. Where there are cases proving that a teacher is not demonstrating good will, a disciplinary process should be in place;
- On behalf of the Student Senate, Trustee Ellis noted that students have requested a safe mechanism to bring forward complaints of racist activity in the school;
- Engage the community with a cyclical consultation process;
- Mr. Wildman noted that occasional teachers desire to be a part of the process invoking change in the schools;
- Build in Equity Walks to be conducted through the school classrooms by administrators. Notice how children engage in class discussions. Look for what is on the wall. Listen to how do the students interact with one another. Observe if the teachers are comfortable teaching and talking about their curriculum from multiple perspectives;
- Consider how to put together a curriculum that humanizes students and affirms their culture and history (i.e. Black students do not want to just hear about slavery and Indigenous students do not want to only hear about residential schools);
- The Roadmap contains old vocabulary. To move forward in a new way, new vocabulary must be used. "Race" and its ideology about human differences arose out of the context of African slavery. The word is a folk idea, not a product of scientific research and discovery. The science of genetics demonstrates that humans cannot be divided into biologically distinct subcategories;
- Examine the purpose of determining the identity of the students. Many people are proud of their varieties of lineage. Identities are not the fixed markers but are instead dynamically created in the moment. Choices that

feel identity-congruent in one situation do not necessarily feel identity-congruent in another situation;

- The language in the Roadmap is written for “others” and “otherness”. Using words like anti-Islamic and anti-Black in discourse may perpetuate the sentiment in a shrouded way. Use positive words like, pro-Black and pro-Islamic;
- There is no mention of White people. White students are being groomed and conditioned to be tolerant to the ‘other’. The system is creating white fragility and white guilt. Black issues are creating issues for White children. Consider that all children are sacred and all children wish to be successful;
- Add a sixth section to the Roadmap to promote the study of humanity;
- To be able to continually engage with the community, the District website could be designed in a more user friendly way;
- Relationship building begins with attending community events like a pow-wow;
- Restorative justice should be listed as an outcome;
- Enlarge the District’s Equity Department to serve the 74,000 students. Hire more diversified staff for outcome improvement;
- Deploy regular student surveys to measure outcomes; and
- To make true progress towards shifting the culture in school, a child should be able to answer ‘yes’ when asked if the school is a friendly space.

Coordinator Lawrence highlighted that in 2018, the senior management team completed awareness and anti-oppression training. Today, there is a group of 150 principals and vice principals who meet regularly to discuss how the inequities are affecting students, families and staff. The conversation revolves around the obstacles they feel as system leaders and how do they leverage support for one another to be able to create and nurture a culture that truly acknowledges dignity and respect for all. This group has taken the conversation to other school boards to promote the model to have honest discourse with system leaders. The District’s superintendents are engaged in one on one coaching with a leading human rights strategist in Canada, District Advisor Carolyn Tanner.

The ‘Let’s Talk Equity Sessions’ delivered by Sue Rice and Coordinator Lawrence have had upwards of 45-100 system-level staff enrolled to join the conversation. While there is a window to do this equity work, they are aware of the undertow of status-quo thinking. Part of the Roadmap work is to re-imagine

how the school system can fully serve the diversity of the population, likewise it is to take the moment in time where equity is on the top of people's minds, with the death of George Floyd and the climate of isolation during COVID-19, to notice the relationship between the individual and the systems.

Trustee Scott noted that the Roadmap does not only apply to staff, the work is a guideline to trustees as well. Equity was made a central piece in the 2019-2023 District Strategic Plan. The direction is moving swiftly from a policy-base to action in the schools.

Superintendent Baker concluded that the Roadmap will hold all people in the school community accountable to do the learning and take the necessary actions. The Culturally Relevant Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) Team is engaged in professional training around the articulation and grounding of the values and practices in equity. The word co-create is prominently featured in the document because the District is attempting to explore true partnership in education. Shifting a culture takes time and a consistent effort.

5. New Business

Coordinator Lawrence noted that the ACE Orientation will occur on 27 August 2020, with an alternate date of 26 August 2020.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned the meeting at 8:36 pm.

Elaine Hayles, Acting Chair, Advisory Committee on Equity