INDIGENOUS EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

December 10, 2020
6:00 pm
Zoom Meeting

Members:	Albert Dumont, Monique Manatch, Inini McHugh, Stephanie Mikki Adams, Romaine Mitchell, Lili Miller
Indigenous Education Staff:	Jody Alexander (Vice-Principal, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education), Kris Meawasige (Indigenous Student Support and Re-engagement Coordinator), Kareena Butler (Indigenous Education Itinerant Teacher), Kyl Morrison (Indigenous Graduation Coach)
Other Staff and Guests:	Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Justine Bell (Trustee), Chris Ellis (Trustee), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Shannon Smith (Superintendent of Instruction), Colin Anderson (System Principal), Joan Oracheski (Manager, Research, Evaluation and Analytics Division), Wayne Alourt, Joe Ross (Science Instructional Coach), Sonia Nadon-Campbell (SEAC), Kim Jerome (Odawa Friendship Centre), Felix Weekes, Francois Gravelle (University of Ottawa) and Leigh Fenton (Board/Committee Coordinator)

1. Opening

Elder Albert Dumont opened the meeting.

2. Community Discussion

No new community discussion items were raised.

3. Delegation

3.1 Felix Weekes, Odawa Native Friendship Centre

Ms. Kim Jerome, the Executive Director of the Odawa Native Friendship Centre, described her support for the Inner-City Children (ICC) – Youth Healers Mentorship Program to expand on the traditional cultural support systems the elders provide by cultivating mentorship in the community. Odawa intends to provide training and support to the Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who

will, in turn, provide mentorship to the next generation of youth protégés. The program aims to become fully self-sustaining, with protégés eventually taking the place of mentors. She stated that Indigenous youth who have mentors are more likely to attend college, show improved attitudes towards learning in school and possess higher self-esteem. One of the goals of the program is to build strong relationships with the school board, local universities and colleges, and the City of Ottawa.

ICC Youth founder, Mr. Felix Weekes, stated that the program began in 1986 for Black youth in Montreal's Little Burgundy community. Today, the mandate of the program remains to foster partnerships with existing social agencies to identify "at risk" children and offer them the opportunity to develop mentor-protégé relationships with students enrolled in undergraduate institutions. The in-school mentoring program uses a social development model promoting both recreation and leisure.

Trustee Ellis noted that as the former school council chair at Rideau High School, he saw the positive impacts of the after school sports program. One of the greatest benefits from the program was the relationships that were built. This resulted in participants confiding in the coaches and addressing issues to the benefit of the children and young adults.

University of Ottawa Associate Professor in the School of Human Kinetics, Francois Gravelle, reported that he is the co-director of the Sports, Exercise and Active Leisure (SEAL) research group. In the past he has collaborated with Mr. Weekes to provide support through an in-school mentorship program aimed at assisting children and youth "at risk" on their journey towards school and community successful integration. The SEAL/SELA research group at the School of Human Kinetics has recently been working with Mr. Weekes to help in the adaptation of a mentorship/social integration program, in conjunction with the Odawa indigenous program. They have begun discussions leading to the development of targeted applied research initiatives, involving Indigenous youths aimed at the adaptation and implementation of the program, focused on upholding Indigenous culture.

In response to questions during the discussion period, the following points were raised:

- In response to Vice Principal Alexander's inquiry as to whether the framework of the program is solely sports-based or if land-based teaching will be incorporated, Ms. Jerome responded that the program is to be Indigenous-led. She explained that they are working on setting up activities in the bush to re-teach culture. She highlighted that intergenerational trauma can begin to heal through Indigenous mentorship. Mentorship is widely needed for the Indigenous youth who

leave the reserve and become isolated off-reserve. There are plans underway to build a specific youth centre to welcome students from this program at the Odawa Friendship Centre;

- Trustee Ellis stated that in his experience, a program such as this contributes to breaking down some prejudices held, consciously or unconsciously, by non-Indigenous people;

- Mr. Weekes noted that the programming for schools will be primarily located in the Overbrook/Vanier area of the city;

- Mr. Weekes confirmed that this program has not yet been initiated with Indigenous groups but the model was successful with Black students from the OCDSB in former years; and

- Mr. Meawasige noted that 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. This program continues virtually. He queried more information on ICC's continual connection with school boards to maintain communication and build relationships with staff. Mr. Weekes responded that in the past they have worked closely with mentors, teachers and staff bi-weekly or monthly, as required.

Superintendent Baker noted that to protect the interests of the Board, its schools and students, all education-business relationships will be subject to review by the Ottawa-Carleton Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee (OCREAC). Manager Oracheski described the committee as being composed of members from both the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB). The role of the committee is to support and encourage research applications to conduct non-Board initiated research. OCREAC reviews all applications to ensure that proper procedures and guidelines are adhered to when conducting research with students, parents and staff. Manager Oracheski noted that due to the pandemic, all extended research applications have been put on hold until further notice.

Superintendent Baker agreed that she could connect with Ms. Jerome for further details on the program in the future. Ms. Manatch concluded that the program promises to be beneficial and should more questions arise, the Council will connect with ICC.

4. Presentations

4.1. Report 20-085, Annual Report on Student Suspensions (2019-2020) (M.Giroux)

Your Council had before it Report 20-085, presenting the annual report on student suspensions, including findings from analyses undertaken on 2019-2020 student suspension data, in conjunction with Valuing Voices – Identity Matters! Student Survey data, to identify groups of students who may be under or overrepresented in the data and the differences in the rates of student suspension across the District.

Ms. Manatch disclosed that she is a member of the District's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to support the work on reporting with identity based data. She queried additional information on the suppression of data as it pertained to the Inuit population. Manager Oracheski reported that when examining data, the District must be respectful of privacy. Whenever results are reported for a small number of survey-takers, there is a chance that the anonymity of that population may be compromised. If there are fewer than ten students in the target group, the data is required to be suppressed. Ms. Manatch noted that when she participated in the focus group in advance of the launch of the survey, the Indigenous community made a point of explaining that the numbers of Indigenous respondents would be few. She inquired whether the Research, Evaluation and Analytics Division (READ) would continue to suppress data in the analysis of data or combine all Indigenous responses. Manager Oracheski indicated her support for working with the community to come up with an acceptable solution that respects individual privacy.

Manager Oracheski reported that READ is working with Communications and Information Services to prepare an infographic which will breakdown four of the demographic questions from the Valuing Voices survey: race, Indigenous identity, gender identity and disability. In a prototype form, the infographic will include a response option for the Inuit community indicating that there were fewer than ten students who had been suspended, along with the total number of students who had responded. There is also the option of reporting on the broader Indigenous community to include First Nations, Métis and Inuit together. Ms. Miller highlighted that there were less than ten Inuit suspensions of the 146 Inuit families who responded to the survey.

Manager Oracheski shared that READ examined a variety of ways of grouping students due to the way questions were written on the survey. Students could select as many responses options as applied to them. The suspension report used mutually exclusive identity groupings. For example, some students who identified as First Nations may have also identified as Métis or Inuit. The students who answered the survey with multiple identities will not have been reflected in the suspension report data. Another option would be to consider grouping students according to each response option indicated. Even with this approach, there were still fewer than 10 students who identified as Inuit and who were suspended and suppression of data was still required. The impact on the actual suspension rates for First Nations and Métis was reduced by .2% using

this method. The impact on disproportionality and disparity was reduced to .01.

Manager Oracheski explained that disproportionality is a measure of a specific group's overrepresentation or underrepresentation in an outcome relative to their representation in the overall population, whereas disparity is a measure that compares outcomes of one group to that of another. In both cases. A value of 1.0 indicates equal representation or no difference in outcomes. A value greater than 1.0 reflects overrepresentation or higher risk. A value less than 1.0 reflects underrepresentation or lower risk. Calculations of disproportionality and disparity are significantly impacted by small numbers. A general rule-of-thumb is to have a minimum sample size of 10 in a target group and a minimum population size of 30, otherwise estimates are not reliable. Meaningful interpretation of disproportionality rates and disparity ratios require the establishment of a threshold. The District-level thresholds will need to be determined in consultation with community partners in order to identify targets and monitor progress towards addressing existing inequities and inequalities. This will be a key task for the TAG by the end of June 2021.

Ms. Manatch noted that the Indigenous representatives from the community who were encouraged to support the Valuing Voices – Identity Matters! Student Survey specifically requested that the raw data be shared with their community through the Indigenous Education Team at the District. Manager Oracheski responded that the District has identified the need to develop data sharing protocols with First Nation communities as a priority. Most members of the READ team have been trained in the First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP). READ is seeking advice from the Council as to the specific communities or organizations that they should speak to first. Ms. Manatch queried whether the Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC) will have access to the raw data, as the Council is not considered a First Nation. Manager Oracheski acknowledged that there may be other communities and organizations, including the Inuit and Métis communities who may be interested in having access to their data, but the first priority should be with the First Nation communities themselves. She noted that another element of the data standards is the requirement to be producing open data files. While READ has not completed the preparation of the open data file to accompany the suspension report, this work is also underway and will be made available for public access.

Ms. Manatch queried the process and the timeline for sharing the aggregate data with the Indigenous Education Team. Manager Oracheski replied that this discussion will likely need to occur through a meeting with Executive Officer Michele Giroux and Superintendent Baker, in conjunction with the Indigenous Education and Equity and Diversity Teams. Ms. Manatch highlighted that Indigenous people have been the target of research historically and it is a sensitive issue. She underscored that the request to have access to their data

should be facilitated and respected.

Mr. McHugh noted that in some surveys, he has noticed that the respondent must choose from a multiple choice answer rather than an “all that apply” identity. Manager Oracheski submitted that the Valuing Voices – Identity Matters! Student Survey was unique in that students could self-identify in numerous ways. She added that while the Student Information System (Trillium) allows for a singular Indigenous identity category, and offered to share this feedback with the Ministry; however she was unsure how much leverage she would have to make a change.

Ms. Manatch voiced concern that though the Valuing Voices – Identity Matters! Student Survey was written and introduced with a focus on cultural awareness, the analysis of the survey is not being done using an Indigenous lens, but rather a colonial lens, which has yet to show a benefit to the Indigenous community. Secondly, she noted that the student supports to complete the surveys were school-based supports. Indigenous students may not have been provided with adequate, cultural support to assist them with the completion of the exercise.

Mr. Meawasige introduced Ms. Stephanie Adams, Executive Director of the Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families and welcomed her to IEAC. Ms. Adams commended IEAC for its support to Indigenous children, youth and families in Ottawa. She attested to the difficulties settling in an urban setting after living in an isolated local community of 2,500 people. It is thought that upwards of 10,000 Inuit people live in the Ottawa region, however using modern methods of data collection, this number is presumably understated. The Inuit population is growing in Canada’s capital.

Mr. Morrison noted the use of binary language listed throughout the survey and reports. He recommended that this be changed in future reporting to recognize the non-binary population.

In response to a reference group query from Ms. Manatch, Manager Oracheski stated that when calculating disparity indices, a comparison group needs to be identified. In the case of race, the comparison group was "all other students", for example, to calculate disparity for students who identified as Indigenous to the question about race, students who did not select “Indigenous” as a race category would have been included in the comparison group. While the data standards themselves provide examples to consider the group that is least likely to experience barriers or bias and White (European Descent) was amongst them, there was concern that choosing a particular group for comparison would reinforce that particular group as the "standard to strive for" or reinforce privilege. A conversation about appropriate comparisons, not only within READ, but with other jurisdictions undertaking the work across the province, has provided additional opportunities to reflect on possible approaches. Staff has also benefited from webinars and professional learning opportunities that focus

on analyzing data through an equity lens. The group of comparison for the Indigenous identity question, as presented in the suspension report, was the non-Indigenous group. Manager Oracheski queried whether IEAC viewed it as acceptable to draw such a comparison or if the same standards be applied as those to the race question where, for example, the comparison group for First Nation would include the following response options: no Indigenous background, Métis or Inuit. Ms. Manatch questioned the benefit of the disparity approach. Manager Oracheski conveyed that Ontario Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism stipulate that either disparity or disproportionality must be measured and reported. She noted that the data standards are publicly available. A data standards link will be distributed to the IEAC for additional reference information.

Ms. Manatch concluded by expressing the views that Indigenous participation is required for data analysis of Indigenous communities, research on Indigenous communities should be Indigenous led, and information is needed on how data on Indigenous people will be used. Superintendent Baker noted that guiding the direction on how the District conducts information is important. She noted the intent of TAG was to ensure that there was diverse representation when the data was being analysed. She thanked the Council for their input and Manager Oracheski for her presence and stated that the next iteration of data summaries may be presented differently based on conversations such as these.

Trustee Bell suggested that READ return to IEAC to present on the upcoming analysis of the data or send an email to the Council with an outline of the intended studies. Ms. Manatch supported the suggestion of an email to share with IEAC for future discussion. Mr. Mitchell reflected that the topic of data is fluid and it would be interesting to monitor the changes year over year. Ms. Manatch recommended that the analysis of Indigenous data be kept on the agenda as a standing item.

4.2 Report 20-084, The Development of a Human Rights Policy

Your Council had before it, Report 20-084, reviewing the plan to develop a human rights policy.

Human Rights and Equity Advisor Tanner introduced herself as newly having returned to Canada after working as a lawyer for twenty years on human rights and anti-discrimination issues in Canada, Uganda, Timor-Leste and Nepal. She stated the right to education is fundamentally important to everyone. The purpose of the Office of the Human Rights and Equity Advisor is to identify any barriers in the current practises and systems. A human rights policy is a way for people to promote and protect human rights and bring forward human rights concerns to seek early or formal resolution. She stated that this new policy would benefit from the wisdom of the people at IEAC.

Human Rights and Equity Advisor Tanner briefly reviewed a presentation on the development of a human rights policy, highlighting the international, domestic and provincial legislation in place to protect fundamental human rights in Canada. She highlighted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. She noted when formulating a policy it is important to describe the tenants, guidance, roles and responsibilities and the importance of developing procedures to accompany the policy, including a complaints procedure(s) accessible to all users. The procedure should work well for the people the policy is intended to serve: students, employees, families and community members. She requested Indigenous input on Indigenous priorities for the policy to gain insight into how to develop a complaints mechanism(s) that Indigenous Peoples will be comfortable using.

Ms. Manatch commented that the District should advocate for an Indigenous Trustee on the Board of Trustees. Mr. McHugh noted that he raised this subject at the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) meeting on 29 October 2020. He mentioned that there is legislation in place to appoint Indigenous Trustees to school boards providing there is a reservation in the catchment area. As Ottawa territory does not have a reservation, the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education are preventative. He maintained that there are a large number of students who attend the OCDSB and therefore a change could be implemented.

Trustee Ellis suggested that IEAC may be permitted to participate at Committee of the Whole and Committee of the Whole Budget without involving the Ministry of Education. He added that the Committee of the Whole - Budget meeting is the forum where decisions on District spending occur. Superintendent Baker stated that this is a decision that IEAC can make and recommend to the Board. In terms of an Indigenous Trustee position, she noted that a regulation in the Education Act establishes First Nations representation on school boards where there is reservation or a reciprocal education agreement between a Band Council and the school board, there can be a determination by the Band Council on a representative to sit as a voting member of that school board.

Mr. Mitchell noted that First Nations Representation on Boards is listed in Ontario Regulation 462/97 of the Education Act. In this document there is language describing the threshold number of Indigenous students coming from the territory required for a Reverse Education Agreement (RES). He supported the letter to the Ministry for the revision of this regulation. He noted that both the North York in Toronto and Renfrew County hold Indigenous trustee positions on their school boards.

Mr. McHugh emphasized his commitment to have Indigenous voting-member representation on all District committees. Trustee Ellis noted that he would be pleased to work with IEAC members and Board Services to bring forward a motion to have an Indigenous representative at the advisory committees of the

Board and the Committee of the Whole. Further, Mr. McHugh expressed the view that three Indigenous voting members should be appointed to each committee: First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Trustee Ellis submitted that it would be difficult to lobby for more than one IEAC representative to sit on each of the committees. Superintendent Baker suggested that Trustee Ellis liaise with Trustee Hough and Trustee Bell to work on inviting Indigenous members of the community to participate in committees of the Board as voting members.

Ms. Manatch recommended that a steering committee be struck for the development of the human rights policy and that Indigenous representation is included. Human Rights and Equity Advisor Tanner agreed to this mechanism in the development of the new policy. She is looking forward to engaging students in the "grassroots" policy development process. She requested support from IEAC on how best to seek guidance from the Indigenous community, noting that feedback can be communicated back to her office.

5. Reports - Deferred

5.1 Superintendent's Report

This item was deferred to the 21 January 2021 IEAC meeting.

5.2 22 October 2020, IEAC Report

The IEAC report of 22 October 2020 was received.

5.3 IEAC Action Tracking Log

This item was deferred to the 21 January 2021 IEAC meeting.

6. Information and Invitation

Sonia Nadon-Campbell introduced herself as being Indigenous and French. She noted that she had recently been re-elected the Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for a second term. She is proud to advocate for youth with special needs and is a mother to three children, two of which have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). In the past, she has volunteered for the Board of Directors at Makonsag. Currently she sits on the Board of Directors for Roberts/Smart Centre, who employs a team of people trained in the area of managing and treating youth mental health and behavioural disorders.

7. Closing

Elder Dumont offered a closing at 8:26 p.m.