

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

January 21, 2021

6:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

Members:	Albert Dumont, Inini McHugh, Monique Manatch, (Stephanie) Mikki Adams, Sytukie Joamie , Jo VanHooser, Pauline Mousseau, Romaine Mitchell, Marlene Souliere
Indigenous Education Staff:	Jody Alexander (Vice-Principal, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education), Kyl Morrison (Indigenous Graduation Coach), Kareena Butler (Itinerant Teacher) , Kris Meawasige (Indigenous Student Support and Re-engagement Coordinator), Chantel Verner (Instructional Coach)
Other Staff and Guests:	Wendy Hough (Trustee), Trustee Bell (Trustee), Donna Blackburn (Trustee), Lynn Scott (Trustee), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Janice McCoy (Superintendent of Instruction), Pamela LeMaistre (Manager of Human Rights), Leigh Fenton (Board/Committee Coordinator), Azia Seitcher-Hamel

1. Opening

Elder Albert Dumont opened the meeting.

2. Presentation

2.1 Report 20-114, Equitable Recruitment and Hiring Policy (J. McCoy)

Your Council had before it Report 20-114, describing the proposed policy for equitable recruitment and hiring at the District.

Superintendent McCoy reported that the draft policy was developed to comply with a draft Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) released by the Ministry of Education following the repeal of Ontario Regulation 274 - Hiring Practices. Since 2013 under the former regulation, a mandatory hiring process was in place for long term occasional teachers or permanent teachers. School boards were required to follow a certain process in terms of who could be considered, based largely on seniority, as well as the technical qualifications that are recognized by the Ontario College of Teachers. When the regulation was repealed near the end of October 2020, the government issued an interim set of hiring guidelines

for school boards to follow pending the release of a PPM. The draft PPM underwent a brief consultation process in November. Until the final PPM is released, the District will not be in a position to bring a final policy to the Board of Trustees because the PPM provides specific requirements to be included in the school board policy. The guiding principles of the policy aims to ensure fair, consistent and transparent processes for hiring are established, including ways to maximize employment opportunities for new teachers who are entering the profession. Ensuring that the requirements and selection criteria for hiring are available are important considerations. The inclusion of diversity, equity and human rights qualifications are to be embedded in the policy.

The Human Resources Department is developing a set of board procedures that will outline the processes for specific hires. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The focus of the policy is limited to teachers. The guiding principles listed in the draft policy are the same as those implemented for all hiring practices;
- Indigenous representation was requested on hiring panels;
- Superintendent McCoy noted that operational limitations exist in the current hiring process, such as the short time frame for staffing many positions for the following year;
- Superintendent McCoy stated that the practice at the District is that the policy is developed and then approved by the Board of Trustees. Afterwards the procedures, which involve the operational aspects of implementing the policy, are developed by staff and approved by the Directors Executive Council composed of senior staff. Depending on the nature of the procedures, some consultation may occur.

The policy will impact the hiring of Indigenous teachers in the following ways:

- The process broadens the hiring considerations from those which were permitted consideration under the previous regulation;
- Lived experience can be included as a consideration;
- The principals will be able to consider aspects on the candidate's resume beyond the technical qualifications and seniority; and
- The establishment of a framework to enable principals to be intentional around increasing the diversity of staff, including the representation of Indigenous people among the teaching staff.

Ms. Manatch expressed the view that the requirement to have a Bachelor's degree in the field of education is a barrier for Indigenous educators and the policy does not consider knowledge keepers or Elders in the community. They have lived experience and inherent knowledge of the community. She stated that the policy is an opportunity to decolonize the education framework and introduce an Indigenous ontology of knowledge transference.

Superintendent McCoy noted to teach in the province of Ontario, a person must hold a Certificate of Qualification from the Ontario College of Teachers. Advocacy opportunities are possible avenues for change through the Ontario Public School Boards Association, specifically, for example, to expand the qualifications around the Indigenous language instruction, however the current recruitment and hiring policy is to be built under a specific framework set by the final PPM. Trustee Scott noted that in 2018 the District asked for changes to provincial regulations to broaden hiring qualifications to recognize traditional Indigenous knowledge.

Ms. Adams suggested the inclusion of a clause in the policy that refers to Indigenous lived experience and knowledge of culture. She noted that the Nunavut Arctic College, the Nunavut Education Program and the Early Childhood Educator programs in Nunavut are making significant advancements to hire Inuktitut speaking teachers in the Arctic.

Mr. Joamie suggested that when hiring Indigenous educators, include the Indigenous community in the hiring process in a meaningful way to avoid tokenism.

A student contributed that as the Indigenous teachers are Elders, a reasonable approach would include Elders on a hiring panel. Indigenous people stepping forward to apply for the teaching roles may or may not have a university degree in education. Superintendent McCoy noted that there are opportunities to look to the community or internal staff for representatives on diverse hiring panels.

A student maintained that above all else she feels engaged with teachers who bring passion and enthusiasm to the classroom and with teachers who focus on creating futures for their students.

In conclusion, Ms. Manatch offered to assist Superintendent McCoy with the language in the procedure to be developed as a part of the policy. Ms. VanHooser shared that when making efforts to connect with Indigenous communities, a western education is not of the highest importance, instead, being able to relate to people using lived experience is a key component. She indicated that she was willing to support Ms. Manatch, if needed.

3. Consultation

3.1 Human Rights Policy Consultation with IEAC (C. Tanner)

Human Rights and Equity Advisor Tanner imparted that her intention was to listen to the voices on the Council to hear the ways in which the human rights policy and procedure can be developed to serve the needs of the Indigenous students, families and staff members. In December, her visit to the IEAC meeting was to seek advice on the development of a participatory and inclusive consultation plan. In phase one of the consultation plan an internal working group was formed, composed of subject matter experts. Vice Principal Jody Alexander is part of the working group to provide the lead on engaging and hearing perspectives from Indigenous students and their families. Through working with the Indigenous Education Team, Human Rights and Equity Advisor Tanner hopes to engage Indigenous students in ways that work for them. For example, a facilitated discussion with Indigenous students on their own terms in a circle setting. In phase two of the consultation plan in June 2021, the human rights draft policy will be shared with advisory committees to collect further comments. A plan to consult on the human rights procedure will be scheduled afterwards.

Human Rights and Equity Advisor Tanner delivered a brief online presentation. She highlighted Article 15 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada (UNDRIP) where it is stipulated that Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education.

Indigenous peoples are protected from discrimination when accessing the right to education. A school board's obligation is to provide education about Indigenous culture, traditions and perspectives and to teach truth. Her vision for a human rights policy outlines the human rights principles that the District is committed to upholding, including principles around Indigenous rights, along with Indigenous education and creates a way for people to enforce those rights. For example, if an Indigenous student experiences discrimination during disciplinary measures at school, how can they address the discrimination effectively within the District. If an Indigenous student experiences racism, how can they have that addressed if the school board is failing to live up to its obligation to teach truth in the curriculum. She asked which ways will allow human rights to be enforceable through a process that is safe and comfortable. She sought feedback on actions that the District can take to grow trust with Indigenous families and students.

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

- Mr. McHugh suggested incorporating a process to heal or mend after a situation that has occurred on school property. When families connect with him at the Silatunig Inuit Youth Engagement Program, they trust him to advocate on their behalf. If there is a concern at the District, he will contact the Indigenous Education Team who will then connect with a principal or vice principal at the school. A meeting will be set to have a healing circle or gathering to address the distresses of the family with trusted allies present;
- Mr. McHugh recommended consulting the Truth and Reconciliation Act (TRC) of Canada in the Calls to Action 62 through 65, under sub-heading "Education for Reconciliation";
- Ms. Manatch recommended consulting the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) which was mandated to investigate and propose solutions to the challenges affecting the relationship between Aboriginal peoples, the Canadian government and Canadian society as a whole; and
- Mr. Joamie queried the notion of an external organization defining the term "human rights" for others. The rights followed by his people are to treat everyone equally to promote harmony. Human Rights and Equity Advisor Tanner appreciated this perspective and noted that she has struggled with how to bring together concepts of international human rights written with a Eurocentric lens and inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples in a policy that works for Indigenous Peoples. She hopes to hold more conversations with Indigenous community members in Ottawa to understand better how this might be accomplished.

4. Reports

4.1 Indigenous Education Team Update

Vice Principal Alexander reported that the Indigenous Education Team is working on the templates submissions to the Board Action Plan on First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education. The four areas of support are supporting students, supporting educators, using data to support student achievement and engagement and awareness building in the school community. She highlighted that this year a strong focus is on the well-being of students after the pivot to remote learning. She accredited the following team members for their work to ensure student engagement during these unprecedented times: Indigenous Graduation Coach Kyl Morrison, Indigenous Student Support and Re-engagement Coordinators Kris Meawsaige and Josh Lewis, along with Indigenous Education Itinerant Teachers Kareena Bulter and Chantal Verner.

The OCDSB Indigenous Speaker Series will continue throughout the school year and both students and staff are welcome to attend. Itinerant

Teacher Butler has offered "Tea and Talk" sessions with non-Indigenous teachers to build knowledge of Indigenous perspectives and histories. Vice Principal Alexander has provided guidance to principals and vice principals to develop their knowledge pertaining to the Algonquin land acknowledgement. Within schools discussions with library technicians and teacher librarians are ongoing to review resources on the Indigenous people. There are four English courses being offered in the 2020-2021 school year for Contemporary, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Voices grade 11 university preparation class (NBE3U).

The Original Voices Youth Council meets every Wednesday from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. In the meeting of 20 January 2021 the Council discussed the request from the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) where the District received \$39,986 in 2020-2021 PRO grant funding and has been working with PIC to consider the best ways to use these funds and support all school communities. A student illuminated the importance of incorporating Indigenous speakers into all areas of the centrally-consolidated speakers list, instead of limiting the Indigenous speakers into a lone category. It was noted that this approach could be construed as accidental segregation.

The District partnered with A7G - Assembly of Seven Generations to send 45 December care packages for Indigenous youth and families in the Ottawa area.

The OCDSB Indigenous Youth Symposium is being planned for high school students to support Indigenous academic and personal success.

4.2 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Baker referred to the meeting of the Advisory Council on Equity (ACE) on 26 November where it was raised by Mr. McHugh that Indigenous representation could be further accentuated in Board-level discussions at the District. She noted that should members of the Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC) wish to put forward any recommendations to amend a Board policy to appoint an IEAC representation on Committee of the Whole and Committee of the Whole, Budget, ACE supports these measures.

Superintendent Baker cited that ACE, in their discussions surrounding equity and inhabiting Algonquin territory, have raised the subject of the appointment of an Indigenous trustee to the Board of Trustees. She noted that Ontario Regulation 462/97: First Nations Representation on Boards outlined the conditions governing appointment of a First Nations Trustee to a school board. Though the OCDSB does not hold an Education Services Agreement with a council of a band, a letter may be written to the Ministry of Education to express a desire for a revision to the regulation.

Moved by Inini McHugh

A. THAT the Board allow the Indigenous Education Advisory Council to appoint representatives to the Committee of the Whole and Committee of the Whole, Budget, respectively.

Unanimously Carried

B. THAT the Board of Trustees write a letter to the Minister of Education to allow the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board to have an Indigenous Trustee.

Unanimously Carried

Mr. Joamie expressed the view that the person chosen to represent the Indigenous voice should be an Algonquin person, as the Ottawa-Carleton region is situated on Algonquin territory.

a. IEAC Action Tracking Log

This item was deferred to the 25 March 2021 IEAC meeting.

4.3 IEAC Report, 10 December 2020

The IEAC report of 10 December 2020 was received.

5. Community Discussion

There were no items raised for Community Discussion.

6. Standing Items

6.1 Analysis of Indigenous Data

Superintendent Baker reported that Manager Oracheski from the Research, Evaluation and Analytics Division (READ) will connect with Ms. Manatch who is a member of the District's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for a future conversation regarding the analysis of Indigenous data.

7. Information and Invitation

7.1 Original Voices Youth Council, Wednesdays from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Vice Principal Alexander highlighted that should there be community outreach to bring more attendees to the Original Voices Youth Council, establishing parameters for a safe space would be required first. The Council must be a place where youth feel safe to offer their ideas and share experiences.

Ms. Manatch announced that both she and Elder Dumont will be working together to assemble the Algonquin protocols of the IEAC circle. People other than IEAC members will be required to join with an advance invitation. The Indigenous paradigms are based upon relationship building

and their aim is not exclusion. The intent of the discussion is that these protocols will be adopted in a good way.

Elder Dumont recalled a story of Herman Standing Ready, from the Sioux nation in Saskatchewan. Herman told him that whenever a stranger appeared on their territory, the nation would send a scout to observe the stranger discreetly for days on end and take note of the kinds of things the person was doing. The scout reports would tell the community on how to approach the stranger or who this stranger was known to be from observations. Ultimately the scout would report to the nation to assure them whether or not the stranger had designs upon their peace.

Mr. Joamie requested that space be made for the Inuit voice as Ottawa has a growing Inuit population. He noted that the IEAC originally had many students attending and the over the years the number has lessened. He underscored the importance of the hearing the voices of the youth.

Ms. Adams suggested that a "buddy system" for youth and another long standing member of IEAC may provide the students with a positive experience then, in turn, promote student participation and leadership elsewhere in the community.

A student suggested that a category be built into the agenda distinctly for students and knowing specific questions on a certain topic before the meeting date will help them to be ready with their ideas and to participate in a meaningful way.

8. Closing

Elder Dumont offered a closing at 8:28 p.m.