



REPORT NO. 6, ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY

DATE: 28 September 2017

A meeting of the Advisory Committee on Equity was held this evening commencing at 6:11 p.m. in the Mezzanine, 133 Greenbank Road, Ottawa, with Elaine Hayles in the Chair and the following also in attendance:

- MEMBERS:** Nadine Clarke, Community Representative
Elaine Hayles, Community Representative
Harvey Brown, Community Representative
Joanne John, Community Representative
Emeka Ndukwe, Community Representative
- TRUSTEES:** Chris Ellis, Anita Olsen Harper
- GUESTS:** Bob Dawson, Senior Sports Writer, Diversity Management Consultant, and Black Hockey Historian
Tim Stanley, University of Ottawa
Nimao Ali, EISC of Ontario
Haleh Zamanpour
- STAFF:** Carol Ann Burrows, Equity and Inclusive Education Instructional Coach
Jacqueline Lawrence, Diversity & Equity Coordinator
Sherwyn Soloman, Principal – York Street Public School
Ken Mak, OCDSB
David Sutton, OCDSB
Dave Wildman, OCEOTA
Nicole Guthrie, Board/Committee Coordinator

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Hayles called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Nimao Ali,
THAT the agenda be approved.

Chair Hayles requested that Student Trustee update be added to the agenda as item 6c.

**Moved by Nimao Ali,
THAT the agenda be approved as amended.**

- CARRIED -

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved by Nadine Clark,
THAT Report 5, dated 25 May 2017 be received.

In response to a query from Trustee Ellis regarding item 7 of the report, Diversity Coordinator Lawrence responded that the matter of the student survey had gone to the Directors Executive Council (DEC) for discussion and will be considered as part of the board's work on the 2017-2018 Equity Action Plan.

In response to a query from Chair Hayles regarding the status of the motion regarding the Eastern Area Accommodation Review and the transition of Rideau High School students, Diversity Coordinator Lawrence indicated that a preliminary report on the matter will be discussed at the 3 October 2017 Committee of the Whole (COW). Trustee Ellis indicated that the report will highlight the type of tracking and information that can be collected. Trustee Ellis expressed the view that the Committee may wish to consider the report and provide its own comments and recommendations. ACE has an opportunity to add its voice to the discussion.

Mr. Sutton expressed the view that the report be circulated to members in advance so that ACE can provide advice and knowledge. Diversity Coordinator Lawrence indicated that the report would be available on the District website with the 3 October COW agenda. Trustee Ellis indicated that he will formally request that a response on the document be sought from ACE.

Ms. Ali noted that her name was missing from the list of guests at the meeting; and Ms. Burrows requested that her name be correctly indicated as Carol Ann Burrows.

**Moved by Nadine Clark,
THAT Report 5, dated 25 May 2017 be approved as amended.**

- CARRIED -

4. Advisory Committee on Equity Review

a. History of ACE

Chair Hayles provided the following brief history of the Advisory Committee on Equity:

- The Community Council for Ethnocultural Equity (CCEE) was founded in the mid-1990s when the Ontario Ministry of Education made a commitment to foster and encourage antiracist and ethnocultural equity education through Memorandum #119;
- The Ministry requested that school boards develop and action their own Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity (AREE) policies. Both local school boards (Carleton and Ottawa) developed policies and practices;
- When the two Boards amalgamated in 1997, the two AREE committees merged, and became the CCEE;
- Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy was released in 2009. As a result, the CCEE reorganized in order to serve the Board with respect to equity; and
- A new bylaw, policy and mission were prepared and the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) was approved by the Board in the spring of 2012. ACE held the first meeting in September of 2012.

b. Mandate/Terms of Reference

Your committee had before it a draft of the revisions to Policy P.008.GOV Advisory Committee on Equity. Diversity Coordinator Lawrence explained that the revisions to the composition section of the policy were aimed at broadening the membership base. The revised policy will be brought to the Directors Executive Council (DEC) in December and move forward to the Committee of the Whole (COW) in January. The committee will have an opportunity to provide further input at the October meeting.

During a discussion on the revisions to Policy P.008.GOV the following points were noted:

- Composition will be amended to include parents or guardians as well as individuals with an interest in diversity, equity and inclusive education;
- An appendix will be added to the policy with a list of community agencies and partners with a focus on serving youth and families with a diversity, equity and inclusion lens. The agency list will be reviewed and updated periodically;
- ACE is an ad hoc advisory committee that operates at the discretion of the Board;

- Revisions to the policy will help ACE be more effective in fulfilling the mandate as directed by the Board and the committee's own goals and objectives;
- Not every board has an Equity Committee;
- The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) and Audit committees are statutory committees legislated by province and therefore provided with support;
- The addition of any new voting members can present a challenge with respect to quorum if they do not attend regularly; and
- Accountability is important. The voting members representing community organizations and/or community agencies must ensure two-way communication back and forth from the organization.

Chair Hayles and Ms. Ali expressed the view that ACE does not have an adequate orientation for new members and that support and information for the committee is not as forthcoming as with other committees.

Ms. Burrows indicated that she often meets people who could be members of ACE but there are often barriers to participation. She expressed the view that the District needs to revise the communication effort to engage and remove barriers to ensure a greater diversity of members.

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that a preliminary meeting with communications staff was held to discuss the membership recruitment campaign. A timeline and sample would be provided to the members.

Ms. Hayles expressed her frustration with the District website. She noted that in a recent search for information on the committees of the Board, the website page dedicated to committees listed neither the committees of the Board nor contact information.

c. Key Areas of Focus and Contribution to OCDSB

Mr. Brown expressed the view that ACE has been deliberate and consistent in its request for data collection and the District has complied. The province has now followed with the creation of the Education Equity Secretariat and the new three-year Education Equity Action Plan.

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that Senior Management recognizes the important community voice that ACE provides and through the work of the committee an equity and inclusion lens is applied to their policy and program work. She indicated that the opinion of ACE is continually sought on a variety of program reviews and the committee is regularly a part of consultation plans. This past year ACE was asked to provide comment on the Accommodation reviews, the Gifted Program review, and policy changes.

Mr. Mak expressed the view that the Date with Diversity event was a highlight of the 2016-2017 school year and that it provided attendees with an understanding and appreciation of how they may do things differently to benefit students.

Ms. Clark stated the work of the research sub-committee has influenced the Research, Evaluation and Analytics Division (READ). The results are evidenced in both the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) and the Annual Student Achievement Report (ASAR).

Trustee Olsen Harper enquired whether or not ACE has received an update on the move of the Rideau High School students to Gloucester High School, specifically the First Nation, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) students. Diversity Coordinator Lawrence indicated that data collection for the transition would be discussed at the 03 October 2017 COW and the report should also come to ACE for consideration. Chair Hayles indicated that she will ensure that the committee follow-up on the matter of the transition.

6. Policy Updates: Ontario's Education Equity Plan

Your committee was provided with a link to the province's new Education Equity Action Plan. The plan outlines the province's three-year strategy to reduce systemic barriers and ensure that all students in Ontario can reach their full potential.

Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan creates a path to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices, systemic barriers and bias from schools and classrooms. The plan will allow the ministry to better support the achievement and well-being of all students. Key actions include: ensuring culturally responsive curriculum and teaching practices, identifying ways to encourage diverse communities to participate on Parent Involvement Committees (PICs) and school councils, and promoting the teaching professional and removing barriers for under-represented groups.

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence encouraged the committee to read the document and think about what it means for the work of ACE.

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

- The province intends to introduce a renewed approach to Grade 9 in which all students are supported in achieving their maximum potential and choosing appropriate pathways to work, college, apprenticeship, or university;
- The province will evaluate student discipline, because racialized students, Indigenous students, students with disabilities, and students with special education needs are overrepresented in the data on suspensions and expulsions. The province will work with all school boards, students, parents and education partners, to develop interventions, preventive approaches and programs to address the issue;

- Equity and inclusive education will be a theme for the 2018–19 Parent Reaching Out (PRO) grants;
- More intentional strategies for reaching out and ensuring representation of diverse communities on PICs and school councils will be identified;
- Opportunities to promote the teaching profession and remove barriers to entry for underrepresented communities ensuring the representation of the workforce is in alignment with the student population will be identified;
- The province will develop a statement of principles and objectives for the collection of identity-based student data and support boards in undertaking student identity data collection and analysis that will inform policies and practices;
- The province will begin to collect, analyze and report the following disaggregated data: race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and indicators of parental socio-economic status;
- Of the 72 boards in the province less than 5 have human rights complaints offices;
- Trustee Ellis noted that Associate Deputy Minister Patrick Case, from the Education Equity Secretariat has selected Director Adams to participate in a small working group that will focus on the plan, particularly the infrastructure and data collection component. The District is one of 4 Boards asked to participate and pilot some of the initiatives;
- Principal Solomon noted that other Districts have equity departments and a Superintendent whose portfolio is exclusively equity;
- Mr. Brown expressed the view that hiring practices and promotions must be addressed and that unions must also be engaged. He was pleased to hear discussion of the performance measurement of principals in the plan however talk of equity and implementation are separate and that there must be accountability within the District's hiring and promotion practices;
- Mr. Stanley expressed the view that a central office of equity be created within the District; and
- Chair Hayles expressed the view that equity within hiring practices ought to be a focus for the committee this year.

7. Information Items/Reports

a. District Update

District principals and vice-principals met with Patrick Case, the new Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), Education Equity Secretariat. At the Equity Learning Day, Mr. Case shared information about future changes to the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grants to increase parent engagement for racialized parents. Equity will be a focus for the Ministry and the District this year.

The Centre for Urban Schooling (CUS), OISE/University of Toronto, created a Framework for Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP).

The framework is based upon literature and theoretical tenets from the United States, known as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. The Framework covers seven areas of equitable practice: i) Classroom Climate and Instruction, ii) School Climate, iii) Student Voice and Space, iv) Family/Caregiver-School Relations, v) School Leadership, vi) Community Connections, and vii) Culture of Professional Development.

The University of Ottawa was successful in their application to lead the Réseau de Savoir sur l'Équité - Equity Knowledge Network (RSEKN). RSEKN will bring together diverse partner organizations, including the District and ACE, to mobilize evidence and professional knowledge, facilitate the use of evidence-based practices for instruction, and contribute to Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

Sir Robert Borden High School will partner with ACE this year to host the Date with Diversity.

Instructional Coach Burrows noted that through her work with Inclusive Safe and Caring Schools she is meeting with partners in the community to help build bridges. She noted that a team of ten educators from the District recently attended the "Realizing Rights 2017: Human Rights and Constitutionalism" conference at Ottawa University in June 2017. The central educators from Curriculum Services who attended the conference can spread the messages heard to principals and vice-principals.

In response to a query from Mr. Sutton regarding equity training within hiring practices, Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that she is training managers on unconscious bias and how it informs decision making. She noted that District has an opportunity to enhance the hiring opportunities and attract more professionals from a diverse background.

Ms. Ali queried whether or not the District conducted name blind application reviews and interviews. Diversity Coordinator Lawrence indicated that the District Human Resources staff had discussed this. It was noted that on the careers page of the District website, diversity was not listed as a practice.

Principal Sherwin expressed the view that he disliked the term culturally responsive pedagogy. He noted that it is limited and does not do enough to integrate the systems that are already in place. He expressed the view that ACE can do more with the anti-oppression framework. He prefers the term "equality of outcome".

Mr. Dawson noted that barriers exist within the District's hiring and promotion practices. Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that she is working with Instructional Coach Burrows on inclusive design and the creation of a holistic space to combat systemic barriers.

Mr. Stanley expressed the view that culturally inclusive and relevant pedagogy is a good starting point but not a place to end. He noted the real task is to bring the issue of safety into the classroom. Safety includes both physical and psychology.

b. Board Update

Trustee Olsen Harper indicated that a minor change was made to P.008 GOV Advisory Committee on Equity. The change included the removal of student trustees from the non-voting members of the Committee according to the revised Student Trustee policy P.017.GOV Student Trustees. Trustee Ellis added this does not preclude their participation on the committee as a student senate representative and student senators and student trustees are always welcome to attend as non-voting members.

Trustee Olsen Harper stated that she had requested information on the suspensions and expulsions of FNMI students at the 17 May 2017 SEAC meeting and has yet to receive a response. She has made a similar request for the information recently and Executive Officer Giroux indicated that the READ in conjunction with the Safe Schools team led by Superintendent Reynolds would be investigating the request.

Trustee Olsen Harper indicated that she had recently received a note from the Ministry regarding an Indigenous Education Advisory Council. In conversation with Superintendent Baker and Principal Alexander, this initiative is a Ministry priority and will be independent of ACE. The Council will include indigenous representation.

Trustee Ellis noted that the Board work plan for 2017-2018 addresses a framework for data collection and identifies data collection by race as a Board priority. Mr. Stanley queried whether the collection of the racialized data would also include staff.

c. Student Trustee Update

The Student Senate sent regrets. They indicated that the Student Senate will meet on 05 October 2017 and will select representatives for ACE. They expressed anticipation and expect to be active participants.

10. Round Table

Mr. Sutton and Mr. Brown indicated they were pleased with the work of the committee and hoped for another successful year.

Trustee Ellis noted that both he and Student Trustee, Rita Ramotar, recently attended a workshop hosted by the Social Planning Network of Ontario. He added that the organization may have some funding available for projects with an element of equity and best practices. The network indicated that they will be planning an equity event in Ottawa. Trustee Ellis indicated he would share details as they emerge.

Ms. Zamanpour expressed the view that she was pleased to be a part of the committee and hoped that one day the District would have an Equity Officer in all schools and an equity department at the Board office.

Ms. Clark noted that the District has collected an enormous amount of data over the last several years and the reports from the student surveys are a source of valuable information for the work of the committee. She noted that a consistent challenge facing schools across the District is the continual turnover of parents on Parent Council. The Ottawa-Carleton Association of School Councils (OCASC) has highlighted engagement of school councils as an area of focus this year. The District must strive to ensure parents are continually engaged.

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that the annual Parent Conference is scheduled for 18 November 2017.

Chair Hayles indicated that committee members will be sent Memo 17-115, Ministry of Education Engagement on Governance Supports, and that the governance questionnaire would be added to the agenda for the October meeting.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 pm.

Elaine Hayles, Chair
Advisory Committee on Equity