



REPORT NO. 4, ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY

DATE: 26 April 2018

A meeting of the Advisory Committee on Equity was held this evening commencing at 6:20 p.m. in the Mezzanine, 133 Greenbank Road, Ottawa, with Joanne John in the Chair and the following also in attendance:

- MEMBERS:** Elaine Hayles, Community Representative
Cukwuemeka Ndukwe, Community Representative
Harvey Brown, Community Representative
Nadine Clarke, Community Representative
Jane Fjeld, Youth Services Bureau
- TRUSTEES:** Erica Braunovan
- OTHER TRUSTEES:** Donna Blackburn
- GUESTS:** Tim Stanley, University of Ottawa
Stacey-Ann Morris, YLACC Young Leaders Advisory Council
- STAFF:** Dorothy Baker, Superintendent of Curriculum Services
Jacqueline Lawrence, Equity and Diversity Coordinator
David Sutton, OCDSB
Jimmy Pai, OCDSB

1. Call to Order

Chair John called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Jane Fjeld,
THAT the agenda be approved.

The committee requested that Item 6 be changed to ACE Membership Committee members.

**Moved by Jane Fjeld,
THAT the agenda be approved as amended.**

- CARRIED -

3. Review of Advisory Committee on Equity Reports

a. Report 3, 29 March 2018

**Moved by Elaine Hayles,
THAT Advisory Committee on Equity Report 3, dated 29 March
2018, be received.**

- CARRIED -

It was suggested that when the Chair cannot be present another voting member of the committee preside over the meeting.

4. Equity at Committee of the Whole (COW)

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence and Superintendent Baker spoke to the highlighted changes made to the approved policy.

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

- Mr. Ndukwe objected to item 4.23 and expressed the opinion that the agenda should not be planned with the superintendent;
- Mr. Brown noted that ACE works closely with staff and reported that there has never been an attempt to prevent topics for an agenda and has welcomed suggestions from the members;
- Trustee Blackburn confirmed that all statutory committees and others are organized through the designated Superintendent;
- Ms. Hayles noted that through her research of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) terms of reference, it was noted that the agenda preparation was the responsibility of the co- chairs. Staff resources were to determine items on the agenda; board will provide clerical support - ACE has a problem with power dynamics - what does planning with the superintendent say to the committee;
- Mr. Ndukwe expressed the view that there is an issue with the motion for the data collection; and
- Superintendent Baker responded to concerns about motion and the role of superintendent.

a. Black Community Delegations to Committee of the Whole 17 April 2018

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that at the 17 April 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting there were four delegations who spoke on behalf of the Black community.

In her delegation Ms. June Girvan suggested that the District formally recognize the United Nations International Decade of People of African Descent. Ms. Girvan referred to a draft proclamation provided to the Board for review and added that the theme of the decade is “People of African descent: recognition, justice, and development.”

In his delegation Richard Sharpe expressed the view that disaggregated data should be collected in all District schools and referred to various ways in which the data can be collected. He highlighted the importance of ensuring that members from the Black community are involved in the establishment of data collection processes when the District is prepared to proceed with the proposed initiative.

In his delegation Mr. Eldon Holder Jr., speaking on behalf of the Young Leaders Advisory Council (YLAC), noted that the provincial government has announced that it will be building a new, larger jail in the Ottawa area. Mr. Holder expressed concern that the decision to build the new facility was made in the absence of public consultation. Mr. Holder’s delegation highlighted the District’s importance as a stakeholder in the region and urged the Board to publicly address the issue noting that systemic racism affects students in schools and correctional facilities. Ms. Hayles noted that the intent of the YLAC delegation was to focus on the school to prison pipeline and its causes.

Ms. Hayles queried if the committee is going to discuss the school to prison pipeline and whether or not the committee could work on the issue. Mr. Stanley added that the conversation regarding the school to prison pipeline should also include Indigenous students.

ACE members Elaine Hayles and Emeka Ndukwe recommended that the District form an “equity office” and expand its current staff to include an “equity and human rights officer” in their delegation. They suggested that trustees communicate the impacts of Black racism to their parent communities.

Trustee Braunovan and Mr. Stanley congratulated committee members and the Black community representatives on their delegations. The presentations and order of presentations were effective and assisted in providing the trustees with a broader understanding of the issues.

b. Gifted Program Review

In response to a request for an update on the Gifted Program Review from Committee member the following points were noted:

- Trustee Blackburn explained that the Board made a decision not to proceed with the Gifted Program Review consultation. She noted that a Gifted Advisory Group was formed to recommend changes and updates to the Gifted Specialized Program;
- The recent debate on the Secondary Gifted Specialized Program Class Transition to the Geographic Model ended without opportunity for further consultation. Trustee Blackburn expressed the view that alternate sites need to be considered as Lisgar Collegiate Institute is over capacity;
- Ms. Hayles expressed the opinion that the review of any District program should be equitable and that District programs must be available to all students;
- Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted the delegation of Sandhya Rao at the 17 April 2018 Committee of the Whole, expressed the view that more information is required prior to proceeding with the planned consultation process for the secondary Gifted specialized program and urged trustees to delay the consultation process until enrolment data is known for the new International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Merivale High School;
- Trustee Blackburn noted that the original Gifted Program Review had envisioned a screening tool as an option to promote equity;
- Dr. Stanley expressed the view that current tests are culturally biased;
- Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that when teachers recommend the further testing of students there may also be bias.
- Trustee Blackburn suggested that ACE have a representative at future COW and Board meetings to ensure that questions of equity are a part of the discussion on all District matters;
- Chair John advised that ACE can monitor the District agendas and reports and can delegate as required to ensure equity is a part of the discussion;
- Trustee Braunovan explained that both the Gifted Review and the Secondary Gifted Specialized Program Class Transition to the Geographic model were referred back to staff to work with the community to develop alternative options to present to COW;
- Mr. Sutton noted that over time, ACE has tried to address issues with evidence in data to support the argument of equity within District programs;
- Dr. Stanley explained that there is a lot of research around gifted notably the testing for giftedness and the District needs to consider this research in any proposed solutions. He expressed the view that the

real issue is how to build schools to support each child at their current learning stage. He noted that issues often map to socio-economic status (SES) and that a child who is acting out and is lower SES or non-white is policed whereas a white child gets assessed and placed in a gifted class;

- Ms. Morris spoke about Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and its benefits to for diverse populations. She expressed the view that UDL could be incorporated into regular classroom programming;
- Mr. Ndukwe expressed the view that the presence of gifted students in the regular class benefits other students. Mr. Ndukwe commented that he does not understand the Gifted Congregated program and felt it to be elitist;
- Trustee Blackburn noted that concerns of the Merivale High School community were not heard in the recent consultation and that those present at the information evening were supporters of the IB program and not community members. The issue of bell time and whether or not to move to a non-semestered program were the primary focus of the consultation. She expressed the view that the Merivale High School community was dissatisfied with the consultation and the Principal has sought further input from the Merivale HS community;
- Trustee Blackburn explained that access to the IB program is more equitable as admission is based on the results of an entrance exam and annual fees upon acceptance. There is no fee to apply and the same criteria are used to score all applicants. The financial element could be addressed by the school for children from low SES;
- Dr. Stanley provided the committee with an overview of the International Baccalaureate program and its advantages and disadvantages. He noted that because of the international focus the amount of locally developed curriculum is limited;
- Mr. Ndukwe expressed concern regarding the District focus on Giftedness;
- Ms. Clarke noted that the District does a lot of meaningful consultation, with good data. She expressed the view that it should be students who want to access the program and not parents who make the decisions. Ms. Clarke expressed the view that there will always be groups who lobby for a particular agenda and that it will be important for ACE to bring an equity lens to discussions and ensure that changes benefit everyone;
- Mr. Brown queried the opportunities available to the committee to move the issues forward. He noted any argument the committee makes needs to be carefully considered and drafted to ensure ACE's voice is heard and the problems in the system addressed; and
- Chair John concluded that the committee must continue to work towards its mandate. She expressed the view that while she sympathizes and understands the member's frustration the committee

must present a united front and continue to move the equity agenda forward.

5. ACE Membership Procedures

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that with approval of Policy P.008.GOV Advisory Committee on Equity the committee can now begin to strengthen the membership to ensure a diversity of voices. She invited members to share their vision of ACE and provide input on the strategy to encourage membership.

During the discussion on an outreach strategy the following points were noted:

- Ms. John noted that within Policy P.008.GOV Advisory Committee on Equity a number of organizations are listed and could be contacted regarding the possibility of interest in membership;
- Mr. Sutton expressed the view that missing from the list are diverse/racialized students and diverse racialized staff;
- Mr. Ndukwe expressed the view that potential members must be engaged in their own communities. He suggested that staff members should be out in the community and meeting with community. Meetings should be organized at times when it is convenient for broader attendance;
- Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that she has approached Executive Officer Michele Giroux regarding an outreach strategy to reach targeted communities;
- Mr. Harvey suggested that young people and community leaders should be included in strategy discussions so that they might share their experience and knowledge;
- Diversity Coordinator Lawrence confirmed that YLAC is willing to engage;
- Mr. Stanley queried whether or not there was a recruitment process for membership and who decides on the membership;
- Mr. Harvey expressed the view that the committee should be open to other ways of engaging potential members should there not be interest;
- Mr. Sutton queried whether or not there was a budget to enable effective outreach;
- Ms. John indicated that the sub-committee or working group could determine the scope of the outreach effort and with the communications department assistance
- Trustee Braunovan noted that the policy does not specify how new members will be invited to participate. The sub-committee or working group can define its methods and create a list of organizations, agencies and individuals to approach;
- Diversity Coordinator Lawrence indicated that she would prepare a draft invitation letter. She added that members should advise her of other community groups and agencies who may be interested;

- Ms. Morris suggested that agencies be categorised to ensure they align with the intent of the committee;
- Mr. Sutton expressed concern about criteria for membership. Superintendent Baker noted that the membership criteria is embedded within the policy;
- Ms. Fjeld queried the membership composition and noted there may be more organizations than positions available;
- Mr. Stanley requested that a list of organizations be circulated as well.
- Superintendent Baker pointed out that the procedure to accompany the policy is still being developed;
- Superintendent Baker advised that the working group liaise with Board Services staff to ensure a consistency of language; and
- Members interested in participating on a working group, should contact Diversity Coordinator Lawrence.

6. Student Engagement – May meeting

Diversity Coordinator Lawrence noted that students from the Black Youth Conference and the Indigenous conference will meet in May at a central location.

7. Roundtable

During a roundtable discussion the following points were noted:

- Diversity Coordinator Lawrence provided information regarding Date with Diversity which will be held on 8 May 2018 at Sir Robert Borden High School;
- Mr. Brown queried whether or not there was a list of Indigenous community organizations or agencies as outlined in draft Policy P.140.GOV Indigenous Education Advisory Council;
- Mr. Stanley expressed the view that the new Indigenous Education Advisory Council will decide how they wish to engage with the other advisory committees;
- Mr. Sutton expressed the view that ACE must continue to be inclusive. No group or individual should be excluded from participating in the discussion; and
- Ms. Hayles noted that the 24 May 2018 meeting will be the last meeting of ACE for the year and that an annual report is typically presented to the Board in June. Ms. John responded that the report should be drafted and circulated to members in advance of the Board presentation.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Joanne John, Chair
Advisory Committee on Equity