



Creating an LGBTQ2S Community Advisory Committee

To: Program and School Services Committee

Date: 16 January 2019

Report No.: 01-19-3556

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

Recommendation

It is recommended that the creation of a new LGBTQ2S Community Advisory Committee (CAC), as presented in this report, be approved.

Context

Rationale: At a Board meeting on 20 June 2018, Trustees voted directing staff to explore and report back on the creation of a new LGBTQ2S-focused CAC as a strong, relevant voice to guide the Board's decision-making on issues related to the unique needs of LGBTQ2S students, families and staff members, in order to help ensure the Board is providing supportive learning environments for all.

Background: The purpose and function of CACs is set out in TDSB [Policy P023, Parent and Community Involvement](#).

“Community Advisory Committees shall be established [through a Resolution of the Board] where necessary to provide the Board with ongoing community advice on specified areas of Board policy or program, as well as on educational issues of broad community interest; in addition, ad hoc advisory committees, task forces, or working groups with community representation shall be established where required, on the understanding that the input from all such advisory groups does not preclude the input of other stakeholders across the system.”

Over the past two decades, the Board has established more than a dozen different CACs, each with a mandate to seek information and make recommendations on issues affecting a particular defined segment of the TDSB community. The Board currently supports the following 10 CACs:

- Aboriginal Community Advisory Committee (ACAC)
- Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee (ASCAC)
- Black Student Achievement Advisory Committee (BSACAC)
- Community Use of Schools Advisory Committee (CUSCAC)
- Early Years Advisory Committee (EYCAC)
- Environmental Sustainability Community Advisory Committee (ESAC)
- Equity Policy Advisory Committee (EPCAC)
- French-as-a-Second-Language Advisory Committee (FSLAC)
- Inner City Advisory Committee (ICAC)

TDSB [Operational Procedure PR558, Parent and Community Involvement](#) defines the CACs' advisory role and relationship to the Board:

“A CAC may advise the Board on a matter specifically referred to it by the Board or a standing committee, or it may advise the Board on matters of its own choosing, within its mandate as established by the Board when it was constituted...[In addition] “A CAC may also choose to exercise an advocacy role (i.e., it may indicate to the Board a preferred position on an educational issue under consideration by the Board) on the understanding that the position has been established through a fair and democratic process of deliberation and decision-making among the CAC membership.”

To learn more about the advisory function, structure, operation and reporting mechanism of CACs, please see the [Community Advisory Committees of the Toronto District School Board: A Practical Handbook for Committee Members](#).

Consultation: Staff reached out to LGBTQ2S communities during fall and early winter of 2018, describing the Board's direction and explaining the role and function of the CACs, in order to gauge the level of support for establishing a new LGBTQ2S-focused CAC. Seeking as broad a range of perspectives as possible, the conversation included representatives from various TDSB agency partners, LGBTQ2S advocacy groups and community allies, as well as individual TDSB students, parents, and staff members. [To highlight the importance of student voice and provide deeper insight into the issues,](#) TDSB Student Equity Program Advisors (SEPA) were asked to seek feedback from the students and families they work with, including those directly affected by gender-based violence and marginalization.

The process at this initial stage focused primarily on determining whether the Board's CAC structure and mandate were felt to be an appropriate and effective channel for bringing the LGBTQ2S community's issues, concerns and suggestions forward to the Board in order to better support LGBTQ2S youth and families in our schools.

Respondents were overwhelmingly in favour of establishing an LGBTQ2S-focused CAC, and emphasized the timeliness and relevance of the proposal. Many felt that the CAC had the potential to serve as an important resource for Trustees with respect to LGBTQ2S issues, inform the Board's decision-making around programming, improving school climates, and enhancing the achievement and well-being of LGBTQ2S youth and their families. Finally, a number of those contacted expressed interest in remaining involved in this CAC initiative as it moves forward.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Upon approval of this report by the Board, staff will follow the next steps for establishing a CAC as outlined in the TDSB [PR.558](#) to develop a recommended draft LGBTQ2S CAC mandate and membership structure, which will be presented to the Board for final approval in spring 2019.

Resource Implications

Funding for the LGBTQ2S CAC will be provided through current departmental budget allocations.

Communications Considerations

A communications plan will be developed in consultation with staff from the Government, Public and Community Relations Department, as required.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

- [P037, Equity Policy](#)
- [P023, Parent and Community Involvement Policy](#)
- [PR558, Parent and Community Involvement Operational Procedure](#)
- [Community Advisory Committees of the Toronto District School Board: A Practical Handbook for Committee Members](#)

From

Executive Superintendent Jim Spyropoulos, Human Rights and Indigenous Education, at Jim.Spyropoulos@tdsb.on.ca or at 416-397-3678.