Community Advisory Committees

Name of Committee: **Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee (EPCAC)**

Meeting Date: **February 24, 2025**

A meeting of the Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee convened on Monday, February 24, 2025, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. with Co-Chair Jean-Paul Ngana presiding. This meeting was held via Zoom.

Attendance (via Zoom):

Members:
Jean Paul Ngana (Co-Chair, Parent), Michelle Aarts (Trustee Co-Chair), Neethan Shan (TDSB Trustee), Joella Connaught (Parent), Feven Haddish (Parent), Janina Cherkewich (Parent)

Staff Resource Persons: Marwa Hamid (Superintendent of Education – Family of Schools 22), Cheryl Nambiar (Administrative Liaison Family of Schools 22)

Non-Members:
Trustee Dennis Hastings
Trustee Dan McLean
Derick Chica

Guest: Michelle Munroe - Central Coordinator, Parent and Community Engagement

Regrets:

Eleanor Yang CCNCTC, Michael Kerr – Colour of Poverty, Colour of Change, Sophia Ruddock (Parent), Charlene Dunstan (Parent), , Sharon Beason(parent)

Community Advisory Committees

ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATIONS / MOTIONS
1. Call to Order / Quorum / Reading of Meeting Norms	● Meeting called to order at 6:37 p.m. At a committee meeting, all EPCAC members shall: ● Adhere to the established process. ● Listen to each other with an open mind and without interruption, to gain better understanding and clarity of the issues at hand; ● Remain civil and respectful of each other. ● Refrain from making any negative or disparaging statement against another member; and state opinions and respond to others within the agreed upon time limit for a topic. **Quorum**	
2. Land Acknowledgment	● The meeting began with a Land Acknowledgment	
3. Declarations of Possible Conflict of Interests	● None	
4. Approval of Agenda	● Approved, without comment	
5. Approval of January 27, 2025 Minutes	● Approved, without comment	
6. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting Minutes	**Auditor General's Report** ● **Trustee Aarts**: The report will be circulated prior to the meeting so that members can review it in advance. **Transportation Report** ● The transportation team will attend in April. ● Action: Members are asked to send any questions regarding transportation to Cheryl before the March meeting, so the team can be prepared for the discussion. **Budget Consultation** ● Trustee: Details on the budget consultation are forthcoming.	

	Human Rights Presentation	
	• A presentation will take place in March/April	

7. Michelle Munroe – TDSB CAC review and next steps	• In January 2024, the Board approved new procedures for how the CACS operate within the Board.
	
	  ○ **PR741** focused on governance rules and responsibilities of trustees.
	
	  ○ **PR742** addressed the operational pieces for membership, staff, and how the CACs themselves would operate and govern.
	
	• There are 12 CACs, including two statutory committees: PIAC and SEAC. These two have legislative procedures but are part of the advisory structure.
	
	• The Board approved the review of 6 committees, with a focus on exploring potential changes and alignment.
	
	• Review Process and Recommendations (November 2024):
	
	• In November 2024, 3 committees brought forward their review recommendations to the Board: Early Years, Environment, and French.
	
	• Three recommendations emerged from the Board:
	
	  1. Trustee co-chairs and the director will collaborate with the committees to explore alternative committee models, reporting back in the spring.
	
	  2. EPCAC and ICCAC should work together to review their mandates and explore a potential collaboration focused on equity and social determinants of health. The director will present a report in 2025.
	
	  3. The director will ensure that further reviews of CACs include alignment with other mandates and recommendations for structural changes.	

- Over the coming months, staff will engage in a **third review** of current CACs, exploring possible mergers and evaluating alternative models.

- CAC members will be involved in assessing the current model, identifying more suitable alternatives, and potentially retaining the existing structure or creating a new comprehensive report to present to the Board.

- The final report with recommendations will be presented to the Board in 2025. Until then, CACs will continue to operate as usual.

Specific Focus on EPCAC and ICCAC:

- EPCAC has been tasked with having a conversation with ICCAC to explore potential overlaps and the possibility of merging into a single committee focused on equity and social determinants of health.

- Key questions will include:

  o How do EPCAC and ICCAC's mandates align, and where can they be strengthened?

  o Can a unified model better serve the needs of students, especially in terms of equity and social determinants of health?

  o What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTS) of merging the two committees?

Social Determinants of Health:

- The concept of **social determinants of health** (e.g., poverty, income inequality) is central to this discussion.

- ICCAC has shifted their focus to include intersectionality — addressing not just poverty, but also the broad social and economic impacts on student success.

- The committees will need to assess the role of these social factors and how they impact students' engagement with and success in the education system.

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- What are the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats (SCOTS) that each committee brings to the table?

- How does the shift in environment (e.g., changing social or educational factors) impact your operations?

- Have you been able to move forward effectively with your existing mandates? If not, what are the obstacles?

- How might the two committees better align their mandates to strengthen their work in supporting student success and well-being?

- What are the concerns or fears each committee has regarding the possibility of merging?

- How can the committees best collaborate to achieve their goals, particularly around equity and student success?

Potential Outcomes:

- The outcome could be a decision to continue with the current structure, or merge into a new single committee model.

- A comprehensive report with recommendations for structural changes will be presented to the Board in 2025.

- The Board of Trustees is primarily responsible for policy direction and development, not for directing staff. However, their recommendations could influence future changes.

- Staff will facilitate the conversations and explore the role clarification and potential merger of committees.

Upcoming Meeting:

- A meeting has been scheduled for March 18, where the committee will explore these questions and decide on the next steps.

- Michelle has provided guidance on how to move forward with the review process.

Action Items:

	• Prepare a guiding document for the committees, outlining the process for their review and collaboration. • Clarify questions for EPCAC and ICCAC to consider in their discussions. • Explore possible alignment of mandates and identify opportunities for a unified approach.	
8. Trustee updates	**Budget Consultation (Trustee McLean)** • A budget consultation will take place soon, with several opportunities for delegates to be heard. • TDSB Senior Staff plans to reach out to all the CACs, making a presentation and seeking feedback. • There are ongoing mechanisms in place for the committee to delegate specific questions about the budget to EPCAC. • The plan is in development, and the Board is hopeful for a government funding announcement in April to provide clarity on the funding situation. **Islamophobia and Antisemitism:** • A report on Islamophobia and Antisemitism was released in December, with a subsequent update a few weeks ago regarding public consultations. These were summaries, not part of a finalized strategy yet. • The consultations involved feedback from students, the public, and organizations, which the Board has received. • Staff are currently reviewing the feedback to inform the development of strategies. **Motion on Combating Hate and Promoting Belonging:** • A motion was passed at the Planning and Priorities meeting to continue working on individual strategies addressing specific issues. However, these strategies should eventually form part of a holistic	

	approach that combats hate and racism while promoting belonging, acceptance, and understanding among all students. • Challenges Identified: The piecemeal approach to these issues has been disjointed, and there are concerns that specific needs for each committee are not being fully addressed due to capacity and timelines. • The goal is to move towards a broader framework of belonging within the system. **Consultation Process on Islamophobia and Antisemitism:** • Feedback Focus: The consultation so far has specifically gathered feedback from Muslim students and families (regarding Islamophobia) and Jewish organizations, students, and families (regarding Antisemitism). o The goal of these consultations was to understand what students and families are experiencing and what they want the Board to know when developing strategies. • Strategy Development: The feedback received so far has not yet influenced the strategy itself. More consultations will continue as staff work on refining the approach.	
	Next Steps and Clarifications: • Consultation Updates: Staff will continue to gather feedback and incorporate it into the broader strategy for combating hate and fostering inclusion. • Committee Involvement: The next consultations will include a more holistic approach, addressing the broader issue of belonging and acceptance across all groups	

9. Updates on ICCAC and EPCAC	• The committee has two main decisions to make regarding its relationship with ICCAC and its advisory model.	
	Question by SRP:	
	• Does EPCAC want to merge with ICCAC?	
	o Motion Proposal: The wording is adjusted to: **"We are considering working with ICCAC to explore options for mutualizing our advisory work for the Board."**	
	▪ Options to consider:	
	1. Status Quo – Pros / Cons	
	2. Strong Collaboration – Pros / Cons	
	3. Merge – Pros / Cons	
	▪ Mover: Janina	
	▪ Seconder: Feven	
	▪ The committee will make recommendations based on one or more of these options.	
	Considerations for the Decision:	
	• If the committee moves forward with any option, it should understand the positives, but also be aware of what might be lost when merging or collaborating with ICCAC.	
	Second Key Question:	
	• Chart with different model shared:	
	Alternative Advisory Models.docx	
	• What type of advisory model does the committee want to pursue? The question needs to be reframed for clarity.	

o Clarification on the Board's Intent: The Board has asked the committee to explore options for collaboration with ICCAC. The committee should consider a collaborative model rather than a full merger. There's a need to reconsider and reframe the question based on this guidance.

Clarifying the Committee's Role:

- Trustee Shan's Input: The motion signals where the committee's heart lies. If there is resistance to the idea of merging or collaborating, the committee can move a motion to express disagreement with this direction.

- Although the Board has asked for exploration of these options, the committee can still advise and share their perspective, even if they cannot directly change the Board's decision.

Meeting Update – February 13:

- At a meeting on **February 13**, it was emphasized that the committee needs to consider whether they want to merge with ICCAC. There had been some confusion about the nature of this request.

  o The Board's intent is to collaborate rather than mandate a merger. The committee should frame their questions and discussions accordingly.

Consideration of Alternative Advisory Models:

- Once the committee has decided whether to merge or remain independent, it needs to consider various options:

  o Current Structure: Remain as an advisory committee.

  o Merge: Combine with ICCAC to form a single advisory body.

  o Hybrid Model: One committee could remain an advisory committee, while the other shifts to a working group or stakeholder group.

- If one committee feels its role is more operational and involves working directly with staff, it could shift from being an advisory committee to a reference group or stakeholder group that receives

	support from staff rather than the Board of Trustees. These are different models to consider. • The CAC model is flexible and draws from various models, depending on the needs and mandates of the committees involved.	
	Action Items: • The committee will need to evaluate the pros and cons of the three options (status quo, strong collaboration, or merging). • The committee should also consider whether the advisory model needs to evolve into a working group or stakeholder group based on their role and the Board's needs. **Question on Mental Health Committee:** • SRP was asked about the definition of the Mental Health Committee and where it potentially fits within these models knowing it is not part of any CAC. Next Step: SRP will provide clarification on this by gathering the answer	
10. Policy Consultations for LOI and Abuse & Neglect	**Abuse and Neglect Policy:** • This policy has been under review for a long time, and a consultation was conducted several years ago. • Staff drafted a new policy but felt that it needed to be revisited and consulted again due to significant changes. • Original Policy: Focused primarily on child welfare systems, rather than the needs of Boards students. • New Policy: Aims to reflect the realities of Board and its students, in addition to legal requirements. • Consultation Update: Currently open for feedback. • **New Elements**: 1. The impact of racism on the child welfare system.	

2. Efforts to address bias within Board.

3. The policy now cross-references more laws and legal requirements.

4. Disability is mentioned in the definitions but not fully addressed within the body of the policy. Staff are working to better address intersectionality, including disability.

- Important: There has been a historical bias against families with disabilities within the child welfare system.

- Consultation Timeline: The consultation is closing online today (Monday, February 24, 2025). Feedback can be sent to the provided email.

Learning Opportunities Index (LOI):

- LOI has been due for review for a while, with recommendations from ICCAC for a broader consultation on how the LOI index is determined.

- **5 Key Factors for LOI Calculation**:

  1. CRA income data for the postal codes of students at the school.

  2. Board census data and Toronto demographic data.

  3. Whether the students come from single-parent vs. two-parent families.

  4. Support levels at home (e.g., education level).

  5. Various socio-economic factors affecting the community the school is located in.

- Purpose of LOI: LOI is a socio-economic calculation used to determine the level of need within a school. Schools are ranked on a scale from 1 to 485 (1 being the highest need and 485 being the most affluent).

- Resource Allocation: LOI plays a role in deciding the resources allocated to schools, but some resources (e.g., classroom sizes) are determined by the provincial funding model.

- MSIC Program: Focuses on addressing poverty by providing resources and programs to schools within high-needs communities (e.g., literacy/math coaches, VP, CSP, and teacher supports).

- Playgrounds: The Ministry of Education does not fund playgrounds, but playground replacement is prioritized for communities with higher needs.

- **Consultation Dates for LOI**:

  1. **East End LOI Public Consultation**:

     - **Date & Time**: Thursday, March 6, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

     - **Location**: 140 Borough Drive, Scarborough, ON M5S 2R5

  2. **Downtown LOI Public Consultation**:

     - **Date & Time**: Tuesday, March 18, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

     - **Location**: Central Technical School, 725 Bathurst Street, Toronto, ON M5S 2R5

  3. **Virtual LOI Public Consultation**:

     - **Date & Time**: Thursday, March 20, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

     - **Location**: Webinar link to be shared

  4. **Hybrid LOI Public Consultation**:

     - **Date & Time**: Thursday, April 3, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

     - **Location**: 5050 Yonge Street, North York, ON M2N 5N8 (Hybrid, in-person and virtual link shared)

- **LOI Feedback Deadline**: **March 24**.

	• Review Period: LOI is recalculated every three years, which may change the schools categorized as model schools and their access to resources. • Schools that fall closer to 1 (high needs) tend to be clustered together, while more affluent schools are ranked closer to 485. • Once schools hit rank 154, they transition off the model school list, meaning they still receive resources but are no longer part of the program. • ICCAC's Role: Much of the work around the LOI and model school conversations is being led by ICCAC.	
	Action Items: • Feedback on Abuse and Neglect Policy: Submit feedback via the provided email. • LOI Public Consultations: Attend one of the scheduled consultations or submit feedback by March 24.	
11. Next Meeting Reminder	March 24, 2025	
12. Adjournment	Meeting Adjourned at 8:22pm	