



**Equity Policy Advisory Committee
Minutes**

Date: Thursday, March 1, 2012

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: Committee Room A, 5050 Yonge Street

Present: Diane Dyson (Parent Alternate Representative); Patricia Hayes (TDSB Staff Resource to Committee, Manager, Human Rights); Augustre Munro (Parent Representative) Karlo Cabrera (TDSB Staff Resource to Committee, Program Coordinator, Equity); Tara Gallagher (TDSB Staff Resource to Committee, Officer, Human Rights); Kayode Brown (Just BGraphic Representative); Marjolein Winterink (TDSB Staff Resource Representative for Maria Rodrigues); Margaret Blair-Grant (Parent Representative); Christopher Penrose (Success Beyond Limits Representative); Mahassen Mahmoud (SEPT Representative); Maria Rodrigues (Trustee Co-chair); Pardeep Nagra (TDSB Staff Resource to Committee, Employment Equity); Saida Sabrie (SPLC Representative); Marcia Russell (Community Representative); Dauda Massaquoi (SPLC Representative)

Regrets: Michael Kerr (Colour of Poverty - Colour of Change Co-Chair); Nadine Sookermany (Parent Co-Chair); Jim Spyropoulos (TDSB Staff Resource to Committee, Coordinating Superintendent, Inclusive Schools, Student, Parent and Community) ; Jacqueline Spence (TDSB Staff Resource to Committee, Central Coordinating Principal, Equity); Tim McCaskell (Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario Alternate Representative); Evan Muller-Cheng (Agincourt Community Services Association Representative); Imam Abdul Hai Patel (Former Commissioner of Ontario Human Rights); Carmen Bierman

Recorder: Amanda Tiberio

| Item | Information/Discussion | Action/Recommendation |
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| Call to order-Welcome and Introductions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Trustee Maria Rodrigues Roundtable introductions were made | |
| Approval of Quorum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quorum was approved. | |
| Approval of Agenda | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda was approved as written. | |
| Approval of Minutes - January 26, 2012 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minutes of January 26th were approved with amendments: Library content – elaborate on questions of reflective, relevant libraries | |
| Superintendent’s Items and Report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item skipped due to absence of Jim Spyropoulos, Coordinating Superintendent, Inclusive Schools, Student, Parent and Community | |
| Equity and Inclusive Schools Updates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable and Inclusive Schools brought forth recommendations to P&P with reference to support for Portuguese-speaking students. They are looking for recommendations from trustees about further information needed for support. The recommendations are going to the Board on March 6th for further debate with the Board of Trustees. March 21st is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD). The day is dedicated to remembering events that happened in Africa during the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960. In partnership with the Gender-Based Violence team, EIS has put together curriculum and resources for teachers and schools, and added links to community organizations on the EIS website. April is Hispanic-Canadian Heritage month. In partnership with the Toronto Catholic School Board, they have put together events about pieces regarding Hispanic-Canadian | |

heritage. TDSB is sponsoring a student-planned student conference for Spanish-speaking youth, called “Avanzando Unidos”.

- May is Asian Heritage month, and EIS has partnered with the Catholic School Board to plan celebrations. There is sometimes confusion about what constitutes Asia, as it has cultural, geopolitical, linguistic and geographic definitions. The TDSB is going with a geographic definition which is more inclusive. Many Israeli/Palestinian students do not self-identify as Asian and EIS is attempting to provide greater diversity. There are many events being sponsored by the TDSB in celebration of Asian Heritage.
- June is Portuguese Heritage month. They are focussing on how to create awareness of Portuguese students within the curriculum, celebrate their contributions to Canada, and challenge untold stories to be brought forward.
- November is Aboriginal Education Month. The country recognizes June 21 as National Aboriginal Day, but that is usually the last week of exams for secondary students and it would be difficult to provide curriculum. Aboriginal Education Month is designed to run in tandem with Louis Riel Day (November 16) and the Fall Harvest Festival, which includes many events related to Aboriginal community members.
- EIS is trying to be very inclusive and celebrate as many heritages as possible. They are trying to address high dropout rates/low achievement in some student heritage groups. The celebrations are used to learn the history behind those heritages so that students can understand and be more inclusive of their peers.
- They are aiming to have student conferences for every community
- The department is going to meet with Roma students, parents, and community to find out how schools can best support Roma students, and how TDSB can support teachers who support Roma students.
- A question was raised about whether celebrations only took place in high schools. The celebrations also take place in elementary schools, in which case they use media such as film and picture books to inform students.
- A question was raised about whether the celebrations/curriculum is optional, as many parents are not aware of any events taking place in many of the schools. Instead of celebrating cultures, they are choosing to shut out every culture and do nothing. Trustee Maria Rodrigues expressed concern and desire to have every school to celebrate all heritage months. Trustee Rodrigues will write to Chris Bolton, Chair of the Board, about the committee’s concerns.
- Trustee Rodrigues expressed desire to organize an Equity conference by the end of the year. Karlo suggested using the FUTURES conference as an entry point. The focus on parents and community is on the Saturday. There is the possibility of an opportunity for sponsoring some parents/community members to attend the Saturday portion of the conference. Trustee Rodrigues asked that any EPAC members with interest in attending the conference send their intentions to Amanda Tiberio. Once a budget allotment is confirmed, registration information will be forwarded to all members who

Trustee Rodrigues will write to Chair Bolton regarding EPAC’s concern that heritage months are not being celebrated in all schools.

Any EPAC members who wish to attend the FUTURES conference on May 5, 2012 can send their intentions to:
Amanda.Tiberio@tdsb.on.ca
Registration information will be forwarded at a later date.

are interested.

Discussion ensued:

- A question was raised about where the heritage-focused curriculum is for other months of the school year, and why schools do not reflect all heritages in the curriculum rather than in a designated month. The heritage months are designed to raise awareness, but they do not necessarily advance the Equity agenda. In the letter to Chair Bolton, Maria will include the suggestion to have experiences of all heritages incorporated in the curriculum throughout the school year, in addition to highlighting months for awareness.
- Celebrating days is meaningless if there is no follow-up action. There are large numbers of drop-outs in the Somali, African and Portuguese communities. A question was asked about what the TDSB has done to find out why this is happening. Currently the board is working on partnerships with community agencies to run extra-curricular programs that support those students in question. Student Equity Program Advisors work with students who have a more difficult time to get support. They have linked with teachers and subject departments in schools to develop curricula that are responsive and reflective of culture in the school communities, and work with superintendents to engage staff, parents and community in all initiatives.
- Each heritage month is an opportunity to bring together all of a school's resources. Engaging is not the same as celebrating, and it is important to make sure schools are engaged in activities that mobilize resources.
- Accountability is an important aspect that is not being looked after. In the past, many different suggestions and resources have been offered that would have helped to move the curriculum forward, but have not been put in place.
- The problem is not a lack of good intentions. Problems cannot be solved at the same level that created them. Partnerships are critical to overcome issues.
- Transparency is critical. There has been a lot of talk with no action.
- It was suggested that there should be a day to celebrate only Africa. A comment was made that low achievement affects everybody and segregating communities will not help. Discussion has to be put into action. Trustee Rodrigues will include in the letter to Chair Bolton the committee's concern about the lack of action, and ask how the Board will move forward to address the problems.
- A question was raised about whether heritage events are funded by the TDSB. Funding comes from many different sources.
- A question was raised about how refugee rights are looked after. Karlo will find out more about World Refugee Day. In the past, the Board has worked with CAMH to help refugee students deal with trauma.
- Part of the reason why students are parents are failing/dropping out is because they are disengaged with teachers. Strong programs can only do so much without a good

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| | <p>relationship between students and teachers. Parents, community and outside partnerships should come together to discuss how to bridge the gap between students and teachers and engage students in the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustee Rodrigues suggested, using the model of the Portuguese-speaking student Task Force, that a task force be created for all communities with high drop out rates. • It was revealed that a Black Student Task Force is currently being formed with partnerships with the United Way, OISE, TDSB staff, and community organizations. Trustee Rodrigues will look into this and bring more information to the next meeting. • Beyond race, class and gender, there is a particular construct of marginalized students, including lack of self esteem, lack of identity and lack of power. Perhaps these features must be addressed as a whole instead of looking into each racialized community individually. A comment was made about how the approach to each community must be culturally appropriate and linguistically available. They would have to customize solutions and provide support from different angles. • There was concern that generally, task forces provide recommendations that are never looked at or acted on. It would be helpful to have a time line to support the goals of a task force. | |
| Aboriginal Education Centre Updates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item skipped due to absence of Cathy Pawis, Central Coordinating Principal, Aboriginal Education | |
| Participation in Participatory Budget Meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kayode Brown volunteered to be a second representative of EPAC at the next two Participatory Budget Reference Group meetings. • Committee Assistant will send all documents and notes from the meetings to members of EPAC. | Kayode Brown will represent EPAC at the final Participatory Budget Reference Group Meetings. |
| Review Terms of Reference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPAC Terms of Reference is still in draft form. Committee assistant will send a copy to all members before the next meeting. Karlo Cabrera proposed a work group to be formed in order to solidify the Terms of Reference so that a chair could be elected for the next meeting in preparation for the 2012/2013 school year. Interest was shown by the majority of the group, and it was decided that the Terms of Reference review would instead be the first item on the agenda of the next EPAC meeting, with discussion during dinner, and decisions made during the meeting. • Diane Dyson commented that future agendas should include more items requiring decisions rather than information. | |
| Membership Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item pushed to next meeting. | |
| Other business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Rodrigues proposed an invitation to the next EPAC meeting be extended to Chris Bolton, Chair of the Board. A motion to request the attendance of Chair Bolton was passed unanimously. • The Equitable and Inclusive Schools website now has a link to the EPAC website. The Committee Assistant will forward both links in an email to EPAC members. | Chair Chris Bolton will be invited to attend the EPAC meeting on April 19, 2012. |
| Adjournment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm. | |

Next Meeting: April 19, 2012