

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

**General Meeting**: Monday, February 22, 2021

A meeting of the Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee convened on Monday, February 22, 2021 from 6:37 pm to 8:35 pm on Zoom with Parent Co-Chair Aleem Punja presiding.

| **Members in Attendance**:  **Staff Present:** | Sharon Beason (Parent), Dennis Keshinro (Community-Co-Chair), Dan MacLean (Trustee) Catherine Maloney (Parent), Aleem Punja (Parent), Sophia Ruddock (Parent), Pablo Vivanco (Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre)  Irit Kelman (Manager, Human Rights Office), Precious Sidambe (Administrative Assistant) |
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| **Regrets**: | michael kerr (Colour of Poverty-Colour of Change), James Li (Trustee), Tesfai Mengesha (Success Beyond Limits) |

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| **ITEM** | **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS /**  **RECOMMENDATION/MOTION** |
| **Call to Order, Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands, Reading of the Meeting Norms and Approval of Minutes** | The meeting was called to order at 6:37 pm.  Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands and Meeting Norms were read.  The agenda was approved. |
| **Approval of Minutes** | The minutes from the January 25, 2021 meeting were approved. |
| **Trustee Co-Chair Update** | Trustee Co-Chair, Dan MacLean, gave an update to the committee. The human rights annual report was presented to the Program and School Services Committee and was discussed for four hours. The report was very well received and the committee acknowledged the importance of this work and is anxious to move forward.  The TDSB will be offering asymptomatic testing to the school communities. The Board has partnered with Toronto Public Health and they have identified neighbourhoods where the covid-19 rates are high. Pop-up sites for voluntary asymptomatic testing will be available in these neighbourhoods.  The Board will begin the public consultation on policies being reviewed which had been on hold for a year These sessions will be held remotely, on Zoom due to the current circumstances.  Last week the TDSB completed the last student switch between virtual and bricks & mortar school. In September, 38% of students requested virtual school. The TDSB virtual school represents the fifth largest school in the province. The first opportunity to switch was around Thanksgiving, but was postponed. In December, the TDSB reached out to families to ask who was interested in switching, both ways, and received over 6000 requests. Students were ranked in quintiles based on the number of covid-19 rates in their particular neighbourhoods. Students from neighbourhoods with high covid-19 rates were given more consideration and were prioritized. Requests for students in quintiles 5, 4, and 3 were met.  Trustee MacLean reached out to Executive Superintendent Jim Spyropoulos to discuss the feasibility of having a conference/meeting with other community advisory committees. The request was timely as the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee had proposed a similar idea and a formal proposal is with the Elders to seek advice. Executive Superintendent Jim Spyropoulos and Centrally Assigned Principal, Tanya Senk, are willing to attend the next EPCAC meeting to discuss how to move forward. |
| **New Membership Process** | Staff presented the membership procedure document that was included in the agenda. The committee also discussed equity issues for both in-person and remote meetings, e.g. access to devices and internet to attend meetings remotely; and the convenience of virtual meetings, particularly with child care duties. As the numbers for committee members are dwindling, the committee decided to post for new members now and when we resume in-person meetings, they can do further outreach.  With regard to new member selection, the committee decided that they would vet and assess the new member requests to ensure due diligence. |
| **Human Rights Annual Report 2018-2020** | Staff presented on the human rights annual report that was presented to Trustees at the last Program and School Services Committee meeting. The report covers a two-year span and the data sets provide a holistic view – includes the wellness survey data; racism, hate and bias incidents (PR728 data); and complaints.  PR728, Reporting and Responding to Racism and Hate Incidents Involving or Impacting Student Procedure, was developed following a trustee motion in 2019. It looks to not only identifying the issues, but ensures that accountability measures are put in place. A portal was developed for Principal and Superintendents to report such incidents. Superintendents will have access to real time data for their respective learning networks.  Data on the type of complaints that are submitted to the Human Rights Office does not include the cases reported directly to Principals and Superintendents.  Feedback from communities was that the issues identified in the report were already known to them - that the data confirms their experiences.  The biggest concern in the Human Rights Office (HRO) is the backlog – the office has not been staffed adequately. The Manager will be meeting with executive staff to discuss staffing and a process to resolve the backlog cases. In addition, non-Code workplace harassment complaints will be moving to Employee Services and the HRO will focus on discrimination and code-based workplace harassment. This will create greater capacity for the office to focus more on the service side (i.e. broader TDSB community such as students).  One concern raised by the committee was around the way Human Resources has historically dealt with issues of equity and diversity, and the fact that one needs a very acute speciality when dealing with diversity, equity and inclusion issues when dealing with not only code based complaints but all complaints. Lastly, the concern around checks and balances was brought up. The committee emphasized the need for human resources and diversity, equity and inclusion to have synergies with the human rights office. |
| **Anti-Black Racism in Schools** | The committee discussed anti-Black racism in schools following an article that was posted in the Toronto Star. The committee discussed their role in this matter and how they can intervene.  It was raised that the leadership in this area should come from the Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee (BSCAC) and the EPCAC can be allies. One idea was to invite BSCAC to one of EPCAC’s meetings. |
| **Addressing Anti-Asian Racism** | The committee discussed the Anti-Asian Racism resource co-created by TDSB and ETFO and requested that staff involved with this issue be invited to attend the next meeting to walk through the resource with the committee. |
| **Human Rights Policy, P031** | Staff provided an update on the draft revised human rights policy that is currently posted for public consultation. Members were invited to share their feedback either as members of the committee and/or members of the TDSB community. |
| **Information: Partnership Office** | The committee held a discussion around the barriers for organizations when it comes to the partnership process. An issue was raised that the organizations that come into the community are often not from that community, and that the organizations from the community are being denied access to the schools. Some organizations, e.g. with retired principals, can navigate through the process seamlessly while others cannot. It was raised that community organizations on other committees have also identified this as a concern. A request was made to have a representative from the partnership office present to the committee. |
| **Adjournment** | The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm. |