

Equity Advisory Circle Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 5, 2025 at 9:30 AM.
Zoom and in-person in North Bay Boardroom

Present:

Tim Graves, Executive Superintendent
Lisa Lamoureux, Principal of Student Well-Being, Equity and Indigenous Education
Erin Plourde, Canadore College Community Inclusion Coordinator
Marcus Etienne, Community Care Centre
Louise Sargent, Trustee
Amanda Mathias, Indigenous Education Lead
Lana St. Louis, Mental Health Lead
Deborah Robertson, Executive Director - Multi-Cultural Centre
Margaret Soroye, NNDSB ETFO President
Alison Clarke, Principal of Special Education
Sujala Niroula, Schools Coordinator - Multi-Cultural Society
Stephanie Norrie, Executive Assistant
Heidi McMillan, Executive Assistant

Regrets:

Seth Compton, OutLoud North Bay
Jeannie Vaillancourt, North Bay Metis Council
Niki Hutchinson, Youth Engagement Lead, North Bay District Health Unit
Ashley St. Pierre, Education Director Moose Deer Point FN
Lyudmyla Boyko, Multi-Cultural Centre
Katrina Aguiar, The Drop/Mental Health & Addictions Worker West PS Health Centre
Howard Wesley, Trustee
Nathan Moore, CAS Teacher Liaison Youth in Care
Melanie Gray, Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Land acknowledgment by Principal Lamoureux

Talking Circle – Welcome EAC members

Principal Lamoureux welcomed everyone to the meeting and had introductions and prompt around the circle.

Review Terms of Reference & Guiding Principles for our EAC

- The Equity Advisory Circle (EAC) is a standing committee of the Near North District School Board (NNDSB), reporting to the Board of Trustees.
- Its purpose is to provide advice, consultation, and feedback on diversity, equity, and inclusion matters, as outlined in the NNDSB Equity Plan and Strategic Plan.
- The Guiding Principles were reviewed, emphasizing respect, collaboration, and constructive problem-solving among members.
- The Terms of Reference for the Equity Advisory Circle (EAC) were reviewed, as is standard practice at the first meeting of each school year.
- The EAC was reaffirmed as a standing committee of the Near North District School Board, reporting directly to the Board of Trustees.
- The purpose of the EAC is to provide advice, consultation, and feedback on matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, aligning with the Board's Equity Plan and Strategic Plan.
- Current membership includes three trustees

- Representatives from SEAC, FNAC, PIC, the Mental Health Team, and multiple community partners also serve on the committee.
- New members are appointed annually. Members were invited to suggest potential new participants from community organizations.
- The EAC is chaired by the Superintendent of Education, Equity and Inclusion, with support from the Superintendent responsible for Indigenous Education.
- Meetings occur four times annually with additional working groups formed as needed for specific projects.
- Partnerships continue with agencies such as CAS, Canadore College, the Health Unit, and the Multicultural Centre.
- Members are expected to attend and actively participate in all meetings., support the goals and purpose of the EAC, demonstrate trust, respect, and teamwork, maintain positive collaboration.
- Members should notify Lisa Lamoureux or Heidi McMillan if unable to attend and may send a delegate when necessary.
- Updates or additions are made as required and distributed once approved.
- Meeting minutes are recorded, approved at subsequent meetings, and shared publicly once ratified.
- The group emphasized open communication, active listening, and the respectful exchange of diverse perspectives.

Near North Equity Update – Principal Lamoureux

- On September 26th PD Day, the Indigenous Education Team led a Truth and Reconciliation learning session.
- Schools collaborated on literacy, numeracy, and well-being goals.
- SMHO Literacy modules were shared with Grade 7 and 8 teachers.
- For National Truth and Reconciliation Day/Orange Shirt Day, learning sessions were held for elementary and secondary students, facilitated by the Indigenous Education, Equity, and Library Services Teams.
- Personal experiences were shared about residential schools from Judy Couchie with secondary students and a read-aloud was shared with elementary students.
- **Collaborative School Goals** - Schools worked together to advance literacy, numeracy, and well-being objectives
- Grade 7/8 teachers participated in SMHO literacy workshops
- Secondary teachers attended an AI training session
- **Well-Being Champions Program** - Launch of Near North Student and Teacher Well-Being Champions for the 2025–2026 school year.
- Professional learning and planning sessions were held for both Secondary Student Well-Being Champions and Teacher Well-Being Champions.
- On September 29, secondary student well-being champions gathered at Almaguin for a joint session with teacher well-being champions
- On October 1, teacher well-being champions from K–12 schools met for professional learning at South River Community Centre
- Upcoming meetings planned for secondary student well-being champions in November
- **Equity Coaches and Anti-Oppression Practice** - Equity Coaches participated in an October 20th PD session focused on anti-oppressive lenses and school/system structures
- Many Equity Coaches continue to lead student groups, including, Pride clubs, and Well-Being groups
- LIFT applications (due October 31st) saw many coaches submit projects centered on student well-being and equity goals within their school communities.
- Ongoing projects by Equity Coaches emphasize anti-oppressive approaches and support for student groups.
- **Professional Development and Safety** - The PD day in August brought teams together for planning and a safety workshop, The PD day in September started with the Indigenous Education team leading the opening focused on Truth and Reconciliation

- Additional PD sessions continue to focus on anti-oppressive practices and ongoing equity projects.
- **Community and Inclusion Events** - Pride Day at Canadore in June brought together students from across the board, fostering a sense of safety, belonging, and fun during the transition from elementary to secondary and post-secondary education

Reports/Updates

SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) – Principal Clarke

- In September, NNDSB SEAC appointed Candy St. Onge as Chair and Leigh Armstrong as Vice-Chair.
- Principal Clarke updated SEAC on summer 2025 learning supports and programs, which included learning programs, camps, and transition activities. Eighteen students attended summer camps (grades 3–10). Transition activities were available at 15 elementary and 5 secondary schools (27 programs), supporting 312 elementary and 264 secondary students.
- On September 23rd, a fall DLRT/Admin meeting was held. Topics of learning included, Speech and Language Referral Model, Supports for Students with Diagnoses Transitioning to Post-secondary School, Mental Health Referrals, and Supporting Student Transitions.
- On September 26, EA PD covered topics such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), understanding oppositional behaviour, best practices for inclusion, strategies and support for students with vision and hearing needs, and Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) training.
- In October, Principal Walkling was able to attend SEAC and present on the NNDSB Student Achievement Plan. He shared information related to data tracking, attendance data, engagement and well-being.
- In October, Principal Clarke reported that IEPs were completed and sent home using RISE software. New EAs and select employees received BMS training on October 20 at AHSS.

FNAC (First Nations Advisory Committee) - Amanda Mathias

- The committee uses a collaborative, grassroots approach to create responsive plans focused on student achievement, Indigenous language, land-based learning, and culturally responsive supports. NNDSB is electing its fifth Indigenous Youth Trustee, and Indigenous language enrollment has grown significantly. An anti-racism session for secondary staff is scheduled on November 14th.
- The Indigenous Education Advisory Circle includes representatives from eight First Nation communities, postsecondary institutions, friendship centres, and other community partners. Work is guided by a collaborative and responsive approach, ensuring community and youth voices shape educational priorities.
- Priorities identified through consultations with the Indigenous Youth Advisory Circle, Indigenous Educator Circle, and community partners include:
 - Student achievement and preparation for the future.
 - Indigenous language revitalization – over 530 students now enrolled in Indigenous language programs (growth from 4 to 10 teachers).
 - Land-based learning and experiential education.
 - Enhanced collaboration with Indigenous partners and communities.
 - Teaching of Indigenous histories, perspectives, and contributions in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- A key highlight was the upcoming election of the fifth Indigenous Student Trustee, following the successful two-year term of Riley Trudeau, who has been instrumental in advancing student voice and participation at the Board level.
- Upcoming events include anti-racism education sessions featuring guest speaker Randi Ray on November 14th for secondary staff.
- The Indigenous Education team continues to celebrate and promote culturally responsive practices and system-wide awareness of Indigenous knowledge and contributions.

PIC (Parent Involvement Committee) Principal Lamoureux

- The September PIC meeting focused on committee elections, nominations, and increasing parent participation.
- Upcoming meeting (November 12th, 2025) to feature multiple presentations:
- Correlation between attendance and student achievement (by Lana St. Louis and Principal Walkling).
- Updates from the Equity, Indigenous Education, and Student Well-Being Departments (presented by Principal Lamoureux).
- Planet Youth presentation on screen time and sleep (by Principal Samuel).
- Student Senate updates and the Words Matter Campaign parent workshop (November 20).

Trustee Update – Trustee Sargent

- Trustees and administration are currently responding to 15 ministry-led binding directives, many requiring immediate implementation.
- Efforts are ongoing to complete required policy and procedural revisions within mandated timelines.
- Recent Board changes include: Departure of three Trustees and Appointment of new Trustees Krista Messenger, John Arkwright, and Jay Aspen. New Student Trustee: Dev Bassi and Riley Trudeau (Indigenous Student Trustee) is completing her second term.
- The Governance Committee continues a full review and update of bylaws and policies, anticipated for completion by late spring.
- Election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair scheduled for November 18.
- The Parry Sound School build and associated planning continue to progress.
- The Board's commitment to ensuring decisions remain student-centered and aligned with well-being and achievement goals.

Mental Health – Lana St. Louis

- Summer mental health support program successfully hired a full-time clinician to assist twenty-seven students across the region.
- A pilot re-engagement program supported students with chronic absenteeism, providing academic credit recovery and mental health services.
- Professional development provided to staff aligned with PPM 169 and evidence-informed interventions, emphasizing brief, solution-focused therapy models:
- Training in *One-at-a-Time Counselling* and *Solution-Focused Brief Therapy*.
- Ongoing monthly clinical supervision groups to ensure implementation fidelity.
- Child Development Counsellors received training in the “Little Spot” program (for K–3 students), supporting emotional literacy and regulation.
- The Substance Use Prevention Project expanded from 4 to 12 schools, targeting Grade 8 students with evidence-based interventions proven to delay and reduce substance use.
- Ministry's Grade 6 Mental Health Literacy Modules were recently released and are being integrated with staff support and guidance.
- Staff engaged in discussions using the School Mental Health Ontario – Mentally Healthy Classroom Tool, strengthening school-based prevention and intervention practices.

Community Agencies Update from our service partners

- **Canadore College**
- Reported on the annual Child and Family Services Outreach Visit, which brings approximately forty youth to tour Canadore College campuses.
- Students participated in hands-on activities across various sites (aviation, trades, commerce, sports, Indigenous programs).
- The visit concluded with a North Bay Battalion hockey game, providing community engagement and mentorship opportunities.
- Planning underway for a January return event, expanding participation to more youth and continuing to promote postsecondary pathways and accessibility.

Northeast Multicultural Centre

- Planning underway for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 2026).
- The event will feature an anti-racism keynote speaker and accompanying teacher and student training opportunities.
- Collaborative partnerships continue with local school boards, Nipissing University, and Canadore College.
- Awareness campaigns and social media posts will be shared with schools to promote inclusion and education on racial equity.

Closing Circle

Group Activity: Members participated in a **Closing Circle** activity, ***“Name one goal you would like to focus on to support student well-being.”***

- Members’ reflections included:
- Maintaining a student-centered focus in all decision-making and committee work.
- Supporting student mental health and inclusive learning environments.
- Continuing to foster cultural responsiveness, student voice, and community collaboration.
- Strengthening teacher and student well-being initiatives and promoting equity across the system.
- Enhancing communication with families, particularly newcomers and those facing barriers.
- Expanding opportunities for professional learning and reflective practice among staff.
- The group reaffirmed its collective commitment to student well-being, belonging, and success.

Next EAC date: January 28, 2026