

Equity Advisory Circle Meeting Notes

Wednesday, November 20, 2024 at 9:30 AM.

Zoom and in-person in North Bay Boardroom

Present:

Melanie Gray, Superintendent of Teaching and Learning
Tim Graves, Superintendent of Education
Lisa Lamoureux, Principal of Student Well-being, and Equity
Amanda Mathias, Indigenous Education Lead
Nathan Moore, CAS Teacher Liaison Youth in Care
Erin Plourde, Canadore College Community Inclusion Coordinator
Niki Hutchinson, Youth Engagement Lead, North Bay District Health Unit
Marcus Etienne, PIC Chair
Katrina Aguiar, The Drop/Mental Health & Addictions Worker West PS Health Centre
Margaret Soroye, NNDSB Teacher
Howard Wesley, Trustee
Louise Sargent, Trustee
Heidi McMillan Executive Assistant

Regrets:

Seth Compton, OutLoud North Bay
Alison Clarke, Acting Principal of Special Education
Lyudmyla Boyko – Multi-Cultural Centre
Jeannie Vaillancourt, North Bay Metis Council
Sandra Zurbrigg, Community Member
Sujala Niroula, Multi-Cultural Society
Deborah Robertson, Multi-Cultural Society
Krista Holmes, Executive Assistant
Ashley St. Pierre, Indigenous Trustee
Lana St. Louis, Mental Health Lead

Land acknowledgment by Principal Lamoureux

Talking Circle - Introductions

- Superintendent Gray welcomed everyone to the meeting and had introductions around the circle.

Land Acknowledgement - *Principal Lamoureux*

Talking Circle- Introductions & welcome new EAC members

Terms of Reference & Guiding Principles for our EAC

Principal Lamoureux summarized the Guiding Principles and reviewed the TOR.

- Guiding Principles - treat each other with respect and dignity
- Solve any conflicts in a transparent manner demonstrating respect and civility.
- Empower and support each other to be positive leaders.
- Maintain a consistent high standard of ethical behaviour.

- Respect confidentiality.
- Be collaborative.

Terms of Reference

If you have any feedback regarding the TOR after meeting, please email Principal Lamoureux.

Type

- The Equity Advisory Circle is a standing committee of the Near North District School Board and reports to the NNDSB Board of Trustees.

Purpose

- The EAC will provide advice, consultation and feedback on matters of diversity, equity and inclusion as outlined in the NNDSB Equity Plan and NNDSB Strategic Plan.
- ACTION ITEM- Principal Lamoureux would like to include - our main goal is supporting students.

Membership – The AC shall consist of:

- NNDSB Trustees as designated by the current NNDSB Board of Trustees; NNDSB Board committee chairs including SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee), FNAC (First Nations Advisory Committee), PIC (Parent Involvement Committee).
- NNDSB staff representing Indigenous Education, Mental Health Lead, Special Education, Equity Department and Program Department.
- The NNDSB shall appoint community members from local community organizations that represent a broad range of underserved and equity seeking groups such as but not limited to Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ, Newcomers, Person with disabilities, Racialized people, women, youth, etc.
- A call for community members shall be posted for the month of September via social media. Organizations may submit a letter to the NNDSB through the EAC chair nominating a representative (and alternate) from their organization.
- Each community committee member is invited to serve for a renewable two-year term. Committee members should declare their interest in renewal by the end of September meeting of the second year of their term.
- The committee shall be chaired by the Superintendent of Education or designate with responsibilities for Equity and Inclusion and/or Indigenous Education.
- Principal Lamoureux opened the floor for questions and or comments.
- Trustee Sargent suggested the trustees review annually and change call for community members through various sources including social media.
- ACTION ITEM – to change callout to various sources including social media and also change the time to read the fall rather than September.

Meeting Arrangements

- Members shall meet as a committee four times per school year, (via electronic platforms such as Zoom or Teams), from September through June. The committee may appoint working groups that have specific directives. All working groups shall report and be responsible to the members of the committee.
- ACTION ITEM for Principal Lamoureux to change meet four times per school year, in person and via electronic platforms such as Zoom or Teams.

- The assigned Executive Assistant will create calendar invitations and distribute to all members along with the agenda, agenda items for consideration and meeting notes from previous meetings.
- Meeting notes will be shared at public board meetings and uploaded to the NNDSB website.
- Nathan suggested we include meeting arrangements for community members to add to the agenda and include - to contact the Executive Assistant and the Chair for agenda items to be added to the agenda. (ACTION Item for Principal Lamoureux).

Duties & Conduct

- Committee members are expected to attend and actively participate in all NNDSB EAC meetings and any working group meetings as required
- Contribute time, knowledge, skill and expertise to the fulfillment of the Committee's responsibilities
- Understand their role and expectations
- Understand and follow the purpose of the NNDSB EAC
- Develop and maintain a climate where mutual support, trust, respect, courtesy, teamwork, creativity and a sense of humour are valued.
- Respect the individual worth and dignity of other members and at all times, work together to achieve a common vision, utilizing the diverse knowledge, expertise and talents of all members to optimal advantage.
- Challenge ideas and not people, creating a climate where it is okay to disagree at times.
- Communicate directly, concisely and honestly, listening without interruption, and be open-minded, allowing a variety of opinions to be heard.
- Communicate using inclusive and non-discriminatory language, respecting the spirit of the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Address topics and issues from the perspective of the organization being represented. EAC is not a forum for discussion of individual, personal or private student issues.
- Work effectively with staff and respect all decisions made by the NNDSB EAC.
- To attend all meetings or notify the chair of EAC and arrange for their alternate if that applies, to be present so that their organization is represented. The representative should advise the alternate as soon as possible to allow the alternate sufficient time to prepare for and attend the meeting.

Review

- Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.
- Once reviewed by the current NNDSB EAC and feedback obtained the 2024-25 EAC TOR will be shared with NNDSB Executive Council and the NNDSB for further approval.
- Date of next review: November 2025.
- Trustee Sargent asked if the TOR will be shared with Near North Exec council and NNDSB - clarification is that the board of trustees?
- SO Graves clarified yes and they would need to come back to this committee before they make it to the Board.

- Our Near North Mental Health Team and System Principals engaged in three days of training at Spirit Point focused on Restorative Circles. (The Circle forces you to be fully present when there are not distractions and makes an impact and good way to support those with struggles and conflict).
- Our Mentorship Team – new Principals and Vice Principals participated in first in-person session on October 1st at the Annex. Presentations were made from Finance, Facilities and Program. Mentors/mentees also participated in circles throughout the day.
- Our 2024-2025 CRRP Calendar was shared with all Near North staff in late August. All schools and departments received three hard copies of the calendar and it continues to be shared at the beginning of every month by email with all Near North staff.
- We shared two editions of the Student Well-Being newsletter for October and November 2024 with all staff and asked principals to share with their school communities and on their social media.
- Our Near North Student Senate has come together three times for 2024-25 at Chippewa, Parry Sound and FJ McElligott. There is a new structure for Student Senate Meetings.
- Mental Health Lead Lana St. Louis and Principal Lamoureux attended SMHO Regional session in Sudbury on October 29th focused on the new Grade 10 SMHO modules and goal setting for 2024-25.
- Our Near North Vice Principals engaged in an in-person meeting on November 5th at the Best Western in North Bay. Our Indigenous Education Team did a presentation for our VPs as well as CAS and our LDT team on School/Student Achievement Plans.
- Equity Coaches from all regions have submitted LIFT and Experiential learning applications that focus on supporting student well-being and equity goals in their school communities.
- Equity Coaches will share their projects/work with their school staff and at the PD day on April 4th, 2025, with teachers throughout the NNDSB.
- Many school teams are using LIFT funding to purchase new resources for students and staff and to train staff on how to use resources.
- Erin from Canadore asked if the modules will go up to grade 12 eventually. There are a lot of challenges navigating stress management.
- Principal Lamoureux confirmed that is the goal. The content of the modules are excellent talking about anxiety, developing healthy friendship and relationships. Video links are included. Feedback – we received at Almaguin – some of the students would prefer they not use cartoons; they would prefer to have real people as the actors in the videos. Principal Lamoureux will share the modules for EAC team to access.
- Student Senate – all were present at the first meeting of the year.
- Niki from the Health Unit did a presentation with all of our secondary teachers – it was nice to bring everyone all together. Did a lot of interactive and reflective conversations on the data. Brought a Stash box – we purchase the new substances or any kind of nicotine like products to educate teachers what these things look like – disguised as treats or rubics cubes. Compared the Planet Youth data with school climate data, grouped different school data and regional data so they can look in and look out on data and apply changes. Planet Youth is a community approach the focus is on the community and the settings around the school.
- Principal Lamoureux wanted new members to be aware of the Safe Schools resources available in our schools
- Poster launch – Responding to Discrimination displayed in schools. There is a phone number, email address and QR code you can report any acts of bullying or discrimination you witness

or experience. Lots of positive feedback from the staff so far. QR code entries are submitted anonymously.

- Poster outlines steps - tool for staff to feel more confident on how to address the issues. Make sure they feel confident in responding to acts of discrimination. We provided PD last year for all staff on how to use the tool.

Reports/Updates

- SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) SO Graves
- Mental health literacy modules and those modules are fantastic. In gr 7, 8 and 10 because of curriculum update and do anticipate the ministry doing those updates and providing the mandatory modules. Contains resources that can be accessed on the School Mental Health website for students, teachers, parents, system leaders.
- SEAC Advisory Committee – mandated committee of the board, is populated by trustees of the board and associations that represent children with disabilities or identifications from across the region.
- Last month we focused on Student Achievement and Well-being and had a financial presentation by SBO VanHaesendonck to make recommendations to the board on the Special Education budget. Next SEAC meeting is tomorrow and there will be an update on our behaviour team that support schools and management challenging behaviours. A few changes with the college in regulations have caused us to make a few adjustments. Not significant adjustments but did cause us to reorg. Principal Samuel will be speaking on safe schools. Chair & Trustees will provide an update. Spec Ed plan is available online.

FNAC (First Nations Advisory Committee) Amanda Mathias

- Numerous events supporting professional learning for all staff and even more planned for the year. Work with FNAC and IEAC – NNDSB meets regularly with the 8 partnering First Nations to review and update the Educational Service Agreement and co-create action plans to support student success. We also meet with Indigenous Advisory Circle alongside the community and partners to ensure a local voice and grass roots approach to supporting student and educators and community.
- IYC continues to develop and grow in their leadership. Monthly meetings are mixed between online and in-person. IYC has continued to be involved in schools and the community, often taking on planning for and participating in key days of recognition.
- IYC Gives Back. They are collecting toys and monetary donations for the “Stuff the Cruiser Campaign” in collaboration with community partners. There is considerable success through candy gram sales, spirit days, artwork auctions, theatre and more. Already thousands of dollars collected for the IYC GIVE BACK CAMPAINGE.
- IYC supported learning for their education communities for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Treaty Week, Indigenous Veterans Day and more.
- School communities are working towards City-Wide Powwow, which is a four-board collaboration.
- Youth leaderships are working towards Indigenous cultural celebrations at each secondary school, supporting student transition. Aanmitaagzi and alumni are supporting the development of each school’s community in the North. In the west, they will continue to host a traditional pow wow. The planning is beginning now, all 6 dates are in May.

- We are also beginning to plan the year end leadership session in partnership with Nipissing University, Enji-giigdoyang: Office of Indigenous Initiatives for the IYC.
- Northern, Parry Sound, West Ferris and Chippewa Secondary Schools have Indigenous Youth Spaces and Graduation Coaches.
- Recently we further expanded to Grade 7/8 grad coaches, proving to be successful. Intermediate students were working towards their own junior version of the current IYC. There is mentorship and collaboration.
- With Wasauksing First Nation through a Niigaan Gdizhaami (NG) Partnership Grant, the west schools receive cultural programming and language support from Cultural Advisor Lisa Ross to support cultural learning. They support the west.
- In partnership with Dokis First Nation, another NG grant continues to be used to bring various Indigenous Artists, knowledge keepers and Elders to schools. We also bring students to the community and to learning events hosted by partners. This supports the North district.
- In addition, we are working with a special grant through the ministry to develop a strategic plan for language programming, develop a mentorship program and develop resources. Language revitalization, recruitment and retaining language teachers and programs remain a priority.
- We are currently working towards further curriculum enhancements through the utilization of walking the path, the spark Initiative, curriculum enhancement projects by subject and division.
- Program enhancements through reflection and continued exploration of Seven Stones, Alternative Learning Centre model, partnership with the Friendship Centre, Courses, and language focusing on Indigenous Education.
- Continue to provide resources for existing courses.
- Enhancement to our front facing websites so they know the information they are accessing is vetted and local information.

PIC (Parent Involvement Committee) SO Graves

- Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), which advises the Director and the Board on issues around communication with parents, supports school councils, and ensuring parent engagement. The committee manages a grant program, the Parent Reaching Out Grant, application-based process which provides funds for parent outreach programs. This year, the committee is offering the grants in a two-phase process to accommodate school councils' needs. The committee also runs parent workshops and is planning a book study for school councils on the topic of screen time and its effects on children. Superintendent Graves discussed the Parent Involvement Committee's role in supporting school councils and the importance of parent engagement. He highlighted the Parent Reaching Out Grant, which provides funds for events that focus on issues of equity, addictions, vaping, and screen saturation. The grant application process is now open, with the first round closing on November 27th and the second round ending in late winter. The committee also partners with other departments or communities to run parent workshops.
- Meeting coming up early Dec asked PIC committee to represent on this committee.

Trustee Update

- Trustee Sargent explained the board consists of nine trustees, including eight elected through municipal elections and one Indigenous Trustee elected through the chief of their region. We have 2 student trustees and that is now a 2-year position. The Indigenous Student trustee is elected by the IYC, with the student senate electing the other student trustee.
- The board re-elected Ashley St. Pierre as chair and Howard Wesley as vice chair.
- The trustees will receive updates from the committees at their board meetings.

Community Agencies Update from our service partners

Nathan from CAS

- Discussed his involvement in coordinating reach meetings with schools, supporting students in care, and facilitating referrals to the School of Success (SOS) and ECPP program. Linking them with a trusting caring adult in the school making sure they are connected to mental health supports as well as connecting them to cultural and extra-curricular activities.
- SOS has two classrooms at our Elmwood location and is largely geared to students involved in the agency and look at transitioning students into the program working to build schools to transition them back to mainstream school.
- Elmwood runs Youth programming 5 nights a week with the youth programming runs 3 nights for ages 6-12 through city of North Bay 3-6 pm. Agency runs Tuesday & Thursday with Let's Talk Tuesday focusing on mental health topics partnered with Hands for ages 14+. Thursdays geared to youth drop in night with programming around independent skills ie. Rental agreements and substance use. Great partnerships with Ind Friendship where they offer indigenous programming.
- Alternative Education Employment & Pathways Fair at Elmwood January 19, 2025, highlighting different pathways to complete a secondary school education into post-secondary and different pathways and will be offered to local high schools for individuals looking for alternative pathways to complete support their education. Transportation will be provided to youth that want to attend. Nathan to send out emails to school Principals for more information.

Katrina from The Drop in Parry Sound

- The Drop is open to youth ages 12-20.
- The Drop developed at the conclusion of the NNDSB wellness camps in 2021
- Strategic plan – to increase access to The Drop as we currently operate off fundraising/donations.
- Tues/Wed/Thur, 3:30-6 pm, last Wednesday of every month from 6-8 pm
- Working on several grant applications, one to extend the hours of operation to 5 days a week, one for a computer lab and improved wifi access, one for drop in counselling,
- AGM - Dec 3rd – Contact Karina for more information.
- Working to increase diversity of participants - have reached out to local FN
- Creating opportunities for youth leadership to create a position for youth at our board level.
- Several great partnerships with community agencies.
- Hoping to grow and top priority is keeping the doors open and accessible to youth.

Niki from the Health Unit

- PD day support and Planet Youth.
- Looking at individual student data specific to school stays specific to that school.
- A lot of work for outdoor learning initiatives.

- Recent funding support identified at Student Senate for money towards accessible menstrual products and a new shelter for students to gather outside of Almaguin.
- Lending library hosts curriculum support for educators and community groups. “Vaping what's the hype” – already linked to curriculum for mainly grades 5-9.
- Working with Ameilia rising to have alcohol and cannabis goggles to be rented out in the community.

Erin from Canadore

- Continue to collaborate with various community partners to support students through various EDI workshops, in person workshops available for our students. Oversee youth and care bursary which is open and available to all students that have been in the care of CAS. Applicants can apply to get back all their tuition and ancillary fees. Great for youth to help offset the costs of school.
- Student for a Day opportunity to take away some of the unknowns for first time post-secondary and offer support for tour and fun community activity.

Group Activity: Closing Circle - Principal Lamoureux

- *Short on time so the closing circle is going to be extended to our next circle in January.*
- *Important to be engaged and present so the question is **How would you like to support the well-being of our students?***

Next EAC date: January 29, 2025