

Equity Advisory Circle Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 29, 2025 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
Kelly Huston, Indigenous Teacher 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
Louise Sargent, Trustee
Seth Compton, OutLoud North Bay
Margaret Soroye, NNDSB Teacher
Ashley St. Pierre, Education Counsellor Moosedeer Point FN
Heidi McMillan Executive Assistant

Regrets:

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

Land acknowledgment by Principal Lamoureux

Talking Circle – Welcome EAC members

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

Near North Equity Update – Principal Lamoureux

The guiding principles were reviewed.

- 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.

EAC Terms of Reference Updates

- 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. The EAC will support equity work throughout the NNDSB and in our communities.
- The membership currently has 3 trustees.
- A call for community members shall take place in June and September, will be on the agenda for our final EAC for the school year.

NNDSB Update

- Near North Equity Coaches are engaged in many LIFT projects and Experiential Learning projects focused on equity, Third Path, UDL and Student Well-being.
- Plante Youth has provided funding to our Near North schools that participated in the Planet Youth survey. The funding is to support student well-being initiatives.
- Out 2024-2025 CRRP Calendar continues to be shared electronically with all Near North staff at the beginning of each month as well as our Student Well-Being newsletter.
- Our Near North DSB Program Team participated in the Pathways to Success Education and Career Fair on January 16th at Elmwood organized by Nathan Moore and our OECT Team with motivational speaker Jamie McMillan who shared her story of resilience.
- Student Senate met at Almaguin on Dec 13th and West Ferris on Jan 17th.
- Mental Health SMHO Kits were distributed to all principals. The focus of the kits is leading mentally healthy schools.
- Some of our elementary and secondary principals came together on Jan 15th for a round table discussion on student well-being.
- Many Near North Equity Coaches, educators and staff participated in student well-being initiatives for Bell Let's Talk Day on January 22, 2025.
- Our Near North Library Team was named Library Professional of the Year. Every year, the Ontario Library Association honours one exceptional individual with the Ontario Library Professional of the year award in recognition of leadership. Our NNDSB Library team was chosen for all their hard work and efforts.
- Equity resources and events in our community include:
 - <https://egale.ca>
 - <https://smho-smso.ca>
 - <https://www.equityliteracy.org>
 - <https://www.wlu.ca/academics/faculties/faculty-of-education/assets/resources/edi-resources-for-educators.html>
- EGALE workshop scheduled for EA's on January 31st PD day.

Reports/Updates

SEAC

- In January, SEAC was able to acclaim a chair for the committee. We are pleased to share that Trustee Chantal Phillips has been acclaimed as SEAC Chair for the duration of this school year. An election for Vice Chair will be held in February.
- In both December and again in January, SEAC was able to begin a engage in a review of the Terms of Reference. The committee was able to suggest revisions to the Terms of Reference, which will be brought forward for finalizing in February.
- In January, Gail Degagne (Math Lead Teacher) was able to share a mid-year update of her ongoing work. Gail works directly with classroom educators, school-based DLRTs and students. Specifically, Gail was able to share key goals, the tiered math strategy as well as priority action items, such as knowing the learner, content learning at all three tiers and curriculum fidelity. Gail was also able to share and discuss learning impacts, gap closing resources and informed next steps. Further, she was able to discuss the DLRT role and how that role is being supported to engage in direct small-group

instruction with grade 3 learners, focused IEP modification page planning/implementation and highlights/celebrations related to their ongoing work.

- Principal Clarke was recently able to share that the special education leadership team continues to work alongside the leads at RISE to complete the final stages of configuration of the RISE platform, which is an online student profile platform that will replace our current IEP composer and will facilitate special education referrals to central special education services, such as Psychology, Speech Language and Behaviour referrals. Currently, early adopter training sessions are occurring and implementation training sessions with respective staff groups are being planned for February. NNDSB will go live with RISE after the March break.
- Principal Clarke has also been keeping the committee apprised of our Grade 7/8 empowerment sessions for students with learning disabilities. This initiative is being led by the central psychology team and includes both virtual and in-person sessions wherein students join together to learn about and be engaged in asset-based conversations about their learning profiles. Sessions are structured to empower students as well as encourage self-advocacy and asset-based mindsets. All schools were invited to host student sessions, and most schools participated. Sessions are scheduled to continue into the beginning of February.
- Chair Phillips is engaging in a Special Education Parent Guide review and is working to suggest revisions that will consider accessibility related to content and features.

FNAC – Kelly Huston

- There have been numerous events and initiatives to support professional learning for teachers, leadership, and the Indigenous education team across the system. This has included strong community partnerships, formally we work with FNAC and IEC.
- The NNDSB regularly meets with the 8 partnering First Nations to review and update the Educational Service Agreement, co-create action plans focused on supporting student success and wellbeing. Additionally, the Indigenous Advisory Circle is engaged to ensure local voice, grassroots approaches, and culturally responsive practices in supporting students, educators, and community engagement.
- A plan was created to review the 2024/2025 school year and co-create a shared vision for the 2025/2026 school year.
- The most recent meeting occurred on January 22nd, with the next meeting scheduled for April.

Indigenous Youth Circle (IYC) and Leadership

- 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. Most notable so far this year have been:
- IYC Gives Back - The Near North District School Board's Indigenous Youth Circle, in partnership with the North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre and the Anishinabek Police Service, held a successful Stuff the Cruiser fundraiser. Over two months, Indigenous youth from six secondary schools organized various fundraisers, collecting toys and over \$1282 for the North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre's holiday gift-giving. The event, held at Sturgeon Falls Canadian Tire, saw participation from Indigenous Student Trustee Riley Trudeau, Kelly Huston and local police officers, who collected donations and raffled items, ultimately filling an APS truck with toys.
- The event culminated on December 12, where Student Trustee Student Trustee Riley Trudeau, and Dokis First Nation Student Jacob Restoule, hopped in APS cruisers driven by Sergeant Larocque and Constable McLeod. Amanda and I also joined in on the two routes. We visited 5 of the 6 secondary schools to collect their donations.
- Along with a \$1000 donation from Dokis First Nation, and the monies procured at Canadian Tire, over \$4000 was raised.
- 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.

May 7th - CSS
May 9th - WFSS
May 14th - AHSS
May 28th - NSS
May 29th – NORTH BAY POW WOW MEMORIAL GARDENS
May 30th - PSHS

- 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.

Regional Level Initiatives - three grants:

1. **NG Fund with NFN:** Great Lakes Cultural Camp has facilitated two camps to date - Deer Hide Camp and Trapping Camp. Both events were attended by a grade 7 class from CSS and a grade 8 class from WFSS. We are grateful for the hospitality from the community of Nipissing First Nation along with the hospitality from students and staff at Nipissing Secondary School. We look forward to our upcoming events happening this Spring and Summer.
 2. **NG Fund with Wasauksing:** Cultural Coordinator, Lisa Ross, continues to share her knowledge with students and staff in the West. Lisa has coordinated various knowledge keeper visits. We are grateful that this partnership will also support the upcoming PSHS pow wow.
 3. **NG Fund with Dokis:** This grant continues to support various events for our students in the West, these include but are not limited to, quill work workshops, medicine pouch making workshops, women's hand drumming and youth leadership support. This grant has also supported robust professional development opportunities for Indigenous language teachers. We look forward to utilizing this grant to support other events such as, 4 teaching and learning pow wows and guest speaker Ted Nolan.
- Staff – working toward further curriculum enhancements and LIFT funds at white woods. History project, 7 stones and courses and update SharePoint.
 - Grad Coaches – 7/8 grad coaches this year.

PIC – SO Graves

- This fall and winter PIC has undertaken 3 mandates – provide advice and support to school councils and support to parents on information items, develop strategies and initiatives to engage parents in improving student achievement and sharing information.
- Key themes include cell phone use/screen time use and effects it has on students.
- Book Study - "Childhood Unplugged" focuses on practical strategies for parents to balance their child's screen time.
- There are plans to bring in the author in the fall, with funding provided by PIC.
- Planet Youth strategy is an initiative that aims to improve the lives of youth by addressing issues such as vaping and drug abuse. It highlights the importance of parent-child time, noting a correlation between higher cannabis use among students that reported less parent time.
- Presentations around the Icelandic Model and how PIC can support some of that work.
- Parent Reaching Out Grants provide funding for initiatives aimed at engaging parents. The criteria for applying typically focus on curriculum and equity. Additionally, the grants support parent nights that promote family time and offer strategies that parents can continue to use at home.
- Subcommittee – 9 schools have been approved and most of the funding has been allocated.
- Next Parent Involvement Committee is April 16, 2025.

Mental Health Update -

- Mental Health Lead Lana St. Louis is hoping to fill vacancies for the Mental Health Clinician in the west and north.
- Proactive and restorative circles.
- PreVenture for grade 7/8 students – is an evidence-based prevention program that uses personality targeted interventions to promote mental health and delay substance use among teens.

- Mandatory literacy manuals have been added to grade 10 careers. Teachers have received PD to implement these models.

Trustee Update- Louise Sargent

- Board of trustees hoping to get an update on the cyber security breach.
- Letter sent to Ministry asking that the Ministry initiate, study and begin consultations regarding efficiencies within the four-board system model.

Community Agencies Update from our service partners

NBMC Deborah Robertson – no update

CAS – Nathan Moore

- The Pathways event was held 2 weeks ago with approximately thirty students from Laurentian Learning Center and Scollard Hall attending, with twenty organizations presenting. We plan to do it again next year and want to expand with opportunities for more to participate and will be looking at a larger space for next year. It is a great opportunity for students to see alternative pathways for education and employment.
- Continuously working with SBO Van Haesendonck to administer stability funding designated to youth in NNDSB and connects with CAS to keep students at their current school when they move within the city.
- Youth programming is available at the youth hub 5 nights a week - run by City of North Bay. Tuesday's focus on mental health – various topics on mental health. Thursday's focus on life skills and drop in for use of the gym.
- College application time - helping students navigate college applications and ensuring they have the financial support to cover the application fee. We utilize the funding to reimburse them for the application fee and remove the barrier of the application fee.
- Advocate for students struggling in mainstream classrooms looking for exclusions not being successful in a regular classroom and working with Emily Samuel and Special Ed team.

OUTLoud – Seth Compton

- Nipissing Equity Collective is a new group that started in September. They meet once a month at the Indigenous Friendship Centre with a focus on tightening support and services to LGBTQ youth.
- New to OUTLoud- partnership with Hands to have a Crisis worker on site every Wednesday to support youth and build relationships with kids.
- Partnership with Canadore to develop training – data collection done through a survey.
- North Bay Regional Health Center has a gender affirming clinic – 4-6 week wait time, and it has become quite popular.
- Contact OUTLoud for support with High School coop hours.

The Drop – Katrina Aguiar

- Open 3 days a week.
- Submitted an application for funding to be able to increase hours.
- Biweekly music program.
- Biweekly virtue program that builds compassion, empathy & respect.
- Ask Us Anything Program gives youth the opportunity to submit questions and sit down with a trusted adult to get answers.
- Thrive Program is a 5-week program that focuses on healthy sexual relationships.
- Looking for feedback on how to increase our numbers. Participation is low in the 16-18 age group. OUTLoud has had success designating specific evenings for the older teens ie. Friday night for college students. Avoid mixing younger youth with older youth. Hosting karaoke for the age-appropriate activities and closing off to the younger group worked well for OUTLoud.
- Nathan mentioned doing too much for a large group often doesn't work, so suggested having a more mature atmosphere, as well as doing a bring a friend night.

Health Unit – Nikki Hutchison

- Huge focus on Planet Youth – specific for 2 areas that completed the survey for North Bay and West Nipissing and has opened to communities' participation.
- 14 projects have applied for micro grant.
- Planet Youth – building supportive communities for youth – improving outcomes through evidence-based prevention. Survey results are housed on the website [Planet Youth](#)
- Leisure and substance use - grade 10 students get surveyed every two years.
- Supporting a parent engagement week with all 4 boards Mental Health Leads for parent education on cell phones.
- Supporting Nipissing U at Sundridge with 24 hours move project – focus on sleep and recess, to support student well-being.
- Student Senate meeting – youth are flagging important issues.
- An active sensory hallway has been installed at Chippewa to help students regulate, with another one being installed at West Ferris this summer.
- An additional lending library is available at the Health Unit where teachers can get items for free - linked to curriculum.

Canadore – Erin Piourde

- Student for a Day allows students to tour campus and residence. It's an opportunity for students to experience college life for a day and tour residence and campus and attend a battalion game and dinner. Second and third-year students attend the dinner to chat about their college experiences.
- Tour all 3 campuses on March 20th.
- Contact Erin to have the college application fee removed if the fee is a barrier for any student wanting to apply to college.
- Always looking for feedback to support youth in a smooth transition.

Group Activity: Closing Circle - Principal Lamoureaux**How would you like to support the well-being of our students?**

- Principal Lamoureaux – Focus all NNDSB students feel accepted and happy and belong – capture the student voice and hear what they are struggling with and what they are happy with. Ensure, students, staff and parents can go for help when they need it – access resources.
- Restorative circles have been used with classes that are struggling – conflict in personalities, sometimes making smaller groups i.e. girls away from the boys and they tend to share more. A lot of work with restorative circles. We do see progress that they have made – becoming more comfortable and their relationships have improved. They respect the circle and realize how their actions and words affect others.
- Erin – offering accessible support so students know I am a safe person to reach out to. Paint a friend – fun activity and an opportunity to see if there are any barriers or challenges.
- Seth – focusing on fostering positive relationships, healthy habits, good sleep patterns, offering safe space and positive environment for youth and their caregivers.
- Nikki – unique position hearing youth voice and community organizations. Ensuring students are aware of what is happening behind the scenes as our timelines take longer but have them understand we are working on their suggestions.
- SO Graves – Demand for service is greater than the service we can provide i.e. Spec Ed/Mental Health – our service pathways – are we connecting the right student with the correct service. Working within our board partners and community partners to improve those pathways and turnaround time. What

data are we collecting along the way – moving forward can we make that decision in a strategic way – that allows us to best support our students.

- Kelly – Indigenizing curriculum so all students can learn with an Indigenous perspective.
- Trustee Sargent – Would like to be present when the community is having a discussion. Being present helps it all come together by attending student discussions and hearing what they have to say. Supporting students is what we are here for. Trustee Sargent would like to attend a student senate meeting just to listen – not participate.
- Nathan - Having positive interactions with the kids. Meeting them and listening to their voice, make sure their voice is heard. Keeping their well-being and best interests' top priority. Limited with services and time but to keep the child's interests at the forefront thinking outside the box to ensure everyone is on the same page.
- SO Gray – Supervise and support elementary schools, teachers, principals by leading with empathy.
- Spend time listening and identifying the best pathways to address challenges.
- Important to share these areas with specific schools and their communities.
- Program and Curriculum – Consistently monitor and track student learning. Address staffing shortages creatively to develop and implement programs that are not one-size-fits-all.
- While the Ministry may have specific ideas, our team focuses on ensuring equitable access for all students, considering various groups such as ESL, Spec Ed, etc.
- Marcus – Being supportive and there for the students. There is help for them and we are there for them.

Next EAC date: April 9, 2025