

## **Indigenous Education Advisory Council Meeting**

October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017

In Attendance: Clara Howitt, Tina DeCastro, Paula Hedgepeth, Brieanne John, Lisa Staley, Mona Stonefish, Kahentiiosta Yen, Beth Cook, Ray Luvie, Amberley John, Bradley John, Kim John, William Tooshseniq, Carol Antone, Donna Grayer

Regrets: Julia Burgess, Ron Leclair, Erin Kelly

**Opening**— Elder Mona Stonefish

### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Clara Howitt welcomes everyone, introductions made around the table.
- Diversity officer will be joining in later
- Regrets from Trustees Ron Leclair, Julia Burgess, and Director. All out of town.
- Meeting was set today to review and sign the Action Plan
- Next meeting will schedule in advance and make sure Trustees/Director can attend.
- Dr. Sharon Pyke will be joining later for open conversation. Did ask Paul Antaya to join, however based on conversation from last meeting, Sharon Pyke will be here to talk about well-being.
- Next meeting will arrange for Mr. Antaya to attend for conversation about hiring practices, and moving forward in connection to IEP protocol.
- Review of principals of journey together.

### **1. Action Plan**

Went through at last meeting, copies available at the table. Open floor to any discussion since last meeting.

Tina-data collection section is included in this copy (wasn't in last meeting)

Busy year planned. Take a few minutes to peruse the Action Plan. One person from committee and Director will sign. Document is fluid, items can be added/adjusted along the way.

Question: at the last meeting going over the BAP, question was asked about language camps and land based learning camps?

Answer: Waiting for grant application for leadership grant, that is what that money will be used as, land based education. No date yet as to when grant will be available. Have done some initial planning as to what it will look like. Will have to apply for grant.

Answer: Outdoor Education monies have been set aside as well for land based learning opportunities. Paula and Brieanne will be planning these opportunities.

In Summary (Clara) : some allocated funds directly in Board Action plan, money tied through Outdoor Ed., and potential of some additional dollars coming through grant, team has some work to do in what that might look like, sound like, can bring that back to the table based in inquiry and questions in terms of both land based opportunities and language camps.

Question: Board has property that borders on parklands, I think that is something that maybe Clara can look at?

Answer: Not sure what land you are looking at? Clarify: You are looking at a camp at a school? Open to possibilities. Through about Forest Glade—trees, small forest, quite a large field. Day camp?

Refer to page 5, money set aside for learning

Not specifically related to Board Action plan, Tina received phone call from Executive Director Natural pathways learning centre. Email sent requesting assistance, non-profit organization. Based out of Camp Briarswood and Holiday Beach Conversation area. Sounds like organization is open to having a partnership. Tina will forward email to the group, anyone can contact Executive Director if they wish to help her.

Comment: Indigenous Languages—how can we advocate to get those funding dollars to come to this board to benefit our students. Write a letter to the Ministry?

There is a budget line specific to secondary language opportunity-populated if there is student interest

Clara—tabled this discussion to next meeting when trustees are attending, issue around political advocacy, communication with ministry, advocating that way. There is language classes in the evening.

Tina: Right now using BAP money to have after school language courses.

Tabled for now, trustees at next meeting, seek guidance and support from them, and appropriate steps to take to seek action.

Question: A lot of boards that don't use the money as it should be, is there opportunity to give the money to the people who will actually use it?

Answer: The ministry has taken different steps to ensure that boards do that. Parents need to be educated and informed to be those advocates, to inform the ministry. Don't know if the ministry would do that. Ministry has to be given the message over and over again to act.

Can be added to the conversation, this table is an exemplary table in the province. Let's wait for Trustees, Director of Education, table this to the next meeting.

Another item for next meeting: follow up in terms of IEC being a committee of the board. The board takes this committee very seriously, but there is some ties in terms of being an official committee of the board. This can also be part of advocacy, limited by education act. Statutory rules. Statutory committees would be GECPIC, SEAC, SAL. There is no definition in the education act for something like Indigenous Education Advisory. So the board (Trustees, Director, Senior team) value and appreciate the purpose of the committee and the whole evolution that has come along, and signing of the protocol. Can make it a special purpose committee. What needs to happen is there is a motion by Board of Trustees from the floor to make it that, then appoint 2 trustees to the committee. Would serve that the value and voice of the committee is important. The piece around being a committee of the board is another political piece, needs to be changed in a different way.

Will ask the director to speak to the chair of the board to make that motion happen. That will happen possibly in December at the Organizational Meeting, or maybe at the next IAEC meeting in the New Year. At this point it would be referred to as a special purpose committee.

Clara will ask the Director to speak to the Chair of the Board for this reason.

Comment from table: That is exactly what happened last December at the organizational meeting when we established the planning committee for the IEP that on record that the 2 trustees volunteered, were chosen.

Answer: There is a little bit of a difference, there are committees that are termed committees, like an adhoc special committee, for example the IEP was these people sit for the IEP, we did that for a math task force. This special purpose committee is ongoing. The legitimacy of the other part is something that this table would be great at advocating for, which means that it wouldn't just happen in just this board, but in all boards, which I think that where the ministry is going.

Question: when you say there is some political piece that we have to work on, is that at the trustee level, city level, the ministry levels, what exactly do we have to work on?

Answer: bound by education act to a committee of the board. When I say political, I think the conversation should happen with the trustees at the table, and the director and what next steps could happen in terms of either letter writing or so on and so forth, to advocate for that to happen. It's not that our board doesn't want it, it's that the education act doesn't recognize it at this point.

#### **Update on Open Minds Program:**

Family of Schools: Decided to split between Paula and Brienne we did family of schools this year to try and accommodate the most students. We each have around 10 schools that we provide support and services to. Meet with Principals and make introductions to the program and let them know what it's about. In the process right now of meeting all the students and getting to know each other. Long process, want to take time to know the students, data collection. Helps to find out what students feel their needs are, what they want to learn culturally as well.

First culture club activity this year is rotating through different schools, different events. Last year ran the Regalia Making Sessions, culture club replacing that this year. Being held at 3 schools will help reach different students in areas of the city. Oct 30<sup>th</sup> is prepping for rock your Moccs awareness day. Students can bring in their moccasins and fix them up, students that don't have moccs we will help them make a mini pair of moccs. Mona volunteered to help with making moccs, cut patterns, etc.

Sessions run from 4-7, 3 hours, might need parents there to help the younger students.

Those activity nights will be divided by age groups, so everyone can participate.

Next is grade 11 and 12 workshops-most of the meeting places and dates set for that. All the focused intensive support high school students will get that. Opportunity to learn about post-secondary education applications, funding applications, bursary, grant applications. Trying to do early on so that all the students will have information. Preceding those workshops will be doing subject specific PD for guidance counsellors and student success team workers in the schools Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>, have contacted the secretariats, St. Clair, Chippewa who does their own funding, to come and share their information so

that the guidance is more equipped to answer questions. Have also been invited to attend workshops when talking to all the students.

Round Dance planned for Nov 10<sup>th</sup> at West Gate, flyers going out, everything planned. Will be there with information for students, inviting board staff so students and families can be familiar with those faces.

Also been working as a liaison for all the families and students since back to school, assisting parents, staff, any concerns happening in class, school.

Question: So, liaison is that for IEP meetings?

Answer: yes, if they want us there

Question: Are we tabling the special Education discussion?

Answer: yes, can have Lynn joining at a future meeting

Question: I see support for students that are academically doing well, but there is also the literacy test that special needs students' needs to write for grade 10, and this board knows that the success rate is very low.

Answer: We are not only supporting students that are doing academically well, it is for those students that are struggling as well. We offer one on one support also have tutoring support. At Herman they have an Urban project that meets 3 days a week, trying to collaborate with it.

Importance of team meetings, discuss ways to help build that network of support for the students so that the support isn't just coming from the team, maximizing the supports that are already out there and making sure that our FNMI students have access to those.

Dr. Pyke and Toni has joined, so were are going to skip ahead on the Agenda to them.

Sharon Pyke, Superintendent responsible for student well-being. Last year I asked to come to the meeting to ask what well-being is, what does it mean to you? I took all your feedback and collated that and provided it to the province for them to determine about the well-being wheel, what does that look like, has there been any changes? I have heard nothing back about any kind of changes, they did take the feedback from all over the province, so I know your voice has been heard, as well as other organizations and groups around Greater Essex contributed to that. But also that worked for me and our committee to look at well-being and how is that going to inform us in our plan for this year. We have a mental health and well-being plan, strategic plan, it is 3 years, we set goals for 3 years. We have lots of activities for this year. I thought that today is 2-fold, 1 is to ask your input on what kinds of things you would like to see through these 3 goals but more importantly I would like to introduce you to Toni Lauzon, she is newly hired social worker for our social work team and for half her position is social worked for all students in the board, and for the other half she is specifically working with indigenous students. Very excited she has joined team for that.

Toni—As social worker assigned to FNMI population, what that role looks like is, we're still trying to define some of it, so some it is providing some education to schools, to administrators, the other part is that our administrators are putting in referrals for some of our children from our FNMI population who are struggling in school and then our social work looks the same, so any concerns that their having, we'll

come in, have a meeting, determine whether school social work is appropriate. It is brief intervention, only able to provide 6 sessions through the school, so we're really working with our community partners, we'll be meeting with them on Monday, Can-Am, SOHAC, to make sure our families are familiar with the resources that are available to them in terms of well-being in the community because we are not able to provide long term service through the school board.

Dr. Pyke—Toni is also helping our own social workers develop their own knowledge about issues with Indigenous students, how we can all work together and work towards assisting. A lot of collection of information for Toni, and educating all of us. This extends what we are looking at through the mental health assist, which is the provincial mental health association that I (Dr. Pyke) belongs to, being the mental health superintendent and really extending the work of Brenda Rastool, she is helping us as a province understanding what kinds of things we need to be looking at, what kind of questions. Another year of really gaining some information of how we need to tweak our services appropriately.

Question: So the community Partners, you didn't mention Canadian Mental Health?

Answer: Have I reached out to them to come to this?

Question: Aren't they a community partner in this?

Answer: Yes, they are, we are just meeting with youth support from Can-Am and SOHAC, not to say we don't have additional partners, I was just saying we are meeting with them just to make sure that all of our roles are kind of clear.

Comment: Not all families want to work with a native organization, it's important that those other agencies are being involved and the students know that we are partnering with them.

Dr. Pyke-making sure that pathways are cleared, and we know what services are offered, full range to students.

3 Goals based on feedback:

1. Increase the awareness of signs of mental illness and where to get help. Have to make it a lot more visible for people to know where to get help.  
One of the big ways we are going to do that is working on some website presence, we don't have much presence on the Greater Essex site for parents, for students and for staff on where to get help. Hoping by end of May will be up and running. Do send out paper things, but according to kids and student senate need to be more viral, they don't rely so much on paper, they need to get information right away. One of our goals for next 3 years.  
Specifically for this year looking at suicide protocols as well with community partners, what does that look like and how we can make sure there is paths of communication.  
Also looking at Early Years
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> big goal is the increased ability of children and youth to cope with stress. Student well-being so have to make sure the word children and youth is in there. It's purposeful that we use the word stress which is a term that everybody is using. I'm not sure there is a specific definition out there in the communities so we left it wide open. We didn't want to say increase the ability of the children to cope with anxiety, because then right away we've got all the other people then think I don't have anything wrong with me, I just can't manage things. So, we kept

it very open with our language. Looking at specific interventions for populations of students, especially with some of our newcomers.

Really going to be promoting sleep, sleep hygiene, which is how to prepare yourself how to go to sleep. Stats show the older kids get the less sleep they get. Everything affected when you don't get enough sleep. Another piece within this goal is focusing on the sign and symptoms of substance abuse and addictive behavior. Opiate strategy that was released, we're part of that piece so you will be hearing more about that.

3. Third goal for 2017-2020 is increased staff capacity and intervention and in programming. Have heard some of the things that Toni will be helping us out to build that capacity, but we are looking at what are we doing in school, what does that look like for intervention and their own understanding and their own personal growth, and what they can do to change what they do and how they teach. A few examples of how that will be done this year: mindfulness-continue on training people on mindfulness, lots of research out there stating how beneficial it is for kids, if we can get kids to practice it, and that's hard, it's hard for adults to do. Have some social emotion kits to help the younger kids, JK/SK, learn different words, other than mad, sad, glad. Heard from teachers, principals, that we need some classroom strategies on dealing with anxiety.

Clara: Would like to look at IEP Principal #6 which is establish an FNMI centered holistic services and learning environment for learner success. Hearing all the wonderful things that Sharon is talking about, and keeping that principal in mind, do you have questions, ideas, input, that you would want to have considered in the very important work that is happening and moving forward?

Replies: Tina asked Sharon Pyke if it was possible for them to consider training and focus in the area of intergenerational trauma so that staff can respond in a trauma informed way.

Answer: That is something that we are looking at, and we are working on is the trauma piece. We do have presentation about trauma, it's a fairly new word for people and the understanding of what that means and the implications. Did meet with 2 people from this table and they gave resources.

Comment (from Clara): Sharon can you post the mental health strategy on the board website and when is that done? Is it posted now?

Answer: Not sure if it's posted now, have to double check, but it should be

Comment(from Clara): You have all the work, foci, so maybe once that's posted we can also send a link to everyone here so that they can review in detail the plans you have in place to support. I want to be clear that everybody has an understanding and if anybody has ideas to help Sharon and her team in doing this very important work and being sensitive to the needs of FNMI students and also building capacity within our system to be responsive, so I wonder if at this point, Sharon once that's posted if you can send the link to the committee. Sharon has shared a lot of information, it's massive work that being done and a little bit of time for it to ruminate, any questions we might have, we can come back at our next meeting and talk about

that, and if we need to invite Sharon back, or anybody from our team, if we have any questions in perusal and thinking that way I know Sharon would be amenable to that. This is not just a one-time come in conversation, its ongoing conversation if we follow the Indigenous Education Protocol to the degree that we want to.

Thank Sharon for coming, and Toni, we'll share that information and put it on our agenda to discuss any other ideas or questions and we'll look at potentially welcoming Sharon back. Really want to thank Sharon for all her work, for being a champion and openness and listening and wanting to be part of the work.

Comment: I would like to/interested in seeing what work has been done or will be done and the goals that you've presented and one of the things is because of all the what has been discussed about the hurts and the stresses and leads to some of our youth or younger people getting into the addictions and so I'd be interested in seeing what you are offering or what your goals

Comment: On the flip side, I'd like to see acknowledgement of Indigenous mental health strategy in our schools

Comment: would like to add, students were talking at school about a friend of family who had committed suicide, and the school wanted to call crisis line, are these girls ok, school called parents, parents say it's not a big deal, we're desensitized, we're not, but it's not uncommon, it's part of life.

Comment (Clara): Think about all the things that Sharon shared with us and I'll send out that link and we can have a follow up conversation.

Going to go back to Lisa:

Lisa: Brand new position, this term goes from September to about mid-January, going to be working with about 4 different schools, elementary schools, about 17 students working with in the area of math and literacy. This is strictly an academic focus, not to say that I'm not involved in other areas as well, but my position is to assist academically. Will see each student about once a week for 2 periods per day. Students who are self-identified and who are in academic need in either math or literacy or both areas. So far met with each student, about twice so far, at building relationships process right now, getting to know them, they are getting to know Lisa, looking at where the areas of need are and what kind of strategy's can be implemented. Next term will be another group of schools working with. This is all within the classroom. I'm not removing students from the learning environment, it's additional, homeroom teacher still there, just working one on one in small groups to ensure that they're getting what they need.

Clara: This position was a derivative of an agreement with the union, there were a couple of positions that were available, we advocated for a position to support students specifically for First Nations, and they agreed to it. Happy to have Lisa join to provide direct support in terms of academics to those students who have self-identified.

Question: What is the position called?

Answer: Itinerant Teacher for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students

Clara: It's a one year position, potentially might be extended to 2 year, hoping to be able to argue the value and importance of the position moving forward depending on what happens. Very pleased that we were able to garner one of those positions specifically for work with our First Nations students.

Question: Which 4 schools?

Answer: the 4 schools this term are Ford City, Herman Academy, WestGate and Marlborough. Next term not decided yet.

Tina: we also have our tutoring program starting, so our tutors have been rehired, this communication will be going out to parents as well. The goal is creating a network of support, trying to not put any support on one group more than another, we want to balance it out, to provide opportunity's to engage and empower all of our Indigenous students, whether they need academic support or cultural support, this is just another layer of academics. Also moving forward with curriculum, was a review done on the social studies curriculum, now has been revised with lots of input, it will be specifically around truth and reconciliation. The revisions have been made, there will be information sessions for teacher educators, we have to then provide professional learning opportunities for teachers on the implementation. I can see that as an AD HOC committee, coming together, looking at the revised curriculum, and talking about what that training and the professional development will look like for educators. All the other things that are on the board action plan are in motion, we did add the collaborative inquiry which will continue to focus on mathematics, Lacey will continue to work with us, as the artist that helps provide the experiential opportunity for the students and teachers. We will be attending a meeting in October to learn from what other systems are doing in that area so that we can better train our teachers and work with our students. Indigenous languages—I'm still waiting for the Catholic Board, it's their turn to host the classes. We are moving forward with Ojibway classes because of the data given last year, Ojibway class on Wednesday nights, in addition to the classes at Catholic Board. Oneida class will be offered in partnership with Catholic Board.

Comment: Clara-would like to add one item, we only have a set amount of professional development days that we can use in a year, determined by the ministry, the board has dedicated the march PD half day, have decided that that day will be focused specifically on communications, and helping to develop a great understanding in the system around our Indigenous Mandate. One of the items we have on the go, we have an initial development of a resource, I am wondering if we need to bring it to this table in upcoming meetings to have people's eyes on it. What are the tools we are going to use, it will not only be professional development, but what are the tools we're going to use, first time board has done anything where they are dedicating time specifically for developing Indigenous understanding.

Tina: Gave an update on Hidden History activity done with all Principals and system leaders to help them understand the history in this country in relation to Indigenous Peoples that has been hidden and not shared in textbooks.

Question: You have community educator student feedback, under the measurement tool in the board action plan, I don't remember doing any kind of feedback last year, did I miss something?

Answer: this is our plan for this year, this is new, so that you are aware, anybody who participates in different programs, eg. The tutors, they are provided the opportunity to give feedback. In the past we have made sure that any parents directly involved with program provided have had the opportunity to provide feedback. We need to make a conscious effort to continue to do that.

Input for Official Opening/Acknowledgment of Territory: we broached that conversation during the initial IEP, but never landed anywhere. Our board wants to start officially acknowledging the land and right now what we're using, a very generic kind of opening. We want to get to a spot where we have the approval of the leadership in telling us what that official statement is. I'm going to suggest we make that a priority at the next meeting. It's important, but the board needs help with this.

Representation on GECPIC: GECDSB parent involvement committee, asking for representation from this committee on that committee. Two applications have come forward.

Question/Concern: member has a concern about representation with the different positions and high representation from one family appears to be favoritism.

Stating that we have representation that looks like its favoring and we have to talk about that, how are we going to have any kind of succession with our families when it appears that there's not enough representation.

Clara: Decided to table the conversation at this particular meeting.

Open invitation November 1 LEADS meeting, Clara can't attend, asked Joanne Henry if it would be possible if someone from IEAC comes to the meeting, would like someone to go along with Tina to attend the meeting. In Hamilton, same day trip, if anyone would like to attend, contact Tina.

Brad John offered to join if he was not working at the time.

Closing

