

GECSB

IEAC Committee Meeting

Virtual Meeting November 19, 2020

Attendance:

Director Erin Kelly	Dr. Clara Howitt	Tina DeCastro
Tyler White	Brienne John	Adrian Klein
Julia Burgess (Trustee)	Alan Halberstadt (Trustee)	Louise Cervini
Kim John	Cecil Isaac	Donna Grayer
Crystal Michener	Rebecca Major	Loyell Bigjohn
Emily Lockhart	Michael Harrington	Rick MacMillan
Carrie Anne (Caldwell Rep)		

The meeting began at 4:30 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

Indigenous Education Plan Presentation (presented by C. Howitt, T. DeCastro, B. John, T. White, A. Klein)

Part A of Presentation

There are four domains whereby Indigenous expenditures occur:

- Direct Support to FNMI students;
- Community Engagement;
- Support for building the capacity and awareness amongst all students;
- Support for our educators to teach in a knowing way

Supporting Indigenous Students and Student Support Workers

There are three Indigenous Support Workers available for academic, well-being and cultural support. They plan programming based on the students' needs within each school.

Reviewed: **Early Years Virtual Visits, Welcome to Grade 9, and Transitions to University of Windsor** (refer to slides)

Reviewed the **Transitions – Future Designs**

This is directly related to feedback received from the IEAC.

Future Design School focuses on Indigenous programming. Students will learn both project management and social entrepreneurship skills. Instead of going to a typical coop placement their coop is creating a community project. The sessions will earn certifications to add to their resumes. We are presently exploring this learning opportunity for Indigenous students.

Additional Educational Supports

The ***Making Connections Tutoring Program*** offers free tutoring to self-ID students within the district.

Camp Migizi- For 10 years we have offered an outstanding summer learning program for Indigenous students focused on academics, culture and active living.

New this year we will be piloting two ***Academic Support Teachers*** from January to June to work directly with FNMI students from grades one to four, specifically in supporting literacy intervention and mathematics support on a regular basis.

Ojibwe Language Course

We provide Ojibwe and Oneida classes for families in the evenings, but the goal is always to try to find a way to move towards offering credit-based courses for students. We've partnered with a school board that has a financially rich model that offers a credit course; they have offered us five spots for this year. We will be able to closely monitor this course to see what we could do to possibly provide the course in the GECSB.

In May Indigenous students will be offered the opportunity to take part in an ***Indigenous Student Science & Math Symposium*** in partnership with FNMIEAO. It's an opportunity for students to see that Indigenous knowledge in math structures is just as important as western knowledge.

Questions and comments on part A of the presentation.

Trustee Halberstadt:

How does the credit course work with regards to the social entrepreneurship program? Do we generate that within our board? Do we need provincial approval for it to be a credit course?

Response:

It's through the co-op program. During their co-op, the placement part will be the implementation of their project. The learning component, the hours required for co-op, will be their regular co-op program along with the social entrepreneurship and project management program. This is why we are working with Student Success on this to ensure it follows the co-op criteria for the student to earn the credit.

Trustee Burgess:

Is it limited to five students? How will the five students be selected?

Response:

No, the limit is for the language course, not for the co-op program. The co-op program has a cohort of up to 30 Indigenous students. We are going to put it out to everyone.

Kim:

The format of this presentation isn't what we're used to. In the past it's been divided into categories with the monetary value on each category. Will this be represented in that way for the Board Action Plan form to be filled out?

Response:

This is correct. We haven't received the Board Action Plan form yet. The intention would be we would come back to the Committee with the completed form. Tonight we wanted to present our ideas to you and get feedback before we finalize anything. The first slide of this section did indicate that over \$500,000.00 was dedicated specifically to Supporting Indigenous Students; in the next section you'll see an amount dedicated to Community Engagement and another amount dedicated to Supporting Indigenous Education in the Classroom.

Louise:

What are the next steps in transitioning the curriculum to elementary students? Are we waiting to see how this works out at the Secondary level for the Ojibwe language classes, or is there a bigger plan in place?

Response:

We do offer language classes for families in both Ojibwe and Oneida and we've consistently provided that in the evenings over the years as a result of feedback from this committee. This is for students at any level, but predominantly families with younger children attend. In terms of teaching and learning around Indigenous culture and history, that comes through our curriculum in the social sciences at the elementary panel.

We have had some challenges with offering languages within elementary school. The Covid experience has opened our minds to different possible ways of delivering support. I think this will be an opportunity for us to look at the challenges that existed before. How could we possibly hire an itinerant teacher when all of our Indigenous students are spread out throughout the system? We tried in secondary, but even with elementary we had the same challenge, because we don't have enough students in one location for an itinerant teacher. There have been some solutions brought to the table that we have tried out. Indigenous students are exempt from having to take French, if they so choose. This virtual accessibility is going to provide us the possibility of providing a virtual way to engage in Ojibwe language learning. It's not ideal, nothing replaces face to face learning and interaction, but it might be something we want to consider discussing in the future, based on what we recognize we've been able to do in a virtual world.

Louise:

That was going to be my suggestion based on my own child's experience with Camp Migizi. It was great for him. He loved being able to connect that way. Making it into the city was a challenge in the winter months to attend those language classes when there was no other alternative at that time. But what was offered at camp was such a great opportunity that he never really had before and it seemed more personal.

Louise:

Will there be specialized tutoring available to those who have learning disabilities?

Response:

We will connect with Mike Wilcox, Superintendent of Special Education. There are opportunities through Special Education and our partnership with the Learning Disabilities Association. I will come back to you with an answer on that. There are opportunities already in place.

Louise:

In regards to your academic support teachers for that literacy intervention and math intervention that we were talking about, will these teachers be able to suggest referrals for psych assessment; will they be working with Jordan's Principle; how is that actually going to work in regards to those children specifically?

Response:

Whenever there is an inkling that a child might need some extra support, it is always a collaborative process amongst the classroom teacher, other teachers, educational coordinator, principal, to see if there is anything that could be done, including potential assessments. With the academic support teachers we will have another set of eyes on students that will be helpful in allowing the school team to make the decision if a referral needs to be made for that student.

Michael:

As a teacher, I've worked with getting some of my students into the United Way's On Track to Success Program. Is there a way to have an off-shoot of On Track to Success for Indigenous students in the system? I know many Indigenous students may not be able to secure funding for post-secondary education and On Track to Success does a great job of doing that and also provides mentoring and that sort of thing which would help with transitions from, not only elementary school to high school but high school to post-secondary. Just as a future consideration.

Response:

We will connect with Superintendent Josh Canty, who is responsible for secondary education.

Kim:

There are a few parents looking for the regular tutoring program because we are into the end of November and that service is needed. I know Covid threw everything up in the air but this seems to be a yearly thing even without Covid and I'm wondering if we can't move things to get in place prior to summer break so that when we start up in the fall it is already in place.

Response:

It's been hard to find tutors. We're required to post it internally and another posting is going out to the community. I met with some students from the faculty of education yesterday and asked if some of them would be interested. Tina and I will be meeting with a group of them on Monday to talk about them acting as FMNI tutors. It's been an issue around finding people, but you bring up a really good point, we should start it in August and be ready for the beginning of the year. It seems like every year it's a struggle to find people, and the right people. Sometimes we get a lot of applications, but we don't get enough in certain content areas, specifically for our secondary students, like science specialists or math specialists.

Approval to extend the meeting up to a half an hour to cover the remaining slides.

Notation of the following Action Items from Part A of the presentation:

Follow up with On Track to Success;

Opportunity for Elementary students for language learning online virtually as an option;

Following up with Superintendent Mike Wilcox with tutoring for students with an LD profile and connections maybe with LDAO;

Following up with Tutoring;

Following up with Ministry Template at an upcoming meeting

Part B of the Presentation

Community Engagement

We will be starting virtual PowWow Fitness classes in December for six sessions.

Social Series was born out of suggestions from parents in the schools to have more representation of different cultures presented virtually.

We're building on the Storytelling Series that was started last year.

Questions and Comments

Louise:

In regards to the Social Series, are we going to be getting in contact with any local elders or local knowledge keepers?

Presenters:

We have presenters connected to this area, but they are not currently living in this area. If you have suggestions for people you would want us to consider bringing in, please email us.

Trustee Burgess:

With regards to Community Engagement, I'm thinking the full community, not just the family communities; I'm wondering what the capacity is in our system to see any written language anywhere within our system? Across all kinds of different documents for greater community exposure of the written language, as well as the oral.

Response:

An example includes Herman. In Herman, years ago Stonehorse had put up Oneida language words across the school. The principal and the teachers wanted more of that. But then when I was working with students they said that was something they didn't want because for whatever reason it was something that made them uncomfortable at that point. So when we talk about putting something like that in place that's the perspective I usually come from. How do the students feel about that and what do the students want? If the reason they are feeling like that's not something they want tells me there is something about that environment that isn't quite safe enough yet for them to do that. But I've had a lot of elementary schools where we've put up bulletin boards with simple words, usually related to the time of year and we build activities off of that. It gives that visibility to the language like you are saying.

Julia:

I've heard of some schools using a word of the day at announcements, learning a new word and how to spell it. For the wider acceptance and wider exposure. I take your point if someone feels like they don't want it, but I think that needs to be revisited every year to see everybody's comfort level. It's not a static situation.

Response:

One of the things that we decided to do that is currently part of the language component is we have two language speakers who are going to be developing language videos and the words that were chosen were chosen very carefully; they are more about giving a teaching and a message behind it. When you translate Indigenous words, it doesn't translate like it does in English, there is learning behind it. There are Oneida and Ojibwe videos right now being put together that can then be shared during morning announcements. It's not just words, but statements, like being thankful and what does that mean. The focus of those videos will be about sharing the teaching and the meaning behind the phrase or the word.

Trustee Halberstadt:

With regards to communication and collaboration within the community, do we do any collaboration with other boards in our region? Or other boards in the province? I'm sure they are all doing this in some form, although I doubt to the extent to which we are doing it.

Response:

There is opportunity to connect with other boards across the province such as with the Aboriginal Leads Meetings. We share and get ideas from other boards. The Entrepreneurship program is something we heard at another board and we wanted to create that possibility here. We have many people call us about our summer learning program. So there is an opportunity to learn in a reciprocal manner with other boards.

Trustee Halberstadt:

With regards to the co-op programs, I'm assuming there are sponsors within the community, like employers or companies.

Response:

Our job will be to make the links to the community based on their project that they propose. It might not be an organization in the formal way, it may be a First Nations community. It's open to many possibilities.

Presentation Part C

Supporting Indigenous Education in the Classroom

Over 70 classes participated in the ***Treaty Week Inquiry***- Arts as Social Action. The students used art as a provocation for great questions. The art engaged them and fostered curiosity.

Coming up is a ***project with Isaac Murdoch***, artist and activist. An opportunity for students to learn Indigenous history, while at the same time learning how to use art as a way to move to social action. Many teachers ask how to incorporate art in a meaningful way and not culturally appropriate.

There is the continued implementation of our **grade 11 English course (NBE)**. We are in our fourth year of implementation in a five year plan.

The structure that looked like a totem pole at Harrow Public has been removed. We are in the process of working towards the removal of 2 other poles in the district.

New this year **Library Gap Analysis Project** – we are reviewing all resources in libraries, removing some and replenishing with contemporary resources.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Science & Math- An opportunity for all students is the partnership with NASA – NASA Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Science/Math.

Upcoming: Kanahus Manuel - An opportunity for secondary students and noted the information is shared on the Open Minds facebook page and tweeted out as well.

Upcoming: Indigenous Education in the Classroom- This is another opportunity for educators. We actually encourage our parents/guardians to participate as well.

Questions/Comments

Kim:

I just got onto a new board and have been bragging about the Greater Essex County School Board, as I usually do. One of the things that always comes up is funding. Transparency helps. Are we going to have a presentation of the monies that come in under the umbrella of Indigenous?

Response:

Yes, we will. We didn't have the template yet for the Board Aboriginal Plan (BAP) so the plan is tentative. We will come back with the BAP and a detailed presentation. We will connect with the Superintendent of Business to come and do a presentation and help our families understand how things are funded. We have done that in the past and it does help in building understanding, transparency and building trust with our community.

Closing by Cecil Issacs

Next meeting January 19th starting at 4:30 p.m.

Outlook invitation and MST invitation to be forwarded to the IEAC.