

Approved Minutes
Meeting of the Black Community Advisory Council

Monday, February 6, 2023 - 6:30 p.m.
Zoom Meeting

Co-Chair: Gord Gallimore
Co-Chair: Wayne Brunton

ATTENDEES:

Chris Shelton	Parent/Guardian
Horace Wright	Parent/Guardian
Candace Carter (<i>Absent</i>)	Parent/Guardian
Ebenezer Addei (<i>Absent</i>)	Parent/Guardian
Gord Gallimore	Parent/Guardian and Co-Chair
Lynn Busby (<i>Absent</i>)	Parent/Guardian
Roxanne Smith (<i>Absent</i>)	Parent/Guardian
Muna Said-Ahmed	Parent/Guardian
Dr. Brian Chama	Parent/Guardian
(<i>TBD</i>)	Student Member
Sope Duyile	Student Member
Alycia Williams-McSween (<i>Absent</i>)	Student Member
Trisha Johnson-White	Agencies – ResQ Youth International
Marcia Glasgow	Agencies – United Achievers’ Club
Jackie Maloney (<i>Absent</i>)	Agencies – Congress of Black Women
Michael Marshall (<i>Absent</i>)	Agencies – The Black Educators Association of DPCDSB
Jason Eduful	Agencies – The Black Educators Association of DPCDSB
Crystel Campbell (<i>Absent</i>)	Agencies – Black Youth Student Success Initiative
Duke Nicholson	OECTA Representative – Elementary
Jamie Philip (<i>Absent</i>)	OECTA Representative – Elementary
(<i>TBD</i>)	OECTA Representative – Secondary
Thompson Adiuku	OECTA Representative – Secondary
Colin Daniel (<i>Absent</i>)	Elementary Principal/Vice Principal Association
Lorian Feres	Secondary Principal/Vice Principal Association
Sophia Maloney (<i>Absent</i>)	Secondary Principal/Vice Principal Association
Sharise Sealy-McCallum	Graduation Coach for Black Student Success – DPCDSB
Marlo Paraboo	Graduation Coach for Black Student Success – DPCDSB
Dr. Carl James	Advisor – Professor, York University
Wayne Brunton	Staff – Superintendent, BNE Family of Schools and Co-Chair

Michelle Coutinho	Staff – Principal, Equitable and Inclusive Education
Nancy Cargioli	Staff – Acting Coordinator, Equitable and Inclusive Education
Jaclynn Deveaux-Matthews	Staff – Acting Consultant, Equitable and Inclusive Education
Mike Damad	Staff – CIO Information Technology
Max Vecchiarino	Staff – Director’s Designate
Marianne Mazzorato (<i>Regrets</i>)	Director
David Amaral (<i>Regrets</i>)	Associate Director – Instructional Services
Margaret Beck (<i>Regrets</i>)	Legal Counsel
Caroline McFarland	Recorder

1. Opening Prayer

Nancy Cargioli led the prayer.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Jaclynn Deveaux-Matthews played the recorded land acknowledgement read by a former Dufferin-Peel student, Rhaya Clyne.

3. Welcome, Introductions and Attendance

Nancy Cargioli called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Attendance

Attendance was taken and those who sent regrets were noted. Joey Martino, ICT Support, joined as a guest.

4. Approval of the Agenda

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

Moved by Marcia Glasgow

Seconded by Trisha Johnson-White

5. Approval of the Minutes – December 5, 2022

The unapproved minutes of December 5, 2022 were distributed to BCAC members via e-mail.

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 5, 2022 MEETING BE APPROVED.

Moved by Duke Nicholson

Seconded by Marcia Glasgow

6. Information Items:

a. Working Groups (Goal Setting, Curriculum Resources, Community and Family Engagement, BCAC Secondary Student Representatives)

Nancy Cargioli advised that in January, the Goal Setting, Curriculum Resources and Community and Family Engagement working groups met.

Tinisha Stephenson shared that the Goal Setting working group discussed a terms of reference to guide the work being done, to understand the purpose of each working group and to give direction. They suggested renaming it to a letter of reference or mutual understanding. One of the questions that came up was where are the changes going? They discussed taking action to ensure the changes being made by the council are seen and felt by students and goals need to reflect changes in school communities where students are not feeling safe. Members expressed an interest in completing this short mutual understanding or terms of reference before the next meeting. There are goals that exist (student voice, surveys, etc.) to help guide the work being done. They would like the council’s support and review of the terms of reference.

Duke Nicholson shared that the Curriculum Resources working group talked about how secondary text, such as Hamlet and Romeo and Juliet, which touch on topics of murder and suicide can have an effect on some students and should be removed. They discussed that building and understanding around racial literacy should be happening in all subject areas in secondary school, not just English. They spoke about how students are taught and see themselves in the world, and they want to make space for diverse ways of knowing and to build understanding of the complexities of Black communities. They would like to inform parents about what is happening in the classrooms with regard to anti-Black racism. Duke shared that all elementary classrooms were given different resources for teachers to have access to on a daily basis. The groups next steps are to find a clear goal for the Curriculum Resources working group, to make sure that the Equity Department continues to support them and to resend the letter to Minister Lecce with a deadline to ensure accountability.

Nancy Cargioli added that this working group is also looking at novel and text reading recommendations for junior and intermediate students. Once the list is finalized, the group will read and review the books to add them to the list on the Equity SharePoint.

Michelle Coutinho clarified that curriculum expectations are set by the Ministry and teachers have some agency in choosing which resources they use as well as how they are expecting students to demonstrate their learning, such as through a test or project. The focus of the Equity Department, working closely with the Program Department and other departments, is trying to decolonize resources and activities being used to demonstrate students' learning. The identity affirming resources that were sent to elementary schools were provided so that educators are not relying on the 'classics'. It is important to disrupt the stories students hear and disrupt who is always at the center of those stories. When the Equity Department talks to educators and administrators, they talk about decentering whiteness in the resources that support the curriculum.

Gord Gallimore shared that the Community and Family Engagement working group discussed the possible return of the SRO program. They have heard from Board employees and senior management but want to hear from trustees with regard to their stance on the return of the SRO program. As a member of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and Peel community, Gord rejects the idea of the SRO program returning to schools. Though there may be an increase in crime at schools, those funds should be put towards more social workers and more extracurricular programming, specifically coaches, because students are disengaged from school, have too much idle time and are looking for things to do. A request was made that trustees attend the next meeting.

This working group feels that funding should be provided toward equity, specifically for dismantling anti-Black racism through the Equity Department. They discussed creating a Black parent association within schools to have a unified front. The parents attending council meetings could be Black parent association leads at their schools and then that would filter into this meeting. The idea would be to engage Black parents at schools and then create more capacity for them to have a voice throughout the Board.

Max Vecchiarino shared that he passed on the request to have the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Board attend the next meeting with the Director. He also clarified that at the last Board meeting, he did not hear anything about reinstating the SRO program. Wayne Brunton commented that there is a fine line concerning student safety in which police might have to be engaged, such as a lockdown, to ensure students are safe. Max clarified that only lockdowns

have been discussed. The police are experts in safety, so there have been discussions on how to leverage that expertise without having officers roam hallways.

Sope Duyile shared that, at the beginning of the year, the BCAC Secondary Student Representatives working group discussed this year's theme of 'We are Many, We are One.' as well as the Black Voices Lab Guide and how to start and be successful in Black labs at schools. At their November meeting, they discussed different ideas for how to make BSAs at schools better.

Sope shared that there are concerns at her school with the BSA as many staff and students feel like the group creates cliquiness, promotes hate and is not inclusive. As a result, there has been a lot of resistance from staff and students to take their BSA seriously and, without the support of faculty members, it is hard to get anything done. Sope would like to know how this can be fixed as this may be harmful moving forward, especially during Black History month.

Sope indicated concerns surrounding ensuring that there was consistent messaging across all schools with respect to best practices for Black History Month.

Michelle Coutinho advised that they went with the theme of 'We are Many, We are One.' with the support of BSA students as it is the theme for Catholic Education Week and it sort of fit with what they wanted to do for Black History as well. However, they can uplift the national and provincial themes as well. Michelle will also look into the website as they did send updated information to be posted. They will also continue to work with students to see which theme they would like to use and build on. Wayne Brunton advised that he would look at the Board website for Black History Month and ensure it is updated with materials and resources that are now being promoted in schools.

Michelle shared that, with regard to supporting BSAs, work has to be done for people to understand what affinity spaces are and what they do for students. It has been made very clear to all schools and all administrators that the Board is supporting affinity groups, especially when students are asking for those spaces and places. They will continue to work to uplift the importance of those affinity spaces.

Michelle clarified that the Board has an external presenters list accessible to all staff and if a school wants to book a speaker, they have to go to the external presenters list. The list is created centrally by a committee so any speaker can apply. Some of the questions asked are if they are speaking about a particular group and if they identify as a member of that group. This helps weed out instances where people who are not part of that identity are speaking about that identity. The committee represents different aspects of the Board's internal processes, such as curriculum, legal, support services and equity. Schools cannot use a speaker that is not on the external presenters list. Michelle also confirmed that in a communication created by the Equity Department sent out in advance of Black History Month, there were speakers listed.

Lorian Feres shared that the Board did offer an equity grant that schools can request. At Notre Dame, the BSA students are going to be leaders hosting a Black literacy workshop in elementary schools next month because there is a lack of Black educators within elementary schools. This will show the students that they are leaders and they will support them through Black literacy. They are also planning an Equity Conference inviting faith ambassadors in elementary to come to secondary and part of that workshop will be ABR work as well. The equity grant is helping run these initiatives.

A discussion ensued.

Wayne Brunton stated that if anyone has heard of a school that is not supporting affinity spaces or BSA groups, that they should reach out to him or email him. He will follow up with that school as that is not the message that the Board has been echoing to secondary schools and administrators. He confirmed that Max and the other six family of school superintendents would like to know as well.

Sharise Sealy-McCallum clarified that administrators are allowing the affinity spaces to happen in schools and students are allowed to connect, but the mindset of some teachers in the building is a problem.

Max Vecchiarino commented that schools should be welcoming of these groups and actions and not allowing them. If that perception exists for even a moment, there is a lot more work to be done. As senior management, they assume that because they are supporting, promoting and putting funds to these groups that there is action being taken. However, there seems to be some resistance that seems subversive. Max promised to follow up with the superintendents of schools.

A discussion ensued.

Max Vecchiarino commented that this crisis will not resolve itself unless we are effective on both sides of the equation. Significant measures have been put in place on the professional development side but lately they have realized and have followed up with the importance of having people accountable. There is a heightened level of investigation with people being held to account with consequences up to and including termination. The Board is aware that providing a space for teachers to learn is important but that accountability is also necessary and very significant accountability measures have been put in place.

b. Vacant Positions within Black Community Advisory Council

Nancy Cargioli advised that there are two positions that need to be filled within the council. There is a student representative position and an OECTA secondary representative position to fill. Council members were asked to think about how they want to work towards filling these vacant positions and provide feedback. Last year, to fill the vacant student position, they gathered information from interested students and then held a meeting to vote in the new member.

Nancy confirmed that for the student position, the graduation coaches for Black students will let the BCAC secondary student representatives know about the position.

Nancy Cargioli confirmed the Strategic Plan to Dismantle Anti-Black Racism was created through this council and it was aligned with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan. It needs to be revisited in 2023, so it will be revisited this year. This is a great place for the Goal Setting working group to address, create and look at goals in terms of where we are, informed by the group today.

Nancy Cargioli shared that in terms of professional development through the Equity Department, they have Catholic equity leads within every school and, for three years, there has been some work with a focus on anti-Black racism specifically lead through Dr. Nicole West-Burns. There has been professional development surrounding text selection and working through an anti-oppressive

practice. Specific groups were targeted such as librarians, administrators and educators to see what books they are selecting and if it was out of an anti-oppressive practice. Following up with professional development surrounding the Catholic equity leads, members from the Equity Department provide lunch offerings to educators to unpack and have conversations. The professional development opportunities that are offered are informed by student voice, by what is happening at this council and by feedback from Sharise and Marlo.

Max Vecchiarino clarified that they do not have measures in place without follow up. Every school's major goals need to be in the area of equity and anti-Black racism and those goals cannot just be high-level statements. They have to be substantiated by action steps that are taken by schools and specific sources of data. Those sources of data, as they are accomplished at each school level, are monitored by principals as they walk through schools, talk to students and attend student events. They are also part of conversations that principals have with family of schools superintendents, at least three times a year, as superintendents have similar goals and are responsible for them as well. Today they were refining the measurement tool on how they are monitoring that work for family of schools superintendents as they visit with principals. Administrators are required by the province to have their own equity and anti-Black racism goals for their own practice. Every family of schools is not only doing professional development with regards to equity matters, in particular anti-Black racism, but they are doing it in an increasingly focused way. Whenever complaints or concerns are brought forward, they are almost immediately investigated. It is probably not enough and they continue to refine ways to make sure all that they do is countered by strong accountability measures.

Wayne Brunton commented that student surveys, although voluntary, are complex as they are collecting results from all students from 156 schools. The survey results may be from a year ago and do not really have a lot to do with what is happening right now. However, the most powerful tool that administrators use is student voice in their school in real time. There is a lot of work to be done with school administration teams and, as a family of schools superintendent, Wayne meets with his principals and vice principals once a month in person. His goal is to ensure that principals are the starting block to addressing anti-Black racism in their schools. They are also ensuring that at staff meetings, principals are addressing anti-Black racism in the school, doing professional development with their staff and making that a priority. As a family of schools superintendent, Wayne struggles with the measurement piece and the best way he can think of to measure is by talking to students and racialized teachers when he goes to schools. There are not enough racialized Black teachers in the classrooms and the majority of guidance counsellors who are responsible to ensure pathways for students are not Black or racialized to relate to students. So it is a challenge, but he always follows up with principals in terms of what students and student voice in their schools are saying. They are also trying to recruit racialized teachers and trying to recruit racialized staff in positions in which students can see themselves such as principals, vice principals, managers, etc. There is a lot of work to do, they are committed to doing it but it is going to take some time.

c. Multi-Year Strategic Planning Committee (BCAC Representative)

Max Vecchiarino shared that the Research Department undertook a very large student census and had hoped to share those results this evening but are not there yet. They hope to share the final data with trustees in the next week or so and actually hope to build on that data at the next meeting of the Multi-Year Strategic Planning Committee. Like the Strategic Plan to Dismantle Anti-Black Racism, the Board's overall Multi-Year Strategic Plan is nearing its best before date. To that end, they are inviting one member of the BCAC to sit on the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Planning Committee. Together that member and Max could share information

with this council at one of the upcoming meetings.

d. Black History Month Update

Jaclynn Deveaux-Matthews shared that as a department they remain committed to the work of anti-oppression and dismantling the ongoing impacts of colonization in education. This year they have been working to offer a counter narrative that combats the erasure that has been present in schools with regard to the stories, histories and contributions of Black communities and individuals. Often educators enter into this work during Black History Month and the aim is to get them to continue beyond February. They are offering an intentional focus that allows teachers to move away from teaching through a deficit lens and instead uplifting the joy, contributions, stories, histories and lived experiences of Black Canadians. They tried to merge the government's theme of 'Our Voices' with the Catholic Education Week theme of 'We are Many, We are One.' So, their department is promoting the theme of 'We are Many, We are One - Connected Through Stories.' This Black History Month, their focus is on changing the narrative by uplifting under told stories. Through their internal website communication, they uplift Black lives businesses, education initiatives, books, stories, talks and resources that educators can use within their classrooms.

7. Peel Regional Police Discussion (Equity: Anti-Black Racism)

Gord Gallimore shared that he wanted the trustees present to discuss this topic and their dedication to dismantle anti-Black racism.

Michelle Coutinho clarified that they wanted to have a conversation specifically about lockdowns. In the past, police have gone to schools for the purpose of advising administrators with regard to lockdown drills. Schools are required to have lockdown drills, hold and secure drills and fire drills every year. The council was asked for their advice with regard to having police come in and advise administrators regarding lockdown drills. Michelle requested feedback from the group either tonight or at the next meeting.

Max Vecchiarino commented that it may be a good idea to discuss this at a future meeting because by then they might have a prototype of the suggested communication ready for the council to review. It would be made clear that the only part of the school that the police would enter as part of a drill would be the main office area. They might stand outside the office to get a sense of what is happening in the hallways, but they would not go through the hallways.

Max clarified that school safety is currently governed by documents in every part of Ontario referred to as School Board/Police Protocol. It is a document that is typically written by the police forces of the regions with input from all four of the coterminous school boards. The hope is to do all of the training offsite with police to support administrators.

Wayne Brunton clarified that this is not an interaction between police and students and no information about students is being shared with police. He verified what was proposed by Max adding that the administrators would go through their lockdown routine while the officer would remain in or near the office observing and looking for things that can be improved on.

A discussion ensued.

Max Vecchiarino confirmed that the police have committed to doing this work, should we undertake it, in plain clothes and in unmarked cruisers. However, they have made it clear that while they will do their best to do both of those things, it is not something that they can guarantee

depending on who is available.

A discussion ensued.

Michelle Coutinho concluded that this is something being brought to the council, relying on members feedback and expertise in this area before moving to make a decision. Perhaps one of the working groups can figure out how to best represent the voice of this council with this particular subject.

8. Closing Remarks

Nancy Cargioli thanked everyone for joining and is looking forward to the next meeting in April where they will revisit many of the discussions from this evening.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.