



Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 26, 2023, | 6:30 p.m. | Director's Boardroom, 650 Rossland Rd. West, Oshawa

Attendance:

Tracy Barill | Kayode Akomolafe | Auguste Deonarine | Carla Hipolito | Christina Seucharan | Geraldine Kulazikulabe | Janelle Benjamin | Yolanna Cromwell | Lara Spiers | Anissa Voisin | Narmilee Dhayanandhan | Zhora Adatia-McGlashen | Patricia Bailey | Nicole Emanuel | Marjorie Wright

Item	Items for Discussion	Owner
1.	Land Acknowledgements	ABR & BE
2.	Opening Prayer	ABR & BE
3.	Welcome Remarks	Kayode Akomolafe
4.	Continuation of Review of Proposed Committee Restructuring	Kayode Akomolafe/Tracy Barill
5.	Break out Rooms	Tracy Barill
6.	Any other Business	All
7.	Next Steps	All
8.	Adjournment	All

1. Land Acknowledgement:

It was asked if the African land acknowledgement will be used at committee meetings. The Board has that in its notes; a decision will be made by the committee once the structure is established.

2. Opening Prayer:

Narmilee Dhayanandhan.

3. Welcome Remarks and Introductions:

Welcoming remarks from Kayode:

- Thanked all for coming and continued commitment to getting this important committee moving forward
- Highlighted the need to take advantage of the abundance of talent and expertise in the Durham Region present in the committee

- The goal tonight is to complete the restructuring work so that the committee can move on to its critical tasks
- PowerPoint of proposed areas of restructuring was sent to committee members in advance

4. Continuation of Review of Proposed Committee Restructuring:

Reviewed the items covered at the last meeting relative to areas of restructuring which included:

- Reviewing proposed restructuring relating to mandate and membership of the committee. Following this, questions and comments were entertained.

- **Mandate**

Questions and Comments:

- When questioned how the committee would know what to advise the Board on and how parents would know what the Board is doing to provide feedback, it was stated that:
 - Provide input to the Board on such issues as policy development and direction, and those issues impacting the Board's goal of creating a positive school climate that supports students' feelings of belonging and safety at the school and board level
 - Staff would bring presentations to the committee about work that is being done to seek input and feedback
 - The Board expects that parents would bring forward ideas about prevalent needs in the system
 - The committee may assist in enhancing communication between the Board and the community by advising on policies, initiatives and programs that are working and identified systemic barriers; how to best communicate to parents/families; what is of interest and value etc.
 - As a system committee, it would be focused on developing and enhancing system level frameworks; identifying and problem solving on system level issues; looking for trends; prioritizing what is most important to the community; it would not be a forum for discussion about individual issues/students/staff etc.
 - The committee's mandate should be more precise about issues on which it will advise the Board
 - A discussion took place about the differences between policy and practice and how they come together in process – behaviour comes from process
- **Membership:**
 - It is being considered that the committee should be primarily a parent group
 - Membership should be open to only people who are specifically dedicated to identifying, dismantling, disrupting anti-black racism
 - Staff would act as resource (e.g., Superintendent, HREA, Executive Assistant)
- **What Would Be the Impact of Having a Trustee on The Committee? Feedback:**
 - Discussed pluses and minuses
 - A concern that it would change the dynamic of the committee

- It would increase direct communication with a member of the Board of Trustees who sits at the table where governance decisions are made
 - It was expressed that who the Trustee is might affect decisions; needs to be committed to the mandate of the committee
 - It was clarified that while a notice of motion on this matter was submitted to the Board of Trustees, it will not be debated until the next meeting of the Board in May. A direction may come from that meeting to explore the possibilities. Nothing is settled yet.
- **Sub-committees/Working Groups:**
 - To be formed on ad-hoc basis
 - No mandatory requirement for members to be on a sub-committee
- **Meetings:**
 - Minutes of the meetings could be shared back with the whole Board
 - Asked about the hard work done by the subcommittees last year, it was proposed that the committee should look away from that work or perhaps it could build an archive of the body of work, and maintain it to reference and draw upon, so the effort is not tossed out.
- **Communication/Training:**
 - It was recommended that it would be important to engage the group in training to develop common understandings
 - Staff may look to the committee about communication strategies
 - Multi-layered communication is required since details can be overlooked. Not relying on parents to obtain the information on the website themselves

5. **Break Out Rooms:**

Given the small size of the group and the open discussion that took place, break-out rooms were not used.

6. **Any other Business:**

- None

7. **Next Steps:**

- (i) Board staff to update the draft Terms of Reference based on tonight's discussions and share with members
- (ii) Questions for break out rooms to be made available to members in questionnaire/survey form in advance of the next meeting
- (iii) Staff will prepare questionnaire/survey feedback for discussion at the next meeting to speed up restructuring process

8. **Adjournment**