



# Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC)

## Mission Statement

Indigenous students, families, elders, and communities, are better positioned to thrive mentally, spiritually, emotionally and physically when they feel valued, affirmed and have access to their culture.

It is our mission to advance education services for Indigenous students who attend YRDSB Schools that promote and protect Indigenous languages, Indigenous cultures, and Indigenous ways of seeing, knowing, relating, and doing, improving educational outcomes and the lives of Indigenous students.

## Terms of Reference

The role of the Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC) is to advise YRDSB on matters relevant to Indigenous student success and Indigenous education and to hear reports from the board on matters relevant to Indigenous student success and Indigenous education.

These Terms of Reference acknowledge the importance of the traditional and contemporary Indigenous communities we serve and acknowledge the diversity within these communities and our relationship with their organizations. As such we acknowledge that this Council is one such body for engaging with Indigenous communities in addition to the YRDSB's relationship to other formal bodies of education that currently exist, or may exist in the future.

The YRDSB acknowledges that education has and may continue to cause harm to Indigenous students, their families and Indigenous staff. The board takes its responsibility to create identity affirming spaces for learning and as such looks to IEAC to help board employees identify, interrupt, and remove oppressive structures and practices that exist within the education system and to promote respectful inclusion of Indigenous content, and well-being for students, families and staff.

The Indigenous Education Advisory Council will advise the Board on Indigenous Education matters with the expectation that the YRDSB shall respond to its direction through action, and ongoing consultation.

### 1.0 Council Objectives

In order to carry out its mission and meet its mandate of advising the board, the IEAC shall:

- 1.1 review and revise the Indigenous Education and Equity Strategy
- 1.2 build a collective understanding of colonialism in relation to the lands of York Region

- 1.3 advise on resources and professional learning to respond to the education and cultural needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- 1.4 advise on culturally appropriate assessment models to improve academic achievement, and affirm the diverse identities of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- 1.5 advise on and advocate for the interests of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and communities including access to language and cultural programming
- 1.6 provide insight into Indigenous perspectives, experiences and ways of knowing, seeing, doing, and relating connected to education
- 1.7 support the development of quality programs, services and resources that support authentic learning opportunities for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students
- 1.8 advise on ways to develop and implement strategies that facilitate diversified and increased participation by First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents, students, communities and organizations in working to support student success
- 1.9 nurture respect for Indigenous cultures, life experiences and perspectives among all students, staff and school communities
- 1.10 receive and comment on reports from the board on the progress and effectiveness of educational programs created in response to the advice and direction of the IEAC
- 1.11 receive and comment on reports from the board on the actions that have been implemented by the board to achieve the strategies outlined in the Multiyear Strategic Plan, the Directors Action Plan, and the Indigenous and Equity Education Strategy.

## **2.0 Council Operations**

The members of the Indigenous Education Advisory Council will agree to the following protocols and operational norms.

The Council shall:

- 2.1 operate in a manner that is respectful of the diverse cultures, opinions and lived experiences of all members and seek consensus through open and truthful communication
- 2.2 A member shall express to the advisory committee any financial conflict of interest that arises, whether direct or indirect
- 2.3 determine the format, time of day, and number of meetings as an item on the agenda at the first meeting of the school year for which it is convened
- 2.4 host meetings at locations and times that are suitable for Council members and provide virtual platforms in cases where members are unable to attend in person

- 2.5 revise and update membership directories with current phone numbers and email addresses
- 2.6 communicate with members via email address provided by members, following AODA regulations to ensure accessibility for all
- 2.7 make all decisions of the Council by consensus
- 2.8 cancel a meeting if fewer than 51% of Council members are able to participate. This must include the Chairperson or his or her designate. The Associate Director of Indigenous Education or his or her designate must also be present to hear from IEAC
- 2.9 govern who is a member of the Council and part of consensus making operations
- 2.10 make recommendations and prepare communications, when necessary, based on its discussions, for presentation to the Board or through a verbal report from the Indigenous Trustee, and or Indigenous Student Trustee
- 2.11 open and close all meetings with Ceremonies as determined by the Council
- 2.12 establish representation from other board advisory councils as determined by Council members
- 2.13 have authority over who is a member of the Council.

### **3.0 Protocols for Meetings**

The role of IEAC is to: advise the board on matters relevant to Indigenous student success and Indigenous education; hear reports from the board on matters relevant to Indigenous student success and Indigenous education.

Items for discussion that are brought forward for the advice of the Council will be a part of the official agenda for the meeting. Items may be brought forward before the meeting by emailing [indigenous.education@yrdsb.ca](mailto:indigenous.education@yrdsb.ca) or brought forward at the beginning of the meeting on the day of by members of the Council.

As this is an advisory Council that seeks to follow models of Indigenous governance and community discussion, it will be done in the manner of a circle.

- 3.1 the role of the chair will be to: call upon the person bringing an item for discussion, or seeking the advice of the Council, to start the circle
- 3.2 the person bringing the item forward will start the circle by presenting the item to be discussed and posing any questions that will help focus the discussion
- 3.3 discussion will then begin on the matter moving around the circle so that everyone has a chance to speak to the matter or question
- 3.4 in situations where some or all of the members are participating remotely, the chair will set the order for the circle to assist with a respectful meeting format

- 3.5 at the end of the circle if the person bringing the item forward is satisfied with the information provided the discussion will be closed
- 3.6 at the end of the meeting if the person bringing the item forward seeks further information they may ask a clarifying question or follow up on items raised in the circle leading to further discussion. These questions may be posed to a person in particular or to the group as a whole.
- 3.7 in situations where a decision of the Council is required, discussion will continue until consensus is arrived at and a decision of the Council can be recorded and communicated.
- 3.8 in situations where consensus cannot be achieved, all of the opposing points of view will be recorded and either: communicated as the thoughts of the Council, should the whole Council agree to this; or the item will be brought back for further discussion at a future Council date if the Council can come to no consensus on communication.

#### **4.0 Council Membership**

The IEAC will be composed of diverse members from the First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities of the YRDSB who have students attending YRDSB schools including:

- 4.1 Elders, Senators, and Knowledge Keepers, as recommended by the consensual input of First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations working within York Region, or Parents and Guardians of Indigenous students, with every effort made to ensure that there is representation from;
  - 4.1.1 Métis community from York Region
  - 4.1.2 Inuit community from York Region
  - 4.1.3 First Nations community from York Region
- 4.2 the Indigenous Trustee, who will act as Chairperson
- 4.3 the Indigenous Student Trustee
- 4.4 one representative of any First Nations with established tuition agreements with the YRDSB or his/her/their designate.

#### **5.0 Resource to the Council**

In addition to the above membership, the following will act as a resource to the Council as determined by the Indigenous Trustee in consultation with the Associate Director that supports Indigenous Education.

By acting as a resource they will attend IEAC meetings whenever possible to answer questions from the Council, provide reports on board actions, and record communications from the Council to be communicated to the appropriate departments of the board. They are not part of the consensus making membership of the IEAC.

- 5.1 the Coordinator for First Nations, Métis and Inuit education
- 5.2 the Indigenous Transition Liaison
- 5.3 the Coordinator for Indigenous Languages
- 5.4 Associate Director that supports Indigenous Education
- 5.5 the principal of Inclusive School and Community Services
- 5.6 one elementary or one secondary principal or vice-principal from schools with high concentrations of Indigenous learners
- 5.7 one elementary or secondary principal or vice-principal from a school with a low concentration of Indigenous learners
- 5.8 one elementary or secondary teacher or a representative from any school with First Nation representation from the Board
- 5.9 an Anishinaabe Education System (AES) representative
- 5.10 specially-invited guests as identified by the IEAC members, based on the needs of a specific project or initiative.