

**Approved Minutes**  
**Meeting of the Black Community Advisory Council**

**Monday, January 15, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.**  
**CEC Room 301**

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

**ATTENDEES:**

Chris Shelton ( <i>Regrets</i> )	Parent/Guardian
Horace Wright ( <i>Absent</i> )	Parent/Guardian
Ebenezer Addei ( <i>Absent</i> )	Parent/Guardian
Gord Gallimore	Parent/Guardian and Co-Chair
Muna Said-Ahmed	Parent/Guardian
Anita Andoh ( <i>Absent</i> )	Parent/Guardian
Edith Pencil ( <i>Regrets</i> )	Parent/Guardian
Crystal Land ( <i>Absent</i> )	Parent/Guardian
Linda Tobi-Isiekwena	Parent/Guardian
Tineke Harrison ( <i>Regrets</i> )	Parent/Guardian
Eloghosa Enogieru	Student Member
Raheem White	Student Member
Zaida Smith	Student Member
Pinre Ibitoye-Ajayi	Student Member
Trisha Johnson-White	Agencies – ResQ Youth International
Marcia Glasgow ( <i>Absent</i> )	Agencies – United Achievers’ Club
Jackie Maloney ( <i>Regrets</i> )	Agencies – Congress of Black Women
Jason Eduful ( <i>Absent</i> )	Agencies – The Black Educators Association of DPCDSB
Crystel Campbell ( <i>Regrets</i> )	Agencies – Black Youth Student Success Initiative
Sharon Douglas ( <i>Regrets</i> )	Agencies – Black Youth Student Success Initiative
Cherene Randall	Agencies – Salvation Army
Nailah Peters	Agencies – Salvation Army
Duke Nicholson	OECTA Representative – Elementary
Jamie Philip	OECTA Representative – Elementary
Bianca Gagliostro ( <i>Absent</i> )	OECTA Representative – Secondary
Nicole Salmon ( <i>Absent</i> )	OECTA Representative – Secondary
(TBD)	Elementary Principal/Vice Principal Association
Kwadwo Adusei	Secondary Principal/Vice Principal Association
Renee La Croix ( <i>Regrets</i> )	Graduation Coach for Black Student Success – DPCDSB
Marlo Paraboo ( <i>Absent</i> )	Graduation Coach for Black Student Success – DPCDSB

Dr. Carl James	Advisor – Professor, York University
Wayne Brunton	Staff – Superintendent, Equity and Indigenous Education and Co-Chair
Nancy Cargioli	Staff – Acting Coordinator, Equitable and Inclusive Education
Jaclynn Deveaux-Matthews	Staff – Acting Consultant, Equitable and Inclusive Education
Richard Moriah	Staff – General Manager, Plant Department
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 acknowledged that January 15 was Martin Luther King Jr. Day and then led the prayer.

**2. Land Acknowledgement**

Nancy Cargioli played the recorded land acknowledgement read by a former Dufferin-Peel student, Rhaya Clyne.

**3. Welcome, Introductions and Attendance**

Wayne Brunton called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

**Attendance**

Attendance was taken and those who sent regrets were noted. Researcher Mehek Arif and Denize Alphonso-Balogun joined as guests.

**4. Approval of the Agenda**

**THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.**

**Moved by** Duke Nicholson

**Seconded by** Linda Tobi-Isiekwena

**5. Approval of the Minutes – October 30, 2023**

The unapproved minutes of October 30, 2023 were distributed to BCAC members via e-mail.

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 30, 2023 MEETING BE APPROVED.**

**Moved by** Duke Nicholson

**Seconded by** Linda Tobi-Isiekwena

**6. Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Evaluation Strategy Focus Groups**

Max Vecchiarino shared that they were in the process of launching the new Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) that the Board of Trustees passed through the Multi-Year Strategic Planning Committee. Max introduced the new Multi-Year Strategic Plan. The five goals are in the areas of Believe, Excel, Respect, Thrive and Trust. In the Yearly Operationalization of the MYSP, renewed attention is being put on the work of anti-oppression. Boards are being asked to review the plan with the public twice a year in September and October and again in May and June. They will not only do surveys but will also engage people in focus groups.

Mehek Arif shared that they were more intentional with the language in the new MYSP and CBILC. They worked with the Equity team to strengthen some of the language, goals and intentions for the next four years until 2027. The CBILC will be for 2024-2025. The Ministry has asked that all boards conduct both qualitative and quantitative research when it comes to the different action steps and

planning at both the board level and school level that boards have implemented. Quantitative research will be done by survey in the first two months and last two months of the school year. In between, they would like to hold qualitative focus group meetings to get an in-depth understanding of how council members and students feel about the MYP, CBILC, Board Improvement Plan, CSILC and the way they are evaluating everything. The focus groups will be provided with materials a week or two prior to meeting. They will meet in March and April and will be facilitated by either an Equity team member or an Indigenous Education Council member and a researcher. The focus group meetings will be 45 minutes to 1 hour long. Each person will participate in only one focus group. The first set of focus groups will be around the five Dufferin-Peel councils: BCAC, IEC, SEAC, CCCSC and Student Senate. Each council has been asked for two volunteers. If there are more than two volunteers, they will be accommodated. The tentative dates are March 18 and 19 at the CEC. These focus groups will be a mixture of the five councils. If anyone is interested, please let Nancy Cargioli know.

The secondary student focus groups will meet in April. They have been broken down into four groups: BCAC and IEC students, five students with Diverse Learning Needs, five students who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ and two students from each of the seven Family of Schools. The recruitment will be in consultation with student trustees and Student Senate. The student groups will be held at St. Marcellinus CSS and, if needed, transportation will be provided. The groups will meet during school hours from 1:30 to 3:00 pm.

In the previous survey, some of the feedback received was that it was not very accessible and to share the survey in school newsletters, on school websites, on social media, on the Board website and on School Messenger. The survey will involve parents/guardians, advisory council members, community members and students from Grades 4 to 8 with parental support and Grades 9 to 12.

Mehek advised that the goal of the focus groups was to get more council and student feedback on how the Board is navigating their planning throughout the next four years and to see if they are meeting the needs of students, parent/guardian community groups and other needs in the community.

A conversation ensued.

Raheem White commented that it was not fair to ask students to go out of their way to join committees and focus groups to make their voices heard when they have administrators in buildings who should be listening but instead are oppressing students.

Max responded that when he shares the MYP information with administrators, he will discreetly reference Raheem's comment as a reason for the focus groups.

Mehek advised that with the help of the Mental Health and Well-Being team, seven different secondary schools were identified, one from each Family of Schools, to select students from for those student focus groups. The schools selected are from different areas of the Board. She will be meeting with the principals of those schools to see if they were interested and break down the selection criteria.

A conversation ensued.

Mehek confirmed that there would be two focus groups plus a tentative group for council members and six focus groups plus a tentative group for students. They are hoping for approximately five to

six participants in each focus group.

A suggestion was made to separate the BCAC and IEC students into different focus groups.

Mehek commented that the focus group data, once analysed, would first be shared internally with senior management, then trustees, then councils and finally with the public.

Suggestions were made to include the graduation coaches and develop a screener for the student selection process.

Dr. Carl James commented that the conversation needs to be more focused, stating what the data shows about Dufferin-Peel right now, stating some of the questions the Board has to deal with and stating how they will look at those questions in relation to the MYSP. The data should inform who they would want to hear from and what they might want to ask.

The council agreed to meet again virtually in early February to review the data.

## **7. Recap October 30 BCAC Meeting**

Nancy Cargioli shared that in the October meeting, two items came up. One was to set goals as a group and the other was to look at the census data. Goals cannot be set for the council if they do not respond to the data focusing on updating the Strategic Plan to Dismantle Anti-Black Racism. One of the researchers can re-present the information that was shared in June and then they can link goals tied to that data. This was going to be the work of the working group in February/March.

Max Vecchiarino confirmed that they would provide the council with a refresher on the census data, walk through how they made the selections they made based on the data and then work on the screener together. In respect of the other councils various priorities, they need to consult with them on the screener.

Dr. Carl James commented that the Research Department should lead the process, indicating where they see gaps and what information they need. With regard to the screener, the Research team should state what areas they need qualitative data for to help explain what the numbers mean and represent. The different councils should respond to that.

Max shared that Dufferin-Peel implemented its student census beginning in November 2021 and finishing in March 2022. In January 2022, the Ministry decided that students in Grade 8 and below required parental permission to complete the census. As they were in a gray zone by having a lot of responses before and some after, the Board decided to respect the Ministry's direction and embargo the data. It has now been decided that they can release the elementary data based on parent consent. When the census is reimplemented, they will keep the timeline shorter and ensure they are following Ministry direction. Kindergarten to Grade 3 are not included as parents have always completed the survey on behalf of their children.

Mehek confirmed that they would develop the screener and share why they developed it the way they did.

Max stated that they have to acknowledge, as a system, that not only are there long term gaps but that new gaps are discovered on a regular basis. One of the big changes they have made in the Improvement Learning Cycle over the past sixteen months has been the explicit naming of and then, through the Equity team, a lot of responsive plans for anti-oppression. The plan is not

intended to address specific gaps at the school level but more system level gaps. Schools respond to the Catholic Board Improvement Learning Cycle (CBILC). The yearly operationalization through their school plans. In the school plans, schools will address needs as they see them. Beyond that, the hope is that individual teachers are addressing specific student needs in the classroom. The Graduation Coach for Black Students program comes out of the Ministry's review of a variety of school plans and the student data. Boards cannot do anything without Ministry support as they are told how to spend their money.

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Raheem White asked why the Director of Education and the Chair of the Board of Trustees were not present at the meeting in light of, in a student voice perspective, the incident that occurred at Cardinal Leger a couple of months ago. As well, going back to the last Board Meeting scheduled in December, he views it as if the Board is locking Black people out of the building as the Board decided to undergo 'an operational security audit' and did not notify community members that the December meeting was going to be online. The Director and Chair should be here as they are supposed to be held accountable to the people voting them in and to the stakeholders in the educational system where they work.

Wayne Brunton responded that they will be invited as they do not attend all the BCAC meetings. The Director and Chair have come to BCAC and the last meeting they came to was last June when the data was released.

A conversation ensued around the incident at Cardinal Leger C.S.S., locking out of people who were trying to make their voices heard at the Board Meeting and attendance of the Director or trustee at meetings.

Linda Tobi-Isiekwena stated that the council should have been informed about the incident before today as it was an incident dealing with Black students.

Gord Gallimore apologized for not bringing the incident to the council's attention as he heard about it on the same day by students. It was not brought to his attention by the Board as Co-Chair of the council.

Wayne commented that, in the lack of transparency, they have recently met with Dr. Carl and Gord to discuss learning from this and how communication would be made to the council when anything impacts Black students in the community. Moving forward, there will be communication to Gord as Co-Chair and Dr. Carl as BCAC Advisor immediately to let them know there has been an incident and to let BCAC members know. Anything that can be shared will be shared. That being said, it is not on the agenda as neither Max nor Wayne have details about what took place that day and it is presently going through a process.

Raheem asked the following questions which he would appreciate a response to:

1. Why were the police called on community members making their voices heard at the November 28<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting?
2. Whose idea was it to undergo an "operational security audit"?
3. Why is the Director of Education nor the Chair of the Board of Trustees present here today?
4. Who called the police to Cardinal Leger on November 9, 2023?
5. The community knows and sees these same videos. What was the threat of safety, whose safety was under threat and why did more than 30 police officers show up at Cardinal Leger to

subdue 3 teenage Black girls aged 15, 15 and 17?

6. We know that the principal from Cardinal Leger is at Phillip Pockock. How are we going to ensure that the safety of Black students there are upheld? The BSAs talk and we are all sharing videos. Black students feel unsafe, to the point where they don't want to show up to school.
7. What steps are being taken to hold the principal of Cardinal Leger accountable for putting the lives and safety of Black students at risk? If that can't be said to "protect her privacy", well it is our right to know what role she is still playing in educational spaces.

Dr. Carl James stated that the council should raise their questions and concerns, make them explicit and ask for someone in administration to come back with a comprehensive response to the council. There are a number of things at play such as teachers' unions and principals associations. It is only respectful to return to the council with a comprehensive response as soon as possible with the understanding that people in this group and the larger community have videos of what happened.

Gord stated that he was one of the people that the police were called on at the November 28<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting. They walked into the boardroom, held up signs and said they wanted justice for Black students. The meeting was adjourned and the police were called. They opened the door to let the police in and, after an hour to an hour and a half of talking, the police asked them to leave as the meeting was adjourned and stated that if they stayed, they would be considered as trespassing. They left and the meeting was restarted. Flyers were later posted to tell everyone about a Townhall on December 7<sup>th</sup> which was recorded and posted on the Parents of Black Children's website.

Gord shared that at the last council meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup>, they spoke about bringing police presence to the Black Professionals' Expo. On that day, there was a situation that happened with police at Notre Dame. The next day was the incident Raheem referenced.

A discussion ensued.

Nailah Peters asked how they could move forward. Is this a recommendation for policy? There should be some ground rules about how to interact with outside partners. There are things that can be done through policy that can stop this from happening. If you can use policy to give people guidelines that will help and hold people accountable, then that is what should be done.

Max confirmed that police officers have three types of kit from full uniform to plain clothes. The Board has absolutely no jurisdiction in terms of what they wear when they show up to our schools. There is a lot that they cannot share from a Dufferin-Peel perspective if it is student related or staff related and they also cannot comment because they do not know any of the pieces that are police related.

Dr. Carl James stated that they could talk about policies and what the policy is about having police in schools. On what grounds do principals invite police into schools. All those things should be communicated and taken up with the council when the comprehensive report comes back. Also given all the data that the Board has about Black people, can the policy be adjusted to pay attention and be equitable. What is the role of this council in the Board and how is the Board of Trustees and administration respecting this council and the role it could play in terms of furthering the work of the school board.

Kwadwo Adusei shared that as an administrator there is a guideline and a police protocol that they follow in terms of when to contact police. There are times he has called police and asked for plain

clothes officers because of the human dignity of the students. He did not want them to be embarrassed or put on display. If they can set time and space to really respond to all these questions that deserve answers, that would be appropriate.

Pinre Ibitoye-Ajayi shared that she finds it very disheartening that it took such an event to speak about this. It is not just about students being scared that they might call the police on them, but students being scared that if they speak up, they might get suspended or expelled. Over 50% of the Black students in her school have either been suspended or told to transfer schools and not come back the following year. There are teachers kicking students out of classrooms saying they are not allowed to write exams just because the student spoke up for themselves. This conversation should have been happening a long time ago.

Gord advised that questions could be sent to him at [rro.d19.gg@gmail.com](mailto:rro.d19.gg@gmail.com).

Wayne commented that Gord and he will work on the responses to all the questions brought up at this meeting and the other questions that will be sent to Gord. They will invite the Director and Chair of the Board to the meetings as they have committed to come to one of the meetings. Wayne also shared that he does take back the discussions that occur at BCAC meetings.

Wayne shared that all school administrators go through training in which they have to create safe spaces or infinity spaces where they work with BSA groups in schools. There are school plans that identify what their steps are. Students and their parents are encouraged to connect with their teacher or administration team to talk about what their Safe Schools Plan is to create safe, caring and inclusive spaces for students. In some schools, they do deploy the graduation coaches if needed. There is also a reporting tool on every schools website as a confidential way that anybody can report something that is happening in the school. This goes to the Family of Schools superintendent who can then navigate what needs to be navigated in that school. Each school has a go to person whether it be a support staff, CYW, social worker, guidance counsellor or teacher they may trust.

Kwadwo shared that students can speak with administrators and hold them accountable, asking them for answers and how they are going to address the issues in the school.

Gord added that on the Ontario College of Teachers website, OCT members can be reported. This includes teachers, administrators, superintendents and anybody who is currently registered with the college.

It was decided to adjourn the meeting as the council had questions that needed to be answered. Nancy Cargioli applauded Raheem for using his voice and apologized that they did not have the answers that he needed today but they will work to advocate and get those answers.

**a. Setting Goals for BCAC for 2023-2024**

Addressed in item 7 above.

**b. Working Groups for February/March**

Addressed in item 7 above.

**c. Christmas Parent Engagement Event**

Deferred to next meeting.

**d. Black History Month 2024**

Deferred to next meeting.

**e. Update Hiring Practices within DPCDSB**

Deferred to next meeting.

**f. Racialized Mentoring Programming**

Deferred to next meeting.

**8. Closing Remarks**

Wayne Brunton thanked Max and Mehek for coming to the meeting and presenting on the MYSP. They will work with Gord and Nancy to provide a date in February for an online meeting for researchers to re-present the data that was presented in June and the next steps.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.