

**Draft Minutes of the SWISAC Advisory Committee meeting
Held at Toronto District School Board of Education Boardroom
June 19, 2008**

Participants:

Tanya Knight, Chair, CIC
Darlyn Mentor, CIC
Vanessa Lee, Ministry of Education
Jean-Francois Picher, CEPEO
Lucy Bacchet, YCDSB
Ida Hersi, City of Toronto, SDFa
Richard Lecours, CIC
Elizabeth Glass, TDPL
Peter Dorfman, SWIS Coordinator
Dima Amad, MSEP, Brampton, BMC
Michelle Scott, MCYS
Angela Davis, WCDSB, NRC
Afua Marcus, OCASI (Recorder)
Ursula Lipski, MCI
Lisa Morgan, Ont. Ministry of Education

Regrets:

Debbie Douglas, OCASI
Michelle Munroe, TDSB
Jehad Aliweiwi, TNO
Margarita Boody, CIC
Jorge Barahona, Culture Link

Introductions:

Welcome: Tanya Knight, CIC
Darlyn Mentor, CIC
Vanessa Lee, Ministry of Education
Ida Hersi, City of Toronto, SDFa
Dima Amad, MSEP, Brampton, BMC
Michele Scott, MCYS
Angela Davis, WCDSB, NRC
Ursula Lipski, MCI

Review of Minutes from January 18, 2008

Correction

Lisa Morgan will send the correct name of the policy mentioned in her report on page 5, to Tanya.

Update on New Provincial SWIS Coordinator:

The call closed on May 15, 2008. Tanya stated that CIC is currently working on assessing the applications. It is anticipated that a decision will be made shortly.

NOW & WIN Update:

Peter Dorfman gave the committee an overview of the Newcomer Orientation Week program which will be offered to grades 9-12. He stated that the evaluation of last year's program was successful and the program has expanded from 8 sites to 40 sites. There was to be one French site at Monsignor de Charbonnal in Toronto but it will not go ahead.

It was stated that the NOW program follows a model in which students who were newcomers in previous years are trained to run activities for newly arrived students. Sixteen trainers will be hired to work with the youth. The model does not accommodate students who arrive during the school year. There could be an opportunity for ongoing leadership training for the peer leaders.

This year a parent component has been added which will include an orientation for the parents.

Peter also gave the committee an overview of the WIN program which is being offered to students in grades 6-8 at Camilla Rd Senior School in Mississauga. This is a pilot project which is a one-day model oriented to children who are new to Canada. Parents will participate in a passport activity with their children as one example, where they must find different areas of the school where they will learn information -- e.g. at the main office, they would find out the process of calling in when their children are absent. It is hoped that this project will be expanded next summer.

CIC expressed that they are interested in expansion to ensure that the potential of these programs is realized.

Coming to Canada (book) Update:

Coming to Canada is a children's book which talks about a young girl's immigrant experience. This book was developed last year by author, *Rukhsana Khan* and published by *Groundwood Books* and was released this spring. The English language book is available and the committee discussed how the French version will be created.

Peter will inquire about how the book will be distributed and will also have a discussion with CIC regarding obtaining more copies.

Kiosk Update:

The kiosk which will have a series of videos with information for newcomers will be placed in school board reception centres. Newcomers will be able to access 17 languages through this kiosk which will be ready August 1st.

Smaller Centres and Unassigned:

Tanya stated that CIC made some minor changes to the Guiding Principles documents. CIC has accepted the guidelines and they will be sent out to all SWIS steering committees and CIC settlement managers.

Ryerson Mapping Project:

Peter provided the committee with a demonstration of the Ryerson Mapping Project which shows the location of newcomers to Ontario, and newcomer services such as ISAP programs, and public libraries. The maps are now available on the internet and is useful for research and program planning for newcomers.

Expansion of SWIS in Niagara and potential expansion in Durham.

Peter stated that settlement workers are in place in Niagara, the steering committee is up and running and SWIS is ready to go.

Richard talked about CIC's meeting with the public school board in Durham to discuss starting SWIS there. The school board is taking it back to their trustees.

Reception Centres – any changes

Two new reception centres will be open in the TDSB. One in Rexdale and one in North Scarborough. A reception centre will be opened in the Windsor Catholic and Waterloo public boards. Niagara Catholic School Board will open one as well. Potential sites in the GTA are Scarborough and Etobicoke.

Upcoming SWIS Conference

The tentative month for the SWIS conference is January. Tanya asked the committee to look at their calendars in order to avoid conflicts with the potential dates. She will send dates to committee members before the actual date is set. There was discussion about what potential stakeholders to invite to the conference. Suggestions included: school board committees, principals, contact people at the schools, guidance counsellors, and ESL teachers. Jean François informed the group that the French school board has 7-8 workers who work with racialized communities. He felt that the workers would benefit from the conference.

There was a discussion about the options which can help to form the conference. It was suggested that the sessions could be dedicated to two groups: Administrators and Frontline Workers. A conference advisory committee, which will include representatives from SWISAC will be set-up to look at the goals and agenda for the conference.

A youth component will be incorporated within the conference and invitations will be extended to individuals outside of Ontario.

LSP Update

The program is in expansion mode from 20 branches in Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa to a total of 50 branches. This includes the addition of 12 branches in Toronto as well as library branches in: Windsor, Kitchener, Waterloo, Brampton, London, Markham, Vaughan & Richmond Hill. The programs should be up and running in the fall.

Updates from each partner:

Ursula Lipski – MCI

The ministry is working with CIC regarding the COIA agreement. There is a lot of work being done for youth and capacity building initiatives. The RFP which has been posted endeavoured to look at capacity building. Seniors are also a priority and the pre-arrival services are also deemed important.

Vanessa Lee – Ministry of Education

Vanessa informed the committee that she works with the French language Education Policy and Programs Branch of the Ministry of Education. She asked how to determine when to get a SWIS worker. Peter expressed that the traditional way is to use the Ministry of Education's October Report to determine which schools have a higher number of newcomer students and therefore warrant a SWIS worker.

She stated that French schools have low numbers of newcomer students, but that does not mean that the needs are not there. Peter stated that once the new allocation model has been looked at, there may be other ways to address this need. She acknowledged that separate work needs to be done to look at the needs of specific schools. Darlyn Mentor indicated that CIC is open to the fact that a francophone strategy by proposed.

Jean-François Picher - CEPEO

The French Trustee Association received funding to prepare 6 information videos for parents of young children. The videos will be released in September in French and English and will later be released in 5 languages. The video will discuss: playing, writing, reading, and nutrition.

The documents will be distributed to the committee in September and there will be a guide for CIC.

The need for a reception centre is being discussed in Ottawa. The Public and Catholic school boards are working with local groups. CIC was present at the last meeting.

Lucy Bacchet - YCD

The NOW program will take place at St. Elizabeth CHS in the York Catholic School Board. The 2nd year of the “Welcome to Canada Orientation Day” for youth and parents will take place Saturday September 6th at Garnet A. Williams Community Centre in Thornhill. This is provided through SEPYR for the Catholic and Public School Boards.

Ida Hersi – City of Toronto, Social Development, Finance and Administration

Ida inquired about the meeting regarding the Falconer Report.

Darlyn also wants to hear the recommendation re: the Falconer Report to expand and adapt to meet the needs of youth.

Richard Lecours – CIC

Richard explained that the expansion of settlement delivery to local CIC offices is complete.

Elizabeth Glass – Toronto Public Library

Elizabeth informed the committee that TPL is going through a strategic planning process. They are offering after school programs and literacy, particularly for secondary schools. An emphasis will be placed on priority neighbour. Pathways is also a part of the program.

Jean Francois Picher – CPEO

Two schools in Ottawa are offering after-school programs. However, it has been a challenge to encourage them to welcome the community programs. The committee shared that that is not an uncommon factor with some schools and community groups.

Dima Amad – MSEP Brampton Multicultural Community Centre

Gave a brief overview of the SWIS program in Peel Region (MSEP). The program has recently moved to a two day model and is being promoted by the MSEP facilitator who works on behalf of the two school boards. This position is unique to the Peel Region. Some reflection activities have been planned to look at how the program is working under this new model.

Michelle Scott – Ministry of Children & Youth Services

There are currently not a lot of programs for newcomers within the ministry but newcomer families can benefit from youth programs.

Angela Davis – Waterloo Catholic DSB – Newcomer Reception Centre

The SWIS office is next door to the reception centre. They work well together. A full-time Spanish speaking settlement worker has been hired to accommodate the large group of Spanish speaking newcomers. WC DSB, hosted the reception centre networking group which gets together twice a year to discuss various issues and share practises. They will have the NOW program and the Kiosh outlet.

Meeting adjourned:

Next Meeting Date:

September 25, 2008

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Venue TBD