

London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership

Education Sub-council

Monday, March 22, 2010 (3:30-5:30)

Location: G.A Wheable, Room A220

Present: Muriel Abbott, Tamara Kaattari, Jean-Pierre Cantin, Sheila Carson, Kim Godin, Becky Howse, Helen Patterson, Mureed Shahid, , Susanne Quan, Ramiro Castro, Jo-elle Rinker, Mo Jeng, Nancy Pollard, Kate Kennedy, Sonia Muhimpundu, Candace Miller, Cynthia Konnerth and Huda Hussein.

Regrets: Denise Taylor-Edwards, Janet Pinder, Raja Al-Abed, Dr. Shelly Taylor

Summary:

Welcome & Introductions

Jean Pierre welcomed the guest speaker Carmen Reis, from the Ontario Immigrant Network to present on her recent study, Latin American Community Needs Assessment for London and Surrounding Area and some learning from the National Conference on Immigration, held recently in Toronto. Carmen highlighted the impact of the classification of immigrants on the education of the children. It is found that children of refugees take three years to catch up with their Canadian counterparts in schools whereas children of skilled workers, who come at age fifteen, perform better than their Canadian counterparts.

Minutes reviewed and approved.

Updates

Chair updated the group on the themes he presented on their behalf to the Central Council. He also shared some data collected recently from a meeting with service providers which indicate that out of the 1084 LINC seats available in London, only 719 are used whereas 365 seats are available in spite of the wait list. The problem is childcare/child minding – spaces are limited and do not match with the numbers of seats available.

Tasks: Sheila is waiting for a reply from Cross Cultural Learner Centre with regard to recent data on refugees. Mureed provided the link obtained from Mo Jeng on stats Canada which contains some data on non-permanent immigrants. Helen Patterson would follow this with her organization and bring data refugee specific the sub-council

Review Gaps

Group continued to review the gaps

Curriculum: (with regard to school)

After some discussion, there was consensus that it would be too ambitious to modify the curriculum to include the mandatory history or geography credit classes for students (Sheila mentioned Ontario's Equity and Inclusion Education Strategy and the work that the Thames Valley District School Board is currently engaged in and how this may impact this barrier)

Action: group will not further discuss this point pending the result of the action items from the Equity and Inclusion Strategy

Supports for Teachers:

For teachers: Recommend the provision of some training to teachers. Professional development opportunities for teachers may be made available and teachers may be encouraged to take such workshops or courses that address inclusion and diversity as a requirement. The two boards of education need to collaborate as well. Another suggestion was made to adopt some modules used in the United States, such as the Teaching Language Learner course which is mandatory to all teachers in many states across the USA. Another suggestion was made around collaboration with the University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College to provide professional development courses. Another suggestion was to collaborate with UWO to offer a mandatory course on diversity and inclusion as part of the curricula of the Education Faculty.

Another suggestion was the e- tool kit that can be accessed by teachers themselves. The use of a platform for teachers to communicate and discuss

ESL and links to literacy gap

It was discussed that this is a multilayered gap: **one** teaching ESL to adult learners who are literate in their language of origin, **two**: teaching ESL to learners who are illiterate in their own language and **three** ESL for Children from elementary to high schools.

Suggested action to address the adult learners: Bring together service providers who work in the field, to a community planning meeting to discuss these issues and plan. Share resources on this topic and learn from what exists.

ESL for students: currently children are withdrawn from their classes at the elementary level for ESL classes and students at the secondary level are segregated – does this impact the learning of language in any way? What are the feelings of those children when segregated or withdrawn? More information needed to be obtained from SWIS worker.

Recommendation: preliminary steps/investigate some models before moving forward with the discussion on this gap

Supports for young children:

SWIS workers in school may bridge this.

Refining Priorities:

After some discussion the group refined their priorities to include two major themes:

Theme One

Access to Education: This will include: childcare/child minding; status and eligibility issues; internationally trained individuals; ESL and Literacy

Theme Two:

Supports

- a. Supports for Teachers
- b. Supports for Parents
- c. Supports for Students

Next Meeting:

Tuesday April 6, 3:30-5:30 at room A220 GA Wheable