



EQUITY, INCLUSION & ANTI-RACISM TRUSTEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Wednesday February 17, 2021

5:30 p.m. - TEAMS

Chair: Shannon Mitchell

Advisory Committee Members:

Trustees: Shannon Mitchell (Chair), Nancy Beamer, Alex Bradnam, Elizabeth Klassen, Doug Newton

Student Trustee: Karina Tavernese

Director of Education: Warren Hoshizaki

Superintendent of Education: Kelly Pisek

1. Welcome and Introduction Shannon Mitchell
2. Update on System Initiatives Warren Hoshizaki
3. Update on Equity, Inclusion and Anti-RacismPratima Burton
 - Website Update
 - Creed Accommodations – Administrator and Parent/Caregiver Guidelines
 - Approach to Holidays
 - Supporting Black History Month
4. Update on DSBN Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Community Advisory CommitteeKelly Pisek
5. Implicit Bias PDZakia Hamdani
6. Questions

Future Agenda items

Next Meeting: TBD



EQUITY, INCLUSION & ANTI-RACISM TRUSTEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Update on Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism

Website Update

The Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism website has been updated on the DSBN website to include an inclusive framework that captures essential elements to bring about impactful change within our schools. This inclusive framework involves:

- Continuing to grow in our knowledge about the systems and structures that create and sustain racism, oppression and exclusion
- Collectively taking action to revisit and re-evaluate our practices through an anti-oppression, anti-bias and anti-racism lens
- Creating the conditions to ensure every child, regardless of their social identity, is challenged to reach high standards
- Embedding culturally and historically relevant content so students see themselves reflected in the curriculum

Creed Accommodations – Administrator and Parent/Caregiver Guidelines

The previous religious accommodation guidelines are updated to reflect the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy preventing discrimination based on Creed* in our new Recognizing and Respecting Creed Diversity guidelines to reflect two significant changes.

- A change from Collective versus Individual Accommodation Requests. The focus is to treat each religious accommodation request on an individual, case-by-base assessment and to provide the accommodation short of undue hardship.
- A shift in the concepts around religious and creed-based accommodations in the province. The traditional approach to religious accommodations has recognized prescribed rules of **religion**. **Creed**, on the other hand, is outlined by a broader set of criteria and is an individual's personal way to observe their belief.

The guidelines support administrators when working with students and families who request accommodations based on creed. We have also created a parent/caregiver guideline that explicitly explains how they can go about requesting an accommodation. We will be sharing these guidelines in March with our school administrators.

Approach to Holidays

As a system, we are committed to raising our equity consciousness and fostering a school culture that creates an appreciation of diversity and one that prioritizes inclusive practices. Throughout the school year, there are many days of significance that have traditionally been celebrated and acknowledged in ways that are not inclusive or representative of the students and families we serve. As we move forward in our commitment to respecting the diversity of our students, we take an approach to the days of significance that is mindful of our students' lived experiences.

So far this year, we have shared communication with schools about Remembrance Day, the Winter Holidays, Black History Month and Valentine's Day. These communications do not tell educators what to do and how to handle special occasions. Instead we offer teachers and administrators an equity lens to use when making decisions about holidays so learning and celebrations are inclusive.

Supporting Black History Month

We are strong advocates that contributions and achievements made by Black people, and especially Black Canadians, should not only be celebrated in February. We want to make sure that the contributions of all people are celebrated, highlighted, and embedded into the curriculum throughout the year. The learning is more meaningful when incorporated into existing lessons, rather than taught as isolated topics. However, in order to support Black History Month, we collaborated with the elementary and secondary curriculum team to curate a list of resources for teachers that includes literature, videos, community connections, events, as well suggestions for building classroom book collections.

Update on DSBN Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Community Advisory Committee

DSBN is committed to identifying and eliminating all forms of discrimination and systemic barriers. A part of our vision is to create a culture of transformative and impactful change through an inclusive design that uses an asset-based lens of our students and is anchored in anti-oppression, anti-racism and human rights. In support of this commitment to creating an inclusive environment in our schools, the DSBN has established the Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Community Advisory Committee (EIARCAC) to draw in the participation of families and our communities. The social media campaign to invite applicants started Wednesday, February 10 and will remain open until Friday, March 5.

Implicit Bias PD

Since October we have been providing monthly professional development for staff. We started with acknowledging our own identities and learning the identities of our students so we could create brave spaces in our schools and classrooms. We then moved to interrupting biased comments in the moment. The focus of our recent professional development is interrupting bias from within which entails examining our own biases and then looking at strategies to counter those attitudes, thoughts and beliefs.

Respectfully submitted,

Pratima Burton, Student Achievement Leader: Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Education (K-12)

Zakia Hamdani, Consultant: Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Education (K-12)

Kelly Pisek, Superintendent of Education