

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022**

Public Session: 5:30 – Virtual Meeting

## **AGENDA**

**A. WELCOME**

[S. Mitchell](#)

**B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**C. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE – VERBAL UPDATE**

[S. Mitchell/K. Pisek](#)

**D. BUILDING CULTURAL AWARENESS SERIES - DISRUPTING ISLAMOPHOBIA**

[Z. Hamdani](#)

**E. TOES: WHAT THEY SEE IS WHAT THEY WILL BE**

[P. Burton](#)

**F. CULTURALLY & HISTORICALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATION - CULTIVATING GENIUS**

[P. Burton](#)

**G. LEARNING SKILLS THROUGH AN EQUITY LENS (anti-bias education)**

[K. Pisek](#)

**H. BRAVE SPACE GROUPS**

[Z. Hamdani](#)

**I. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

**K. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 8, 2022 @ 5:30**

January 18, 2022

## **REPORT TO EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ANTI-RACISM TRUSTEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The DSNB is committed to embedding equity in all aspects of the education system, starting from training, and building capacity through awareness of an equity lens, to reviewing procedures and practices using an anti-oppression framework, and aligning resources to ensure every school has the support it needs to create equitable learning conditions and an inclusive culture for all students and staff. The framework of this report reflects the tenets of the DSNB Equity Action Plan.

### **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

#### **BUILDING CULTURAL AWARENESS SERIES - DISRUPTING ISLAMOPHOBIA**

School staff and Administrators began the year with learning about the importance of knowing each learner through building relationships and knowing each student deeply. This involved adapting a culturally responsive lens to understand and appreciate the role of culture and how it impacts the way students learn, make sense of the world and how that knowledge can be used to scaffold and connect the student's genius to learning, belonging and being agents of change.

To continue this learning into the community and demonstrating the importance of community partnerships in supporting students, DSNB has committed to a Building Cultural Knowledge series that will focus on building cultural knowledge of each other's way of life so that communities stay connected, interrupt biases and build a supportive network of advocating for one another. These community wide events will be done in partnership with community members and/or agencies and will correspond with the heritage months as outlined in the Days of Significance Calendar.

The first Building Cultural Knowledge event was held on October 28th, 2021 and addressed disrupting Islamophobia. The topics explored what Islamophobia is and how it impacts students, families, educators, and community members. It also addressed the different ways bystanders can interrupt, intervene, and become allies to create a more inclusive community where everyone belongs. The second event in the series will be focused on Black History Month in February.

#### **TOES: WHAT THEY SEE IS WHAT THEY WILL BE**

The DSNB was successful in acquiring a \$25000 David S. Howes Fund grant from the Niagara Community Foundation. The purpose of the grant is to partner with Tools of Empowerment for Success (TOES) Niagara to offer "What They See is What They Will Be!" which is a regionally-specific, culturally relevant, and locally-developed initiative for black youth and open to everyone.

Research through community engagement forums proves there is a need to build up mentorship supports that are culturally focused and delivered through an anti-black racism lens to improve outcomes for black children and youth. Research also indicates racialized youth are less likely to have

mentors and are in greater need of formal mentoring programs.

The program will engage black youth ages 12-18 and their families and black community leaders to mentor black youth over a period of a year and empower them through the promotion of black history, culture, and identity. In addition to mentoring, students and families will participate in modules focusing on Black civic engagement, communication skills, mental wellness, financial literacy, and career exploration. The anticipated outcomes of the mentorship program include building a strong cultural identity for black youth, reduced disparities for black youth, improved emotional well-being and a clear understanding of personal goals and how to achieve them.

Schools are currently reaching out to students and families for enrolment in the online program which will start on February 1, 2022.

## **CULTURALLY & HISTORICALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM**

### **CULTIVATING GENIUS WITH DR. GHOLDY MUHAMMAD FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND FAMILIES**

Dr. Gholdy Muhammad, author of *Cultivating Genius*, began last year in leading elementary/secondary consultants, instructional coaches, multi-language resource teachers, system administrators and senior team through a transformative approach that honours and affirms student identities, experiences, and excellence.

On January 27, Dr. Muhammad will be speaking to elementary and secondary vice-principals and principals in a session to specifically address how school leaders can cultivate the genius in teachers as they support students in an equity framework for instruction including:

1. Identity development
2. Skill development
3. Intellectual development
4. Criticality
5. Joy

In addition to this session, the Parent Involvement Committee will host Dr. Muhammad in an evening session, on January 27, discussing on the ways to advance and respond to students' histories, identities, literacies, and liberation. Dr. Muhammad's framework is essential for all students and will give families the tools to engage in meaningful conversations and to advocate for an inclusive culture where all students thrive.

## **ANTI-BIAS, ANTI-RACISM & ANTI-OPPRESSION LEARNING**

### **LEARNING SKILLS THROUGH AN EQUITY LENS**

Knowing each learner is about knowing each student and about all the different factors that influence their way of life, their way of knowing as well as how it impacts them as a learner. This knowledge of the learner is demonstrated through the learning skills. The reporting of the learning skills is meant to guide and enhance student's success, however studies have shown that this is also where educator's implicit bias and perceptions surface and reduces the performance of learning skills to a measure of

student compliance and teacher approval.

At the November 4th, 2021 Principal Institute, elementary Administrators participated in a day of learning on various topics. The Equity team held a session on Learning Skills through an Equity Lens and explored the following topics:

- intent and impact of learning skills
- awareness of personal implicit biases/assumptions of students and interrupting them
- exploring cultural and contextual influences and their impact on students
- shifting focus from student behaviour to addressing the adult beliefs and mindsets and the structural factors in the environments and system
- using learning skills as an opportunity to build a community of feedback for growth and reflection with students and their families.

As a follow up to the session, an Administrator working group will be formed to continue the development of an equity lens to support teachers in the writing of learning skills.

## **STUDENT VOICE**

### **BRAVE SPACE GROUPS: STUDENT EQUITY ALLIANCE**

A Brave Space is an alliance of students who empower one another, promote equity knowledge, and take action to create a more equitable and inclusive school. These groups consist of secondary students with two teacher facilitators. To date there are eight active student equity alliance groups running in DSBN secondary schools. As part of the Equity Action plan, the goal is to have an active equity alliance in every secondary school.

Input was gathered from the Student Trustee Senate Committee on how to reach students and inform them of the Student Equity Alliance. As a result of the feedback received from the Student Trustee Senate Committee, an advertisement was created and will be shared with schools to inform more students. The Equity Team continues to be a support to schools to help with planning and implementation.

## **RECOMMENDED MOTION**

“That the report of the DSBN Equity Team dated January 18, 2021 be received.”

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