

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2021

Public Session: 5:30 – Virtual Meeting



## A. WELCOME

S. Mitchell

## **B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

- **C. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE VERBAL UPDATE** S. Mitchell/K. Pisek
- D. CULTIVATING CARING CONDITIONS AND KNOWING EACH LEARNER Z. Hamdani
- E. DAYS OF SIGNIFICANCE CALENDAR AND RESOURCES P. Burton
- F. EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY K. Pisek
- G. EQUITY ACTION PLAN K. Pisek
- H. SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY P. Burton
- I. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS
- J. ADJOURNMENT
- K. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, January 18, 2022 @ 5:30



## October 12, 2021

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

## **BACKGROUND:**

The DSBN 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. This framework of this report reflects the tenets of the DSBN Equity Action Plan.

## **INCLUSIVE SPACES**

## SEPTEMBER STAFF PD: CULTIVATING CARING CONDITIONS AND KNOWING EACH LEARNER

On the Sept 1<sup>ST</sup> Professional Development day, all schools were supported with a framework that included two key themes: Cultivating Caring Conditions and Knowing Each Learner. Central support teams, which included Curriculum, Special Education, Indigenous, Mental Health and Equity Teams, collaborated on developing the framework and professional development.

The intention behind Cultivating Caring Conditions is to view a holistic approach to student achievement by prioritizing student well-being through knowing each learner deeply. This helps to create spaces that are inviting, safer and more inclusive for students. In Knowing Each Learner, the focus is on the whole child and that includes their identity, culture (which is defined as shared beliefs, models for living and practices by a group of people), family life and traditions, skills/gifts and joy. This framework is meant to guide teachers to be culturally responsive by knowing students deeply so we can validate and celebrate who they are.

Consultants and instructional coaches are all equipped to support teachers with both frameworks in classrooms and through additional professional development opportunities.

## DAYS OF SIGNIFICANCE CALENDAR AND RESOURCES

The Days of Significance Calendar and accompanying resources are created to give educators the culturally relevant tools to embrace the whole student and cultivate young minds to embrace their genius, appreciate differences and disrupt oppression so we all can live harmoniously.

The calendar is a culturally responsive approach to highlighting monthly days of significance and special observances. In building a culture of appreciation and inclusion where students see themselves valued, respected, and celebrated, the calendar includes book recommendations and monthly heritage resources with a focus on awareness, joy, supporting inclusion, and community connections.

The calendar and resources are accessible through the DSBN website, under the Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism page and through all school websites, therefore it is also accessible to parents and families.



## **IDENTIFYING & REMOVING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS**

## EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY

Equity and Inclusive Education Policy E -11 is being presented at the November Policy meeting. It has been open for public vetting since September 10, 2021.

At the October 5th, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Community Advisory Committee meeting, the committee was reminded to offer feedback through the process established for all policies under review. As well, the Equity Team shared the first working draft with significant revisions for the committee to offer more focused feedback that would support the version being brought to the November policy meeting.

DSBN is committed to creating a learning and working environment that is free of discrimination and harassment regardless of race, class, gender, gender identity and gender expression, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and other forms of discrimination as outlined in the Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

The Equity and Inclusive Education Policy intent is to guide the actions of the DSBN and its schools in providing a safe, inclusive environment free from inequity, discrimination, and harassment. The policy is compliant with the related Ministry of Education policy/program memorandums (PPM), the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom and the Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

The following categories are used to provide an overall framework for the policy:

- Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Practices
- Shared and Committed Leadership
- School-Community Relationships
- Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices
- Creed Accommodation
- School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment
- Professional Learning
- Accountability and Transparency

## EQUITY ACTION PLAN

The DSBN Equity Action Plan was shared at the October Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Community Committee meeting. Highlighted was the framework used which includes the six tenets that have guided our planning and work.

These include:

Student Voice, Safe to Brave Spaces, Culturally & Historically Responsive Curriculum, Anti-Bias, Anti-Racism & Anti Oppression Learning, Community Partnership, and Identifying & Removing Systemic Barriers. This work is grounded in human rights and reflects the principles of anti-oppression, equity, and inclusive education.



The Equity Action Plan balances DSBN's intended outcomes for 2021-22 with completed actions to date from the 2020-21 school year. It is not an extensive list of all the work, but highlights that demonstrate the collective system's commitment to the work. This document will be posted on the Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism webpage and will be brought back to the Equity, Inclusion and Anti- Racism Community Committee with updates on the goals DSBN have committed to and to help inform the 2022-2023 goals.

## SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY

The School Culture Survey is a Ministry of Education mandated anonymous survey that is conducted at least every two years with the goals to:

- Assess perceptions of safety from students, parents, and school staff
- Make informed planning decisions about programs to help prevent bullying and promote safe and inclusive schools
- Determine the effectiveness of programs on an ongoing basis
- Build and sustain a positive school climate.

The purpose of the school culture survey is to better understand DSBN's diverse student population as well as how students feel about their school and their interaction with teachers and peers. The survey is completed by students in grade 4-12, by school-based staff and families. Survey results will identify what is positive about schools and will also highlight areas of improvement that schools will work toward in making their school a safer and more inclusive space for everyone.

This survey is about five factors that help create a positive school culture:

- 1. Well-Being
- 2. Caring and Safe Schools
- 3. Sense of Belonging
- 4. Equity and Inclusion
- 5. Teaching and Learning

Students are also asked about their identities through demographic questions about ethnicity, race, language, religion, and gender identity. This allows us to understand how learning experiences may differ among groups of students, and to promote a safe and inclusive school climate for all students. Secondary schools will administer the survey in December and elementary schools will participate in January.

## **RECOMMENDED MOTION**

"That the report of the DSBN Equity Team dated October 12, 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

## ADDENDUM

**Equity Action Plan** 





## At the DSBN, equity matters.

We believe that each individual deserves:

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- to have their identity and lived experiences honoured,
- to learn in a culture of respect, dignity, and acceptance, and
- to have access to education free from discrimination and barriers.

Meaningful and intentional actions result in a learning environment that inspires every child to reach their full potential. Advancing and sustaining equity requires that we acknowledge within ourselves that learning and unlearning never ends. In centering the whole child, we use an equity lens to reimagine and reinvent our procedures and practices to be inclusive and free from discrimination and systemic barriers. Grounding our work in culturally and historically responsive education, and upholding the respect and dignity of every individual, will ensure equitable learning conditions and an inclusive culture for all students and staff. Sharing the collective responsibility means this is everyone's work as we collaborate alongside students, parents, educators, and community to create an inclusive learning environment.

Our Equity Action Plan demonstrates our commitment to students to ensure there is equity at all levels of the system as we work together to embrace and foster engaging and innovative learning where everyone achieves success and well-being. The Plan outlines the priorities of the six focus areas and provides highlights of the work that has been done and the work we will embark upon this year. Student Voice

# Engaging and responding to student voice and agency

## PRIORITIES:

• Empower, engage and equip students with the skills and tools to be critically conscious and active participants in promoting change in their spaces.

• Create the conditions to amplify, honour and center student voice so all students can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

• Develop reciprocal relationships for sharing ownership for learning and having youth as partners and leaders in our schools and communities.

2020-2021

### ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:

Collaborated with Student Trustee
Senate Committee on a Faces of DSBN
social media campaign highlighting
secondary student activism and
being agents of change in their
communities

• Supported the creation of student initiated Brave Space groups where racialized students and their allies engaged in courageous and critical conversations through shared personal experiences and perspectives

 Student representation on the Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Community Advisory Committee

## 2021-2022

## **ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:**

Establish an equity
representative on all school
based student councils

Establish a Student Equity
Union and provide
mentorship to lead equity
work and be agents of
change within their schools

 Identify and support student initiated clubs and groups to ensure student voice representation with an equity lens

## Inclusive Spaces

Creating brave spaces where everyone can bring their full self to actively listen, explore and learn together

#### **PRIORITIES:**

 Ensure everyone is valued, respected and knows they belong, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability.

 Create the conditions for voices to have a space to acknowledge, examine and allow for questioning for deeper understanding.

 Embed inclusive practices in all areas connected to school culture such as planning, programming and curriculum.

 Rework existing structures where all students are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the school life.

## 2020-2021

#### ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:

 Established a working team of school based staff Equity Champions in every school to support the promotion and integration of equity within their school community

 Provided the tools for staff to have courageous and challenging conversations around race and oppression

 Equipped staff with an equity len when reviewing practices and content so all student identities are included

## 2021-2022

#### ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:

 Launch a days of significance calendar/resource to inform and support planning of events and celebrations representing various abilities, gender identities, ethnicities, races and faith groups

 Create a Know Each Learner framework to build relationships with students by understanding their identities, the context they live in, what brings them joy, the gifts they possess, and the skills they can develop

 Disrupt discriminatory terminology and provide guidelines on the use of inclusive language that respects and promotes all people as valued members of society and avoids exclusion and stereotyping

## Culturally & Historically Responsive Curriculum

## Designing instruction that honours the identities, cultural knowledge and genius of all students

## PRIORITIES:

• Empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes.

 Recognize all students learn differently and that these differences may be connected to background, language, family structure and social or cultural identity.

• Empower teachers to cultivate the knowledge and skills that already exist in all learners to support achievement and well-being.

## 2020-2021

## **ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:**

• Engaged curriculum support staff in training on integrating culturally and historically relevant pedagogy in curriculum programming with a focus on student identity, skills development, intellectual development, criticality and joy

 Supported educators in their ongoing learning through courses, workshops, seminars and resources

 Developed culturally relevant resources that are responsive to student identities and lived experiences

o Pride Month Resources o Black History Month o Heritage Month Resources o Book suggestions to honour student identities

## 2021-2022

### **ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:**

 With support from school based educators, Equity Coaches, nstructional Coaches, Multi-Language Resource Teachers, Consultants, Administrators and Superintendents we will :

- o Embed culturally and historically responsive education into practices, curriculum and assessment
- o Remove barriers to learning through the review and revision of curriculum content through an equity lens
- o Develop resources to support the learning and integration of equity, inclusion and anti-racism

Anti-Bias, Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression Learning Developing a critical lens to disrupt oppressive practices to improve outcomes for all of students, staff and school communities

#### PRIORITIES:

- Build knowledge and awareness of the principles of anti-bias, anti-racist, anti-oppression.
- Develop an equity lens to support classroom, school and system decision making.
- Apply an equity lens to teaching and assessment and evaluation.
- Apply an equity lens to school and system policies and guidelines.
- Eliminate biased, racist and oppressive practices that cause harm.

## 2020-2021

## **ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Created and facilitated monthly learning sessions to develop educator capacity in interrupting bias, anti-racism, anti-Black racism and anti-oppression
- Collaborated with various
   departments in the Board to provide
   all personnel with the required
   learning to support schools through
   an anti-oppression lens
- Provided equity professional development to School Board Trustees

## 2021-2022

#### **ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Continue to build staff capacity in identifying and disrupting personal bias, oppression and racism
- Engage educators in learning and developing their cultural lens
- Participate in ongoing
   professional learning
   opportunities in learning teams
   that may include co-planning
   and reflection to deepen
   professional knowledge
   and practice

## Community Partnership

## Engaging families and community members and organizations

## PRIORITIES:

- Build cultural bridges between families and schools to learn about one another and appreciate differences.
- Nurture and grow the relationships between families, schools and the community in the best interest of students.
- Implement a collective and collaborative approach to benefit the achievement and well-being of all students.
- Engage in authentic educational experiences to affect communities in positive ways.
- Develop successful partnerships with community organizations in the best interest of Niagara.

## 2020-2021

### ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:

- Established Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Community Advisory Committee (EIARCAC) with a membership of a trustee, staff, students, parents and community members that meets regularly to receive, review and provide feedback on the priorities of the DSBN Equity Team and other initiatives related to equity in the DSBN
- Collaborated with the Parent
  Involvement Committee in providing
  anti-oppression and anti-racism
  learning opportunities

## 2021-2022

#### ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:

- Increase communication, transparency and collaboration with families and community members through the Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Community Advisory Committee
- Continue to collaborate with community agencies and groups in knowledge sharing, lived experience lens support and building cultural awareness

Identifying & Removing Systemic Barriers

## Eliminating disproportionality and disparity

## 2020-2021

#### PRIORITIES:

- Uphold the Ontario Human Rights
  Code that protects marginalized
  groups from discrimination and
  harassment.
- Collect, analyze and disaggregate data to identify and remove systemic barriers.
- Review and revise policies and procedures with an equity lens to eliminate differential treatment and outcomes for marginalized groups.
- Disrupt and remove barriers within systems and policies that perpetuate racism, oppression and exclusion.

#### **ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:**

- DSBN hired a Human Rights and Equity Advisor to lead the implementation of DSBN's Equity Action Plan in support of student achievement and well-being, while continuing to build a culture of respect for the principles of human rights and equity throughout DSBN.
- Reviewed and revised policy G-28
  Student Discipline to include
  restorative practices and an equity
  and cultural awareness lens to foster
  mutual dignity, respect and care
- Collaborated with Curriculum team on the revision of an administrative procedure for the selection of curriculum based resources that honour student identities and cultures

## ACTION HIGHLIGHTS:

2021-2022

 Continue to collaborate with system teams to assist in the review and revision of policies and procedures that may perpetuate individual or system racism and oppression

- Administer a board wide school culture survey to staff, students grade 4-12 and families, review data submitted. Establish instructional goals and develop intentional strategies to monitor progress of student achievement and well-being
- Remove barriers in accessing education by providing guidelines in ways to support students, families and staff
  - o Revision and launch of Recognizing and Respecting Creed Diversity: Creed Accommodation Guidelines school and parent quide
- o Revision of Gender Identity and Expression Guidelines - school and parent guide
- o Inclusive Language Guidelines