



Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 20, 2024 | 6:30 p.m. | Director's Conference Room - 650 Rossland Rd. West, Oshawa

Attendees: Chair - Shauna Bookal, Vice Chair - Jamaal Augustine, Director of Education - Tracy Barill, Human Rights and Equity Advisor - Kayode Akomolafe, Superintendent of Education - Katharine Stevenson, Recording Secretary - Brenda Rocha, Mary Lewis, Geraldine Kulazikulabe, Janelle Benjamin, Alexa Rodney, Nicole Cyrus, Lara Awoleye, Anissa Voisin, Kellee Gaines, Angela Adu-Morrison, Nicole Emanuel, Trevor Aitcheson, Megan, Diana Smith, Cristina Seucharan, Tracy Brown.

Time	Items for Discussion	Owner
6:30 p.m.	Land Acknowledgement	Nicole Emanuel
6:35 p.m.	Opening Prayer	Nicole Emanuel
6:40 p.m.	Welcome Remarks Discussion points for the meeting were shared by Chair Bookal.	Chair Bookal
6:45 p.m.	<p>Committee Strategic Action Plan:</p> <p>Chair Bookal reviewed the Equity Action Plan PowerPoint with members. Updates were provided on the following programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach Advocates for Black Students. • Anti-Black Racism Course Pilot. • DCDSB Read Aloud. • CODE Project. • Black Mental Health Day. • Student Census Webpage. <p>A review of the status of the underlisted action items from past subcommittees' proposals from the 2002 PowerPoint was done as below:</p> <p>1. Academic Performance and Student Discipline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UBUNTU virtual learning series, "Created in the image of God: I AM because We Are" is being offered again this school year. 757 students from Grades 7-9 across the Board participated in last year's edition. Proposed sessions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Virtual session 1: SELF-Awareness – Who and I? March 21, 2024. ○ Virtual session 2: SELF-Regulation – How Do I Feel? April 11, 2024. ○ Virtual session 3: SELF-Love – Words, Sound Power. May 2, 2024. ○ In-person session 4: SELF-Expression – Connections. May 23, 2024. • The sessions are facilitated by Tanika Riley and Matthew Jones with Board planning team. • The IntergenerationalHub Career Panel and Drum Circle for Black Secondary Students will be held at the Pope Francis Center on Monday, March 4, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. <p>2. Celebration and Recognition: This initiative has not been implemented. Members discussed different ideas to implement the excellence award for Black students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could either be a recognition plaque alone or a plaque and a bursary/financial award. 	Chair Bookal

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awardee to wear a sash on graduation day. • Development of criteria for selecting the winner. • Bursary to be awarded to student studying education or a combined degree with a view to increasing representation for Black teachers. • Determine funding for the award. • Funding should not delay the take-off. This could start small and be upscaled over time. • Award could be attendance at a leadership camp. <p>Action: An email to be sent out to ABR & BE Advisory Committee members to indicate interest in joining a working group to plan the implementation of the Black Student Excellence Award. The working group will develop the vision, budget, timelines, etc. The working group is expected to provide suggestions and updates at the next meeting.</p> <p>3. Community Resource Development: Ongoing.</p> <p>4. Curriculum and Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP 508-1 – This Administrative Procedure has been developed for the reconsideration and selection of learning resources. • A framework for the selection of culturally responsive and relevant learning resources is part of the procedure. • Introduced to librarians to guide any new purchases and requests for reconsideration. • Introduced to principals and vice-principals. • The procedure will be public facing by the Spring. <p>5. Faith and Expression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Faith Formation goal: Signs and symbols of welcome permeate the school environment, are inclusive, and reflect the diversity of students, families, and the community. • Read aloud event and artistic initiative for kindergarten students based on the book <i>Drawing God</i>. • Students will draw their image of God and submit their masterpieces to DCDSB’s God Gallery. <p>6. Talent Recruitment and Advancement: The following diversity hiring initiatives are being implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A partnership has been developed with Ontario College of Teachers to source education students. • Relationship with a number of universities, including Ontario Tech. • Board attendance at job fairs with a focus on hiring Black employees. • Turner Consulting Bias-free hiring tool is being utilized for hiring into different positions. • A need to conduct another workforce census towards increasing representation was discussed. • DCDSB Equity Invitational Learning series #3 will focus on increasing representation. 	
7:10 p.m.	<p>African Ancestral Acknowledgement:</p> <p>Members agreed that the City of Toronto African Ancestral Land Acknowledgement version will be used for the committee’s meetings. The member taking the African Ancestral acknowledgement is encouraged to add a reflection piece (few sentences reflecting on the Trans-Atlantic enslavement) if they wish.</p> <p>The committee will adopt the Objectives and Guidance provided by the City of Toronto for the African Ancestral Acknowledgement found using this link.</p> <p>“An African Ancestral Acknowledgement draws from the centuries-old and ongoing practice within countless communities of African descendant peoples of opening meetings, gatherings, and events by recognizing ancestors past who lived, struggled, and died to enable their descendants to survive and sustain themselves, their families, and communities. It is also a ceremonial expression of thanks”.</p>	All

	<p>“Where a meeting, event, or gathering is to open with both a Land Acknowledgement and an African Ancestral Acknowledgement, the Land Acknowledgement should be offered first. After this is completed, it is then appropriate have the Ancestral Acknowledgement follow”.</p> <p><i>“The Durham Region acknowledges all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent”.</i></p> <p>“An example of how this acknowledgment can be appropriately adapted to be delivered by a non-Black member of staff is as follows:”</p> <p><i>“Though I am not a person of African descent, I am committed to continually acting in support of and in solidarity with Black communities seeking freedom and reparative justice in light of the history and ongoing legacy of slavery that continues to impact Black communities in Canada. As part of this commitment, I would also like to acknowledge that not all people came to these lands as migrants and settlers. Specifically, I wish to acknowledge those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. In support of the Durham Region’s (replaced the City of Toronto) ongoing efforts to confront anti-Black racism, I pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent.</i></p>	
7:25 p.m.	<p>Future DCDSB Black History Month Initiatives:</p> <p>Members were requested to provide ideas, projects, etc. that every school should implement throughout the year and not just during Black History Month.</p> <p>Action: The committee is to compile a list of initiatives to recommend to the board.</p>	All
7:35 p.m.	<p>Equity Invitational Learning Series – Session 3 (March 21st, 2024)</p> <p>Suggestions on how to improve the next Equity Invitational Learning Series were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyer to be provided to committee members to share with their networks. • The board requires increased input from members in planning and hosting the series. • Name tags to be created for committee volunteers during events for ease of identification. • Representation from DCDSB HR department, OECTA, and the Ministry of Education is being considered. • More community engagement is required. • Less food should be provided. Snacks will do. Door prizes are better appreciated. • Members would appreciate more IT support during the entire event to avoid disruptions. • The board’s Communications Department was commended for effective publicity of the event in all the schools through various channels. 	Kayode Akomolafe
7:45 p.m.	<p>Black Heritage and Excellence Celebration Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions were deferred to the next meeting. 	Kayode Akomolafe
7:55 p.m.	Closing Prayer	Nicole Emanuel
8:00 p.m.	Adjournment	Chair Bookal