



## Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

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Tuesday, March 21, 2023, | 6:30 p.m. | Pope Francis Centre, 650 Rossland Rd. West, Oshawa

### Attendance

#### In person:

Tracy Barill, Director of Education | Kayode Akomolafe, Human Rights and Equity Advisor | Luetasha Watkins | Laka Ford-Williams | Auguste Deonarine | Keisha Petrolo | Anissa Voisin | Zhora Adata

#### Virtual:

Wendy Kao | Shauna Bookal | Sean McCormack | Phil Johnson | Patricia Bailey | Nicole Emanuel | Kristy Beausoleil | Jennifer Cole-Ahmed | Janelle Benjamin | Trevor | Angela Adu-Morrison | Christina Seucharan | Clifford Azevedo | M. Gibson | Natasha George | Tracy Forde | Max Travis | Janelle Benjamin | Kellee | Stephen Linton

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### Land Acknowledgement

Sean McCormack

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### Opening Prayer

Tracy Barill

Item	Items for Discussion	Owner
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1.	<b>Welcome Remarks:</b>	Kayode Akomolafe
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The Board thanked Committee members for their continued attendance and commitment and noted that this meeting and the next two will focus on the proposed restructuring of the Committee.

2.	<b>Matters Arising:</b>	All
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The Board received an email from a committee member requesting information on how many PVPs have taken the mandatory anti-racism training and how well principals share their learning with their staff. In response, it was stated that the Director and principals meet once a month. Vice-principals attend these meetings every other month. At the meetings, training is provided – by the Superintendent of Equity. This year, in accordance with the Equity Action plan, the training has focused on materials developed by School Mental Health Ontario – “What does Racism have to do with me?” On alternate months, the Human Rights and Equity Advisor provides training on compliance with the legal requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the application of various human rights principles and concepts in education. Principals share these trainings with their staff on PA Days and they are monitored by their Family of Schools Superintendents to ensure that they comply with this process.

Central Staff such as Custodians, Maintenance and staff members from the Academic Services, Student Services, Business, and ICT departments of the Board office have also been required to attend mandatory Human Rights and Equity training this year.

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On whether the Board can determine principals' and staffs' understanding of the training subjects, it was stated that it takes some time to evaluate the outcomes of layered and complex learning. The training programs are being put into action, and the Board is progressing through them. It is challenging to determine the impact in a short period of time since these new trainings commenced last summer. It was also noted that such new learning often takes three to five years to have measurable impact. The Board will continue working to increase employee knowledge and comprehension.

It was noted that every school has an equity lead. According to the collective bargaining agreement, schools are permitted one hour of after-school instruction once a month. The importance of funding in education was emphasized.

### 3. **Committee Restructuring:**

Tracy Barill /  
Kayode  
Akomolafe

Discussions began with background information on laws, legislation and regulation under the Education Act and Board policies surrounding committee types and structures. It was noted that statutory committees are those that the Education Act requires all school boards to establish. These are the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and the Parents Involvement Committee which for the Board is the Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (DCPIC).

Other advisory committees are created by the Board in response to the Ministry of Education's directions, system needs or demands. The Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Advisory Committee is in this category. There are also the Indigenous Education Circle and the 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee. These non-statutory advisory committees are not decision-making bodies. They are set up to advise the Board on matters identified in their terms of reference.

The areas of proposed restructuring that the Board wants to present to the Committee are

#### **Mandate:**

- Responsible for advising, informing, providing feedback on the Board's Equity Action Plan, in setting up a three-year vision. The Committee is expected to help in providing a connection between the Board and the community organizations that support it
- When developing an action plan, the Committee could help the Board to better understand what is important to the community
- Support the Board in identifying addressing systemic discrimination
- Assist in developing speaker lists/programs/initiatives for resources and events
- Provide feedback on strategic goals
- A voice for community engagement

#### **Membership:**

- The goal is to align with the membership structure of other advisory committees such as DCPIC, SEAC, and IEC.
  - Would consist of parents/guardians/caregivers/community representatives with expertise or interest in Anti-Black racism, Black Excellence, student outcomes and EDI
  - Possibly create a separate staff and advisory body and then combine ideas.
  - Alignment of membership size and structure with other existing committees (up to 20 members).
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- As the ABR & BE Sub-Committee has over 140 members, we could include everyone in a dedicated communications list, so they are privy to the meeting minutes but not necessarily be on the Committee.
  - Possibility of Trustee involvement is part of what the Board of Trustees may consider when Board reports on Advisory Committees is submitted at the next Board meeting on March 27, 2023.
  - This committee could be a channel for promoting community of Board events.

Following a question/comment from a participant expressing concern about restructuring, discussion took place which touched on the following topics:

- It was suggested that there was some confusion about who the “Executive” of the committee was and that it would be helpful if members include their full signatures on emails so that people know who they are speaking with.
- The Committee noted that there is an ABR parent distribution email list that is separate from the Board committee where parents and members of the community can send their concerns to ABR executives. It was explained that through that forum, the Executive members listen to concerns and then bring them to this committee to streamline communication. It was questioned if this was problematic.
- Director Barill noted that as is the case for all Board sanctioned committees, the ABR & BE Advisory Committee must have a Board member present at each meeting. While individuals are free to form community groups of their choosing, they should not be represented as a DCDSB group. There is a concern regarding transparency if a separate line of communication is being routinely used to inform decision making as it is not a DCDSB group and therefore may not include all parents. It was also noted that communication and building trust are key to the Committee’s success.

It was agreed that the next committee meeting would pick up where things left off in the scheduled presentation.

**4. Executives:**

Deferred to next meeting

**5. Sub-Committees/Working Groups:**

Deferred to next meeting.

**6. Meetings:**

Deferred to next meeting.

**7. Breakout Session:**

Deferred to next meeting.

**8. Next steps:**

The PowerPoint presentation on the proposed restructuring will be shared with members of the Committee. Outstanding agenda items will be addressed at the next meeting. Also, feedback on areas of proposed restructuring will be received from the Committee meeting. It is hoped that a breakout session and an opportunity for questions would also hold at the next meeting on April 26, 2023.

**9. Adjournment**

All