



Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Advisory Committee & Sub-Committee Meeting

Tuesday, February 21, 2023 | 6:00 p.m. | Pope Francis Centre, 650 Rossland Rd. West, Oshawa

Attendees:

In Person: Tracy Barill, Director of Education | Kayode Akomolafe, Human Rights and Equity Advisor | Sean McCormack | Nicole Emanuel | Mary-Attracta Okolle | Anissa Voisin | Narmilee Dhayanandhan | Patricia Bailey | Laka Ford-Williams | Cristina Seucharan | Auguste Deonarine | Bibi Singh | Sonya Melim | Zhora Adatia-McGlashen | Keisha Petrolo |

Virtual: Janelle Benjamin | Geraldine Kulazikulabe | Karen Petgrave | Angela Davies | Christie | Phil Johnson | Kellee Gaines | Kristy Beausoleil | Lara Awoleye | Mark Gibson | Shauna Bookal | Patricia Dawkins | Tanika Riley | Samara McKay | Nikki Reason | Trevor Aitcheson |

Item	Items for Discussion	Owner
1.	Land Acknowledgement & Opening Prayer	ABR & BE
2.	Introductions & Welcome Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">Round table introductions.The Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Advisory Committee (the Committee) members were thanked for attending the meeting. The Board looks forward to getting the Committee back on track.The Board's Anti-Racism Policy (PO200) was revised and passed by the Board of Trustees at a special Board Meeting in October 2022. The policy guides the Board's anti-racism work, in alignment with the Board's annual equity action plan.The Committee's history was reviewed with a view to repurposing it to be more effective and interface better with the Board.	Kayode Akomolafe
3.	Sub-Committee Proposal Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sub-committees submitted project proposals in June 2022, but Committee meetings ceased until now. There was a consensus on giving the Committee a fresh start.The Committee would transition away from project-based work to functioning as an advisory committee.A preference was expressed for round table discussions, fixed meeting duration, agreed frequency of meetings, location, and not more than 3-4 discussion items at each meeting.Recommended to include an African land acknowledgment in meeting proceedings.	ABR & BE

4. Committee Restructuring

- The Committee must stay high level.
- The Committee can make recommendations and provide advice to the Board on processes and benefits to children in schools. The Committee is also expected to engage in dialogue with the Board.
- The Committee can meet monthly until June to decide on its restructuring and the outcome of the deliberations will be presented to subcommittee members.

5. Round Table Discussions

- **Improving Representation among Board Employees**
On enquiries about what the Board is doing about hiring more diverse staff in schools, it was communicated that the Board is making changes through its Human Resource Services department to address the deficit in representation of racialized people in the Board's staff.
- **Human Rights and Equity Trainings**
Each month at the Director's meetings, human rights, anti-racism, and equity training are delivered to principals and vice-principals. The Superintendent with responsibility for Equity and Inclusive Education and the Human Rights and Equity advisor deliver these trainings on alternate months. The knowledge gained from those meetings is then shared with educators in their respective schools. A two-part series of mandatory Human Rights and Equity training sessions has been provided for all Catholic Education Center, Operations, Maintenance, and Admin Center and custodial staff of the Board. The trainings cover topics including:
 - History of racism
 - Understanding the intergenerational trauma of the transatlantic enslavement
 - Human Rights legislations
 - Prohibited grounds and the social areas where they apply
 - Contemporary impact of racism
 - Microaggression
 - Addressing the use of the N-wordand much more

Surveys are filled out after each training for feedback on effectiveness of the training and input for future sessions.

Equity and Inclusive Education

- The Equity and Inclusive Education page on DCDSB website was reviewed with Committee members, highlighting among other things, the work of the Coach Advocate for Black Students (CABS).
- **Board Policy Review Process**
The Board's policy review process includes each year identifying policies that require review. Each policy goes through three readings, with opportunity for community input prior to receiving final approval by the Board of Trustees. The public has opportunity to provide input into policies that are up for review via the Policy Input page on the Board's website, which can be set for individuals to receive alerts when policies requiring input are posted. Every Superintendent with responsibility for a policy, reviews and gets Senior

leadership's input into it before it is sent to the Board of Trustees for review. The Committee can continue to have a strong voice by sharing ideas via ThoughtExchange. Next policy meetings are in March and May 2023.

Increased Diversity on the Board of Trustees

- In response to the Committee's request for increased diversity on the Board of Trustees, and it was noted that Trustees are elected during the Municipal Elections process. As a result of the last Municipal Elections there are three new Trustees on the Board. The Board now has more diversity and has an equal male/female balance.
- **Encouraging Black Excellence**
Drawing from Committee members' recent experience of an initiative of diverse guest speakers attending their children's classroom to talk about their success stories, the Committee sought the Board's commitment to encouraging Black students to pursue careers in education, engineering, etc. and exposing them to mentoring opportunities.
- **Gratitude to Superintendent Susie Lee-Fernandes**
The Committee members expressed gratitude to Superintendent Susie Lee-Fernandes
- **Resources in Classrooms**
A staff member shared her experience collaborating with school communities to increase resources in classrooms like diverse barbie dolls, books with people of color in them, various skin color crayons so students can paint a realistic picture of their family, etc.
- **Challenges Advocating for Children**
It was noted that Black parents should not have to worry about their children and the racism they face in school. It is difficult for Black parents advocating for their children because parents do not want to be labelled as troublemakers. There appears to be no repercussions or accountability for cases of discrimination that occur in schools. The Committee is interested in changing this status quo. The Board views that ongoing training and dialogue with educators and administrators in our schools is helpful in effecting change. The Board will continue to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in our schools.

6. Next Steps

All

- Confirmed meeting dates (meeting invites to be sent out to committee members):
 - March 21st at 6:30 p.m. at the Pope Francis Center.
 - April 26th at 6:30 p.m. Venue TBD (meeting room at Notre Dame was suggested)
 - May 24th at 6:30 p.m. Pope Francis Centre
- All meetings for next year will be scheduled on the Board's master calendar before the end of this year for planning purposes.
- The restructuring of the Committee will be prioritized between now and June.
- On whether the Committee should be joined by Parent Council representatives, principals, and teachers, it was emphasized that this Committee's voice is being prioritized now. Other voices may be invited later.
- Recommended to include an African land acknowledgment.

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- Specific agenda items should be focused on at meetings and the duration of meetings should be adhered to.
 - Few issues to be brought forward for discussion at the Committee's next meeting on March 21st.

7. Adjournment
