



Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Durham Catholic District School Board – North and South Board rooms at CEC

April 21, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Attendance:

ABR & BE Advisory Committee Members: N. Emanuel (Chair), L. Chevers (Vice.Chair), J. Oritse, A. Voisin, N. Cyrus, Linda A, T. Razac Huggins, K. Gaines, L. Awoleye, A. Rodney, T. Aitcheson

Guests: M. Skerritt, V. Shaw, A. Jack, I. Fowler, K. Fowler, D. Olaseni, E. Olaseni, M. Esan, Moyi Esan

Board Staff: G. Winn, K. Akomolafe, K. Stevenson, M. Prabu

Online Attendees: Antoinette, Jen EverGreen, Monique W., Ahmya Chevers, Sade, Katlego, Mikaela Fowler, Angela, Lisa, Latoya

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

Opening Prayers

N. Emanuel offered the Land Acknowledgement, followed by L. Akinyemi delivering the Ancestral Acknowledgement. The Opening Prayer was led by N. Cyrus

2. Welcome

K. Akomolafe welcomed committee members and thanked them for their ongoing commitment and participation.

3. Adoption of Minutes

“THAT the Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Advisory Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on February 26, 2026.”

Motion moved by N. Emanuel and seconded by L. Chevers. Carried.

4. Update on Election of ABR & BE Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair addressed members on concerns by some committee members and community members regarding the planned election of the Chair and Vice-Chair and outlined the concerns below:

- The lack of clarity on the interpretation and application of eligibility requirements in the Committee’s Terms of Reference, particularly the term “*caregiver*” not being defined

in the Terms of Reference leading to cultural interpretations rather than its use/application in education.

- The Board's interpretation of "caregiver" ignores the Black community's understanding of "caregiver" differs from the Board's legal interpretation; Indigenous Peoples use similar broad definitions
- The unilateral communication by the Board relating to the election process and the timing of the election notice did not reflect governance practices that support transparency, culturally responsive participation, and meaningful community engagement.
- The election notice appeared on the Board's website the day after initial conversation with the Chair, before the Executive meeting could hold.
- Disappointment with the process undertaken by the Board and the importance of maintaining trust and confidence in the Committee's work.
- Community members perceive this as another example of Black parent voices being invited but not empowered.

In response to the Chair's comments, the Board provided the following clarification:

- The Terms of Reference was not amended in any way since it was developed by the Committee.
- The Chair was not removed at any time as had been suggested. The Chair's term runs from September to June of a school year. Board staff further advised that as per the Terms of Reference, elected officials are required to have a child enrolled in the board for the duration of their elected term. The Chair was deemed ineligible to complete a two-year term because her son was graduating in June.
- An individual can remain a contributing member of the committee even if they don't have a child in any of the Board's schools.
- The provisions of the Terms of Reference have been applied consistently in the past.
- A member of the Executive previously stepped down when their child graduated, based on application and interpretation of the same provision of the Terms of Reference requiring an elected member to have a child in the Board for the duration of the term for which they were elected.
- It was explained that the term "*caregiver*" is not defined in the Education Act and has been removed from Board policies and administrative procedures.
- Caregiver in education has specific legal meaning used in unique situations and refers to a person acting in *loco parentis*, introduced by the parents and backed with formal documentation. This is distinct from general caregiving provided by a family member or a community member.
- The election notice was not posted on the Board's website for information purposes. It was part of a planning process required to comply with the requirement in the Terms of Reference to post the notice of election in the third week of March. It was not the actual notice. The Board had requested for a meeting with the Chair and was not going to post the notice until after the meeting, which ultimately did not hold.
- All actions taken by the Board were done in good faith, not to target any individual.

Following further discussion regarding governance, eligibility requirements, precedent, legal considerations, and the balance between compliance and inclusive community participation, members and community participants expressed a shared interest in ensuring clarity and confidence in the Committee's processes.

Members requested that the election process should be paused and that the Terms of Reference should be reviewed in consultation with the Committee, prior to proceeding with the intended elections.

Motion: THAT the Terms of Reference of the Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Advisory Committee be reviewed with respect to eligibility requirements and THAT the election of the Chair and Vice Chair be deferred until the review is completed.

Motion moved by J. Oritse and Seconded by L. Chevers. Carried.

The need for clarity on the committee being a parent body or a community body was discussed, noting that a parent body would require a parent with a child in the Board's school and as opposed to a community body. There was also the question of whether committee prioritizes parent/guardian voice exclusively or includes broader community expertise.

Action Item: Board staff will meet with the Executive to review the Terms of Reference.

5. Business Arising

Deferred Agenda Items

- Black History Month at DCDSB
- Proposed Meeting dates for 2026-2027 school year
- DCDSB InspireRise Leadership Network
- Publication of ABR & BE Executive Contact Information
- Dreams Delayed Sub Committee updates

Board staff will provide written updates on deferred items where appropriate prior to the next meeting.

6. Motion to Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was moved by L. Chevers and seconded by J. Oritse. Carried.

7. Closing prayer – J. Oritse

Meeting Adjourned at 8:46 p.m.