DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

NOTICE OF MEETING

STANDING COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SESSION

Monday, November 6, 2023

Chairperson: Christine Thatcher

Vice-Chairperson: Emma Cunningham

Director of Education and Secretary to the Board: Camille Williams-Taylor

Recording Secretary: Kathy Fitzpatrick

DATE:	Monday, November 6, 2023
TIME:	7:00 p.m.
LOCATION:	Boardroom
ATTACHMENTS:	Agenda

Copies to:
All Trustees
Director of Education
All Superintendents

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Monday, November 6, 2023
7:00 p.m.

PAGE

1. <u>Call to Order</u>

Verbal

2. <u>Land Acknowledgement</u>

Verbal

The Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with the territories upon which our school board and schools are located. Today, this area is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We acknowledge that the Durham Region forms a part of the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, the Mississauga Peoples and the treaty territory of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. It is on these ancestral and treaty lands that we teach, learn and live.

3. <u>Declarations of Interest</u>

Verbal

4. <u>Motion to Approve Agenda</u>

Verbal

5. <u>DDSB Presentations</u>

(a) Mental Health Action Plan and Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM)169
   (Superintendent Andrea McAuley)

1-22

7. <u>Director's Update</u>

Verbal

   (Director of Education Camille Williams-Taylor)

8. <u>Recommended Actions</u>

(a) Addressing Anti-Black Racism
   (Director of Education Camille Williams-Taylor)

23-140

9. <u>Information Items</u>

(a) Student Trustee Report
   (Student Trustees Ben Cameron, Kayla Hoare, Neha Kasoju)

Verbal

(b) 2023-2024 DDSB Math Achievement Action Plan
   (Superintendent Mohamed Hamid)

141-194

(c)   Update: Multi-Year Strategic Planning Process   Under
        (Executive Lead Robert Cerjanec)   Separate Cover

(d)   Trustee Professional Development Report Back: Face It, Fight It   Verbal
        Conference
        (Trustee Emma Cunningham)

(e)   OPSBA Report   Verbal
        (Trustee Emma Cunningham)

10.   Memos

(a)   2324:05, Student Excursions and Activities   195-196

(b)   2324:06, Ministry of Education Capital Priorities Process   197-199

(c)   2324:07, Request for DDSB Support of Toronto Youth Cabinet   200-213
        Statement

11.   Adjournment

3

DDSB
Ignite Learning

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

REPORT TO: Durham District School Board, Standing Committee   **DATE:** November 6, 2023

SUBJECT: Mental Health Action Plan and   **PAGE:** 1 of 5
Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 169

ORIGIN: Camille Williams Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
Andrea McAuley, Superintendent of Equitable Education
Gary Crossdale, Superintendent of Equitable Education

1.0   Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Trustees with information on the requirements of PPM 169-Student Mental Health and its alignment with the Durham District School Board's (DDSB) Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan.

2.0   Ignite Learning Strategic Priority/Operational Goals

Success – *Set high expectations and provide support to ensure all staff and students reach their potential every year.*

Well-being – *Create safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces to promote well-being for all students and staff*.

Equity – *Promote a sense of belonging and increase equitable outcomes for all by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement*.

Engagement – *Engage students, parents and community members to improve student outcomes and build public confidence.*

3.0   Background

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) recognizes that good mental health is an important foundation for achievement and well-being. The District's 2022-2025 Mental Health and Well-Being Plan reflects our commitment to cultivate the conditions for healthy learning and working environments, where all students and staff feel they are welcomed and where students are engaged in school life, both in their classroom learning and the larger school environment, where they know they are valued, seen and heard, where their identities are affirmed, where they belong and are connected to adults that care, and where their lived realities are recognized.

Schools are an ideal place for mental health promotion, the prevention of mental health concerns, and the early identification of mental health concerns through school-based prevention and intervention services. Schools provide students with the knowledge and skills to be aware of, care for, and advocate for their own mental health and well-being.

The Ministry recently launched PPM 169-Student Mental Health, which requires all school boards to implement it by January 2024 (Appendix A). Embedded within the PPM are eleven expectations of Boards whose goals result in students having the knowledge and skills to understand and support their mental health, provide ongoing access to high quality mental health services with appropriate supports for their individual needs when and where they need them across the provincial mental health continuum of care.

4.0 <u>**Analysis**</u>

PPM 169 outlines eleven expectations, all of which are aligned to our District's three-year Mental Health and Well-Being plan and our one-year Action Plan for 2023-2024. The expectations and examples of the activities that align to our District Plan are listed below.

1. Three-Year Mental Health Strategy and One-Year Action Plan
The DDSB has developed and implemented a three-year Mental Health and Well-Being plan and a one-year Action Plan that includes the requirements outlined in PPM 169. See Appendices B and C.

2. Joint Local Planning with Community-Based Child and Youth Mental Health Providers
District leaders responsible for mental health participate on joint local planning tables in order to support the school board and the local community-based child and youth mental health agencies to provide coordinated mental health care that ensures there are strong pathways to, from, and through mental health supports and service. Examples of participation in joint community planning include, but are not limited to, active membership on the Durham's Children and Youth Planning Network, Durham Youth Suicide Prevention working group, Infant Mental Health Committee.

3. Multi-Tiered System of Supports
The DDSB utilizes Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to deliver school-based mental health services. This model includes a continuum of services: mental health promotion, early identification, prevention and early intervention, and service pathways/clinical support provided by members of the Psychological Services and Social Work teams for more intensive mental health needs including crisis and trauma. Examples include consultation regarding service pathways to school teams by members of the Inclusive Student Services (ISS) mental health teams, classroom substance use prevention programming, classroom programming focused on the development of social emotional learning skills, identity affirming group supports (e.g., Black Excellence Made Evident-BeMe, AFFIRM), as well as identity affirming and student-centred individual goal focused therapy/clinical support. Positive School Climates and Well-Being school teams continue to support conditions that reinforce mental health and well-being.

4. Consistent Use of Evidence-Informed Brief Interventions and Standardized Measurement
The DDSB Inclusive Student Services mental health professionals utilize evidence-informed interventions that align with their scope of practice, relevant legislation, and regulatory colleges' obligations for privacy and reporting. Interventions are also in keeping with client centred care and the stated goals of the client. Staff use standardized measurement tools where appropriate and in accordance with the needs of the individual and their plan of care. The DDSB is working with partners across the province to explore and strengthen measurement-based care approaches that will support the ongoing plans of care and service models.

5. Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocols
The DDSB has developed a board suicide prevention, intervention and postvention protocol with the most recent version released in September 2022 to include postvention content and to reflect consultation with our Indigenous Education Department. Since 2014, staff have been offering applied suicide intervention skills training and ongoing communication to school administrators and educators regarding the protocol to ensure they know how and who to reach out for help immediately on behalf of students.

DDSB
Ignite Learning

6. Virtual Care Delivery
While our professional mental health staff utilize an in-person mode of delivery for mental health services, a virtual option is available to ensure accessibility for students and their families. Staff currently provide virtual care through Microsoft Teams which is compliant with legislative and regulatory college's obligations for privacy.

7. Enhanced Educator and Staff Mental Health Literacy
Learning opportunities are being provided to District staff to ensure that they can embed mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention into the education experience for students and help to foster safe, and welcoming environments. Examples include:
- Supporting Student Mental Health Community of Practice
- Consultation/Coaching Specific to Mental Health Promotion
- Positive School Climates Learning Series
- Mental Health First Aid-Youth
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

8. Mandatory Mental Health Literacy Learning for Students
The District is currently preparing Intermediate educators responsible for health curriculum to deliver the mandatory mental health literacy modules for Grades 7 and 8 which will support student learning on mental health and mental illness and build awareness of the impact of the stigma associated with mental illness. The modules are aligned with the existing curriculum expectations in the Grades 7 and 8 Health and Physical Education curriculum.

9. Family Mental Health Literacy and Awareness
Our Inclusive Student Services (ISS) mental health teams provide culturally responsive mental health support to families within our service model. Families (and students) who may be struggling can access support in partnership with their school team or directly through the "Connect with the Mental Health Team Button", an online form used to reach out to ISS mental health team member. Staff continue to look at connections to the Parent and Community Engagement department in support of enhancing educational and engagement opportunities for families.

10. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
While Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills are embedded in the Ontario curriculum and include identification and management of emotions, recognizing sources of stress and coping with challenges, maintaining positive motivation and perseverance, building healthy relationships, developing self-awareness and confidence, and thinking critically and creatively, the District also has a team of Child and Youth Support Workers who provide direct classroom SEL programming along with SEL capacity building for Educators through consultation and professional development opportunities.

11. Mental Health Absences
In June 2023, the District adjusted absence code procedures to include the option of well-being, should a student be unable to attend school due to a mental health concern. This was a slight modification of the 'illness' attendance code for students and/or guardians who are reporting student absence. The code will now read as "(AI) Illness: Health and Well-Being". The addition of 'Well-Being' to the illness code for student absence is a way to honour the importance of self-care and restorative personal practices and how these approaches bolster health and overall well-being. The code provides an opportunity to acknowledge the many ways personal wellness can promote a healthy and resilient lifestyle.

5.0   <u>**Financial Implications**</u>

Funding to support the implementation of the DDSB 2022-2025 Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan and PPM 169 is embedded in the approved 2023-2024 budget. Additional funding has been received for mental health through related funding.

6.0   <u>**Evidence of impact**</u>

6.1   **2022-2023 School Year – Foundations into the Launch of PPM 169**

Districts report mental health related service data to the Ministry of Education and School Mental Health Ontario on regular cycles (e.g., EDU Annual School Mental Health Survey). The reports focus on quantitative reporting, which provides insight into the number of students served and the types of services engaged and invites reflection on service trends and challenges. The DDSB recently submitted 2022-2023 data to the Ministry of Education which included:

- 5832 students served (both virtually and in-person) by school-based regulated* mental health professionals; includes 1:1 consent-based plans of care.
- The data above **does not** include number of students served through mental health promotion (Tier 1) and targeted prevention (Tier 2), school supports through consults, traumatic incident responses, child/youth protection consultations, crisis suicide intervention ASIST/Violent Risk Threat Assessments (VTRAs) and other adult to adult care consultations for proactive and group (e.g., class) support.
- Trends: The uptick in the number of referrals for students for K-Grade 3 from 2021-22 to 2022-23 school year was 13%, and for the Grade 9-12s the increase was 16% for the same time period. Anxiety, coping with stresses, feeling misunderstood and navigating interpersonal relationships are trends that staff noted. Mental health is within a larger system of societal issues; more children and young people are experiencing significant stress. We see through our data that there is an increase in mental health referrals, and we have anecdotal evidence from our clinical staff that youth tend to raise issues relating to systemic factors such as oppression, discrimination, and racism.
- Monitoring wait-times: Students in the DDSB have a number of ways to engage District provided mental health services. A triage is engaged to ensure that students seeking support, non-emergency, are engaged directly within 72 hours of reach out.
- Community-based programs have wait-lists. For many partners, services have also been reduced due to staffing challenges.
- DDSB staff are experiencing greater service pressures across the tiers of intervention and services as the needs of children and youth have increased as have waitlists for community-based services.
- Community referrals are challenging to track as dialogue ranges from inquiry to supported assistance navigating community referral pathways (e.g., Education Community Partnership Program referrals). Over 1053 connects were tracked. Based on PPM 169, and in anticipation of related changes to the Ministry of Education data collection, staff are refining the data and tracking where individual students are being referred to and to which community partners specifically for mental health related services.

6.2 **2023-2024 – PPM 169 Implementation School Year**

The DDSB will report annually to the Ministry of Education on the initiatives provided to achieve the requirements outlined in this PPM/Memorandum. Information gathered from impact monitoring tools and processes (e.g., School Climate Survey), along with the Ministry of Education Survey, will provide the DDSB with data related to the implementation of the DDSB 2022-2025 Mental Health and Well-Being Plan and the ongoing efforts towards supporting conditions for student mental health and well-being in schools.

*The Ministry of Education data tool includes services provided by regulated professionals only; within the DDSB, all mental health services are provided either directly by a regulated professional, or under the direct supervision (and therefore under the licensure) of a regulated professional. It is the regulated professional who is responsible for the plans of care and provision of service, even if some of the direct service is delegated to supervisees (as allowable by the College of Psychologists of Ontario).

7.0 Communication Plan

The DDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan is posted on the DDSB website. In congruence with the requirements of PPM 169, the annual plan will be added to the publicly available resources. Information in this report and the update to publicly available resources on ddsb.ca will be shared with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and school teams.

8.0 Conclusion and/or Recommendations

Durham District School Board considers well-being and positive mental health fundamental to student achievement and staff success. This report is provided to the Board of Trustees for information.

9.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Policy/Program Memorandum 169
Appendix B: Mental Health and Well-Being 2022-2023 Action Plan
Appendix C: Annual Plan: Mental Health and Well-Being 2023-2024 Action Plan

Report reviewed and submitted by:

_____
Camille Williams Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board

_____
Andrea McAuley, Superintendent of Equitable Education

_____
Gary Crossdale, Superintendent of Equitable Education

Ontario ⚚   (https://www.ontario.ca/page/government-ontario)

Policy/Program Memorandum 169

Date of Issue: July 28, 2023

Effective: January 1, 2024

Subject: Student Mental Health

Application:
Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Mental Health Leaders
Principals of Secondary Schools
Principals of Elementary Schools
Director of Education, Consortium Centre Jules-Léger

Purpose

The Ministries of Education and Health are committed to working collaboratively to build a continuum of mental health and addictions care across schools, community-based child and youth mental health providers, and hospitals that is coordinated, comprehensive and responsive to the needs of each and every student.[1]

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline requirements for school boards and school authorities, and the Consortium Centre Jules-Léger[2] to provide culturally responsive, evidence-informed student mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention services that respect students as complex individuals and provide appropriate supports for their diverse needs. As well, this memorandum outlines the importance of school boards working within the broader provincial system of care to help provide clear pathways to and from more intensive community and hospital-based mental health services, when needed.

Good mental health is foundational to achievement. Students who report feeling mentally well, are more ready to learn, feel a stronger sense of belonging at school, and perform better academically. Substance use prevention programs and supports can also help improve student performance, participation, and overall well-being. The well-being of others such as school staff, family, and other students may also have an impact on student mental health and should be acknowledged as an important factor in supporting student mental health and wellness.

The *Education Act* makes it clear that all partners in the education sector have a role to play in enhancing student achievement and well-being and authorizes the Minister to establish policies and guidelines respecting student mental health, including respecting the use of learning materials relating to student mental health and require boards to comply with the policies and guidelines.[3]

Schools are an ideal place for mental health promotion, the prevention of mental health issues, and the early identification of mental health concerns through school-based intervention services. Schools provide students with the knowledge and skills to be aware of, care for, and advocate for their own mental health and well-being.

Mental health and addictions services and supports need to adhere to trauma-informed practices, that are culturally responsive, and respect students as complex individuals and providing appropriate supports for their diverse needs.

Context

Roadmap to Wellness: A Plan to Build Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions System (https://www.ontario.ca/page/roadmap-wellness-plan-build-ontarios-mental-health-and-addictions-system) is the government's plan to build a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system that recognizes the needs of Ontario's diverse population including children and youth. Implementing the roadmap requires a whole-of-government approach. This policy/program memorandum (PPM) supports the government's commitment to develop a mental health and addictions system that makes high quality services available for people throughout their lifetime.

Vision Statement for Student Mental Health in Ontario

Students have the knowledge and skills to understand and support their mental health and have access to high quality mental health and addiction services that provide appropriate supports for their complex and individual needs when and where they need them across the provincial mental health continuum of care.

Requirements for School Boards

1. Three-Year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and One-Year Action Plan

Every school board must develop and implement a three-year mental health and addictions strategy and one-year action plan that includes at a minimum, a comprehensive framework that includes the requirements outlined in this PPM and how each component will be evaluated and measured. The board's mental health and addictions strategy and action plan must be made publicly available on its website by June 30th of the prior school year and reflect input from key partners including students, families and local community-based child and youth mental health providers.

The Ministry will provide a template to school boards on an annual basis to report on the implementation status of the PPM requirements, to be submitted by June 30th, with a copy of the board's three-year mental health and addictions strategy and one-year action plan.

2. Joint Local Planning with Community-based Child and Youth Mental Health Providers

The work of joint local planning is to support school boards and community-based child and youth mental health lead agencies implementation of a coordinated mental health care system in local communities. This includes:

- Establishing and sharing relevant information between organizations including standardized partnerships, protocols and processes (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding);

- Making the best use of mental health resources in each community by clarifying roles and responsibilities at each tier of service and communicating about the available capacity of local community-based child and youth agencies

- Establishing clear pathways to/through/from mental health care services for students who require services outside of the school setting; and

- Coordinating outreach and engagement with students and their families who may face barriers to accessing mental health care.

To further the vision of "one system of care"[4] where mental health services across sectors place children, young people, and their families within the centre of care, it is the Ministry of Education's expectation that school board leadership (e.g., Superintendents with Responsibility for Mental Health and Mental Health Leaders) actively engage with and collaborate in local planning that is related to student mental health and wellness. A description of this collaboration should be detailed and posted on the website in the school board's one-year action plan and the key outcomes achieved must be provided to the Ministry of Education through the Annual School Mental Health Survey.

Overall, school boards, Mental Health Leaders, and schools should engage with other interrelated sectors and service delivery partners as needed, as part of system planning efforts (e.g., hospitals, public health units, local Indigenous partners through

Indigenous Education Councils and communities, addictions and substance use prevention organizations, cultural and faith-based organizations, organizations addressing gender-based violence, youth advocacy groups).

3. Multi-Tiered System of Supports

School boards will utilize a Multi-Tiered System of Supports[5] approach to deliver school-based mental health services. This structure helps to establish priorities, clarify roles, and ensure service coordination and quality. A Multi-Tiered System of Supports structure includes a continuum of services: mental health promotion, early identification, prevention and early intervention, and service pathways / clinical support for more intensive mental health needs.
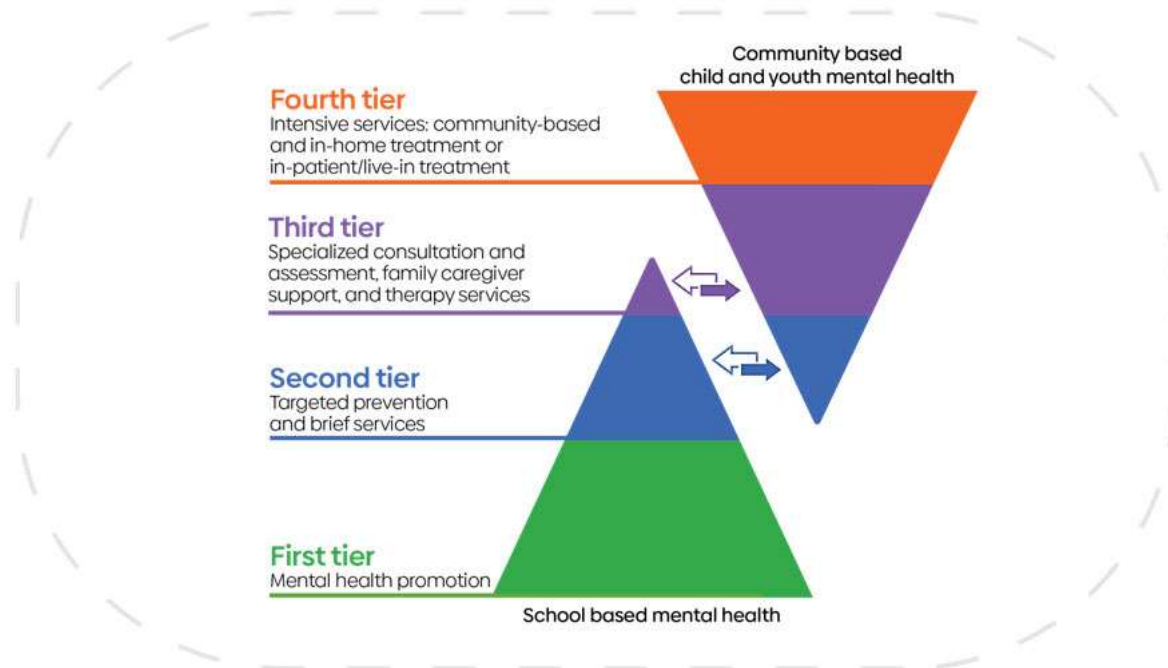

Figure 1: Integrated Tiered System of Care

4. Consistent Use of Evidence-informed Brief Interventions[6] and Standardized Measurement

Regulated school mental health professionals will utilize evidence-informed brief interventions and standardized measurement tools that align with their scope of practice and regulatory colleges' obligations for privacy and reporting. This will allow for opportunities to maximize the best use of resources and meet students' goals of improved mental health in the school setting. Additionally, the interventions and measurement tools are to be compliant with applicable legislation, such as the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA)*.

5. Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocols

All school boards will work with their local community mental health and healthcare partners, including Indigenous partners and communities to regularly update and enhance their board's suicide prevention, intervention and postvention protocols. All school administrators and educators, including guidance teacher-counsellors, must have working knowledge of these protocols and know how to reach out for help immediately on behalf of students.

6. Virtual Care Delivery

When possible, school boards should use an in-person mode of delivery for mental health supports. Remote mental health services using a virtual care platform can be used/offered when it is the most appropriate or accessible delivery vehicle to meet student needs. School boards must use and ensure that the providers of mental health prevention and early intervention services are using a virtual care solution that meets provincial standards for I&IT solutions to support the safety and security of students and other board users, is compliant with applicable legislation, such as the *PHIPA* for providing mental health services and aligns with the provider's scope of practice and regulatory colleges' obligations for privacy and reporting. It is recommended that virtual care solutions with video and/or secure messaging functionality are verified solutions on the Ontario Health Verified Virtual Visits Solution List (https://www.ontariohealth.ca/system-planning/digital-standards/virtual-visits-verification/verified-solutions-list) , which ensures solutions meet provincial standards for privacy, security and functionality.

School boards will support learning and share evidence-informed resources on mental health and addictions with educators and school staff, including guidance teacher- counsellors, so that they can embed mental health promotion and substance use prevention into the education experience for students and help to foster safe, and welcoming environments.

8. Mandatory Mental Health Literacy Learning for Students

School boards will implement ministry-approved, teacher-led and culturally responsive mental health literacy learning modules for students in Grades 7 and 8 that respect the individual and diverse needs of students and ensure consistency in mental health literacy learning across the province. The modules will be aligned with the existing curriculum expectations in the Grades 7 and 8 Health and Physical Education curriculum. Students will learn about mental health and mental illness and build awareness of the impact of stigma associated with mental illness. In preparation for the transitions that come with adolescence, students will continue building strategies for supporting their mental health, including self-care strategies to maintain good mental health and to know where and when to seek help.

9. Family Mental Health Literacy and Awareness

Parents and families play a critical role in supporting the mental health of students and should be involved in their children's mental health journey when possible. In support of meaningful engagement with families, school boards will make available culturally responsive family mental health literacy resources to ensure that families have access to high quality information about how best to notice and respond when their child may be struggling with their mental health, reduce the stigma that surrounds mental health and mental illness, and provide appropriate supports for their child's individual needs. This includes educational and engagement opportunities for families through school community outreach efforts.

10. Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning skills help students foster overall health and well-being, good mental health, and support the ability to learn and thrive. The social-emotional learning skills that are embedded in the Ontario curriculum include: identification and management of emotions, recognizing sources of stress and coping with challenges, maintaining positive motivation and perseverance, building healthy relationships, developing self-awareness and confidence, and thinking critically and creatively.

As emerging research shows the impact that the evaluation of social-emotional learning skills can have on particular groups of students (e.g., Black, Indigenous, racialized students, male students, students with disabilities and students experiencing other socio-demographic disadvantages), educators are not to assess, evaluate or report on the overall expectations related to social-emotional learning skills in the Ontario curriculum. It is the ministry's expectation that instruction of the social-emotional learning skills will continue.

11. Mental Health Absences

Emphasizing the importance of self-care and prioritizing mental health can allow for more open conversations amongst students, parents, and teachers. If students are unable to attend school due to a mental health concern, their absence must be excused under s. 21(2)(b) ("by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause") of the *Education Act.*

Implementation

School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON) is the Ministry of Education's implementation partner for student mental health. SMH-ON does this through the development and implementation of made-in-Ontario, evidence-informed mental health promotion and prevention resources, programs, and professional learning for classroom educators, school administrators, and regulated school mental health professionals. School boards are expected to work closely with SMH-ON to support the provision of evidence-informed approaches to school-based mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention.

Similarly, the Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions, partners with the Ministry of Health, the community-based child and youth mental health sector and SMH-ON to share knowledge, build capacity, and create connections to help improve mental health and addictions services for children and youth and their families.

Both organizations are key partners in supporting the implementation of quality mental health services for students and their families across the care continuum.

The implementation of this memorandum should consider the intersections of student mental health with other ministry PPMs including but not limited to:

- Policy/Program Memorandum 81: Provision of health support services in school settings (https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-81) ;

- Policy/Program Memorandum 119: Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools (https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-119) ;

- Policy/Program Memorandum 144: Bullying prevention and intervention (https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-144) ;

- Policy/Program Memorandum 149: Protocol for partnerships with external agencies for provision of services by regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals, and paraprofessionals (https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-149) ;

- Policy/Program Memorandum 151: Professional activity days devoted to provincial education priorities (https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-151)

The Ministry of Education expects all decisions that support student mental health and well-being to be made in accordance with this PPM and applicable laws, including the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, and with school board collective agreements. Where any direction of the PPM conflicts with these requirements, the applicable laws and collective agreement provisions prevail.

Roles and Responsibilities

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education provides guidance, funding, and implementation support to school boards to help promote student mental health. The ministry also works with other partner ministries such as the Ministry of Health to support a more systematic approach to children's mental health and to make the best possible use of resources across the continuum of mental health care.

Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health has the provincial policy mandate for the overall mental health and addictions system. In March 2020, the ministry released *Roadmap to Wellness*, Ontario's mental health and addictions strategy. The Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence at Ontario Health is responsible for implementing *Roadmap to Wellness* with guidance and funding from the Ministry of Health. The ministry also provides strategic program management and fiscal oversight of community-based child and youth mental health programs and services under the authority of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*. The Ministry of Health collaborates with the Ministry of Education to support a more integrated system of mental health care for students.

School Boards

School boards are responsible for a number of activities including but not limited to administering the funding they receive from the province for their schools, hiring teachers and other staff including mental health professionals, supervising the operation of schools and their teaching programs, and ensuring schools operate in accordance with the *Education Act* and its regulations.

Community-based Child and Youth Mental Health Agencies

Community-based child and youth mental health agencies deliver a range of mental health services to children and youth up to the age of 18, and their families. Services are primarily based on a set of provincially defined child and youth mental health "core services," ranging from prevention services, counselling, and therapy to intensive and specialized services.

Children and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Lead Agencies

CYMH Lead Agencies are child and youth community-based mental health agencies which are also accountable for planning the delivery of core services in their area and which work with the health, education, and child welfare sectors, including hospitals, schools, and Children's Aid Societies, to better coordinate services and supports for young people. The CYMH Lead Agency Consortium is a group that represents all 31 Lead Agencies and provides them the opportunity to collaborate, address common challenges, and share information on promising practices, as well as provide coordinated advice to the Ministry of Health.

Ontario's 34 Public Health Units offer healthy living programs and disease prevention information for individuals across the lifespan. As a requirement under *The Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability (Standards), (https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/protocolsguidelines.aspx)* boards of health are required to consider mental health promotion under four different program standards: Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being, Healthy Growth and Development, School Health, and Substance Use and Injury Prevention. Under the *Mental Health Promotion Guideline, 2018, and School Health Guideline, 2018 (https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/protocolsguidelines.aspx#guidelines)* , boards of health shall develop and implement a program of public health interventions using a comprehensive health promotion approach to improve the health of school-aged children and youth.

Superintendent with Responsibility for Mental Health

The Superintendent with Responsibility for Mental Health provides overall strategic direction in the area of student mental health and ensures this work is communicated and aligned throughout the school board. System and school leaders establish the conditions for quality, consistency and sustainability in school mental health.

Mental Health Leaders

Every school board employs a Mental Health Leader to provide leadership within their school board for student mental health. Mental Health Leaders collaborate with school board staff and community mental health partners to promote a proactive, integrated system of care, with clear pathways to/from/through service for students requiring mental health supports.

Mental Health Leaders are experienced, regulated mental health clinicians who are accountable for developing and implementing their school board's three-year mental health and addictions strategy, one-year action plan, and the collection, utilization and reporting of information related to student mental health.

Regulated School Mental Health Professionals

Regulated school mental health professionals, including social workers, psychologists, and psychotherapists support students with mild to moderate mental health concerns and provide brief evidence-informed early interventions. For students with more intensive mental health concerns, regulated school mental health professionals will refer students to community-based child and youth mental health services. However, regulated school mental health professionals will support students with intensive mental health concerns and/or students in crisis, as appropriate, when intensive mental health services are not readily available in the community.

Non-regulated School Mental Health Professionals (Student Support Staff)

Non-regulated school mental health professionals, (e.g., child and youth workers) support all students in the classroom or in small groups with evidence-informed mental health literacy and universal mental health promotion activities.

Mental Health and Addictions Nurses in Schools

Mental Health and Addictions Nurses in Schools are employees of Home and Community Care Support Services who provide early intervention, system navigation, and therapeutic strategies that address specific mental health and addiction needs for students. The program consists of specialized nurses working in the community and in schools to assist students who have various mental health challenges.

Educators

Educators are well-positioned to teach all students about mental health. Mental health and well-being is included in the Program Planning section for all Ontario curriculum. In addition, there are mental health related expectations included in various elementary and secondary Curricula. Educators are at the center of creating mentally healthy, and welcoming classroom environments and notice students about whom they may have a concern and know how to respond to those observations. Educators are aware of the pathways to support available in their school when they do notice a student about whom they are concerned.

Guidance Teacher-Counsellors

Guidance teacher-counsellors support career counselling as well as student well-being and make connections to supports for student mental health.

Data Collection, Monitoring and Evaluation

The collection and use of data and evidence to monitor and evaluate student mental health and addictions needs and progress will identify where gaps may exist. Data and evidence will inform both the Ministry of Education and school boards that the supporting conditions for student mental health and well-being in schools have been established.

School boards are required to annually report to the Ministry of Education on their activities to achieve the requirements outlined in this memorandum and to use data to inform their three-year mental health and addictions strategy and one-year action plan. The EDU Annual School Mental Health Survey will be comprised of questions that capture information about mental health supports and services provided by school boards, mental health literacy instruction for students, and collaboration with community-based child and youth mental health providers. Data collected pertaining to Indigenous students is expected to follow principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP).

Review Process

To ensure information and practices related to student mental health and addictions are current and evidence-informed, this PPM will be reviewed every five years.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Mental health
is the state of an individual's psychological and emotional well-being. It is a necessary resource for living a healthy life and a main factor in overall health. It does not mean the same thing as mental illness. However, poor mental health can lead to mental and physical illness. Good mental health allows you to feel, think and act in ways that help you enjoy life and cope with its challenges.[7]

Mental illness
is defined as alterations in thinking, mood or behaviour associated with significant distress and impaired functioning in one or more areas such as school, work, social or family interactions or the ability to live independently.[8]

Addiction
is a complex process where problematic patterns of substance use or behaviours can interfere with a person's life. Addiction can be broadly defined as a condition that leads to a compulsive engagement with a stimuli, despite negative consequences. This can lead to physical and/or psychological dependence. Addictions can be either substance related (such as the problematic use of alcohol or drugs) or process-related, also known as behavioural addictions (such as gambling or internet addiction). Both can disrupt an individual's ability to maintain a healthy life.[9]

Substance Use and Mental Health
When mental health issues and substance abuse occur together, they are called concurrent disorders. Mental health issues and substance abuse problems occur on a continuum, and a concurrent disorder emerges when they intersect at any point. For example, a person might use alcohol to cope with feelings of anxiety or use drugs to cope with symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.[10]

Mental Health Promotion: Providing universal supports for all students (Tier 1) -
This is the foundational everyday work that educators and school staff do within and beyond the curriculum to welcome and include students, to understand them, to build knowledge of mental health, to promote mentally healthy habits and to partner with families, students and other staff to create a supportive environment. Most of the mental health work in schools is at this level.[11]

Prevention and Early Intervention: Targeted evidence-informed help for students requiring additional support (Tier 2) -
In school, there will be some students who may need additional support.. Educators and school staff can help by reinforcing skills and working to remove barriers to learning. Regulated school mental health professionals and others with specialized skills provide intervention services, like school-based brief interventions.[12]

Intervention and Pathways to Care: Bridging and crisis management support for students who require more intensive treatment and access to services from community partners (Tier 3) -
Although it will always be necessary for regulated school mental health professionals to provide some level of intensive services (because students cannot or will not access outside supports, and to manage crisis events as they arise), it is the role of school mental health professionals to help students access appropriate community or health services and to provide needed ongoing care while students are at school.[13]

Intensive services for community-based and/or in-home treatment or in-patient/live-in treatment (Tier 4) -
These services are provided by community-based mental health agencies or hospitals for students with the most intense and complex mental health challenges. The role of regulated school mental health professionals is to support student referrals to Tier 4 services, support case management/coordinate with other services the student may require, and support students' reintegration back to the school environment.[14]

is an approach to mental health services, delivered in schools that is systematic, brief and evidence-informed for students experiencing mild to moderate mental health concerns. It can be provided to individuals or in small groups.[15]

Measurement-based Care
is the routine, systematic use of validated measures, such as patient-reported symptom-rating scales, before or during each clinical encounter to inform decision-making about treatment.[16]

Trauma-Informed Practice
recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma, realizes the extensive impact of traumatic stress on individuals and communities, responds by integrating knowledge of trauma into the program or service, and actively resists the re-traumatization of clients and staff.[17]

Culturally Responsive
is an approach to mental health learning, supports and services that considers students' intersecting social and cultural identities. This approach recognizes that students may respond differently to mental health learning, supports and services and that these differences may be connected to a student's background, language, family structure, and social or cultural identities. This approach also emphasizes that educators and school leaders reflect on their own biases and analyze how their own identities and experiences affect how they view, understand, and interact with all students.[18]

Footnotes

- [1] ^ In this memorandum, references to parent(s) and families are aligned with definitions of parent(s) and guardian(s) as used in the *Education Act*. It may also be taken to include caregivers or close family members who are responsible for raising the child.

- [2] ^ Wherever school boards are referenced, school authorities and the Consortium Centre Jules-Léger are also included.

- [3] ^ This policy is established under the authority of *paragraph 29.6 of s. 8(1) of the Education Act* which authorizes the Minister to establish policies and guidelines respecting student mental health and require boards to comply with the policies and guidelines.

- [4] ^ School and Community System of Care Collaborative. (2022). Right time, right care: Strengthening Ontario's mental health and addictions system of care for children and young people (https://smho-smso.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/report-right-time-right-care.pdf) .

- [5] ^ Stephan, S. H., Sugai, G., Lever, N., Connors, E. (2015). Strategies for integrating mental health into schools via a multitiered system of support (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2014.12.002) . Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 24(2), 211-231.

- [6] ^ Brief services (4-6 sessions) provide "quick access" to therapeutic encounters to address the immediate or presenting needs of a student. Therapeutic approaches include but are not limited to solution-focused, cognitive-behavioural, motivational interviewing and brief narrative therapies. Brief services may meet the needs of the child or young person and be all the treatment that is required or it can help identify or clarify the need for further treatment or services

- [7] ^ Public Health Agency of Canada (https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/about-mental-health.html)

- [8] ^ Public Health Agency of Canada (https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/chronic-diseases/mental-illness.html)

- [9] ^ Canadian Mental Health Association (https://ontario.cmha.ca/addiction-and-substance-use-and-addiction/)

- [10] ^ Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. When Mental Health and Substance Abuse Problems Collide: Understanding, Preventing, Identifying and Addressing Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues in Youth (Topic Summary) (ccsa.ca) (https://www.ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2019-05/CCSA-Mental-Health-and-Substance-Abuse-2013-en.pdf)

- [11] ^ School Mental Health Ontario (https://smho-smso.ca/school-and-system-leaders/learn-more/mental-health-leadership-strategies/think-in-tiers-and-focus-on-the-positive/)

- [12] ^ School Mental Health Ontario (https://smho-smso.ca/school-and-system-leaders/learn-more/mental-health-leadership-strategies/think-in-tiers-and-focus-on-the-positive/)

- [13] ^ School Mental Health Ontario (https://smho-smso.ca/school-and-system-leaders/learn-more/mental-health-leadership-strategies/think-in-tiers-and-focus-on-the-positive/)

- [14] ^ School and Community System of Care Collaborative. (2022). Right time, right care: Strengthening Ontario's mental health and addictions system of care for children and young people (https://smho-smso.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/report-right-time-right-care.pdf)

- [15] ^ School Mental Health Ontario (https://smho-smso.ca/smh-professionals/learn-more/structured-psychotherapy/)

- [16] ^ Ontario Hospital Association. Measurement-Based Care in Mental Health: Why, How, and What? (https://www.oha.com/Documents/Background%20Reading%20to%20Measurement-Based%20Care.pd)

- [17] ^ Public Health Ontario (2021). Trauma-informed practices for children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. Trauma-informed Practices for Children and Families - Publications Ontario (gov.on.ca) (https://www.publications.gov.on.ca/CL30312)

- [18] ^ Ministry of Education (2023). Considerations for program planning- Human Rights, Equity and Inclusive Education. (https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/program-planning/considerations-for-program-planning/human-rights-equity-and-inclusive-education)
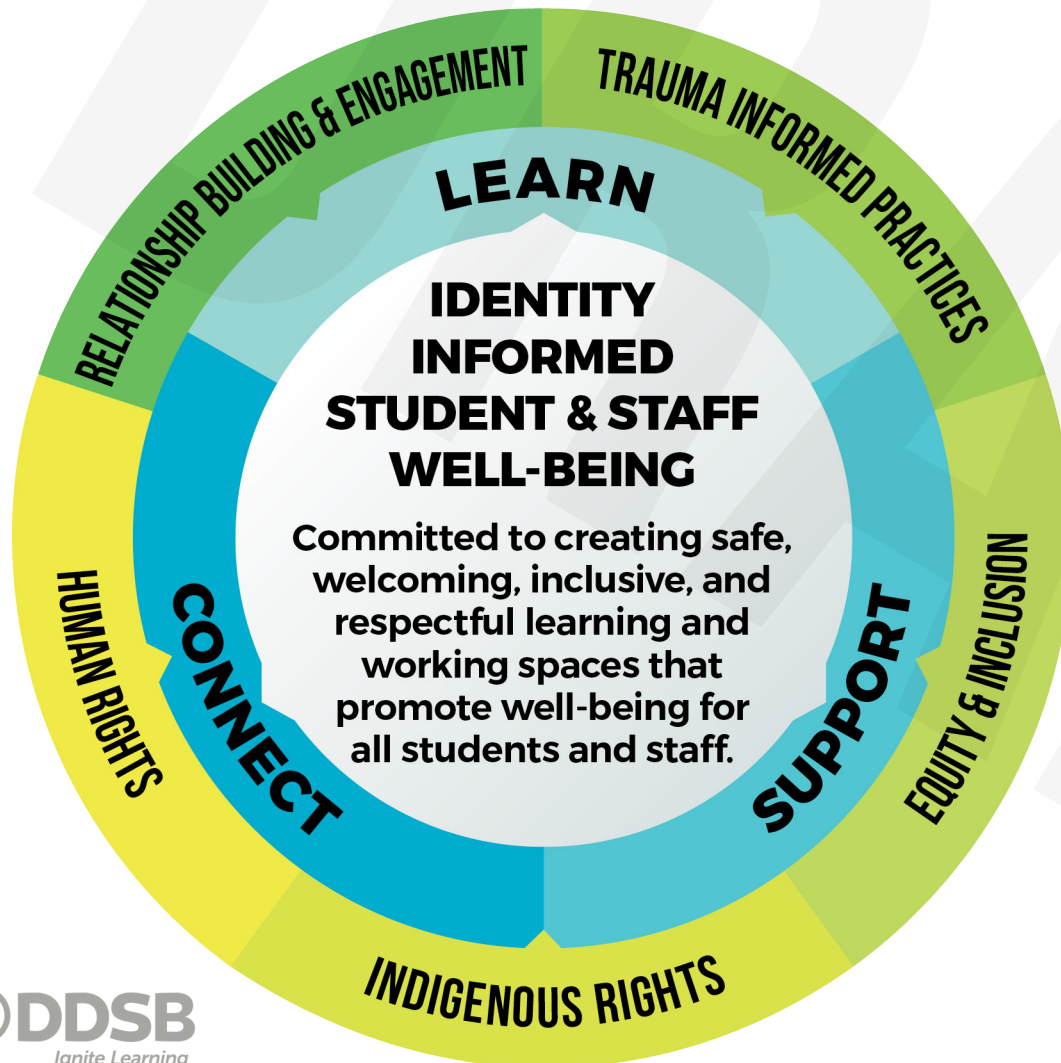
Learn | Support | Connect

We believe it is important to **learn** how we can support the everyday mental health and well-being of students and staff. We commit to provide for our students and staff inclusive, identity affirming, and culturally relevant **supports** as needed. We strive to **connect** all students and staff to, from, and through the pathways for those supports.

IDENTITY INFORMED STUDENT & STAFF WELL-BEING

Committed to creating safe, welcoming, inclusive, and respectful learning and working spaces that promote well-being for all students and staff.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING & ENGAGEMENT · TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES · EQUITY & INCLUSION · INDIGENOUS RIGHTS · HUMAN RIGHTS

LEARN · SUPPORT · CONNECT

LEARN TO UNDERSTAND

1. Mental Health Literacy
2. Everyday conditions that support mental health and well-being

SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN

1. Focused Staff Skills Building for Student Support
2. Mental Health Supports and Services

CONNECT TO PATHWAYS

1. Strong Pathways to, from and through Mental Health Supports

WELL-BEING EVERYONE EVERY DAY

Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan 2022-2025

DDSB
Ignite Learning

SEPTEMBER 2022

Durham District School Board - 2023-2024 One-Year Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan

The Durham District School Board recognizes that good mental health is an important foundation for achievement and well-being. The District 2022-2025 Mental Health and Well-Being Plan reflects our commitment to cultivate the conditions for healthy learning and working environments, where all our students and staff feel they are welcomed and where students in particular are engaged in school life, both in their classroom learning and the larger school environment ; where they know they are valued, seen and heard, where their identities are affirmed, where they belong and are connected to adults that care and are present to their lived realities.

The 2023-2024 Action Plan* supports and guides the implementation of the District's 2022-2025 Mental Health and Well-Being Plan.

Learn   **Support**   **Connect**

We believe it is important to learn how we can support the everyday mental health and well-being of students and staff. We commit to provide for our students and staff inclusive, identity affirming, and culturally relevant supports as needed. We strive to connect all students and staff to, from, and through the pathways for those supports.

Our multi-year plan, and the specifics of the 2023-2024 (one-year) action plan are based on the commitments of Learn, Support and Connect which align to the commitments within PPM 169 Student Mental Health:

LEARN TO UNDERSTAND

1. Mental Health Literacy
2. Everyday conditions that support mental health and well-being

SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN

1. Focused Staff Skills Building for Student Support
2. Mental Health Supports and Services

CONNECT TO PATHWAYS

1. Strong Pathways to, from and through Mental Health Supports

We are appreciative of the connection to and support from School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) and the dedicated professional services staff & educational staff who are integral to the development and delivery of programs and services reflected in this plan.

*Please note: This document was developed for internal use and will be updated and posted on the website by December 2023 in alignment with the requirements outlined in PPM 169. The One-Year Action Plan for the 2024-2025 will be developed in Spring 2024 and posted prior to the start of the school year.

Learn to Understand: Identity Informed Engaged Learning

Goal: Increased capacity, capability, and commitment of the District, Schools, and Board staff to ensure that school and work environments support staff and students' mental health and well-being and maintain a culture of care.

- School and classroom environments are grounded in maintaining and sustaining caring, attuned, and identity affirming relationships.

Priority Area	Key Activities/Actions	Outcomes	Timelines 2023-2024
Mental health literacy ***PPM 169 Alignment*** - *Enhanced Educator and Staff Mental Health Literacy* - *Mandatory mental health Literacy learning for students*	1. Collaboration between Teaching and Learning, Positive School Climates and Inclusive Services Mental Health Departments in support of the Grade 7 and 8 mental health literacy modules for implementation in January 2024.	a) Collective planning between Teaching and Learning, Positive School Climates and Inclusive Services Mental Health Departments on system implementation of the new mental health literacy curriculum through the Ministry. b) Intermediate Educators responsible for teaching health will be provided coaching and implementation support on the new mental health literacy curriculum. c) Development of a school-based implementation guide.	- Implementation Planning Team established September 2023 - Educators training dates scheduled for late November and early December. - Teaching and Learning and Inclusive Services Mental Health Departments to collaborate with provincial implementation supports through School Mental Health Ontario early November. - Implementation of the mental health literacy modules to begin December – June.
	2. Develop and deliver identity informed mental health modules as a means of mental health promotion for students.	a) Series of modules developed, and an implementation/training plan developed by the end of 2023. b) Delivery of modules to Educators and Support Staff. c) Increase knowledge and implementation of practices that promote, bolster and support	- Writing team working group to review content and establish training framework- September – December 2023. - In person, virtual, self-directed options made

			student well-being.		available to District staff January 2024.
	3. Work in collaboration with People and Culture and Inclusive Student Services Mental Health Department on a wellness campaign for staff.	a) Wellness campaign developed and communicated to the system for the 2023-2024 school year. b) Staff are aware of and access available virtual resources.	• Communication plan developed and monthly implementation to begin September 2023 and continue through to June 2024.
Setting the everyday conditions that support mental health and well-being *PPM 169 Alignment* • *Multi-Tiered System of Supports* • *Enhanced Educator and Staff Mental Health Literacy* • *Social Emotional Learning Skills*	1. Provision of consultation and coaching around implementation of Tier One strategies to classroom educations through identified Inclusive Student Services Mental Health teams and Positive School Climates central teams	a) Enhanced Tier One resources developed for sharing and coaching with school staff.	• Development of a bank of resources will be ongoing, with school wide and individual school staff sharing scheduled with Inclusive Student Services Mental Health Staff shared September- June.
	2. Revise "First 20 Days" document to ensure a focus on policy integration and shift focus to maintaining and sustaining relationships that span from September to June	a) Revised document ready for implementation at the start of the 2024-2025 school year, inclusive of the provision of implementation training.	• Resource review October- December 2023 • January 2024-March 2024 revisions made. • Resources made available to the system May-June 2024
	3. Implement learning series: • Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in the classroom • Emotion focused school support • Positive School Climates learning series • Community of Practice learning series	a) Develop and or review content as needed. b) Provide learning to District staff through Professional Development days, monthly learning opportunities, and at set times throughout the learning year.	• Community of practice- monthly September 2023- June 2024 • Emotion focused school support- series offered Fall 2023 and again Winter 2024 • Positive School Climates learning opportunities scheduled Fall2023, Winter 2024, Spring 2024

	Learn	Support	Connect

4. Leading Mentally Healthy Schools for Administrators Learning series	a) Inclusive Student Services Mental health and Leadership Development department collaborated on learning opportunities for school leaders to increase their awareness of the District 2022-2025 Mental Health and Well-Being Action plan and better understand their role in leading mentally health schools. a) Develop Administrator focused learning modules. b) Clarify referral process and pathways to mental health services and supports.	• Initiate collaboration between Leadership and Inclusive Student Service Departments Sept 2023 • Establish learning dates and relevant resources to support by December 2023.
5. Development of a school observation tool/school reflection tool focused on positive and identity affirming school climates	a) Develop observational tool to assess students' experiences of welcoming, inclusive schools/classrooms.	• Create observation tool development team November 2023 • Tool development and pilot May 2024.
6. Collaboration with in-school positive school team around school-based implementation of the Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan.	a) Training provided to all in-school teams Fall 2023. b) Increased awareness of Mental Health and Well-being Action Plan and related initiatives/activities.	• Training date set for November 2023. • Inclusive Student Services Mental health team members reach out to each in-school team with offer of support by December 2023.
7. Develop a Family of Schools based communication process to support the implementation of the Mental Health and Well-Being Action plan.	a) Mental Health and Well-Being is an agenda item on the Family of Schools Meeting agenda.	• On-going

Support to Strengthen: Identity-Affirming Mental Health Supports and Services

Goal: Increased capacity and ability to provide identity- affirming mental health supports and services that ensures school and work environments are responsive to the continuum of mental health and well-being needs of students and staff to bolster early intervention.
- Students are surrounded by District staff who engage with and support their mental health and well-being needs through equity centred and identity affirming practices.

Priority Area	Key Activities/Actions	Outcomes	Timelines 2023-2024
Targeted Staff Skills Building ***PPM 169 Alignment*** - *Multi-Tiered System of Supports* - *Enhanced Educator and Staff Mental Health Literacy* - *Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocols*	1. Provide Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), safeTALK, Livingworks START, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) to appropriate district staff.	a) Schools are responsive to the mental health and well-being needs of students and bolster prevention, early interventions and pathways to care.	- Training scheduled throughout the calendar year in compliance with trainer status expectations and responsive to the training needs of district staff- October 2023- June 2024
	2. Trauma Informed Practices system training plan development and implementation	a) Develop training plan and initiate implementation of the training plan; initial training provided to Senior Leaders and piloted with identified Education settings/groups. b) Increased capacity for Leaders and Educators to practice in trauma informed ways.	- Training plan completed December 2023 - Initial training to begin January- June 2024
	3. Inclusive Student Services and Positive School Climates Team Conference	a) Inclusive Student Services and Positive School Climates Teams have a clearer understanding of their duty bearer responsibilities, protected rights, as it relates to mental health and well-being and inclusive programming.	- Conference planning September-October 2023 - Conference date November 28, 2023
	4. The development of identity-affirming Tier 2 focused professional learning content/curriculum.	a) An Inclusive Student Services staff writing team develop a structure and content for professional development. b) Deliver training through self-directed learning modules, virtual training and/or in-person training. c) Increase knowledge and implementation of practices that bolster and support student mental health.	- Structure and content established by December 2023 - Implementation of training January- June 2024

| Learn | Support | Connect |

Identity Informed Mental Health Supports and Services ***PPM 169 Alignment*** • *Multi-Tiered System of Supports* • *Consistent Use of Evidence-informed Brief Interventions and Standardized Measurement* • *Virtual Care Delivery*	5. Enhance Inclusive Student Services' mental health staff's ability to provide evidence-informed identify affirming practices inclusive of: ● Trauma Informed Clinical Interventions ● Acceptance and Commitment Therapy ● Intersectionality and Mental Health ● Cognitive Behavioural Therapy	a) Increased understanding of all staff roles and responsibilities, processes and procedures in supporting student mental health & well-being in an identity affirming and culturally responsive manner.	• Training dates set over October 2023-June 2024
	6. The Inclusive Student Services' Mental Health Staff continue to provide identify affirming practices in all areas of services.	a) Provide individual identify affirming mental health services and supports. b) Provide identity informed school level and individual student level mental health consultation. c) Provide identify affirming crisis and traumatic response and support.	• September 2023-June 2024.
	7. Continue to provide/deliver specific identity-affirming group programming for students.	a) Provide Black Excellence Made Evident (BEME) and AFFIRM (2SLGBTQIA youth) at scheduled times during the school year	• November 2023-June 2024

Connect to Pathways: Strong Pathways To, From and Through Identity-affirming Mental Health Supports

<u>Goal:</u> All staff have a clear understanding of protocols and pathways to care across all schools and work environments

Priority Area	Key Activities/Actions	Outcomes	2023-2024 Timelines
Strong Service and Support Pathways ***PPM 169 Alignment*** • *Joint Local Planning with Community-based Child and Youth Mental Health Providers* • *Multi-Tiered System of Supports* • *Enhanced Educator and Staff Mental Health Literacy* • *Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocols*	1. Commit to annual board-wide training on suicide protocols in all schools.	a) Increase awareness of Board protocol and ability to identify the ASIST trained staff in schools.	• Communication plan developed November 2023 • Communication plan implementation- January- June 2024
	2. Provide training and communication to schools around protocols and pathways to care provided by the Inclusive Student Services mental health teams.	a) Increase awareness and alignment of practice to the established pathways for mental health service referrals. b) Increase in the number of students supported to, from, and through District mental health services and to, from, and through community-based mental health supports and services.	• Communication plan implementation- September 2023- June 2024 • September 2023-June 2024
	3. Continue to strengthen our partnerships with community mental health agencies.	a) Create/sustain a coordinated and integrated pathway of care for students. b) Review and enhance process for the development of memorandums of understanding (MOU) and partnership agreements with local community-based mental health providers. c) Update internal report of community leadership tables DDSB mental health leadership and team members' support.	• September 2023-June 2024 • November 2023-June 2024 • January 2024

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

REPORT TO: Durham District School Board   **DATE:** November 6, 2023

SUBJECT: Addressing Anti-Black Racism   **PAGE:** 1 of 4

ORIGIN: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board

1.0   Purpose

To provide Trustees with an update on the strategic directions and internal structures established to name, face and dismantle Anti-Black Racism within the Durham District School Board (DDSB) system in order to improve the school experiences of Black students and advance performance, achievement, excellence and success of Black students in our classrooms and schools.

2.0   Ignite Learning Strategic Priority/Operational Goals

Success – *Set high expectations and provide support to ensure all staff and students reach their potential every year.*

Well-being – *Create safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces to promote well-being for all students and staff.*

Leadership – *Identify future leaders, actively develop new leaders and responsively support current leaders.*

Equity – *Promote a sense of belonging and increase equitable outcomes for all by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement.*

Engagement – *Engage students, parents and community members to improve student outcomes and build public confidence.*

Innovation – *Re-imagine learning and teaching spaces through digital technologies and innovative resources.*

3.0   Background

In the 2016-2017 school year, the DDSB engaged Justice Donald McLeod to undertake a study of the perspectives and experiences of the Black community within the DDSB. This study was undertaken through focus groups that included students, staff, families, and community partners. The result was a report that included 27 recommendations for action (Appendix A). The findings reported by this study were consistent with emerging research in Ontario and nationally. Of particular note, the Ryerson University research project: The Black Experience Project (2016) along with the York University Project: Towards Race Equity in Education (2017) yielded perspectives that aligned with the findings in Durham at that time.

The Equity and Diversity Steering Committee was established to address these recommendations. The Committee was chaired by Justice McLeod and then Trustee Patrice Barnes. The Chair of the Board also sat on the Committee along with members of the senior team and community representatives.

A number of working groups emerged within the Equity and Diversity Steering Committee that enacted the recommendations that emerged from the Town Hall Community Voice Report (Appendix A). The results and impact of the work undertaken by these Committees has been captured in a number of public reports, including, but not limited to the February 2023 report to the Board on dismantling Anti-Black racism (Appendix B) and the Living Compendium community-facing experience in May 2023, where evidence of implementation and impact was shared with the community at large.

Recognizing that dismantling Anti-Black racism continues to be a priority in the District, a staff-led working group in partnership with external contributors has undertaken to revisit the Compendium of Action for Black Student Success to build on previous directions, the impact of the past strategy and on current research. The Compendium of Action for Black Student Success 2.0 is being released to the system this fall. (Appendix C)

4.0   Analysis

At the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, the Equity and Diversity Steering Committee was reconstituted to properly reflect the governance and operational structures of the Board and the District. As this group's work has been largely operational in its focus and deliverables, the Steering Committee has been recalibrated and is now the Anti-Black Racism Action Team (the "Action Team") comprised of staff and community partners. The new Action Team is operational in nature and the mandate of the Action Team has several key components:

- Implement the action items in the Compendium of Action for Black Student Success;
- Conduct ongoing analysis of day-to-day operations in support of the Compendium of Action for Black Student Success;
- Value and prioritize input from the community; and
- Report to the community yearly.

In the Spring of 2023, the Board of Trustees signalled an interest in exploring structures for intentional and accountable actions to continue the work to dismantle Anti-Black racism. As a result, the Director struck a temporary working group comprised of staff and trustees to explore this question and advance options for the DDSB Board's role in championing this work and commitment to the community. All trustees and student trustees were invited to attend these discussions. Additionally, in order to ensure our direction is aligned with the governance policy framework established by the Education Act, an external opinion was sought to clarify the appropriate structure for Committees and

trustee engagement in this work. The opinion delineates the role of the various Committees within the Board and confirms that our current approach is in accordance with the Education Act's policy governance framework.

As trustees are aware, the Board's bylaws provide the Board of Trustees with the ability to create an Advisory Committee which, once created, operates at arm's length from the Board of Trustees but with a mandate to provide recommendations to the Board of Trustees on matters of policy. A Board created Advisory Committee is distinct from a Statutory Committee (such as SEAC) whose membership and mandate are set out in legislation.

It should also be noted that staff will be coming forward to the Governance and Policy Committee with recommended changes to the bylaws to recommend revised language providing more structure for Advisory Committees (other than the Indigenous Advisory Circle which will not be part of the recommended changes in accordance with the Board's commitment to distinct Indigenous Rights). These proposed changes are likely to include criteria for membership as well as greater staff and trustee engagement and oversight.

5.0 Conclusion/ Recommendation

While the Action Team will carry out its work in accordance with its mandate as a staff-led working group under the leadership of the DDSB Anti-Oppression team, there are also opportunities for trustee engagement for the purpose of accountability and transparency per the governance mandate of the Board of Trustees. Two structural possibilities for trustee consideration are:

1) Fulsome reports to the Board's Standing Committee in, February and June which would provide trustees and the public with updates on commitment, implementation and impact of the Action Team's work. The Standing Committee format allows for discussion, questions and feedback in a public session.

   Or

2) The creation by the Board of Trustees of an Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee. Under the DDSB bylaws, an additional Advisory Committee can be initiated by a resolution of the Board of Trustees. Advisory Committees provide public recommendations to the Board on matters of policy and can include trustee and/or staff representation at the discretion of the Committee. Such a Committee may involve a significant time commitment of any designated trustee(s).

6.0 Appendices:

Appendix A: Town Hall Community Voice Report, January 2017
Appendix B: Board Report – Towards Excellence in Black Student Achievement in the DDSB, February 6, 2023

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Appendix C: Compendium of Action for Black Student Success 2.0

Report reviewed and submitted by:

_____

Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board

Durham District School Board

&

Present

Town Hall Community Voice Report

January 2017

Prepared by: Justice Donald F. McLeod

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement

Executive Summary

In May and June 2016, the Durham District School Board (DDSB) Diversity Initiative and 100 Strong Community Program held a series of "*Town Hall Community Voice Sessions*" (thereafter, community voice sessions) to give students, parents, administrators, staff and community members of the racialized African Caribbean diasporas the opportunity to share their voices and concerns about diversity in DDSB and to work towards sustainable change. The purpose of the community voice sessions and in-person paper survey was to obtain the views and perspectives of a broad range of DDSB stakeholders to become more aware of, and responsive to the needs of the racialized African Caribbean students, families and communities it serves.

Six community voice sessions were held in three locations across Durham region. The sessions were open to a broad range of stakeholders including: Invested and active groups, DDSB staff, DDSB students, Durham Black Educators' Network, DDSB Administrators and Community members (see Table 1). Approximately 200 people attended the six community sessions. Participants also voluntarily completed 112 in-person paper survey questionnaires, the results of which are summarized below.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to obtain data for this report. In-person paper survey and notes from community voice sessions were compiled and analyzed based on the questions and the number of responses to each. The survey asked both open-ended and closed ended questions, and the responses were reviewed and analyzed as aggregate data in tables and charts and grouped into general themes based on questions and participants' responses. The survey was not intended to be statistically representative of DDSB stakeholder groups or to test hypotheses, explore correlations or generalize about diversity in DDSB. Rather this was a self-selected survey which gave participants another opportunity to offer further comment to the community voice session about diversity in DDSB. Thus, the information gathered and presented in this report provide only a snapshot on racial diversity, as expressed by the participants in the community voice sessions and those who voluntarily completed the survey.

Overall, based upon participants' responses from survey data and feedback in community voice sessions, there are significant challenges to diversity in DDSB, and to meeting the academic and social needs of racialized African Caribbean students. Most participants were not happy with the level of diversity in DDSB (56%), and many provided feedback expressing their dissatisfaction. Only 7% had a "very positive" experience with diversity and 40% had a "positive" experience. Although there are several diversity programs and initiatives in DDSB, participants reported many challenges that included the ongoing streaming of racialized African Caribbean students in mainly applied and mixed courses, low teacher expectation and academic performance and high rates of suspension, concerns with expulsion and police in schools.

Based on the feedback gathered from participants in the community voice sessions and responses and comments from paper-based surveys, several recommendations have been put forward for consideration and further study by the Durham District School Board.

Introduction

In May and June 2016, the Durham District School Board (DDSB) Diversity Initiative partnered with 100 Strong to hold a series of *"Town Hall Community Voice Sessions"* (thereafter, community voice sessions) to give students, parents, administrators, staff and community members of the racialized African Caribbean diasporas the opportunity to share their voice towards sustainable change. The purpose of the community voice sessions and in-person paper survey was to obtain the views and perspectives of a broad range of DDSB stakeholders to ensure they are aware of, and responsive to the needs of the racialized African Caribbean students, families and communities it serves.

DDSB and 100 Strong took on this initiative due to growing community diversity and increasing enrolment of students of racialized African Caribbean diasporas in the board. Further, there is increasing concern that racialized African Caribbean students are not performing well in the DDSB, which increases tensions between families, schools and communities.

The community voice sessions were facilitated by Mr. Donald F. McLeod, a founding partner of The McLeod Group, Barristers and Solicitors, a well-known and respected criminal, administrative and human rights firm in Toronto. In 2013, McLeod was appointed to the Ontario Court of Justice, and became the first Black Judge to graduate from Queens University since the Law School's inception in 1957. He is also the founder and Co-Chair of 100 Strong, a not-for-profit community program for the advancement of African Canadian young men in urban centres.

This preliminary report outlines findings from community voice sessions and in-person paper survey that were completed by stakeholders from the racialized African Caribbean diasporas, and non-racialized members of DDSB. This information is considered an important first step in identifying and documenting the educational needs of racialized African Caribbean students in DDSB. It aims to ensure that DDSB hears the voices and concerns of its various education stakeholders on the issue of diversity and responds with the needed supports to help racialized African Caribbean students succeed. Details of the community voice sessions and survey results are below.

Town Hall Community Voice Sessions

Six community voice sessions were held in three locations across Durham region in May and June 2016. The sessions were open to a broad range of stakeholders including: Invested and active groups, DDSB staff, DDSB students, Durham Black Educators' Network, DDSB Administrators and Community members (see Table 1). Special invitation was extended to students who were currently attending DDSB, parents, staff, including social workers, teachers, superintendents, Trustees, businesses and other concerned community residents who have an in interest in public education. One community session was conducted with each target group. It is estimated that approximately 300 people attended the six community sessions. Participants voluntarily completed 112 in-person paper survey questionnaires, the results of which are summarized below. The dates, locations, and target audience are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1: Dates, Locations and Target Audience

Dates	Locations	Target Audience
May 19	DDSB Education Centre	Invested and Active Groups
May 30	Centennial Building, Regal Room	DDSB Staff
June 1	Donald A. Wilson S.S.	DDSB Students
June 6	Centennial Building, Regal Room	Durham Black Educators' Network
June 13	DDSB Education Centre	DDSB Administrators
June 21	Centennial Building, Regal Room	Community Members /Parents

Information and Notification to the Community

The community voice sessions were promoted and disseminated by the Durham District School Board media team. Several methods were used to inform the DDSB community of the community voice sessions, including the development of a promotional flyer (Appendix A). The flyer was shared broadly in the following ways:

- Distributed to students, teachers, staff, and administrators in person and via e-mail
- Shared with parents and community members in person, via e-mail and word-of-mouth
- Placed in a variety of local community spaces such as community organizations to reach out to a broad range of community members
- Sent via e-mail to various other interested stakeholders across Durham region

Each community voice session was approximately an hour and a half in length and conducted in an open discussion format. Justice Donald McLeod conducted each session in camera, which means in private, with no recording devices or cameras permitted. A standard agenda was developed to ensure consistency. Those in attendance had the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences on issues of diversity, streaming, academic performance, suspension and expulsion, police in school, and graduation of racialized African Caribbean students in DDSB. The information shared at each community voice session was recorded on flip chart paper. The key issues and concerns raised are summarized below.

Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to obtain data for this report. In-person paper survey and notes from community voice sessions were compiled and analyzed based on the questions and the number of responses to each. The survey asked both open-ended and closed ended questions, and the responses were reviewed and analyzed as aggregate data in tables and charts and grouped into general themes based on questions and participants' responses. The survey was not intended to be statistically representative of DDSB stakeholder groups or to test hypotheses, explore correlations or generalize about diversity in DDSB. Rather this was a self-selected survey which gave participants an opportunity to further comment on the community voice session discussion about diversity in DDSB. Thus, the information gathered and presented

in this report provide only a snapshot on racial diversity in DDSB, as expressed by the participants in the community voice sessions and those who voluntarily completed the survey.

Data analysis

Content analysis was conducted on the feedback provided by participants of the community voice sessions and from the open-ended survey questions. The following analysis has been undertaken for this report:

- An overview analysis of all survey questionnaire submitted, including the specific target group, questions and responses.
- A review of written responses and comments from community voice sessions
- An identification of common themes that emerged across questionnaire responses and community voice sessions.

Participant Survey Overview

In May and June 2016, participants from the six community voice sessions voluntarily completed and submitted 112 in-person paper-based surveys. The surveys provided another opportunity for participants to respond to specific questions, make comments and offer suggestions or possible solutions. All surveys submitted were identified, compiled and summarized by the type of participant target group, questions asked and responses (See Table 2). Participant target groups included racialized African Caribbean and non-racialized individuals. Due to the small sample size, data will not be presented as disaggregated by race/ethnicity, age, gender, panel (elementary, high school), target audience (e.g. student, parent, staff, teacher, administrator, community member, etc.) or other variables. Instead, aggregated data will be shared based on the questions and responses. The small sample size also means the results are not generalizable to racialized African Caribbean youth in Durham District School Board. It is important to note that self-identified racialized African Caribbean individuals made up the largest group of survey respondents and community voice session participants, except for the school administrator group, which was comprised primarily of non-racialized individuals.

The first part of the survey asked participants to provide demographic information, including racial identity, income, age range, panel, length of employment, employer and membership. The second part of the survey was concerned with the streaming, performance, and behaviour of racialized African Caribbean students in the DDSB. As well, questions were asked about suspension, expulsion, arrests and police in schools. The final section of the survey allowed participants to provide detailed responses to open-ended questions about reasons for suspension and expulsion, diversity programming, challenges to diversity and experience and satisfaction with diversity within DDSB.

The results in this report have some limitations in terms of the self-selected, convenience sample of 112 survey participants. The results are not representative of the entire population of Durham District School Board and therefore cannot be generalized. It should also be noted that the findings outlined in this report, reflects only the perspectives and experiences of those who participated in the community voice sessions and survey. Although multiple perspectives were gathered from the

various education stakeholders who attended the community voice sessions and completed the survey, the findings do not represent the perspectives of all members of Durham District School Board.

From the data table below, of the total number of individuals (N=112) who completed the survey, the largest respondent group was DDSB administrators 34 (30%), followed by students 25 (22%), parents 20 (18%), community members 14 (13%), Durham Black Educators' Network 14 (13%) and staff 5 (4%) who were not members of the Durham Black Educators' Network. As can be seen, the number of participants in each target group was unevenly spread. This unevenness affected the percentage of total respondents. Further, not every question was answered by every survey respondent. In these cases, percentages have been calculated out of the total number of persons who responded to that question.

Table 2 – Data Table: Surveys

Dates	Target Audience	Count of Survey Respondents	Percentage of total respondents for the various groups (N=112)
May 30	DDSB Staff	5	4%
June 1	DDSB Students	25	22%
June 6	Durham Black Educators' Network	14	13%
June 13	DDSB Administrators	34	30%
June 21	Community Members	14	13%
June 21	Parents	20	18%
TOTAL		112	100%

Chart 1: Survey Data

Staff   Students   Network   Administrators   Community   Parents
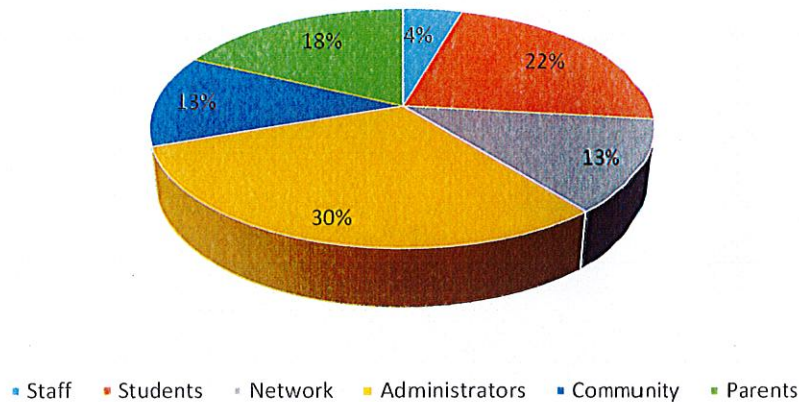
Results

Education Streams Where Racialized African Caribbean Children Are Placed

Survey participants were asked to identify the education streams in which racialized African Caribbean students are mainly placed. The five streams are as follows: Academic, Applied, Mixed, and Workplace and/or Locally Developed. Tables 3 and Chart 2 below outline the number of survey responses and the percentage of total responses to this question: "*In which education stream are children from the racialized African Caribbean diasporas mainly placed?*". Of the 105 responses to this question, the majority 39 (37%) indicated that African/Caribbean children are mainly placed in the Applied Stream. This was followed by Mixed 32 (30%), Academic 28 (27%) and Workplace/Locally Developed 6 (6%) streams.

Table 3|Question: In which education streams are racialized children from the African Caribbean diasporas mainly placed?

Education Streams	Count of Survey Responses	Percentage of total respondents to this question (N=105)
Academic	28	27%
Applied	39	37%
Mixed	32	30%
Workplace/Locally Developed	6	6%
TOTAL	**105**	**100%**

Chart 2: Reported Education Streams
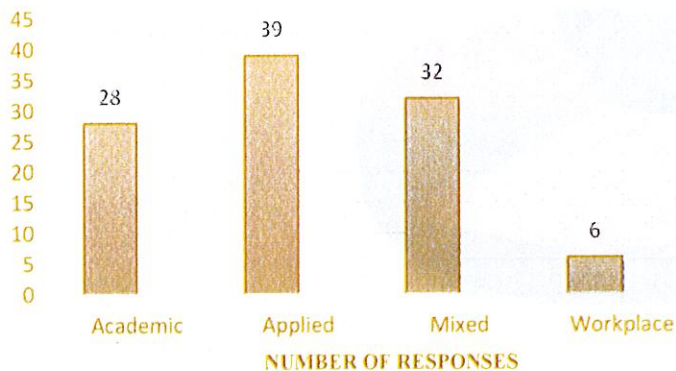
Performance of Racialized African Caribbean Students

Participants were asked the question: *"How well are racialized children from the African Caribbean diasporas performing in school?"*. They were asked to select from a list of possible responses that included excellent, good, fair, and poor. Tables 4 and Chart 3 below outline the responses and the percentage of total respondents to this question. Of the 98 responses to this question, the majority 45 (46%) indicated that African/Caribbean children are performing good in DDSB. This was followed by fair 36 (37%), and poor 10 (10%). Only 7 respondents (7%) indicated that racialized African Caribbean children were performing excellent in DDSB.

Table 4|Question: *How well are racialized children from the African Caribbean diasporas performing in school?*

Performance	Count of Survey Responses	Percentage of total respondents to this question (N=98)
Excellent	7	7%
Good	45	46%
Fair	36	37%
Poor	10	10%
TOTAL	98	100%

Chart 3: Reported Student Performance
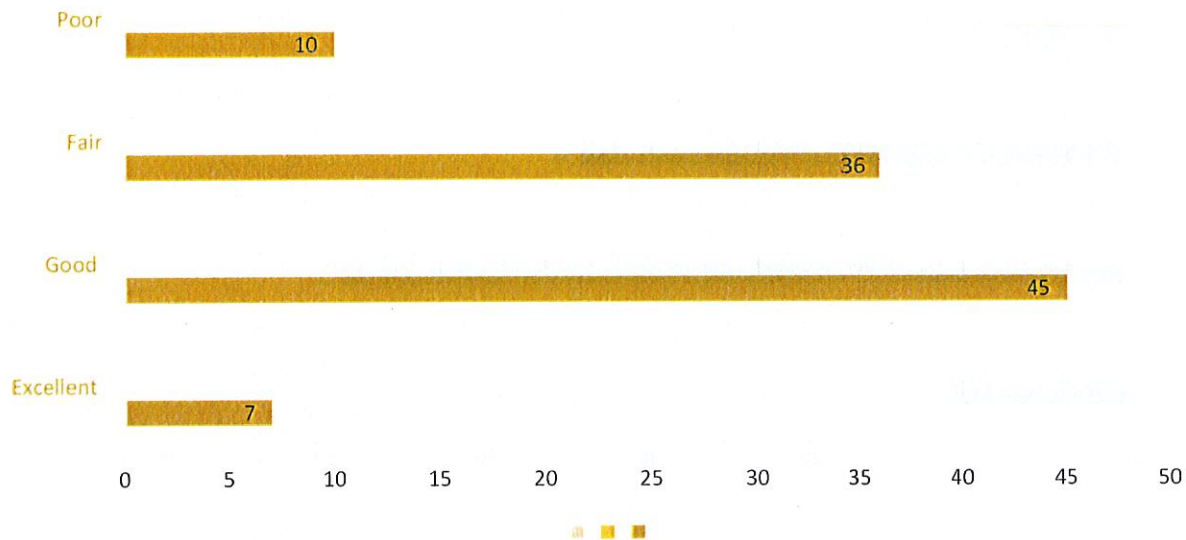
Behaviour of Racialized African Caribbean Children

When asked the question: "*How well are racialized African Caribbean children behaving in school?*", participants' responses were categorized into four possible answers: excellent, good, fair, and poor. Of the 102 (n=102) individuals who responded to this question, the majority 49 (48%) indicated that African/Caribbean children are behaving good in DDSB. This was followed by fair 34 (33%) and excellent 11 (11%). Only 8 respondents (8%) indicated that the behaviour of racialized African Caribbean children in school was poor. Tables 5 and Chart 4 below outline their responses and the percentage of total responses to this question.

Table 5|Question: *How well are racialized children from the African Caribbean diasporas behaving in school?*

Behaviour	Count of Survey Responses	Percentage of total respondents to this question (N=102)
Excellent	11	11%
Good	49	48%
Fair	34	33%
Poor	8	8%
TOTAL	102	100%

Chart 4: Reported Student Behaviour
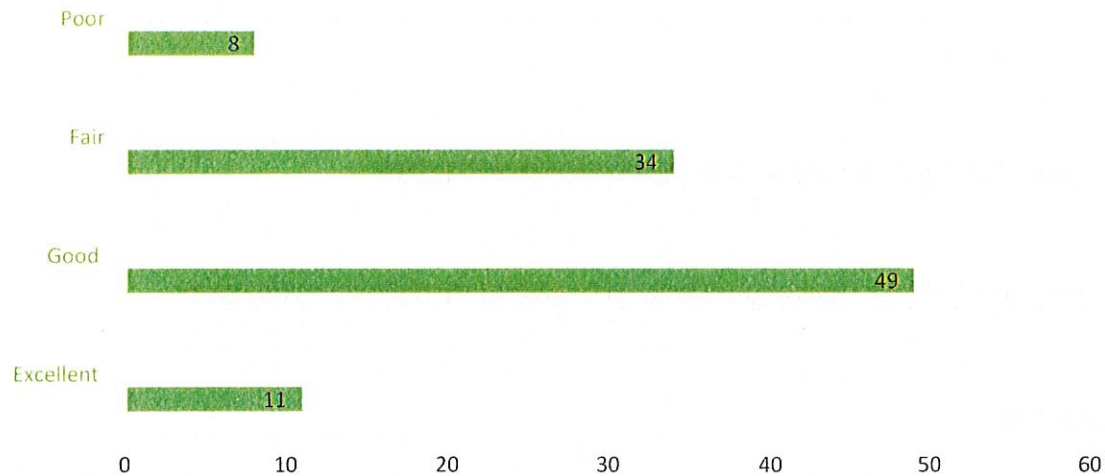
Suspension of Racialized African Caribbean Children

Participants were asked to answer "Yes" or "No" to the following question: "*Are children from the racialized African Caribbean diasporas frequently suspended from school?*". Of the 90 (n=90) respondents to this question, 50 (56 %) said yes and 40 (44%) said no. Racialized African Caribbean respondents were much more likely than non-racialized respondents to answer "yes." Table 6 and Chart 5 below provide the responses and percentage of total respondents to this question.

Table 6

Question: Are children from the African Caribbean diasporas frequently suspended from school?	Count of Survey Responses	Percentage of total respondents to this question (N=90)
Yes	50	56%
No	40	44%

Chart 5: Reported Student Suspension
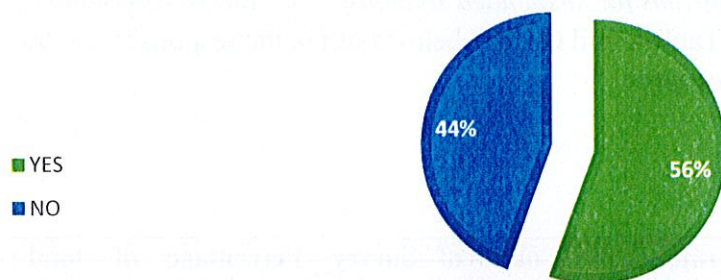
Expulsion of Racialized African Caribbean Children

When asked the question: *"Are children from the racialized African Caribbean diasporas frequently expelled from school?"*, 24 (28 %) of the 85 respondents said yes and 61 (72%) said no. Table 7 and Chart 6 below provide the responses and percentage of total respondents to this question.

Table 7

Question: Are children from the African Caribbean diasporas frequently expelled from school?	Count of Survey Responses	Percentage of total respondents to this question (N=85)
Yes	24	28%
No	61	72%

Chart 6: Reported Student Expulsion

Racialized African Caribbean Children in Suspension Programs

Participants were asked to answer the following question: *"Are children from the racialized African Caribbean diasporas often in programs for suspended students?"*. Of the 78 respondents, 22 (28%) said yes and 56 (72%) said no. Table 8 and Chart 7 below outline the responses and the percentage of total respondents to this question.

Table 8

Question: Are children from the racialized African Caribbean diasporas often in programs for suspended students?	Count of Survey Responses	Percentage of total respondents to this question (N=78)
Yes	22	28%
No	56	72%

**Chart 7: Reported Students in Suspension Programs**
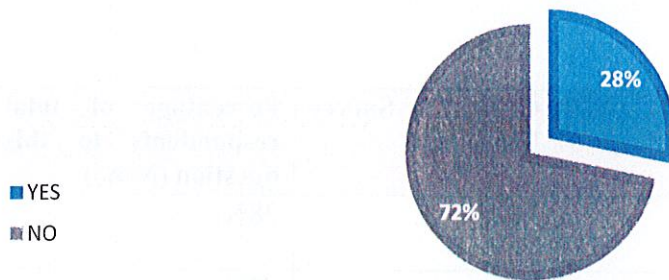
Arrests of Racialized African Caribbean Students at School

Participants were asked to answer "Yes" or "No" to the following question: *"Are children from the African Caribbean diasporas often arrested by police at school?"*. Of the 78 respondents, 26 (33%) said yes and 52 (67%) said no. Table 9 and Chart 8 below outline the responses and the percentage of total respondents to this question.

Table 9

Question: Are children from the African Caribbean diasporas often arrested by police at school?	Count of Survey Responses	Percentage of total respondents to this question (N=78)
Yes	26	33%
No	52	67%

Chart 8: Reported Arrests at School
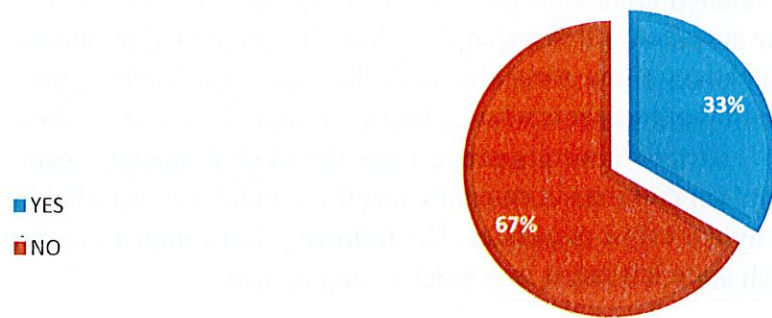
Police in Schools

When asked the following question: *"Are police officers or school resource officers placed in schools in DDSB?"*, 60 (66%) of the 91 respondents said yes and 31 (34%) said no. Table 10 and Chart 9 below outline the responses and the percentage of total respondents to this question.

Table 10

Question: Are police officers or school resource officers placed in schools in the DDSB?	Count of Survey Responses	Percentage of total respondents to this question (N=91)
Yes	60	66%
No	31	34%

Chart 9: Reported Police in Schools
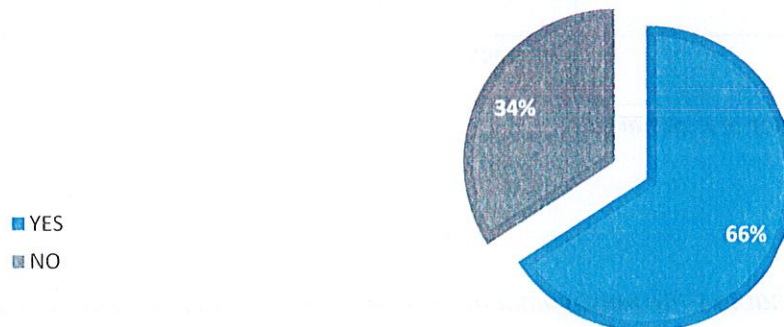
Summary Responses from Town Hall Survey Participants

Participants were invited to provide detailed comments on diversity in Durham District School Board (DDSB), including reasons for suspension and expulsion, diversity programs/initiatives, challenges to diversity, identity, experience and satisfaction with diversity. The tables below provide a summary of the responses from participants who attended the community voice sessions and voluntarily completed a survey. The lists were generated from the most frequently made comments, suggestions and concerns raised at the six community meetings and those recorded in details on the in-person paper survey by the 112 respondents. The following is a summary of the responses to the questions asked, which are not listed in any order of importance.

Reasons for Suspension in DDSB

Participants were asked to provide the most common reasons for the suspension of children from the African Caribbean diasporas in DDSB. Respondents identified a few common reasons for suspension, which are outlined in the table below.

Question: *What are the most common reasons for the suspension of children from the African Caribbean diasporas from DDSB?*	
Opposition to authority	Fighting
Defiance	Attendance
Anger	Aggressive behaviour
Bullying	Conflict with teachers
Talking back	Disrespect
Behaviour contrary to the school code of conduct	Moral tone
swearing	Fooling around
Not following direction/Non-compliance	Insubordination
Conflict between students	Truancy

*These responses are not listed in any order of importance.

Reasons for Expulsion in DDSB

The survey asked the question: *"What are the most common reasons for the expulsion of children from the African Caribbean diasporas in DDSB?* The most common reasons identified by respondents are listed in the table below.

Question: What are the most common reasons for the expulsion of children from the African Caribbean diasporas from DDSB?	
Gang	Drug possession
Assault	Drug trafficking
Weapon	Fighting that cause physical harm requiring medical attention

These responses are not listed in any order of importance.

Diversity Programs/initiatives in DDSB

Participants were asked to identify the diversity programs/initiatives in the DDSB. Several common responses emerged highlighting various diversity/initiatives. Participants were clear that while there are several initiatives, much more needs to be done to address the larger structural problem of lack of representation of racial diversity at the school board. The list below outlines the most common responses on programs/initiatives. It is important to note that these programs/initiatives are not listed in any order of importance.

Question: Please identify the diversity programs/initiatives in the DDSB	
Be the Change	Black Educators' Network
Students together Against Racism Camp	Black experience project
Aboriginal Educators' Collective	First Nations Metis Indian Initiative
Proud to be Speakers Series	Equity Institute
Equity conference/forum	Kids for Change
Black History Month	Durham Black Educators Network
Racialized and Aboriginal Leadership Program	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)	Mentoring program for Black boys and girls
LGBTQ for Families	School Community Counsel Involvement
Anti-Oppression training	Students together against racism
National Association of Black Educators	Positive mental health
Safe and Accepting School	Student Alliance of Singers and Song Writers
Black studies course	Activating success
And still we rise elementary & secondary	Proud of Pickering

Challenges to Diversity in DDSB

The survey asked respondents to explain the challenges to diversity in DDSB. Respondents provided 23 comments on the challenges to diversity, ranging from lack of high expectations of African Caribbean students, streaming of racialized students, lack of representation and role models to policy 274. The table below outlines the challenges as expressed by survey respondents and community voice session participants. It is important to note that these challenges are not listed in any order of importance.

Question: Please explain the challenges to diversity in DDSB
A lack of diversity among staff, administrators and at every level of DDSB, especially higher levels
A lack of attention to the disengagement of African and Caribbean students and parents
Cultural mismatch, misunderstanding and lack of appropriate diversity programming
Focus is often on training of teachers and administrators to promote diversity but it does not work
Setting high expectations and maintaining high achievement for Black students
Lack of understanding of diversity among predominantly white teachers and how to address it
Lack of role models among teaching staff in a school that has predominantly racialized students and white students are the minority. Most of the teachers and administrators are still white
White families feel unfair accommodations are given to non-whites, especially to Muslim students
There is a lack of Black representation at every level. Current staff does not reflect the student body
Lack of recognition of racism, colonization, power and white privilege
The upper levels do not want to acknowledge diversity, especially racial diversity and to address it
Lack of willingness of educators to embrace diversity, especially racial diversity
There is a lack of connection to teachers who are predominantly white
A lack of diversity policy to ensure diversity in leadership and staffing
Failure of system leaders, teachers and individuals to examine biases and discrimination in school

The white leadership in DDSB is all encompassing at the top levels
The lack of Black African and Caribbean people as educators in DDSB, especially males
Black kids are held back from elementary school and only the strongest excel academically
Streaming of Black kids is a big problem in this board. The reality is that only about 5-10% of Black kids get into college or university because they are all in applied
Regulation 274 limits hiring to seniority, which prevents the board from hiring from a diverse pool, including persons from diverse backgrounds to reflect the diversity of the community
Lack of data to identify student needs and address racial diversity is an ongoing concern
Black kids are also disciplined more often and more harshly and there is no tracking, no data on this
The presence of police in school is a problem for Black children who are the targets of harassment

These responses are not listed in any order of importance.

Diversity and Identity in DDSB

The survey asked participants to respond to the following question: "*How does your identity impact your work with students from racialized, African Caribbean diasporas?* Respondents provided 26 comments about identity and diversity, some remarking on how their identity helps in terms of building trust, connection, and relationship with students. Others offered comments on how their white identity, gender and privilege act as barriers to connecting with racialized student. Their comments are outlined below in no order of importance.

Question: How does your own identity impact your work with students from racialized, African Caribbean diasporas?
I understand their challenges and care what happens to them as I have had similar experiences
Race does not appear to matter here. We continue to be marginalized. Other forms of identity seem to matter more than race so African and Caribbean students do not too many role models in DDSB
My identity limits my connection and engagement to racialized students
I must keep working to ensure that race does not fall off the agenda to other forms of diversity
My white identity makes it challenging to build and sustain trusting, positive relationships with teenagers including those from racialized African and Caribbean diasporas
I think we need more racialized staff to be role models for racialized students

I think my identity helps me to connect better with racialized students
I tend to look out for Black children when I see the inequity because I understand that experience
It helps me because I understand the cultural nuances and can connect with them, as well as with parents
The children see me as an "ally" they can speak honestly to about issues of race and racism
I can see the biases and discrimination, call it out and advocate for our children
Parents are also at ease when they see me. They feel safe to talk about their children
Students get excited when they see an African Canadian show up as their teacher
I am unable to speak up all the time due to my role in DDSB
Being white and male with privilege, I must stop and reflect on the situation through many lenses
My identity allows me to connect with students and parents in an authentic way
I have a greater understanding of the issues and realities and can speak to solutions more readily
Black families don't trust teachers. They don't believe that they have their children's best interest
I am often seen as the solution to racial situations because others lack the knowledge on what to do
I feel that I am unable to connect and often inadequate because I do not identify as racialized
Because I do not represent this diversity I am more likely to be heard as an ally
Although I do not identify with racialized students, I do try to connect by promoting open communication in my class and present myself as a learner
I recognize that because of my identity I represent an area of mistrust for racialized students
I sometimes feel the need to 'tread' carefully so that I do not offend anyone
I try to be very respectful of racialized students. I see the disrespect they endure from some teachers
I hold very high expectations of Black students, unlike most of my colleagues who are white

These responses are not listed in any order of importance.

Additional Suggestions /Concerns/Comments about Diversity in DDSB

The survey asked participants: "*Is there anything else you would like to tell us about diversity programs/initiatives in the DDSB?*". Participants provided a range of additional suggestions, comments and concerns about diversity in DDSB. Their responses are outlined below in no order of importance.

Question: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about diversity programs/initiatives in the DDSB?
There is a need for strong leadership and representation of different groups in DDSB
They need to engage students in more authentic ways. Their voices are often missing in DDSB
There is a need to support parents to exercise their rights
The DDSB needs to develop more race-specific training and programming
DDSB needs to collect race-based data on student achievement and suspension
Further studies on racial diversity is needed in DDSB to examine how well African Canadian children are performing in schools across the system
There is a focus on other aspects of diversity but not much on racial diversity
There is reluctance to collect race-based data, maybe due to fear of what the data might reveal
There are some attempts to provide diversity initiatives but minimal acknowledgement of systemic racism or the lack of anti-oppression on the achievement or success of Black kids
School administrators truly do not understand the needs and challenges of racialized students
There needs to be a focus on educating parents and students about their rights and responsibilities
Further studies are needed to explore the impact of unintended consequences of suspension on students' academic achievement. This is urgently needed in the board because they refuse to collect the data
There seems to be an unwillingness or fear to approach issues of race in the DDSB
Limited opportunities for the development of African Canadian children because race and racism are minimized
Generally, the issue of racism is not only unique to DDSB, it is systemic in Durham Region at every institution and is engrained in the society
The lack of diversity of school staff in DDSB is a real concern. It would be nice to have people who understand and can address the negative experience concerning racism through our lens
We need to move from programs and initiatives to curriculum change and staff change

Our issues and voices have been ignored and silenced for too long, which affect our children
There is a lack of high expectation of Black children by DDSB teachers
Black parents need more information about the education system to advocate for their children
The leadership, past and present, refuse to acknowledge that race data exist. The quantitative data exist within the DDSB but they continue to say that it does not exist and they know that it does
There are many reports that are gathering dust, we need to act now. Our children are being harmed
To address under-representation of staff, hiring incentives must be paired with retirement incentives
Teachers need more training on how to engage Black children. They need to look at their biases
There needs to be core programs that are integrated as initiatives continue to be voluntary
There is an urgent need to hire more racialized men and women in DDSB to reflect the community of Durham. Our children need to see people who look like them in the schools they attend
There seems to be a continuous undermining of African Canadian children in the DDSB, including unwarranted suspension and expulsion
There are limited opportunities for the development of African Canadian children in DDSB, along with teacher low expectation
Parents need to have information so they are equipped to navigate the education system to protect their children

These responses are not listed in any order of importance.

Experience with Racial Diversity in DDSB

Participants were asked the question: "*How would you describe your experience with racial diversity in DDSB?*". Of the 92 respondents, 6 (7%) indicated that their experience was very positive. Another 37 (40%) said their experience was positive. 33 (36%) indicated that their experience was somewhat positive and 16 (17%) said their experience was not positive. Tables 11 and Chart 10 below outline the responses and the percentage of total respondents to this question.

Table 11|*Question: What has been your experience with racial diversity in DDSB?*

Experience with Racial Diversity	Count of Survey Responses	Percentage of total respondents to this question (N=92)
Very Positive	6	7%
Positive	37	40%
Somewhat Positive	33	36%
Not Positive	16	17%
TOTAL	92	100%

Chart 10: Reported Experiences with Diversity
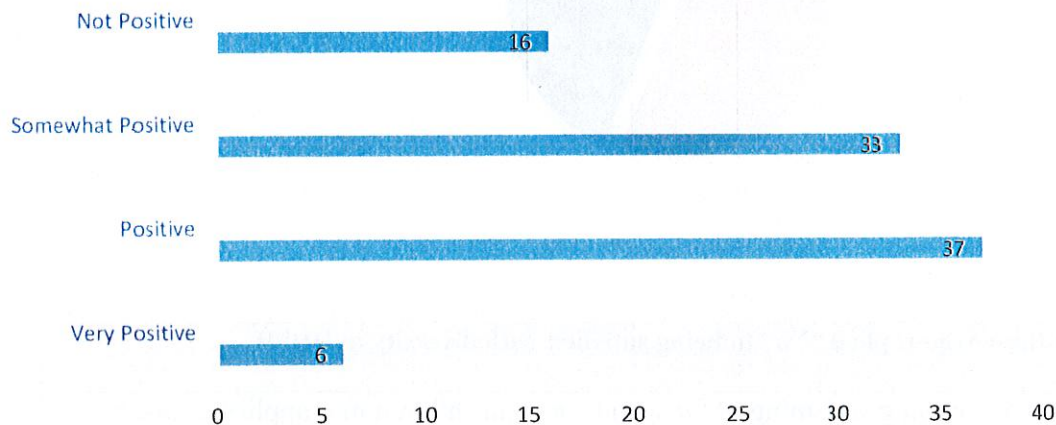
Satisfaction with Diversity in DDSB

Participants were asked, "*Are you satisfied with the level of diversity programming/initiative in DDSB?*". Of the 89 respondents, 39 (44%) said yes and 50 (56%) said no. Those who replied "no" were asked to further explain their lack of satisfaction with diversity in DDSB. Their comments highlighted both the personal incompetency of school leaders to address racial diversity and systemic issues of discrimination and racism, which are outlined in the statements below in Table 12.1. Table 12 and Chart 11 below outline the responses and the percentage of total respondents to this question.

Table 12

Question: *Are you satisfied with the level of diversity programming/initiatives in the DDSB?*	Count of Survey Responses	Percentage of total respondents to this question (N=89)
Yes	39	44%
No	50	56%

Chart 11: Reported Satisfaction with Diversity
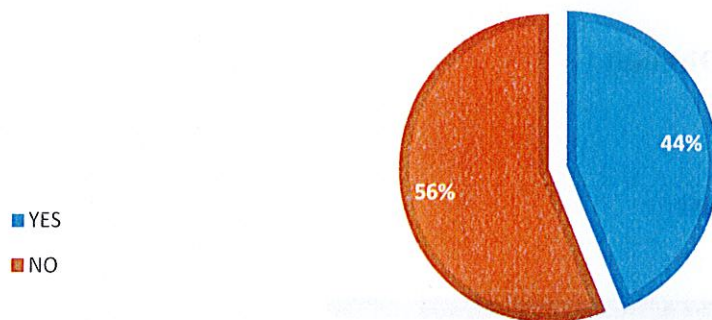
Table 12.1

Responses from those who replied "No" to being satisfied with diversity in DDSB
Dissatisfied with the ongoing streaming of African Canadian children into applied courses
Administrators seem to lack the ability and interest to advance the education of Black children
Many Black students do not feel connected to the school or believe they can be successful in DDSB
Too many staff and administrators "bury" their heads in the sand and pretend that problems do not exist
There needs to be more effort towards meaningful change in practice and policy
We need to look at the systemic issues and not simply create events and programs for diversity
More needs to be done to engage Black boys, especially around leadership and identity
DDSB leaders do not recognize the role of racialized staff and educators and what messages they send when our voices are not heard, or when we are silenced

Programs need to evolve to reflect diverse cultures, and increase dialogue between and among groups
Dissatisfied with the low expectation of Black students, and the streaming into courses that prevent them from going to post-secondary education
There is consistent discrimination against African Canadian children in the board from elementary to high school, which is perpetuated by staff and administrators in both academic and social development
There is a need for more services for students generally, and greater access to African Caribbean counsellors, social workers, and therapists throughout the board
There is a lack of interest on the part of some teachers to educate Black children and hold high expectations
The presence of police in some schools unfairly expose African Canadian children to criminalization
African Canadian boys bear daily harassment from teachers that other students don't have to deal with

These responses are not listed in any order of importance.

Conclusion and recommendations

The findings and comments presented in this report are based upon feedback given in six in camera *community voice sessions* and in the quantitative and qualitative *survey* responses. It should be noted that the community voice sessions and qualitative survey responses generated very similar comments with respect to the level of diversity in DDSB. Overall, based upon participants' responses and feedback from member check discussions, there are significant challenges to diversity in DDSB, and to meeting the academic and social needs of racialized African Caribbean students. Most participants were not happy with the level of diversity in DDSB (56%), and many provided feedback expressing their dissatisfaction. Only 7% had a "very positive" experience with diversity and 40% had a "positive" experience. Although there are many diversity programs and initiatives, participants reported many challenges that included the streaming of African Caribbean students in mainly applied and mixed courses, low teacher expectation and academic performance and high rates of suspension, concerns with expulsion and police in schools.

Most of the approximately 300 community voice session participants expressed support for greater attention to diversity in DDSB. They repeatedly reported an urgent need to hire more racialized African and Caribbean teachers, staff and administrators at all levels of the board. Respondents also suggested the hiring of more counsellors and social workers from racialized African Canadian communities to better engage with and meet the needs of students. It was also noted that racialized African Canadian parents and students need greater access to information about the education system, their rights and responsibilities, and on the services and programs available in the board. Participants also suggested that the DDSB provide information to families so that they are "…equipped to navigate the system to protect their children".

Participants also expressed frustration that DDSB does not appear to make use of existing reports to address diversity as "there are many reports that are gathering dust...[while] our children are being harmed". Some participants were not convinced that diversity programs and initiatives made any difference to the biases and discrimination that racialized African Caribbean children experience in DDSB. In fact, as one participant stated, "there is a lack of recognition of racism, colonization, power and white privilege." Another stated that "We need to look at the systemic issues and not simply create events and programs for diversity". Rather, "there needs to be more meaningful change in practice and policy in DDSB" another stated.

The lack of attention to ongoing streaming and addressing the education needs of racialized African Caribbean students were frequently highlighted. In the words of one participant, "Black kids are held back from elementary school and only the strongest excel academically". It was reported that there was "A lack of attention to the disengagement of racialized African Caribbean students... [as well as] a lack of connection to teachers who are predominantly white". The issue of suspension was frequently reported as an issue. It was suggested that "there seems to be a continuous undermining of African Canadian children in DDSB, including unwarranted suspension and expulsion". It was also suggested that further studies be conducted "to examine how well African Canadian children are performing in schools across the system...[and] to explore the impact of unintended consequences of suspension on students' academic achievement".

The results of the community voice sessions and survey do not reflect positively on diversity within DDSB. Based on the feedback gathered from participants in the community voice sessions and responses and comments from paper-based surveys, I offer the following set of recommendations for consideration and further study by the Durham District School Board.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the overall themes drawn from participants' responses in the survey questionnaires and community voice sessions.

1. Develop curricula to reflect the history and contributions of racialized African Caribbean people in Canada and throughout the world
2. Hire racialized African Caribbean staff and teachers to reflect student body
3. Promote more racialized African Caribbean educators to school administrators
4. Hire more racialized African Caribbean male teachers
5. Promote racialized African Caribbean educators into leadership positions
6. Hire more racialized African Caribbean social workers and counsellors in both elementary and high school panels to support the increasingly diverse student body
7. Develop a student engagement strategy that includes building relations, greater connection, leadership opportunities, and supports for racialized African Caribbean students to help them succeed academically
8. Put in place ongoing, mandatory training on anti-Black racism for staff, teachers, administrators, counsellors, police officers and other personnel who work in DDSB

9   Data collection and reporting on student diversity, including collecting disaggregated race-based data on education streams, student achievement, student discipline (e.g. suspension, expulsion, transfers, etc.), drop-out, Section 23 classrooms, special education needs, admission to post-secondary institutions, student arrests and all police interactions with students

10   Revise policy 274 to emphasize the importance of diversity among the teaching complement, and remove barriers so that more racialized African Canadian teachers can be hired

11   Establish partnerships with service provider organizations and other group/networks in Durham to develop programs that support racialized African Caribbean students

12   Review the diversity programs and initiatives in the school board to assess if they are meeting the needs of racialized African Caribbean students

13   Revise the safe school policies so that racial diversity and anti-Black racism are recognized as critical areas of policy concerns and intervention

14   Revise police school protocols to ensure that racialized African Caribbean students are not racially profiled or unjustly subjected to interactions with law enforcement in school disciplinary matters that have no criminal basis

15   Develop a transparent process for police-school partnership, including the selection and placement of police in schools, which must involve discussion with school community

16   Develop a mentorship program for racialized African Caribbean students, especially for male students. For example, the *Boys to Men Club* and others

17   Provide core funding to support ongoing, mandatory diversity training of educators and staff

18   Develop a parent engagement strategy that outlines values and commitment to building trusting relations and better communication and connection with racialized African Caribbean parents

19   Develop programs (in school/after school) to engage racialized African Caribbean students in the education process and increase their academic performance

20   Develop after school programs for racialized African Caribbean students off school property

21   Develop education seminars for parents of racialized African Caribbean students

22   Establish a parent advocate position to support parents of racialized African Caribbean students on education matters

23   Establish a student advocate position to support racialized African Caribbean students on education matters

24   Establish an oversight body on education matters related to racialized African Caribbean students (e.g. Durham Black Educators' Network)

APPENDIX A

TOWN HALL COMMUNITY VOICE FLYER

Community Voice

REFLECTION SESSIONS

"When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak.

Our visions begin with our desires."

Audre Lorde

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing Equitable and Inclusive Learning Communities.

Through the DDSB Diversity Initiative, Community Voice Sessions, facilitated by Justice Donald McLeod; students, parents, staff and community members of the African, Caribbean and Black Diaspora, were given opportunity to share their voice for sustainable change.

The goal of these sessions was to ensure that the Durham District School Board is aware of, and responsive to the needs of the students, families and community in which we serve.

In these upcoming sessions, Justice Donald McLeod will share his findings and recommendations with all members of our Learning Community to further develop our action plan.

Upon completion of Community Voice Reflection Sessions, the Durham District School Board will continue to work in partnership with Justice McLeod to ensure recommendations are reflected in DDSB programs and practices.

MEETING DATES / SPECIFIC AUDIENCE

Each session is in camera.* Please only attend the appropriate session as noted below.

NOVEMBER 22, 2016

TRUSTEES, DDSB STAFF, TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SUPERINTENDENTS
6:00-7:30 pm
Room 2027-2028

NOVEMBER 24, 2016

DBEN MEMBERS
6:00-7:00 pm
Audley Community Centre
1955 Audley Road
Ajax, ON

DECEMBER 1, 2016

DDSB STUDENTS
4:30-5:45 pm

PARENTS AND INVESTED/ACTIVE COMMUNITY MEMBERS
6:00-7:30 pm

Community Voice
SESSIONS

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing Equitable and Inclusive Learning Communities.

Through the *DDSB Diversity Initiative-Community Voice Sessions*; students, parents, staff and community members of the racialized African, and/or Caribbean diaspora will have an opportunity to share their voice towards sustainable change. **Mr. Donald F. McLeod** will facilitate various Town Hall Community Voice Sessions in attempt to ensure the Durham District School Board is aware of, and responsive to the needs of the students, families and community in which we serve.
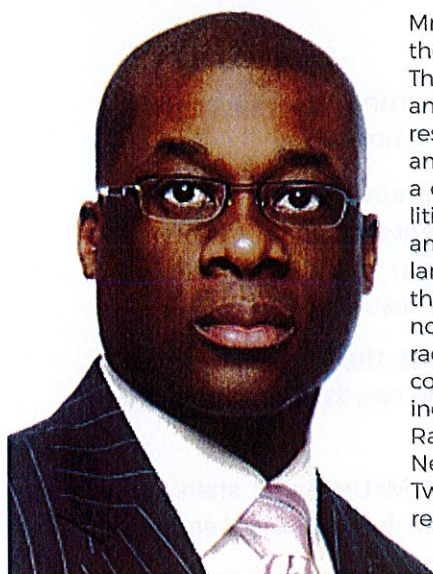
Mr. D.F. McLeod was the founding partner of The McLeod Group, Barristers and Solicitors, a well-known and respected criminal, administrative and human rights firm in Toronto. For over a decade Mr. McLeod was an accomplished litigator with a keen interest in community and social justice issues. In 2009, the landmark case of R v. Douse revolutionized the traditionally used racial vetting process to now take into consideration non-conscious racism. As a litigator, he has provided legal commentary to high profile media programs including CBC Newsworld, The Hour, CBC Radio's Metro Morning, CFRB 1010, CNN, Fox News, CTV Morning as well as TVO's Studio Two on a variety of topics and community related issues.

Mr. McLeod has been the worthy recipient of several notable awards including The Lincoln Alexander Award from Osgoode Hall Law School, The President's Award from the Harry Jerome Awards (Sponsored by the Black Business and Professionals Association), Community Recognition Award from the Jamaican Canadian Association, The Excellence in Litigation Award from the Canadian Association of Black Lawyer, as well as being recognized for his Excellence in Legal Practice from the Association of Black Law Students Caucus.

In 2013, McLeod was appointed to the Ontario Court of Justice, and with that became the first Black Judge to graduate from Queens University since the Law Schools inception in 1957. He also is the Co-Chair of 100 Strong, a not-for-profit community program geared to the advancement of African Canadian young men in urban centres.

MEETING DATES / SPECIFIC AUDIENCE

Each session is in camera.* Please only attend the appropriate session as noted below.

INVESTED AND ACTIVE GROUPS
MAY 19, 2016
7:30-9:00 pm
DDSB Education Centre
Room 2020
400 Taunton Road East
Whitby, ON

DDSB STAFF
(not including administrators)
MAY 30, 2016
7:30-9:00 pm
Centennial Building, Regal Room
416 Centre Street South
Whitby, ON

DDSB STUDENTS
JUNE 1, 2016
7:30-9:00 pm
Donald A. Wilson S.S.
681 Rossland Road West
Whitby, ON

DURHAM BLACK EDUCATOR'S NETWORK
JUNE 6, 2016
7:30-9:00 pm
Centennial Building, Regal Room
416 Centre Street South
Whitby, ON

DDSB TRUSTEES, SUPERVISORY OFFICERS AND ADMINISTRATORS
JUNE 13, 2016
4:30-6:00 pm
DDSB Education Centre, Board Room
400 Taunton Road East, Whitby, ON

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS
JUNE 21, 2016
7:30-9:30 pm
Centennial Building, Regal Room
416 Centre Street South, Whitby, ON

DDSB
Ignite Learning

* In camera is a legal term that means in private. No recording devices or cameras will be permitted.

APPENDIX B

TOWN HALL COMMUNITY VOICE SESSION SURVEY

Community Voice
SESSIONS

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD DIVERSITY INITIATIVE AND 100 STRONG COMMUNITY PROGRAM

MAY 30, 2016

Dear Staff,

As part of an ongoing commitment to diversity, and to the education of students from racialized, African and /or Caribbean diasporas, we would appreciate your help in completing this survey. Please respond to the questions below.

Your participation is voluntary. To ensure anonymity, please do not include your name or any other identifying information. The information will be used as a part of our continued commitment to improve diversity initiatives in the school board.

Thank you for your cooperation.

PLEASE CHECK ☒ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW:

Employee Group:

☐ Secretary ☐ Teacher ☐ Social Worker ☐ Child & Youth Worker ☐ Other

School Panel:

☐ Elementary ☐ Middle ☐ High ☐ Alternative ☐ Other

Length of Service:

☐ 1-3 yrs ☐ 3-5 yrs ☐ 5-8 yrs ☐ 8-10 yrs ☐ 10-15 yrs ☐ 15+ yrs

Department:

☐ Curriculum ☐ Facilities ☐ Support Staff ☐ Special Education ☐ Other

Age Range:

☐ 25-29 yrs ☐ 30-34 yrs. ☐ 35-39 yrs ☐ 40-45 yrs. ☐ 46 + yrs.

What is your Teachable?

_____

Do you identify as a member of a racialized, African and /or Caribbean diaspora group?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Overall, what has been your experience with racial diversity in the Durham District School Board?

☐ Very Positive ☐ Positive ☐ Somewhat Positive ☐ Not Positive

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH QUESTION:

In which education stream are children from the African diaspora mainly placed?

1. Academic   **2.** Applied   **3.** Mixed   **4.** Workplace   **5.** Locally Developed

In which education stream are children from the Caribbean diaspora mainly placed?

1. Academic   **2.** Applied   **3.** Mixed   **4.** Workplace   **5.** Locally Developed

Overall, how well are children from the African diaspora performing in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

Overall, how well are children from the Caribbean diaspora performing in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

Overall, how well are children from the African diaspora behaving in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

Overall, how well are children from the Caribbean diaspora behaving in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

Overall, are children from the African diaspora frequently suspended from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Overall, are children from the African diaspora frequently expelled from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Overall, are children from the Caribbean diaspora frequently suspended from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Overall, are children from the Caribbean diaspora frequently expelled from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

What are the most common reasons for the suspension and expulsion of children from the African and /or Caribbean diasporas from DDSB? *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please identify the diversity programs/initiatives in the DDSB *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please explain the challenges to diversity in the DDSB *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

How does your own identity impact your work with students from racialized, African and /or Caribbean diasporas?
(please use the back of the form if necessary)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Overall, are you satisfied with the level of diversity programming/initiatives in the DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about diversity programming/ initiatives in the Durham District School Board?
(please use the back of the form if necessary)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you!

Community Voice

SESSIONS

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD DIVERSITY INITIATIVE AND 100 STRONG COMMUNITY PROGRAM

JUNE 13, 2016

Dear Trustees, Supervisory Officers, Administrators,

As part of an ongoing commitment to diversity and to the education of students from racialized, African and /or Caribbean diasporas, we would appreciate your help in completing this survey. Please respond to the questions below.

Your participation is voluntary. To ensure anonymity, please do not include your name or any other identifying information. The information will be used as a part of our continued commitment to improve diversity initiatives in the school board.

Thank you for your cooperation.

PLEASE CHECK ☒ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW:

Do you identify as a member of a racialized, African and /or Caribbean diaspora group?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you an Administrator with the Durham District School Board (DDSB)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, in which capacity of administration?

☐ Trustee ☐ Superintendent ☐ Principal ☐ Vice Principal ☐ Other

If no, please identify your position with the DDSB:

_____

How long have you worked for the DDSB?

☐ 1-3 yrs ☐ 4-6 yrs ☐ 7-9 yrs ☐ 10-12 yrs ☐ 13+ yrs

How long have you worked in your current Administrative position for the DDSB?

☐ 1-3 yrs ☐ 4-6 yrs ☐ 7-9 yrs ☐ 10-12 yrs ☐ 13+ yrs

Are you a member of a DDSB diversity committee?

☐ Yes ☐ No

DDSB
Ignite Learning

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH QUESTION:

In your experience, please tell us how children from racialized, African and/or Caribbean diasporas are doing in the Durham District School Board.

In which education stream are children from the African diaspora often placed?

1. Academic   **2.** Applied   **3.** Mixed   **4.** Workplace   **5.** Locally Developed

In which education stream are children from the Caribbean diaspora often placed?

1. Academic   **2.** Applied   **3.** Mixed   **4.** Workplace   **5.** Locally Developed

How well are children from the African diaspora performing in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

How well are children from the Caribbean diaspora performing in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

How well are children from the African diaspora behaving in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

How well are children from the Caribbean diaspora behaving in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

Are children from the African diaspora frequently suspended from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are children from the African diaspora frequently expelled from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are children from the Caribbean diaspora frequently suspended from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are children from the Caribbean diaspora frequently expelled from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are children from the African and/or Caribbean diasporas often in programs for suspended students?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are children from the African and /or Caribbean diasporas often arrested by police at school?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are police officers or school resource officers placed in schools in the DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN DETAIL:

What are the most common reasons for the suspension of children from the African and /or Caribbean diasporas from DDSB? *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

What are the most common reasons for the expulsion of children from the African and /or Caribbean diasporas in the DDSB? *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

Please identify the diversity programs/initiatives in the DDSB. *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

Please explain the challenges to diversity in the DDSB. *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

How does your own identity impact your work with students from racialized, African and /or Caribbean diasporas? *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about diversity programming/ initiatives in the Durham District School Board? (please use the back of the form if necessary)

_____

_____

_____

Overall, are you satisfied with the level of diversity programming/initiatives in the DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

If no, please explain:

_____

_____

What has been your experience with racial diversity in the Durham District School Board?

1. Very Positive   **2.** Positive   **3.** Somewhat Positive   **4.** Not Positive

Thank you!

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Community Voice

SESSIONS

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD DIVERSITY INITIATIVE AND 100 STRONG COMMUNITY PROGRAM

JUNE 21, 2016

Dear Students,

As part of an ongoing commitment to diversity, and to the education of students from racialized, African and /or Caribbean diasporas, we would appreciate your help in completing this survey. Please respond to the questions below.

Your participation is voluntary. To ensure anonymity, please do not include your name or any other identifying information. The information will be used as a part of our continued commitment to improve diversity initiatives in the school board.

Thank you for your cooperation.

PLEASE CHECK ☒ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW:

School Panel:

☐ Elementary   ☐ Middle   ☐ High   ☐ Alternative   ☐ Other

Length of Time as a Student in DDSB:

☐ 1-3 yrs   ☐ 4-6 yrs   ☐ 7-9 yrs   ☐ 10-12 yrs   ☐ 12+ yrs

Age Group:

☐ 12-14 yrs   ☐ 15-17 yrs   ☐ 18-19 yrs   ☐ 20+ yrs

Do you identify as a member of a racialized, African and /or Caribbean diaspora group?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Were you born in Canada?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If no, where were you born? _____

Do you speak a language other than English or French?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH QUESTION:

In which education stream are you currently placed?

1. Academic   **2.** Applied   **3.** Mixed   **4.** Workplace   **5.** Locally Developed

How many courses are you currently taking?

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6+**

How well do you perform in school?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

How many course credits have you earned to date?

1. 0-5   **2.** 6-10   **3.** 11-15   **4.** 16+

Are you on track to graduate from high school?

1. Yes   **2.** No

How well do you behave in school?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

Have you ever been suspended from school?

1. Yes   **2.** No

If yes, how many times have you been suspended from school? _____

Have you ever been expelled from school?

1. Yes   **2.** No

If yes, how long were you expelled from school? _____

Have you ever attended a program for students on suspension or expulsion?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Have you ever been arrested by police at school or off school property?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Do you have police officers or school resource officers in your school?

1. Yes   **2.** No

DDSB
Ignite Learning

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN DETAILS:

What were the reason(s) you were suspended and/or expelled from school? *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please identify the diversity programs/initiatives in the Durham District School Board *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What has been your experience with racial diversity in the Durham District School Board?

1. Very Positive   **2.** Positive   **3.** Somewhat Positive   **4.** Not Positive

Overall, are you satisfied with the level of diversity programming/initiatives in the DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about diversity programming/ initiatives in the Durham District School Board? *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you!

DDSB
Ignite Learning

PARENTS

Community Voice
SESSIONS

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD DIVERSITY INITIATIVE AND 100 STRONG COMMUNITY PROGRAM

JUNE 21, 2016

Dear Parent,

As part of an ongoing commitment to diversity, and to the education of students from racialized, African and /or Caribbean diasporas, we would appreciate your help in completing this survey. Please respond to the questions below.

Your participation is voluntary. To ensure anonymity, please do not include your name or any other identifying information. The information will be used as a part of our continued commitment to improve diversity initiatives in the school board.

Thank you for your cooperation.

PLEASE CHECK ☒ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW:

1. School status:

☐ Parent   ☐ Teacher   ☐ Community Member   ☐ Administrator

2. Highest Educational Level:

☐ Elementary   ☐ High   ☐ College   ☐ University   ☐ Post Graduate

3. Marital Status:

☐ Married   ☐ Single   ☐ Divorced   ☐ Separated   ☐ Other _____

4. Age Range:

☐ 25-29 yrs   ☐ 30-34 yrs.   ☐ 35-39 yrs   ☐ 40-45 yrs.   ☐ 46 + yrs.

5. Number of Children in the Home: (should you have more than one child please fill out a separate form for each)

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5   ☐ More than 5

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH QUESTION:

In which of the education streams is your child/ren currently placed?

1. Academic   **2.** Applied   **3.** Mixed   **4.** Workplace

Has your child ever been suspended from the Durham District School Board?

1. Yes   **2.** No

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Has your child ever been expelled from the Durham District School Board?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Has your child ever been sent home from the Durham District School Board?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Overall, how well is your child performing in Durham District School Board?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

Overall, what has your experience been with the Durham District School Board?

1. Very Positive   **2.** Positive   **3.** Somewhat Positive   **4.** Not Positive

Are you satisfied overall with the Durham District School Board?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Please explain your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with DDSB

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your overall needs, concerns experiences with Durham District School Board?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you!

Community Voice
SESSIONS

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD DIVERSITY INITIATIVE AND 100 STRONG COMMUNITY PROGRAM

JUNE 21, 2016

Dear Community Members,

As part of an ongoing commitment to diversity and to the education of students from racialized, African and /or Caribbean diasporas, we would appreciate your help in completing this survey. Please respond to the questions below.

Your participation is voluntary. To ensure anonymity, please do not include your name or any other identifying information. The information will be used as a part of our continued commitment to improve diversity initiatives in the school board.

Thank you for your cooperation.

PLEASE CHECK ☒ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW:

Do you identify as a member of a racialized, African and /or Caribbean diaspora?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are you a member of the Durham District School Board (DDSB) Black Educators' Network?

1. Yes   **2.** No

If yes, how long have you been a member of the DDSB Black Educators' Network?

☐ 1-3 yrs   ☐ 4-6 yrs   ☐ 7-9 yrs   ☐ 10-12 yrs   ☐ 13+ yrs

Are you a parent of a child/ren in the DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

If yes, how many child/ren do you have in the DDSB?

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5   ☐ More than 5

In which grade level or panel is your child/ren?

☐ Elementary   ☐ Secondary

Are you an employee of the Durham District School Board (DDSB)?

1. Yes   **2.** No

If yes, in what capacity (e.g. Trustee, Superintendent, Vice/Principal, Teacher, Staff, etc.)?

If you are an employee, how long have you worked for the DDSB?

☐ 1-3 yrs   ☐ 4-6 yrs   ☐ 7-9 yrs   ☐ 10-12 yrs   ☐ 13+ yrs

If you are not an employee of DDSB, for which organization do you work (e.g. community, faith, government, business)?

_____

How long have you worked for this organization?

☐ 1-3 yrs   ☐ 4-6 yrs   ☐ 7-9 yrs   ☐ 10-12 yrs   ☐ 13+ yrs

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH QUESTION:

In your experience, tell us how children from racialized, African and/or Caribbean diasporas are doing in the Durham District School Board.

In which education stream are children from the African diaspora often placed?

1. Academic   **2.** Applied   **3.** Mixed   **4.** Workplace   **5.** Locally Developed

In which education stream are children from the Caribbean diaspora often placed?

1. Academic   **2.** Applied   **3.** Mixed   **4.** Workplace   **5.** Locally Developed

How well are children from the African diaspora performing in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

How well are children from the Caribbean diaspora performing in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

How well are children from the African diaspora behaving in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

How well are children from the Caribbean diaspora behaving in DDSB?

1. Excellent   **2.** Good   **3.** Fair   **4.** Poor

Are children from the African diaspora often suspended from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are children from the African diaspora often expelled from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are children from the Caribbean diaspora often suspended from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are children from the Caribbean diaspora often expelled from DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are children from the African and/or Caribbean diasporas often referred to programs for suspended students?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are children from the African and /or Caribbean diasporas often arrested by police at school?

1. Yes   **2.** No

Are police officers or school resource officers placed in schools in the DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

What are the most common reasons for the suspension of children from the African and /or Caribbean diasporas in the DDSB? *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

What are the most common reasons for the expulsion of children from the African and /or Caribbean diasporas in the DDSB? *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

Please identify the diversity programs/initiatives in the DDSB *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

Please explain the challenges to diversity in the DDSB (please use the back of the form if necessary)

_____

_____

_____

How does your own identity impact your work with students from racialized, African and /or Caribbean diasporas? *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about diversity programming/ initiatives in the Durham District School Board? *(please use the back of the form if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Overall, are you satisfied with the level of diversity programming/initiatives in the DDSB?

1. Yes   **2.** No

If no, please explain your level of satisfaction with DDSB

_____

_____

_____

_____

Overall, what has been your experience with racial diversity in the Durham District School Board?

1. Very Positive   **2.** Positive   **3.** Somewhat Positive   **4.** Not Positive

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____   *Thank you!*

DDSB
Ignite Learning

APPENDIX C

TOWN HALL COMMUNITY VOICE SESSION CONSENT FORM

Community Voice
SESSIONS

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
DIVERSITY INITIATIVE AND
100 STRONG COMMUNITY PROGRAM

JUNE 21, 2016

Informed consent

As part of the Durham District School Board (DDSB) Diversity Initiative to ensure the success of racialized, and African and/or Caribbean diaspora students, we would appreciate your help in completing this survey. **Your participation is voluntary.** The information will be used as a part of our continued commitment to improve diversity initiatives in the school board.

I (print your name), _____ agree to participate in a **Community Voice Session conducted by Mr. D.F. McLeod**.

I understand that my participation in the survey is voluntary and that I may withdraw my participation at any time, without jeopardy to me or my child/ren's academic standing in the school board, or any of my relationships with the DDSB.

I understand that my participation in the group may involve disclosure of information about myself or others, however no identifying information will be linked to any specific comments within the report. To protect others rights and privacy, I agree not to talk about any of the information shared by others in this group outside of this discussion.

I also understand that the session is in camera, which means it will be in private with **Mr. D.F. McLeod from 100 Strong**. No recording devices or cameras will be permitted.

Having read and understood the above, I agree to participate in the survey and discussion, and my signature and today's date appear below.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

DDSB
Ignite Learning

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

REPORT TO: Durham District School Board   **DATE:** February 6, 2023

SUBJECT: Towards Excellence in Black Student Achievement in the DDSB   **PAGE:** 1 of 14

ORIGIN: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
Margaret Lazarus, Superintendent of Equitable Education
Mo Hamid, Superintendent of Equitable Education

1.0   Purpose
This report is to provide the Board of Trustees with information about the work and the impact of strategies and programs intended to identify, prevent, and dismantle anti-Black racism and other forms of discrimination at the school level.

2.0   Ignite Learning Strategic Priority/Operational Goals
Success – *Set high expectations and provide support to ensure all staff and students reach their potential every year.*

- Empower students to thrive and succeed at school, ensuring equitable outcomes for all.

Well-being – *Create safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces to promote student and staff well-being.*

- Provide safe, inclusive, and respectful learning and working environments that support positive academic, mental, and physical growth.

Leadership – *Identify future leaders, actively develop new leaders and responsively support current leaders.*

- Educators in school teams will develop their skills to lead initiatives, identify barriers to student success and implement strategies to dismantle oppressive structures.
- Improve anti-racist leadership approaches and practices within the Durham District School Board (DDSB).
- Engage students in authentic learning experiences to grow and develop leadership skills.

Equity – *Promote a sense of belonging and increase equitable outcomes by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement.*
- Ensure equitable access and practices are reflected in programs to create inclusive environments where all students have a sense of belonging and feel that they matter.

Engagement – *Engage students, parents, and community members to improve student outcomes and build public confidence.*

- Engage students in authentic learning experiences responsive to their lived experiences and abilities.

Innovation – *Re-imagine learning and teaching spaces through digital technologies and innovative resources.*

3.0　Background

In recent years, active research has been conducted to capture the voices and experiences of Black communities in the Greater Toronto Area. The results of forums, questionnaires, and focus groups have repeatedly conveyed a pattern of anti-Black racism, systemic discrimination against and disenfranchisement of Black youth. In 2016, the DDSB partnered with Justice Donald McLeod to capture the perspectives about the lived experience of Black communities in our District. Justice McLeod held Community Consultation Sessions, Community Voice Forums with Black communities (staff, parents, students, and community members) across the District to listen to and to hear their experiences and concerns. These sessions, which took place over a year, resulted in twenty-four recommendations (Appendix A) based on the participants' responses to the survey and the community voice sessions. The data is similar to the reports from Peel Region, Fighting an Uphill Battle (2015) and York University "Towards Race Equity in Education": The Schooling of Black Students in the Greater Toronto Area (2017).

A steering committee was developed to action the recommendations. Over time, the District built upon this work in response to the feedback from the system, the learning that was required and the degree of impact that was felt to intentionally interrupt the negative trends and patterns around access, discrimination, anti-Black racism, engagement, and performance for Black youth. As a result, the DDSB initiated across the District the Compendium of Action for Black Student Success in the spring of 2018 for implementation between 2018 to 2021. These initiatives not only serve students directly, they also provide examples of strategies and approaches that can be implemented in schools and classrooms across the District.

Additionally in 2019, data from the DDSB Student Census indicated that the current educational system imposes barriers that disproportionately and negatively impact students who identify as Black. Black students were experiencing school differently; academic outcomes for Black students were worse than white and South Asian students. The data also showed that Black students had a higher proportion of suspensions, and in a four-year period fewer Black students graduated from high school as compared to white and South Asian students.

4.0　Analysis

The DDSB's commitment to identifying, challenging, addressing, and dismantling anti-Black racism has been communicated clearly through the Director's office, the Equity Department, the Curriculum Department, Inclusive Student Services, People and Culture, and through the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy and the Indigenous Education Policy.

The DDSB has been working to implement specific, targeted actions and intersectional approaches to protect the rights of Black students and families, promote increased student success and engagement throughout the District and to hold ourselves accountable for addressing what the Board has heard from Black communities about their experiences and recommendations. Though this report highlights the procedures, programs, capacity building, and instructional practices that are working together with policies around excellence in Black student achievement, many of these actions have the potential to benefit and serve all students and families.

The information in the chart below speaks to policies, instructional practices, programs, and capacity building identified as necessary for student success which aligns with the Indigenous Education Procedure and the Human Rights Procedure. (Please refer to sections 5.1 – 5.4 in the Indigenous Education Procedure

![DDSB Ignite Learning logo]

on Classroom Practices: Teaching and Learning and sections 3.11, 3.14, and 3.16 in the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Procedure.) Providing direct, targeted services, strategies, and programs to underserved student populations will address and dismantle systemic education barriers and increase student engagement, achievement, and success.

Policies, Procedures, Memorandum	
Description	**Impact/Direction**
Resource Selection Policy and Procedure (To be interpreted in tandem with the Indigenous Education Policy and Procedure and the Human Rights, Anti- Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Policy and Procedures) This policy provides guidance on the selection and review of learning resources. It supports the District's commitment to protecting, upholding, and promoting Indigenous rights, human rights, and equity in all its learning and working environments. Accompanying it is a procedure for reviewing texts that have concerns, and it provides tools to assist staff when evaluating texts that are used with students.	DDSB's Innovative Education, K-8 Curriculum Teaching and Learning, and the Early Years Departments met in the fall of 2022 to support elementary school Teacher Librarians across the District. The goal was to support educators with the purchasing of texts that would affirm multiple identities and intersections of identities, as well as to support instructional practices such as offering choice and being responsive to students' interests. The Innovative Education Department developed the following QR Codes to assist educators with the purchase of text tools This approach has enabled staff to become more discerning about the resources that students' experience; it challenges educators to disrupt stereotypic and harmful portrayals of communities, and instead promote identity affirming messaging. Teacher Librarians shared the following feedback after the above session: *"I had an opportunity to meet face-to-face with experts who could guide and advise me about the best book choices for my school."* *"Facilitators being available to make suggestions and steer me to books that I may have overlooked."* *"I think there was a strong range of people available to act as resources."*

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Prohibited Use of Slurs and Epithets The 2021 memorandum to all DDSB staff states that the uttering, writing, or using of derogatory and pejorative slurs and epithets (including pictorial/physical representations) is prohibited within the workplace/school community. This includes reading aloud texts or teaching course content that will reinforce oppressive and discriminatory practices.	This memorandum has equipped schools with the tools to understand what racial slurs and epithets are and has increased awareness leading to responsive and meaningful action when they are used by staff or students. Schools continue to consult system leads and the Equity department for direction on responses when these words are used, with a focus on corrective and preventative actions and learning.

Professional Learning

Description	Impact
Give Race Its Place DDSB's Early Years department provided four professional learning sessions to DDSB educators in the fall of 2021. Dr. Kerry-Ann Escayg and Dr. Beverly-Jean Daniel, both leading experts in anti-racist practice in the early years, facilitated the sessions.	**Educators provided feedback on their most significant takeaway from the session.** *"I need to increase my knowledge and then my students' of Black success and inspirational figures."* *"The many ways we can positively affect the students in our classroom regarding race. Also, to be mindful of the harm that could be done and how we must carefully examine our books, resources, materials, etc., in our classroom."* *"I am absolutely going to to include some of these ideas in my centres; I was stuck on positive representation in books. So, I am excited to include this teaching in my classroom."* *"Racism is a Pandemic. I am on the right path and will continue to use my voice to empower Black children and all children."* *"To approach my learning and teaching practices more thoughtfully and meaningfully. Be considerate of all students and create learning opportunities representing people in an anti-racist framework."*

See us, Hear us: Teaching about the Black Canadian Experience An online seminar series held during the 2021-2022 school year, provided educators and administrators with the historical foundation to address and unpack the current realities of the Black Canadian experience. This series helped to shift mindset, and pedagogy, build capacity, and to work to eliminate barriers to Black student success. 200 educators attended the session.	**Below are impact statements from teachers who attended the seminar series:** *"The information I received today was more useful than most courses I took in university. For educators, background information is key when diversifying our pedagogy, classrooms, and schools."* *"This professional learning series is very powerful and so very relevant. One of the few resources that will help dismantle stereotypical views and treatment of Black students and Black people in general."*
Racial Literacy Sessions for Central Staff Central staff supporting the Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry received additional professional development in building racial literacy. This learning provides facilitators and coaches with the confidence, tools and ability to enact their duty- bearer responsibilities to recognize and address inequity when harm occurs.	These sessions led by Dr. Nicole West-Burns have provided central staff that support the Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry (CCPI), with support when responding to racism. Facilitators practiced their duty-bearer responsibilities in these sessions via case studies and debriefing conversations. The feedback from facilitators was that more of these sessions are needed.
Black Boys and Literacy As a continuation of the transformative work of disrupting and dismantling anti-Black racism, the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) has prioritized professional learning around instructional and curriculum-based practices designed to advance the literacy development of adolescents, especially young, Black boys. In October 2022, Dr. Alfred Tatum, a respected educator teaching Black boys in the Elementary grades, provided a speaking engagement for educators where he encouraged new teachers to rethink their expectations of and practices for, developing Black boys' literacy skills and adopting a growth model of literacy development.	The participants continue to deepen their conversations about literacy and equity for young Black boys and the impact for all students in the classroom.

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Anti-Black Racism Learning for Social Work & Psychological Services Members of the Social Work and Psychological Services team are engaging in critical learning as it relates to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices specific to mental health and well-being. Teams gathered to learn from Charmaine Lane (Registered Psychotherapist, Candidate for Ph.D. in Clinical Counseling), a community-based mental health practitioner with expertise in areas of racial trauma and anti-colonial practices. Ms. Lane's training session entitled, "Working with Black Youth and Families in the Midst of Racial Trauma," offered DDSB mental health clinicians' crucial information about the impacts of Anti-Black racism and colonial structures on the mental health and wellness of Black-bodied individuals.	With a greater understanding of how racial trauma and anti-Black racism impacts students and families, members of Psychological Services and Social Work are shifting conversations to centre student identity and experiences of racism so that these experiences, both historical and current, are validated, are incorporated into the clinical assessment, and form a part of the advocacy with schools on behalf of students and their families/caregivers.
Key messages and points of the discussion centred on the importance of taking an intersectional approach to mental health and fostering authentic therapeutic connections with Black students and their caregivers.	
Interdepartmental Structures and Teaching and Learning Sessions K-12 teaching and learning facilitators, pathways counselors, and inclusive Grade 9 coaches have been meeting to learn about anti-oppression and anti-oppressive instructional approaches to build capacity towards implementing the Indigenous Rights Policy and Procedure and the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Policy and Procedures.	Central staff are better equipped to support school staff with School Learning plans and teachers as they implement changes to the curriculum to align with the Human Rights Policy, Indigenous Rights Policy, and Resource Selection Policy and Procedure. This leads to increased student engagement and, in turn, better student outcomes.
NTIP Anti-Oppression Series As a continuation of the transformative work of disrupting and dismantling anti-Black racism, an ongoing DDSB priority, the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) offered Year 1 and Year 2 NTIP-eligible teachers the opportunity to engage in professional learning with Dr. Nicole West-Burns through a 7-part learning series, running from September 2022 through February 2023. The series was prepared with the beginning educator in mind, the 7-part series supports and enhances educators' understanding of their responsibility to respond to bias; at the same time, it encourages educators to consider how to be proactive in setting up schools and classrooms for anti-bias work.	The information Dr. Nicole West Burns shared with our educators throughout this 7-part professional learning series is critical for their development as beginning teachers. Educators began the series by exploring and reflecting upon their social identities and then used that reflection of themselves to promote thinking about the social identities and the experiences of the populations they serve. As educators progress through the remainder of the series, they will be introduced to frameworks to consider when supporting the educational success and excellence of Black students and when engaging in anti-oppression education.

	Educators will also build lesson plans incorporating this pedagogy across different grade levels while meeting curriculum expectations of teaching skills and supporting the inclusion of joy in student learning. The work that educators have engaged in has truly benefited school communities and provided them with a solid foundation for implementing actionable steps when it comes to disrupting and dismantling anti-Black racism.
Administrator Podcast Series The podcast series "Calling Up" was created to strengthen the capacity as a system to identify, address and dismantle anti-Black racism. The podcast is professional learning and reflection for leaders and aspiring leaders at DDSB. All participants engage in a panel discussion that seeks to improve anti-racist leadership approaches and practices within our system. The Podcast series can be accessed on the following platforms: Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Overcast.	The podcast organizers are completing the last podcast in the series and will begin marketing the podcast before requesting feedback.
The CRRP Google Classroom and Tools to Support Policy Implementation The CRRP Google Classroom is a repository for materials that affirm aspects of student identity and resources to support instructional strategies. One such material is the Tools to Support Policy Implementation, which provides tips and highlights policy aspects connected to curriculum materials and professional development opportunities to help staff move from policy to practice.	The CRRP Google Classroom currently has 1700 students and is growing as more DDSB staff ask for access. The feedback is that the space is valuable and is frequently used, and the area is also a place for users to ask questions and connect with other staff across the system. The Google Classroom has the potential to be used for more professional development opportunities as it has a wide following.
Book Studies in Schools An integral part of the work to dismantle systemic barriers has been to build the understanding of District staff about the historical roots of colonialism and anti- Black racism in the Canadian context. Deepening our understanding of the embedded procedures, practices, and policies in place gives us a stronger sense of why change must be deep and go beyond the surface. Some of the titles purchased and distributed across the District to assist with this knowledge building are: *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*, *Is Everyone Really Equal?* and *How to be an Antiracist*.	The book studies that schools are undertaking are helping to illuminate conversations amongst staff that may not previously have been available. Educators are talking about issues affecting the lives of students and families and moving towards actioning their learning through structures like the Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry.

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Programs	
Description	**Impact**
And Still, We Rise Afrocentric Heritage Program This program is a partnership between Durham Black Educators Network (DBEN), DDSB, and Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and supports DDSB's Black students from kindergarten to Grade 8 in fostering cultural connections within their community and affirm students' identities through hands-on experiential learning tasks. Topics include my Black identity, Kwanzaa, STEM, community building, and Black history. The program invites speakers from the community to share their knowledge and lived experiences while elevating and recognizing diverse Black perspectives. The program runs on Saturdays from December 2022- June 2023 at Viola Desmond Public School	The program promotes a renewed sense of pride in their Black identity. The ability to identify, name, and interrupt microaggressions, understand what anti-Black Racism looks like, and disrupt the narrative centered around Black children. This initiative also nurtures an enhanced sense of self-confidence and the ability to advocate for themselves as they navigate school and life interactions. It is geared to support our Black children as learners and help them maximize their learning potential in school and Canadian society.
Great Beginnings The Great Beginnings Early Years School Success Program for Black students is a play-based, developmentally appropriate program that will enhance children's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, language, math, and literacy skills. This program is designed for children who are not currently attending an early learning program, nursery school, preschool, or childcare and will be entering Junior Kindergarten (Year One) at a Durham District School Board School in September. The program's goal is for every child to enter Kindergarten healthy and secure, emotionally, and socially competent, eager, and confident. Every child can be a successful learner and respectful of the diversity of their peers. We recognize that play is children's work and children learn through play, and with this philosophy, The Great Beginnings Program will allow children to reach their full potential.	**The following are feedback statements from families:** *"Please continue offering this program to all the families wanting this opportunity."* *"The teachers were absolutely amazing!* *My daughter always came home with* *wonderful stories about her day."* *"Thank you for offering this program. My son had a wonderful time, and I believe now that his transition to kindergarten in the fall will be exciting rather than scary for him."* *"The program gave [name removed] my child confidence. It allowed him to trust other adults with his needs. He enjoyed the teachers and all the activities. It was a positive experience, and he is therefore excited to go to school."*

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Cypher	Student Voice:
The Cypher Series for Black Male Empowerment has run annually since 2017 and focuses on breaking down barriers to dismantle anti-Black racism in Durham. This is a partnership between the DDSB and the Durham Black Educators Network (DBEN), a community organization that DDSB collaborates with to ensure the work is relevant and responsive to students. During the pandemic, the Cypher Series was presented in webinars and broadcast in classrooms across the District for students in Grades 6-8. These webinars have provided additional professional learning for the host educators and engaged Black males and their peers through content that affirms and centres Black identities and experiences.	"I loved this webinar because I could totally relate to what this webinar was talking about. I may not be a Black male, but I am a Black female, and I deal with microaggression every day, so knowing that I am not the only one dealing with this stuff." "How the speakers are very inspiring and also how they brought young Black MEN together to speak about our skin colours and tones and letting us know you might not think many people don't have your back, but you have a whole brotherhood behind you always ready to uplift and support you."
Empower Her Conference	**Student Feedback:**
A conference to empower students who identify as Black girls to be aware of the pathways available to them to be successful. Over 200 students attended the session. This year's conference will focus on trades for young women.	"Empower Her" was a fantastic experience, especially the Social Media workshop. We believe that there is a certain image that we should obtain from Instagram models and "influencers," but we learned to be ourselves, not just whom we see on social media.
AFFIRM	The group ran virtually for up to 12 high school students across the DDSB.
AFFIRM is a cognitive-based therapy (CBT) and the evidence-based group that allows 2SLGBTQIA+ youth to learn stress-coping skills through affirmative interventions. Integrating identity-affirming strategies and CBT aims to improve the well-being of youth who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+. AFFIRM was run by DDSB Social Work and Psychological Services staff.	AFFIRM at DDSB is preparing to launch the second round in April 2023.
BeMe	The impact of this programming was evident through student testimonials and a strong sense of community among the students and staff facilitators during and following the group.
The BeMe (Black Excellence Made Evident) Collective, Black staff members, and allies from Social Work, Psychological Services, and Youth Liaison Services have continued their work since the launch of the Anti-Black Racism Toolkit. In the 2021-2022 school year, they launched a virtual group for secondary students and have continued into this school year preparing for an in-person conference format.	In response to student requests for continued programming and support during the transition back to in-person learning, the BeMe team will offer school-based programming featuring BeMe curriculum topics in a two-day symposium format, first being facilitated in February 2023. During these symposiums, students will engage in discussions and activities addressing themes such as identity, positive self-worth, sense of belonging, healthy communication, positive relationships, and Black identity and the media.

According to the collective:
"The impact of anti-Black racism in schools and classrooms has known effects on youth well-being, mental health, engagement, and pathways to success (Carter, 2007; CPHA, 2020). To be a responsive school system, the DDSB must offer opportunities and interventions that support academic achievement and positive social-emotional development for Black students. Our goal as a BeMe collective is to cultivate spaces where Black students experience safety and validation of their lived experiences and feel empowered to share stories and explore their unique identities. In addition to imparting strategies for confronting marginalization and anti-Black Racism, we aim to support Black students in building a connection to community and strengthening leadership skills."

Instructional Practices, School Resources, and Supports

Description	Impact
Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry (CCPI) School teams create a question and action plan to disrupt anti-Black racism. School board teams engage in an inquiry with *specific actions* to be taken to address the inquiry question with a *specific timeline* for the *collection of data* to support learning and answer their question. The structure of the Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry lends itself to a collaborative and responsive approach to school planning. As the C.C.P.I. work continues in the Board, the C.C.P.I. will evolve and look to incorporate the work of integrative anti-racism that looks at the intersections of all forms of oppression. This integrative approach recognizes the saliency of Blackness. It speaks to the fact that there is a hypervisibility of Blackness, and that Blackness is consequential. (Dei, 1996)	The CCPI has had an impact on various levels of the system. Forty-six schools participated in 2 cohorts in 2020-2021. Fifty schools will participate in the 2023-2024 school year. One school in Cohort 4 indicates the positive impact on three teachers for whom the session created dialogue and inquiry as they began to identify barriers they needed to remove while disrupting the notion that explicit systemic racism did not exist in Canada.

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) urges educators to reflect on their identities and practices to move toward offering more meaningful and relevant experiences for students. The framework is built upon three central tenets: high expectations, cultural competence, and critical consciousness.	The capacity building of the central team (e.g., curriculum, early years, innovation) is helping to mobilize the work of CRRP across the system. Educators are reaching out for help in planning to make learning more relevant to all their students. The work of the Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry heavily involves this type of teaching and learning.
Historically Responsive Literacy The Historically Responsive Literacy (HRL) Framework has been a part of a move to implement strategies that impact the instructional core of educator practice. The HRL framework is closely aligned with Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) and posits that an education focusing on skills and knowledge alone will never allow for justice. Therefore, students need to be immersed in opportunities to engage in meaningful learning, think critically about the subject matter, find joy in their learning, and connect to their identities and lived experiences.	As part of the CCPI, many schools inquired about what would happen if they began to plan to use the HRL Framework. Using this framework, educators can offer all students opportunities to connect to the learning that engages their identities, skills, intellect, criticality, and sense of joy.
Black Studies This is a secondary school credit course offered for students in Grade 11 or 12. Black Studies uncovers the historical and contemporary contributions of Black Canadians, with a focus on identity, innovations, and exploring anti-Black racism. This current school year, 17 schools are offering the course.	Interactions with peers, staff, and the curriculum empowered students to share their new learnings within their schools and create positive social change within their community.
Student Affinity Networks Many schools support students by facilitating and holding space for Black students and allies to meet and be together in the community.	Student voices are at the centre of these spaces. For some, the space is a place of community and belonging, and for some, a place to share and plan for contributing to the school climate and culture

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Compendium of Action for Black Student Success The Compendium of Action for Black Student Success is one of the DDSB's public commitments to supporting the well-being and success of Black students. It was created through community consultation and is now in the process of being revised and re-released. The compendium is comprised of the following key priorities: Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Practices, Shared and Committed Leadership, School Climate, Classroom Climate and Instruction, Student Voice and Space, Family/Caregiver School Relations, School Leadership, Community Connections, and the Culture of Professional Development. An update to the compendium is in progress and will be released later in 2023.	**The following are some of the highlights of areas of impact:** **Equitable Framework for Progressive Discipline:** Reform practices that lead to harsher discipline for Black students. **Hiring:** Black students experience seeing and learning from educators who look like them and who may share and understand their lived experiences. Fifteen racialized administrators were hired in 2019 during the Principal and Vice Principal Promotion Process. **Black Advisory Committee:** The creation of Durham Black Accountability Coalition (DBAC) provides opportunities for members of the Black community to have their concerns and questions heard with the expectation of a timely response from the appropriate department
Black History Month Resource created and available in both English and French Because the history of Black people has been historically omitted from curricula and curricular resources, the resource is intended to support educators with materials for all students to learn about the accomplishments and contributions of individuals and Black communities in Canada.	Teachers can share resources where Black students see themselves in the curriculum and that Black history is not just about slavery but about the many ways Black people have contributed to Canadian society.
Addressing Anti-Black Racism & Its Impact: A Well-Being Toolkit for Families In the wake of George Floyd's murder, members of DDSB's Psychological Services and Social Work Teams recognized that resources specific to addressing and talking about the impacts of Anti-Black racism for families	The toolkits were provided digitally and to schools in print versions. Key resources included in the toolkit were provided to school libraries. Presentations were made to staff at the school level to guide staff on how to share and incorporate the toolkit into the learning and interactions with student, parents and community through engagement activities (e.g., parent

and students. With that, a dedicated group of Black staff, supported by Latinx and White allies, created the Anti-Black Racism Toolkit. In the words of the Collective: In the current climate where public attention to anti-Black racism, acknowledgment of its impact, and commitment to change has increased significantly, families may find themselves entering discussions about race and racism more than ever. Users of this toolkit will find various resources of interest compiled within for easy access by children, youth, and adults. We trust that readers will find inspiration, pride, and dignity about the Black experience reflected in these pages and images. For those seeking other types of support, we have offered a growing list of community-based service providers in or near Durham region, committed to serving Black and racialized families."	information nights; Durham Partners Conferences; Ajax-Pickering Wellness Series Partnership). During these presentations, the feedback from staff and the community indicated the need for these resources. Black and non- Black participants spoke about navigating these difficult conversations at home and school, and they felt that this resource would help support these conversations.
Community Advocacy Partnership The Durham District School Board partners with the Durham Family Cultural Centre advocacy group. This group provides no-fee advocacy for Black families navigating the school system.	Durham Family Cultural Centre (DFCC) partnered with 16 schools in the 2021-2022 school year and successfully resolved 17 cases involving Black Students across the District. They also consulted with 13 families who wanted to handle the concern independently. Parents have expressed their gratitude for the support from DFCC.
Graduation Coach for Black Students September 1, 2021, the Durham District School Board received funding over four years to implement the Graduation Coach Program for Black Students. The program's goal in the DDSB context is to build on evidence that provides direct and targeted specialized services. Programs for underserved student populations will help address systemic education barriers and support these students to stay in school, graduate, and succeed.	Schools working with the Graduation Coach for Black students have established Black Student Union Groups. Eighty-one students participated in post-secondary campus tours which increased their understanding of pathway planning. Five students not considering attending a post-secondary institution are enrolled and succeeding. There is an increase in student engagement, teachers are noticing and acknowledging the successes of the students. Parent engagement has also increased.

5.0   Financial Implications

All programs and initiatives are funded through departmental budget allocations.

6.0   Evidence of Impact

Identifying, challenging, addressing, and dismantling anti-Black racism supports the DDSB in meeting its obligations in implementing the DDSB's Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Policy. The impact is visible across the system: schools engage in courageous discussions with staff about barriers for Black students. They are changing the environment, curriculum, and staffing that reflect the Durham Region's diversity. These changes are evidenced in the confidence that students have in using their collective voice to initiate change in their schools and in a staff who uphold their Duty Bearer Responsibilities and the tenets of DDSB's Human Rights Policy. In addition, the various initiatives and strategies for students and staff are supporting learning to address anti-Black racism by debunking negative and discriminatory stereotypes and assumptions which makes the learning and working environments more inclusive and respectful.

7.0   Conclusion

The Equity Department will continue collaborating with all DDSB departments to identify, address, prevent and dismantle anti-Black racism. Staff will continue to provide ongoing professional development and capacity-building opportunities to effect change for all students.

8.0   Appendices

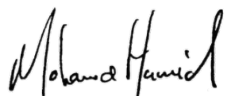Appendix A – Community Voice Recommendations

The report was reviewed and submitted by:

_____
Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board

_____
Margaret Lazarus, Superintendent of Education

_____
Mo Hamid, Superintendent of Education

Community Voice Recommendations 93

Justice McLeod

The following recommendations are based on the overall themes drawn from participants' responses in the survey questionnaires and community voice sessions.

1. Develop **curricula** to reflect the history and contributions of racialized African Caribbean people in Canada and throughout the world.

2. **Hire** racialized African Caribbean staff and teachers to reflect student body.

3. **Promote** more racialized African Caribbean educators to school administrators.

4. **Hire** more racialized African Caribbean male teachers.

5. **Promote** racialized African Caribbean educators into leadership positions.

6. **Hire** more racialized African Caribbean social workers and counsellors in both elementary and high school panels to support the increasingly diverse student body.

7. **Develop** a student engagement strategy that includes building relations, greater connection, leadership opportunities, and supports for racialized African Caribbean students to help them succeed academically.

8. Put in place ongoing, mandatory **training** on anti-Black racism for staff, teachers, administrators, counsellors, police officers and other personnel who work in DDSB.

9. **Data collection and reporting** on student diversity, including collecting disaggregated race-based data on education streams, student achievement, student discipline (e.g., suspension, expulsion, transfers, etc.), drop-out, Section 23 classrooms, special education needs, admissions to post-secondary institutions, student arrests and all police interactions with students.

10. **Revise** policy 274 to emphasize the importance of diversity among the teaching complement, and remove barriers so that more racialized African Canadian teachers can be hired.

11. **Establish** partnerships with service provider organizations and other group/networks in Durham to develop programs that support racialized African Caribbean students.

12. **Review** the diversity programs and initiatives in the school board to assess if they are meeting the needs of racialized African Caribbean students.

13. **Revise** the safe school policies so that racial diversity and anti-Black racism are recognized as critical areas of policy concerns and intervention.

14. **Revise** police school protocols to ensure that racialized African Caribbean students are not racially profiles or unjustly subjected to interactions with law enforcement in school disciplinary matters that have no criminal basis.

15. Develop a **transparent process** for police-school partnership, including the selection and placement of police in schools, which must involve discussion with school community.

16. Develop a **mentorship program** for racialized African Caribbean students, especially for male students. Or example, the *Boys to Men Club* and others.

17. Provide core **funding** to support ongoing, mandatory diversity training of educators and staff.

18. Develop a parent **engagement** strategy that outlines values and commitment to building trusting relations and better communication and connection with racialized African Caribbean parents.

19. Develop **programs** (in school/after school) to engage racialized African Caribbean students in the education process and increase their academic performance.

20. Develop after **school programs** for racialized African Caribbean students off school property.

21. Develop education **seminars** for parents of racialized African Caribbean students.

22. Establish a **parent advocate position** to support parents of racialized African Caribbean students on education matters.

23. Establish a **student advocate position** to support racialized African Caribbean students on education matters

24. Establish an **oversight body** on education matters related to racialized African Caribbean students (e.g., Durham Black Educator's Network).

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Anti-Oppression Department

Compendium of Action for

Black Student

Success 2.0

> **Education** is the most powerful weapon
> we can use to change the world.
>
> *Nelson Mandela*

Completed November 2023

DDSB
Ignite Learning

The Durham District School Board
recognizes Indigenous rights
are distinct. In the exercise of those
rights, Indigenous staff and students
shall not be subjected to actions with
the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The Durham District School Board is committed to learning
and working environments that centre human rights and equity
and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible,
inclusive and free from discrimination.

Black Legacy Acknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge my ancestry, a deep and
profoundly relevant history of Black Peoples across
the diaspora.

A history, lineage and inheritance that predates this
Country, chattel slavery and colonialism and begins
with Africa and ancestry that recognizes struggle
and survival while honouring our narrative of pursuing
self determination. Today I stand valued, grateful and
proud to be Black.

Message from the **Director of Education**

The Durham District School Board has made a strong and clear commitment to creating the conditions for all students to reach their full potential, to find joy, to explore their talents and to author their own path. Through our work, research and learning, we recognize that Black students have historically faced obstacles that get in the way of unleashing their excellence and experiencing joy in their school lives.

This document illuminates the foundations of Anti-Black racism faced by people of African descent in our schools and school communities. This reality necessitates a precise and persistent call to action in our schools, our classrooms and at the desk of each student. The strategic and precise plan of action outlined in the pages that follow, build upon the presumed Black excellence and impending success.

We know that for this work to be successful, it must be collaborative and reciprocal in nature. The Black community is rich in diverse histories, languages, cultures and faith, and so, by extension, every Black child carries unique identities and lived experiences. Through continued partnership with students, staff and community, we will engage in responsive and impactful strategies to confront Anti-Black racism, and in doing so, provide all students a vision of Black excellence and possibility as they grow into their own personal potential.

Together we will thrive at the Durham District School Board.

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education
Durham District School Board

Table of Contents

Why?

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) is committed to upholding the basic human rights of its students and staff and ensuring that all students receive an education that is free from discrimination.

> " You can never have an impact on society if you have not changed yourself.
>
> *Nelson Mandela* "

The DDSB recognises that anti-Black racism (ABR) has led to unequal achievement levels for Black students and is committed to dismantling ABR and ensuring that Black students receive an education that allows them to succeed and realize their potential.

This will be accomplished by:

- addressing systemic inequities

- listening to Black students

- responding in a purposeful and direct manner to student needs

- prioritizing the well-being of Black students

- identifying, preventing and addressing board policies and practices for anti-Black bias in order to dismantle and disrupt said policies and practices

- implementing curricula that affirms, reflects and responds to Black identities and experiences

- ensuring resources are bias and discrimination free

- responding to and acting on concerns of the Black community to address ABR (in response to student and community voice)

- examining curriculum resources for bias and discrimination

- building strong relationships and working collaboratively in partnership with parents, guardians and community members

- providing ongoing anti-Black racism training for DDSB staff to learn more about anti-Black racism and how to address it

"

We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there "is" such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.

Martin Luther King Jr.

"

Anti-Black Racism

The Durham District School Board's (DDSB) commitment to addressing anti-Black racism has been communicated clearly through the Director's Office, Human Rights Department and the Anti-Oppression Department as noted in the Compendium of Action for Black Student Success (2018). As an organization, the DDSB must be responsive to events in society.

The brutal killing of George Floyd, a Black man in Minneapolis, illuminated the "urgency of the now" to focus on the systemic nature of ABR and how it operates in societal institutions. The death of George Floyd was a catalyst for worldwide awakening and understanding of ABR. It captured the attention of the world, led to international protests and a call to action and change to address ABR.

Canada is not exempt from ABR. Many members of Black communities experience various forms of intersectional racism, discrimination and hate crimes. With this reality facing many members of our school community daily, we must address ABR in education.

While ABR is prevalent and evident in Canada, Canadians frequently point to the fact that we live in a diverse society. Faced with this reality and the lived experience of many members of our school communities we must address ABR. Canada was built on the enslavement and oppression of peoples of African descent and the genocide and oppression of Indigenous people.

> **Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.**
>
> *James Baldwin, American essayist, novelist, and playwright*

The DDSB is committed to providing support and resources and facilitating critical conversations to address feelings of outrage, frustration, sadness, and defeat of Black students, families, guardians and community members. As a district, we must actively challenge ABR wherever and whenever possible since it is action, not mere words, that can affect real change in education. Moreover, to understand anti-Blackness, we need to recognize that race is a social construct that was created to justify the unequal treatment of Blacks.

Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate defines anti-Black racism as "prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping, or discrimination directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and colonization. Anti-Black racism is deeply embedded in Canadian institutions, policies, and practices to the point that it has become part of our system".

Facing up to the numbers:
In Canada...

These statistics are not myths; they are ways in which anti-Black racism continues today in the broader community. These statistics demonstrate how race has been positioned historically within the more general social context.

206 the number of years that slavery was practiced in this country.

Slavery officially ended in 1834, which is not that long ago, but anti-Black racism continues in many ways today.

12.5%

9.2% the number of Black people in federal prison whilst they represent 3.5% of the population
CBC News: Canada failing Black, Indigenous prisoners as overrepresentation persists: report

41% the number of Black children in CAS care, whilst they represent just 8% of the youth population
CBC News: 'Crisis' in Children's Aid over number of black children in care

the unemployment rate for Black people in Ontario, **which is higher than non-racialized people (6.9%)**
Study: A labour market snapshot of Black Canadians during the pandemic

1965 the last segregated school closed in Ontario

1983 the last segregated school closed in Nova Scotia

75.6¢ how much a Black person earns for every dollar earned by a non-racialized person
Labour Market Information Council: What can the data tell us about Black Canadians and the labour market?

Black History did not begin with Slavery...

Human civilization is believed to have begun in Africa and throughout history it has been home to some of the world's most dynamic and powerful leaders, both male and female, who helped shape world history. Queen Nzinga, of the Mdunda people of what is now Angola, was a gifted military strategist. Mansa Musa was the richest person in history and under his leadership, the Kingdom of Mali became one of the richest empires in the world. King Amenhotep III was considered one of the greatest Pharaohs of Egypt. During his reign, Egypt enjoyed stability, wealth, and peace and was influential in diplomacy and foreign policy.

Many ancient African societies were culturally and economically vibrant. Historic omissions do not recognize the technologically advanced societies that existed in Africa prior to the forced migration of Africans. African countries like Timbuktu had rich trading empires and organized cities prior to European contact. Timbuktu was home to the first university in the world. Kush was the first kingdom to be ruled by a monarchy.
This is history not taught in schools.

European colonization and influence robbed some African nations of their independence and individuality. The disruption caused by the transatlantic slave trade in the 1400s interrupted the societal structures of these countries and led to the disbursement of many Africans throughout Europe, the Americas, and the Caribbean.

The enslavement of African people in Canada supplied free labour to Canadian colonizers and promoted the idea that Black people were dangerous and needed to be controlled and separated from White people.

Understanding anti-Black racism in its current form requires an understanding of the impact of the subjugation of people from African countries. While there is a tendency to see Canada as more accepting and more tolerant of Black communities than other countries, there are Canadian examples of anti-Black racism. They include the 1910 Immigration Act, which prohibited people who were declared unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada; the arrest of Viola Desmond in 1946 for refusing to move from her seat in the Whites only section of the movie theatre and the destruction of Africville by the city of Halifax in 1962.

It is undeniable that Black students experience ABR. Knowing the history and the context of the Black experience in Canada helps us to understand why Black students are perceived as dangerous and excluded from schools at higher rates than other students.

To ensure Black students are not negatively affected by anti-Black racism, educators and board staff must name, challenge, and change the values, structure and behaviours that perpetuate systemic racism. This requires action. The Compendium of Action for Black Student Success is a document of actions. It is focused on naming, addressing, and ending anti-Black racism in our classrooms and our schools. (*Sankofa Black Heritage Collection: Early Civilizations of Africa).*

How Anti-Blackness Operates in our Schools

The Compendium of Action for Black Student Success identifies anti-Black racism in schools and outline strategies to address barriers faced by Black students.

What are some of the consequences of the historical context of anti-Black racism? How does ABR manifest itself in schools today?

> **The hardest thing about being Black in Canada is the prejudice I face, and that's where my fear comes from.**
>
> *Cameron Davis, a 15-year-old YouTuber who uses the platform to make videos about what it is like to be a Black teenager living in Canada.*

In order to address anti-Black racism it is important to identify the ways in which anti-Blackness operates in schools:

- **Erasure** – the invisibility of Black identities within the curriculum (for example, few novels have a Black character as the protagonist). Black students often do not see themselves reflected in the curriculum or in the staff in their school environment.

- **Streaming** — The Ministry of Education has addressed the discriminatory effects of streaming, which has led to second-generation segregation because of the ongoing inequities it perpetuates. It directs racialized and low-income students out of classes that could lead to higher education and does lasting harm to their future pathways.

- **Adultification of Black Girls** — Perception that Black girls are less innocent and more adult than White girls of the same age. This implicit bias sometimes leads to harsher consequences in school.

- **Heightened Surveillance** — Black youth face heightened surveillance and disciplinary measures at disproportionately higher rates compared to White youth. They are dissuaded from gathering in groups, are closely monitored and are treated as suspects instead of youth.

- **Harsher Discipline** — Black students are subjected to more extreme disciplinary measures than White students and are eight times more likely to face discipline than White youths. White students are granted more leniency when expressing racist hostility.

- **Black Parents/Guardians** — End up on the receiving end of trespass orders. Black parents/guardians have been unnecessarily reported to the Children's Aid Society.

These effects of anti-Blackness are exacerbated based on intersectional identities.

The examples delineated above are a part of the legacy of slavery and anti-Blackness.

Today, we are at a point where it matters how we lead, teach, address, disrupt, and dismantle anti-Black racism via the action items in this Compendium of Action for Black Student Success!

Partnership with the Anti-Racism Directorate

In 2016, the Anti-Racism Directorate (ARD), established by the Government of Ontario, works to eliminate systemic racism in government policies, decisions, and programs and advance racial equality in broader public-sector organizations for Black, Indigenous, and racialized populations. The ARD recognizes the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) to formally acknowledge that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose rights must be promoted and protected.

The ARD has also developed the *Anti-Black Racism Strategy* (a roadmap for addressing anti-Black racism in government institutions). This strategy targets systemic racism in policies, decisions, and programs and helps education systems to move toward long-term systemic change. "Systemic Racism occurs when institutions or systems create or maintain racial inequity, often because of hidden institutional biases in policies, practices, and procedures that privilege some groups and disadvantage others" (*Anti-Black Racism Strategy, 2017*). The vision of ARD is the elimination inequitable outcomes for Black Ontarians in education. In addition, the Anti-Racism Act (*2017*) acknowledges the existence of anti-Black racism and has implemented legislation to address ABR.

The Durham District School Board partnered with ARD to train all DDSB staff beginning with classroom teacher and Board resource support personnel, to address, disrupt and dismantle anti-Black racism.

Compendium History
Community Voice Forums — Justice Donald McLeod

Data gathered through the Community Voice Forums led by Justice Donald McLeod (2016) echoes the results of similar reports from Peel Region and the Toronto District School Board — *Fighting an Uphill Battle* (Report on the Consultation into the Well Being of Black Youth in Peel Region) and *Towards Race Equity in Education: The Schooling of Black Students in the Greater Toronto Area (2017*) (this document references the DDSB). The reality is that Black students feel disengaged and disconnected in our schools because of a lack of recognition of systemic racism that they continue to experience. In addition, parents and families of Black students voice frustration that their children continue to experience low teacher expectations and low academic performance, high rates of suspension, and discrimination in pathways planning — *100 Strong Report (May 2016*). These barriers in education for Black students lead to fewer Black students pursuing post-secondary pathways, which limit potential career choices and options.

> **Strong Communities are born out of individuals being their best selves.** *- Rosemary Brown, the first Black Canadian woman to become a member of a provincial legislature and to run for leadership of a federal political party*

The purpose of the Compendium of Action for Black Student Success is to use the recommendations from the Community Voice Forums, as well as the collected data and suggested recommendations from *Towards Race Equity in Education (2017)* to be specific and intentional in a plan for the success of Black students in the DDSB. In alignment with the Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework, the Human Rights Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy and procedures, the Compendium of Action for Black Student Success lays out a specific plan to remove barriers, reduce frustration for families and improve the success and experiences of Black students in our system.

Justice Donald McLeod

Quotes from Black Students...

"When students can relate to the content in class, then they are more engaged."

" Learning about important people who made an impact and pioneered in a specific field. "

"When posting historical figures around the school we can use people of different backgrounds."

"There seems to be a lack of discussions about anti-Black racism especially after the events that occurred in the recent past *(George Floyd)*, there were no conversations included in courses that should be open to having those conversations."

" Have diverse protagonists and authors from different backgrounds but a full review of the content being talked about. "

"Disconnect between a member of a different community educating students on a community's experience. Have a speaker come in and speak about their authentic experiences."

"Include opportunities for Black students encouraging diversity in all aspects of the school.

"We need to add Black history to the history curriculum."

"In an English class there was a novel which was full of biblical references and for students who were not exposed to the Bible many were not able to pick up the references and speak about the significance of the novel leaving them feeling alienated."

"History shouldn't just be about slavery.

"Don't single out Black students when discussing racism."

Black Parents/Guardians and Community Voices

"Although there have been some positive changes with respect to hiring Black staff, our children still continue to face implicit bias."

> Representation should be there. It does a lot for the children. So many benefits attached to seeing staff who look like Black children.

> We need more Black role models.

"I found that at my child's school it's about the individual teachers implementing ABR curriculum. A lot falls on the Black staff to ensure that it's being done."

"More training in understanding who people of colour are."

"I wonder if the lack of interest on the part of Black students to enter the field of education is due to the lack of representation."

"Understand that Blacks are no less intelligent than other children but do face overt obstacles that are challenging to quantify or qualify."

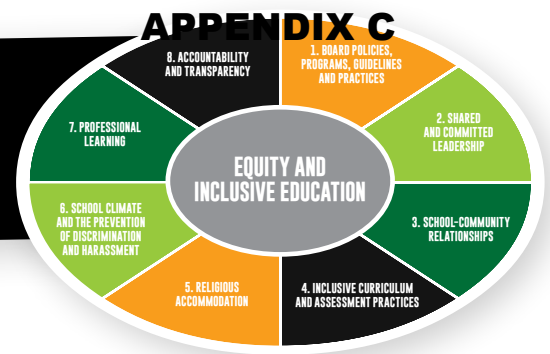"My youngest child did not learn about Black history in school, so I took it upon myself to teach."

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Compendium of Action for

Black Student

Success

Status Updates and

Action Items

* Compendium of Action for Black Student Success 2.0 Action Items begin on Page 20

Compendium Status Update 2018-2021

EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

8. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY
1. BOARD POLICIES, PROGRAMS, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES
2. SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP
7. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
3. SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS
6. SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT
5. RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION
4. INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

1 BOARD POLICIES, PROGRAMS, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES

- Equitable framework for Progressive Discipline completed and presented at administrative council
- January 2019 recruitment fair for Black community: 168 applications for teaching and non-teaching positions, 42 supply teachers, 3 supply clericals, 13 supply EAs, and 4 supply ECEs
- Hired 15 racialized administrators during the 2019 principal and vice-principal promotion process
- Hired 175-plus Black staff
- Hired a Black graduation coach

2 SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

- Black Advisory Committee comprised of Black parents/guardians and community members established in 2019 in partnership with Durham Black Educators Network (DBEN)
- Supervisory officers assigned to equity portfolio

3 SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

- 100 Strong student mentorship program ongoing
- Communications regarding programs supporting the Black community are ongoing — emails, websites, displays
- Farley Flex Mentorship Project at Bolton C. Falby PS
- Everyday Excellence - Dwayne Morgan (8 schools)
- Love of Music — Benjamin DeGraaf (Secondary Black Student Leadership Initiative at 4 secondary schools)
- Modern Day Griot program — University of Toronto Scarborough — Shellene Drakes-Tull (5 secondary schools)
- Use of social media platforms to communicate with parents/guardians and community members
- Affinity networks to collaborate with the Parent Engagement Department and with schools on Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grants at the Regional SCC meeting

4 INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

- Black Studies course continues to be offered at some high schools
- Culturally Relevant Responsive Pedagogy
- Canadian Black History resource available in both English and French

5 RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

- Dates of Significance shared Board wide via various means
- Every DDSB school is required to allocate a space for prayer/reflection if requested

6 SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

- Principals and Vice-Principals trained in bias-free interviewing every 2 years
- Vice-Principals trained on the Equitable Framework for Progressive Discipline document

7 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- Ongoing Dismantling ABR training for kindergarten teachers — special education resource teachers, intermediate teachers and pathway guidance counsellors began in 2020
- Dismantling ABR training provided to school leaders, school teams, educational assistants, ISS (special education staff), social workers
- 46 schools engaged in Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry initiative

8 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

- Voluntary Board-wide and workforce census completed in 2019
- Data from survey used to drive practice and policy

While the district was able to move forward on many of the Compendium actions items, the implementation of some of these action items have been delayed as a result of COVID-19 restrictions/limitations.

2023-2025 List Of Action Items for the
Compendium of Action for Black Student Success

1   Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Practices

1.1 Anti-Oppression, Research and Strategic Analytics (RSA) and Positive School Climate Departments to partner to ensure the inclusion of questions that reflect the disrupting and dismantling of anti-Black racism is added to the School Climate Survey.

1.2 The Board will hire an Afrocentric Facilitator to focus on the development of curriculum and resources that incorporate the Black intersecting experience and the dismantling of anti-Black racism within our schools.

1.3 Two data collection processes will be used to monitor the intentional hiring of Black employees. The voluntary and anonymous Staff Workforce Census will help us understand Black representation within our current staff. The confidential DDSB Voluntary Equity Survey will help us understand Black representation of applicants to jobs in the DDSB and where barriers exist as they move through the shortlist, interview, and hiring stages. These data sets will be analyzed to remove barriers and improve hiring and retention practices and processes for our current and future Black staff members.

1.4 Include a reflection component of equity and anti-oppressive practices as part of the Teacher's Annual Learning Plan and the Vice-Principal and Principal Growth Plan.

1.5 The Board will continue with the employment of two Black Graduation Coaches to support Black students and families with successful graduation and pathway planning.

Evidence of Impact

- Greater accountability to the entire school community with the use of data.
- Increased evidence of equitable outcomes and experiences for Black students and staff, as indicated by the Afrocentric Facilitator and Graduation Coaches' work and bi-yearly reports to the Anti-Oppression Department.
- Increased representation of Black staff at all levels of the DDSB.
- School-led professional development on Culturally Relevant Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), Universal Design for Learning, and Staff Learning Goals align with the School Learning Plan and Board Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

2 Shared and Committed Leadership

2.1 Anti-Oppression and People and Culture/Recruitment Departments to partner to develop and support targeted recruitment events, programming, and new opportunities for potential DDSB central staff and the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) participants.

2.2 Anti-Oppression and Leadership Departments to partner to develop support for our Black aspiring leaders (affinity job-embedded mentoring and coaching) to help them grow their leadership and to navigate barriers in their professional journey.

2.3 Anti-Oppression and Communications Departments to partner and create a list of Black community organizations/groups within the Durham Region. This list will be used to support a communication and marketing plan around the Board's Anti-Oppression Initiatives.

2.4 Anti-Oppression, Human Rights, and Teaching and Learning Departments to partner to work with Facilitators, Interdisciplinary Teams, Central Staff, and Anti-Oppression Leads from the Family of Schools as we develop a system of collaboration involving the work around dismantling anti-Black racism. The collaboration will involve knowledge building, job-embedded training, coaching, and mentoring of colleagues to make recommendations with regard to curriculum information that helps identify, prevent, and address anti-Black racism and anti-oppression.

Evidence of Impact

- Increased diversity amongst DDSB staff.
- Increased number of Black staff in leadership positions in the system.
- Increased profile given to anti-oppression and anti-discrimination programs/initiatives and greater participation from the Black community.
- Increased integration of departmental work around the dismantling of anti-Black racism.
- Decrease in the number of incident reports relating to anti-Black racism and anti-discrimination as reported by the Human Rights Department.

3 School Climate

3.1 The DDSB will support the Black Studies course yearly, and each high school will offer and run the course.

3.2 All schools are to establish a Human Rights and Anti-Oppression Team to include administration, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians, and community members.
The team will:

- facilitate connections between the system, school, and community.

- assist in the development of the school's anti-oppression inquiry which is to be a part of their school learning plan.

- ensure accountability in the work being done to dismantle anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practices.

- ensure all school committees and groups are working to provide a positive school climate that is safe, welcoming, equitable, accessible, and based on the principles of human rights.

3.3 All schools will work with the Anti-Oppression Department on developing a Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry (CCPI) centred on the dismantling of anti-Black Racism.

3.4 Administrators will lead their staff in annual training focused on human rights approaches to progressive discipline, bias-aware discipline, and restorative practices to ensure that everyone understands student and staff rights and duty bearer responsibilities.

3.5 Schools will use the DDSB Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Policy section - Student/Family Human Rights Issue, Incident and Complaint Resolution Procedure, as well as reference the DDSB resource modules on anti-Black racism and the Prohibited Use of Slurs and Epithets memo when dealing with incidents of anti-Black racism.

3.6 Superintendents will monitor school climate measurables outlined in each school's learning plan to provide ongoing support and guidance on the dismantling of anti-Black racism.

3 Evidence of Impact

- All students have an opportunity to learn about Black communities and their experiences, as part of an integrated curriculum throughout the year.

- A targeted inquiry supporting the dismantling of anti-oppression will lead to a more barrier-free experience in education for the students of historically and traditionally marginalized groups.

- Teachers learn and put into practice ways of dealing with preventing and addressing discrimination, racism, and erasure, as they instruct and assess as demonstrated by students expressing they are seeing, feeling, and hearing a more inclusive curriculum.

- Student rights are upheld within each school community as noted by students expressing being seen and heard during school forums/townhalls.

- Increased use of tier 1 teacher interventions to support student-disciplined behaviour. These interventions would include more teacher-student conferencing, restorative practices used in class, a caring adult approach, etc., and a decline in student office referrals, suspensions, etc.

- A consistent system-wide process is used to respond to and address acts of anti-Black racism.

- Superintendents' school visits will focus on supporting the school's anti-oppression goals.
  Guiding questions to be used:
  - What have been the key learnings/achievements you, your staff, and your community have experienced with this work?
  - What is the impact of this work?
  - How did you measure the impact?

4 Classroom Climate and Instruction

4.1 The Black Studies course will be updated to support a relevant and responsive curriculum on the intersectional Black identity, contributions, and celebrations of members of the Black diaspora, dismantling anti-Black racism, and anti-oppression learning. There will be at least two teacher PD sessions each year.

4.2 Review, rename, and update the K-12 Afrocentric Curriculum resource to include student voice and choice by December 2023.

4.3 Schools will ensure the curriculum incorporates the intersectional Black experience and voice and is reflected in assessments and evaluations. Incorporation could include but is not limited to historical content from the colonialism perspective, Black excellence and joy, everyday experiences, contributions to our societal institutions by members of the Black diaspora, community involvement, guest speakers and Black role models and leaders, and the various immigration waves of Black people from countries around the world and how this has contributed to the prosperity of Canada, etc. Some examples include:

Elementary: picture books celebrating Black joy and experiences, integration of new physical activities — cricket, netball, jump rope, hand-clapping, and singing games, social science via personal narrative, lived experiences with guest speakers, etc.

Secondary: inclusion of historical thriving Canadian Black settlements in history and business classes; Black sports, arts, and culture in physical education, arts and social science classes; past and present contributions of Black mathematicians, scientists, technologists, and politicians; immigration waves of Black people from countries of the world, etc.

4.4 A repository of resources covering topics of dismantling anti-Black racism, anti-discrimination, and anti-oppression will be created by the DDSB Anti-Oppression Department. Resources to include (but not limited to):

- Dr. Nicole West-Burns Foundation training on dismantling anti-Black racism.
- See Us, Learn Us Webinar Series
- The Cypher Series 2021 and 2022
- D2L Black Studies course
- Afrocentric Curriculum Resource document

4 Classroom Climate and Instruction *(continued)*

- DDSB Black History document
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) 365 Black Canadian Curriculum
- The Black Experience Project
- The Administrator's Podcast on anti-Black racism
- BLK videos, as well as many other online resources

4.5 Inclusive Student Services (ISS) teams will prioritize student identity, and recognize intersectionality, as part of intervention planning and support

4.6 ISS teams will receive training in foundations of anti-Black racism as this translates into system capacity building of the intersectionality of Inclusive Education and Black students. Knowledge building will support all students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), including students identified as gifted.

4.7 Supporting ISS resources and documents will be rewritten to support the focus on prioritizing identity and belonging for each student.

Evidence of Impact

- Track the uptake and implementation of Black Studies Courses at secondary schools.
- Inclusive team of DDSB staff to review and rewrite the Afrocentric Curriculum Resource document.
- Increased sense of belonging by Black students as demonstrated by qualitative school climate survey data as well as increased academic achievement as shown by Power BI data collection.
- Use of the Afrocentric Curriculum and Black History Resource documents to support instruction.
- Students express through voice that they are experiencing a more culturally responsive curriculum. Through student subject reviews that can be implemented by teachers, it can be established if teachers are embracing new frameworks of Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- A wide variety of content is provided by teachers and staff across the system to support the repository.
- All Inclusive Student Services staff use identity affirming when creating Individual Education Plans (IEP), support, intervention, and safety plans. This becomes standard practice.

5 Student Voice and Space

5.1 DDSB schools will provide a space for prayer/reflection to accommodate prayer needs, time, and space. Space will be noted on school maps, and information about this space will be posted in the student agenda.

5.2 All schools will support a student affinity group/space for Black students if requested by students or the community.

Evidence of Impact

- Students are welcome to practice their faith in a safe space.

- Students demonstrate agency through leadership activities via their affinity group (i.e. school murals, cultural events, speaker series, etc.)

6 Family/Guardian School Relations

6.1 Create an online and accessible portal for parents/guardians to learn about the school transition process from Grade 8 to 9, including but not limited to Grade 8 parent/guardian night at each local high school, the "Choosing My Success" document, access to pathway counselling, IPRC/IEP information, school tour dates, videos, etc.

6.2 The Anti-Oppression and Family & Community Engagement Departments and individual schools will offer parents/guardians and community members engagement sessions, grounded in reciprocity, to update them on the progress on human rights work and initiatives to address anti-Black racism. The Board will provide at least two annual updates, and individual schools will include at least four updates annually on the progress of this work within their school to the community.

Evidence of Impact

- Parents/guardians seize the opportunity to activate their agency in supporting their child's overall achievement, equitable experiences, and opportunities within the system.

- Parents/guardians' voices will be heard and concerns validated at engagement sessions.

- Data gathered during the school-community engagement session will identify barriers, support transformative work, and expose and transform systemic structures.

- Increased participation by Black families in school initiatives.

7 School Leadership

7.1 Schools will use a minimum of five percent of their library/resource budget annually to purchase resources that reflect the diverse experiences of the global Black community.

7.2 Ontario College of Teachers' Professional Misconduct Regulation [O.Reg. 437/97] to be shared at the first staff meeting in the Fall annually. (Making remarks or engaging in behaviours that expose any person or class of persons to hatred on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination under Part I of the Human Rights Code. O. Reg. 437/97, s. 1; O. Reg. 134/08, s. 1; S.O. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 13, s. 7; O. Reg. 175/18, s. 1; O. Reg. 619/20, s. 1), will be deemed as professional misconduct. Information shared should include the resources that support the dismantling of anti-Black racism from OCT, ETFO, and OSSTF.

7.3 Create an electronic tracking system as part of the administrator's annual growth plan to hold administrators accountable for completing the various onboarding modules.

- Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Policy and Procedures
- Safe and Respectful Workplace Policy and Procedures
- Dismantling Anti-Black Racism
- Bias-Aware Progressive Discipline
- Create an electronic tracking system as part of the administrator's annual growth plan to hold administrators accountable for completing the various onboarding modules

7.4 Provide 1:1 mentoring and job-embedded training when needed to support the learning hub module topics.

Evidence of Impact

- Students see themselves and their lived experiences directly within school library books and resources.
- Staff create safe learning spaces for all students free of hate and discrimination.
- Development of a well-rounded school leader who is confident to lead the work in human rights, anti-oppression, and the dismantling of anti-Black racism.

8 Community Connections

8.1 Develop student mentoring, academic and experiential opportunities (in-school, after-school, community-based) in partnership with organizations, for example, Durham Black Educators' Network (DBEN), 100 Strong, Tech Spark, Minds on Math, The Modern Day Griot, etc., to address barriers, increase academic performance, and support well-being and engagement amongst Black children and youth.

8.2 School leaders to connect with faith-based leaders and community partners to foster positive relationships and connections to build religious literacy.

8.3 Anti-Oppression and Positive School Climate Departments to partner with Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), Durham Alliance Outreach, and The First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Advisory Circle to establish support with local community-based resources specific to anti-Black racism and intersectionality.

Evidence of Impact

- Improved student achievement and engagement demonstrated by improved attendance, increased enrolment in university STEM pathways, as well as an overall uptake in post-secondary applications and apprenticeship programs.

- Enhanced demonstration of Black student's leadership, mentorship, and self-advocacy skills within their school community.

- Developed understanding by school staff of the intersectionality of religion and the various cultures within each school community.

- Families use their agency to build stronger relationships with a wider cross-section of community agencies that can provide support outside of the school.

9 Culture of Professional Development

9.1 Ongoing prioritized and differentiated professional development to focus on the dismantling of anti-Black racism, human rights, bias-aware protocols/procedures, as well as Culturally Relevant Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), Universal Design of Learning (UDL), Historical Responsive Literacy (HRL), and critical consciousness, for the following groups:

- System Leaders
- Education Centre Instructional Staff
- Targeted Teaching Groups (Kindergarten, Intermediate Teachers, (Grades 7 to 10), Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs), Guidance and Pathway Counsellors)
- Educational Services Staff (Administrative Assistants, Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators, Custodians)
- Business Operation Staff at the Education Centre (Management Professional Association).

This is not an exhaustive list of DDSB staff.

9.2 Superintendents review strategies for professional learning on the dismantling of anti-Black racism used in Family of Schools.

9.3 Anti-Oppression Department to partner with ETFO, OSSTF, and CUPE to collaborate in developing professional development materials and opportunities to disrupt and dismantle anti-Black racism.

Evidence of Impact

- Enhanced and ongoing mandatory human rights, anti-oppression, and anti-racism training for all members of the DDSB to support capacity building across the system.

- Metrics gleaned from PD sessions, both at the Board and school level will show increased participation, engagement, and the need to understand how anti-Black racism creates barriers and how to address these barriers.

Notes

> **"** Privilege isn't about what you've gone through; it's about what you haven't had to go through. And right now, we are in a time that is calling on us to learn the stories that we don't know. **"**

Janaya Khan – co-founder of Black Lives Matter Toronto
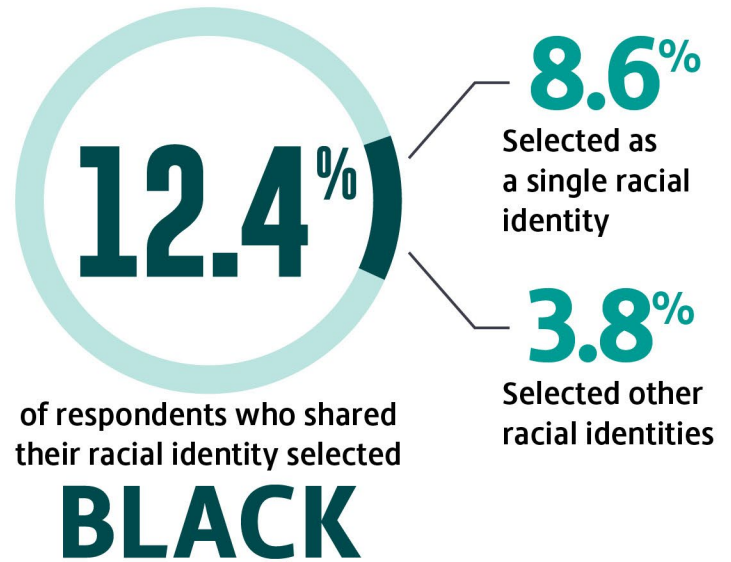
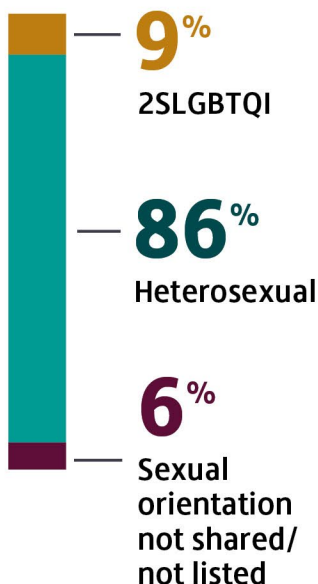*Compendium of Action for*

Black Student Success 2.0

DDSB
Ignite Learning

We Are DDSB
STUDENT CENSUS
KNOW EVERY STUDENT — GROW EVERY STUDENT

Student Census IDENTITY RESULTS

In the Spring of 2019, the DDSB conducted the voluntary We Are DDSB Student Census open to all students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The purpose of the census was to gain a clearer understanding of who our students are in order to support equity, student achievement, and well-being.
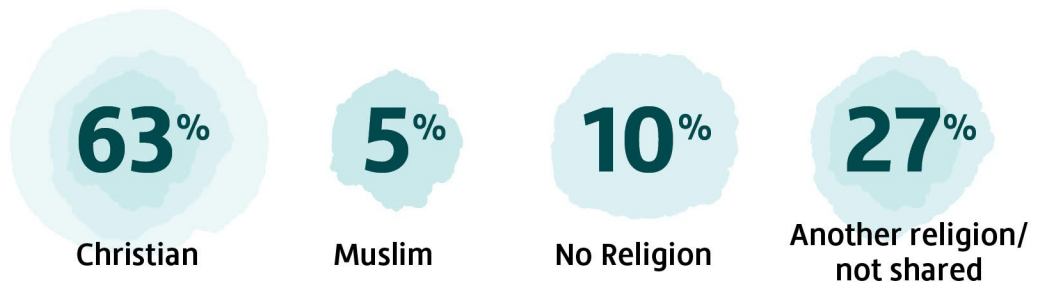
A total of **26,034** students responded to the census for a participation rate of 37%. This summary represents the results of the **3,166** students who identified **Black** as part of their racial identity.
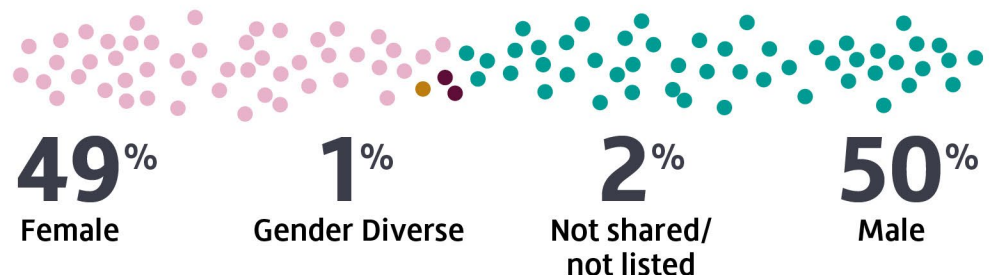
12.4%
of respondents who shared their racial identity selected
BLACK

8.6%
Selected as a single racial identity

3.8%
Selected other racial identities

Black Student Identity by SEXUAL ORIENTATION (Grades 7-12)

9%
2SLGBTQI

86%
Heterosexual

6%
Sexual orientation not shared/ not listed

Black Student Identity by RELIGION

63%
Christian

5%
Muslim

10%
No Religion

27%
Another religion/ not shared

Black Student Identity by GENDER

49%
Female

1%
Gender Diverse

2%
Not shared/ not listed

50%
Male

*Percentages may not sum to 100% because respondents were able to selected more than one option for all census questions

Academic Outcomes for **BLACK STUDENTS**

The following academic outcomes summaries are limited to the 2018-2019 school year (unless otherwise stated). **Results presented are based only on those who participated in the 2018-2019 Student Census and shared their identity.**

LEGEND: ■ Black Students ▨ All DDSB students who completed the Census

Elementary Achievement
% of GRADE 8 students at level 3/4 (averaged across strands)

Literacy

78% **87**%

70% **78**%

Numeracy

Elementary Individual Education Plan (IEP)*
% with an IEP in Grades 1-8

Of the students who participated in the census and had an IEP (excluding gifted), **10% identified as Black.** This is consistent with the percentage of students who identified as Black in the census.

Elementary and Secondary Suspension*

Black students accounted for **over 2 times** the number of suspensions compared to their representation in the Student Census.

*Results for those who selected Black as a single racial identity

Secondary Achievement
% GRADE 12 students at 70% or higher

Grade 12 University English

70% **81**%

62% **72**%

Grade 12 University Math

Grade 12 College English

47% **56**%

41% **56**%

Grade 12 College Math

Average discrepency in grades **10**%

Graduation Rate
% Graduating in 4 Years
(Graduating by the end of the 2019-2020 school year)

85% **88**%

DDSB
Ignite Learning

> # "The only way you really see change is by helping to create it.
>
> *Lena Waithe – American actress, producer, and screenwriter* "

DDSB Student Census Results

The DDSB student census data indicates that the current system imposes barriers that disproportionately and negatively impact students who identify as Black.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, data that shows disparaties and the disproportionalities based on race are indicators of systemic racism. Black students in DDSB experience school differently and fare worse academically than their White and South Asian classmates, and experience higher suspensions rates than the representation in the student census. In addition, fewer Black students graduate from high school in four years compared to White and South Asian students. The achievement gap demonstrated in the census data reflects systemic ABR in the education system.

The Compendium of Action for Black Student Success aims to disrupt this trend by providing specific, direct, and targeted actions for educators and staff working to address systemic discriminatory and racist barriers for Black students. Doing so will address systemic education barriers and support students' right to an education free from discrimination as promised to Ontario students through the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Doing what needs to be done to ensure our young people have what they need to be affirmed and face the world with knowledge of self.

- Jean Augustine

Accountability and Evidence of Success

The DDSB implemented the Human Rights Roles, Responsibility and Accountability framework in 2022. Accountability is best defined as the process through which individuals or organizations in the education system take responsibility for their actions and report on these actions to all stakeholders and is a critical element in the success of improving education systems. Accountability for and commitment to the completion of the action items in this Compendium of Action for Black Student Success must be transparent and visible to everyone within the DDSB as well as parents/guardians and members of the community. Accountability must be modeled and articulated by senior leaders and staff at all levels of the organization.

Successful completion of the action items outlined in this document will be realized when:

- Schools are drawing on the voices and realities of Black students to make responsive and intentional programming decisions.

- Schools ensure that their programming is authentic and reflects the lived experiences and abilities of all learners.

- The collective capacity knowledge and leadership of all students, staff, and communities increase concerning anti-Black racism.

- The Durham District School Board has trained educators to understand anti-Black racism and to use proactive effective strategies to eliminate it.

- Fundamental changes are made to ensure the well-being and academic change to success of Black students.

Indicators and Targets of Success

- The Board is committed to addressing the disparaties and unequal experiences of Black students.

- Fewer suspensions and expulsions of Black students.

- Reduced dropout/push out rates of Black students.

- Higher achievement levels for Black students as evidenced by report card data and provincial assessments.

- More Black students receiving academic awards.

- Fewer Black students in Special Education Programs.

- Increase the percentage of Black students feeling welcome in schools as demonstrated by student feedback in the student climate survey.

Performance Monitoring Plan

- Anti-Oppression department to review action items two times per year to determine evidence-based results.

- Review to ensure action items are achieving intended results.

- Community information session to be held two times per year to share progress and seek feedback and input.

REVIEW SCHEDULE

1st Review	March 2024
2nd Review	November 2024
3rd Review	March 2025
4th Review	September 2025

Future Reviews to be completed bi-annually

Culturally Relevant Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP)

High Expectations

HIGH ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Addressing and Challenging
Deficit Thinking Model

High-Yield Teaching Strategies
& Differentiated Instruction

Culture of High Behavioural
Expectations

Precise and Consistent
Monitoring and Assessment

Appropriate Resources to
Support All Learners

Cultural Competence

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Asset-based Approach
to Families/Communities

Utilize Students' Cultures
as a Vehicle for Learning

Connections to Knowledge
of Families and Communities

Students' Social Identities
and Lived Realities are
Valued and Respected

Examining 'Hidden Curriculum'
as Vehicle to Address Issues

**Morrison,
Robbins,
Rose
(2008)**

CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Students develop a broader socio-political consciousness

Students critique the cultural norms, values and institutions
that produce and maintain social inequities

Teachers transform curriculum by challenging
and offering multiple perspectives on traditional,
Eurocentric, male-centred curriculum

Teachers utilize critical constructivist approach
in classroom as a means to share power
and construct/interpret knowledge together

Education as a means
to affect social change

Critical Consciousness

*The DDSB launched CCRP Board-wide in 2019.
CRRP provides an anti-oppression framework
to ensure an equitable education for all students.*
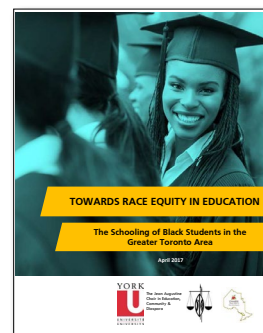
Resources for Teachers
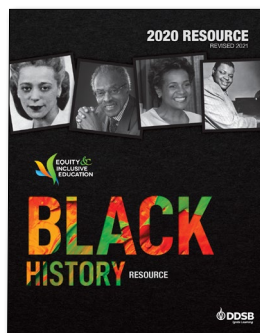
Black History
Resource
English Version
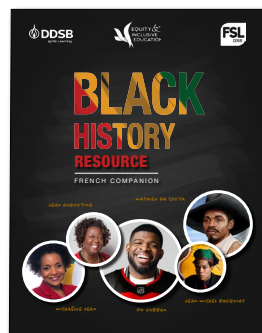
Black History
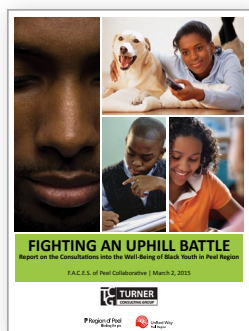Resource
French Version
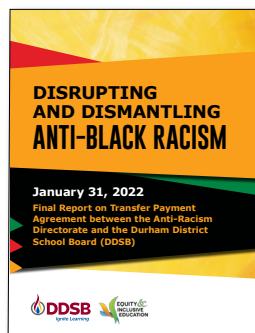
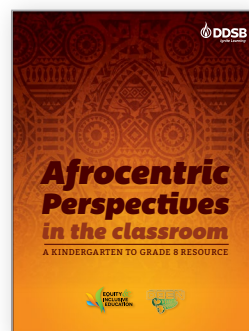Anti-Black Racism
Directorate Report
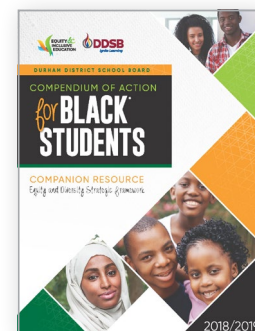

Towards Race
Equity in
Education

The Black
Experience
Project
in the GTA

Fighting an
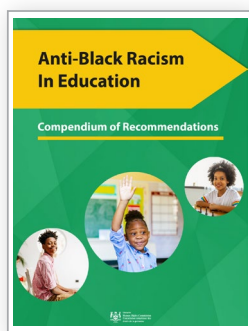Uphill Battle

Afrocentric
Perspectives in
the Classroom

Black Student
Compendium

Connect Durham
April Report

Anti-Black Racism
in Education
Compendium of
Recommendations

Resources for Parents/Guardians

BOARD RESOURCES

- Addressing anti-Black racism and its Impact: A Well-Being Toolkit for Families
- Accommodating Creed Document
- French as a Second Language Parent Network
- DDSB Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)
- Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Policy

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- Durham Family and Cultural Centre (previously known as Side by Side Family Centre)
- Kujenga
- S.N.A.P (Stop Now and Plan)
- Durham Black Educators' Network
- Durham ONE
- The Congress of Black Women Canada – Pickering/Ajax Chapter
- Disrupting and Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Directorate Report

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS/ PARTNERSHIPS

- Anti-Black Racism Action Committee
- Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce
- Student and Family Advocate Program (Side by Side Family Centre)
- Durham Black Educators' Network
- Durham Family and Cultural Centre (previously known as Side by Side Family Centre)

Glossary of Terms

Affinity Network: staff with shared identities goals and objectives.

Anti-Oppression: an approach that recognizes the power imbalance within society that attributes benefits to some groups and excludes others. This approach seeks to develop strategies to create an environment free from oppression, racism and other forms of discrimination. It acknowledges the intersections of identity and Human Rights Code grounds and aims to promote equity between various identities.

Anti-Racism: an active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism as well as the oppression and injustice racism causes. An anti-racism approach is a systematic method of analysis, and a proactive course of action rooted in the recognition of the existence of racism, including systemic racism. Anti-racism actively seeks to identify, remove, prevent, and mitigate racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between groups and change the structures that sustain inequities.

Anti-Black Racism: prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and its legacy. Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, to the extent that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger White society. Anti-Black racism is manifested in the current social, economic, and political marginalization of African Canadians, which includes unequal opportunities, lower socio-economic status, higher unemployment, significant poverty rates and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system.

Barrier: anything that prevents a person from fully taking part in any aspect of DDSB services, employment or learning and working environments based on a Human Rights Code ground(s) and can include policies, procedures and practices, and physical, architectural, information or communications, attitudinal, and technological barriers. Barriers can be overt or subtle, intended or unintended, and systemic or specific to an individual or group. Barriers prevent or limit access to opportunities, benefits, services or advantages that are available to others. See also "systemic barrier" below.

Bias: a predisposition, prejudice or generalization about a group of persons based on personal characteristics or stereotypes.

Bias Aware Discipline: a continuum of prevention strategies to foster and reinforce positive behaviour, and to help students make good choices.

Choosing My Success: student, parent, guardian information regarding transition from grade 8 to 9.

Colonialism: the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy: teaching that recognizes all students learn differently and that these differences may be connected to background, language, family structure and social or cultural identity.

Discrimination: any practice or behaviour, whether intentional or not, which results in a person or group experiencing differential or inequitable treatment (or where they are denied opportunities or benefits) based on one or more of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Human Rights Code (This is often based on stereotypes, assumptions or negative attitudes about a group of people).

Duty Bearer: employees who are responsible for promoting, protecting and upholding human rights and DDSB Human Rights Policy preventing and addressing discrimination in DDSB services, employment and learning and working environments. Duty bearer responsibilities are outlined in the Human Rights Policy and procedures. Duty to accommodate: DDSB has a legal obligation under the Human Rights Code to accommodate students' and employees' Human Rights Code related needs, to the point of undue hardship (see definition below). The duty includes procedural and substantive elements to collaboratively identify accommodation options and solutions, and to provide accommodation that must respect the individual's dignity and needs, and that maximizes integration, independence and participation.

Equity: a process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality for individuals or groups. The intent of equity initiatives is not to produce sameness or equality of outcome. It is to create the conditions of fair inclusive and respectful treatment and through which everyone may have equal access to resources and equal opportunity to thrive for (for example, by identifying and removing barriers that impact specific groups of people).

Facilitators: classroom teachers seconded to support classroom teachers in curriculum.

Historical Literacy HRL: teaching, learning, and leadership beliefs and practices authentically respond to: Students' cultural (and other) identities. The cultural (and other) identities of others – Gholdy Muhammed. The five parts to the HRL frame are intellect, skill, identity, crticality and joy.

Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC): a school board committee that decides whether your child is exceptional and requires special education programs and services. They also decide the Placement within the school and the decision is reviewed annually.

Inclusive Design: design that considers the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age, and other forms of human difference.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): students who receive special education and related services must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The plan is a legal document and individualized to meet the needs of the student.

Institutional Racism: also know as systemic racism, is a form of racism that is embedded in the laws and regulations of a society or organization.

Intersectional Discrimination/Intersectionality: discrimination based on the overlap between or combination of two or more Human Rights Code related characteristics. Often it is the result of identities that intersect in a socially significant way. It refers to discrimination that occurs based on two or more Human Rights Code grounds that produces a unique and distinct form and experience of discrimination, and recognizes that people's lives involve multiple overlapping identities, and that marginalization, exclusion and discrimination may be further exacerbated because of how these identities interact or "intersect".

Job Embedded Training: the learning that is grounded in the daily work of teachers, with the goal of improving student outcomes.

Learning Environment: any space, premise, location or thing at, upon, or in which a DDSB student or community member learns or engages in activities connected to the learning environment (e.g., parent engagement/parent council activity, etc.). This includes virtual/online environments. Conduct that has consequences for the learning environment, regardless of where it occurs, may be considered to have occurred in a learning environment (e.g., schools and school-related activities, such as extra-curricular activities and excursions).

Marginalized Group: refers to a long-term, structural process of systemic discrimination that creates a group(s) of disadvantaged peoples. These groups become permanently confined to the margins of society; their status is continually reproduced because of the various dimensions of exclusion in society and it affects full and meaningful participation in society.

Power: access to privileges such as information/knowledge, connections, experience and expertise, resources and decision-making that enhance a person's chances of getting what they need to live a comfortable, safe, productive and profitable life.

Prejudice: negative prejudgment or preconceived feelings or notions about another person or group of persons based on perceived characteristics.

Privilege: unearned power, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities that exist for members of the dominant group(s) in society. It can also refer to the relative privilege of one group compared to another.

Progressive Discipline: appropriate consequences and/or supports to help students improve their behaviour, while considering their individual circumstances. The goal is to help prevent inappropriate student behaviour from happening again.

Race: a social construct to categorize people based on geographic, historical, political, economic and social factors. This social construction of race is called "racialization" and the process also contains a value judgement or response to individuals or groups. In addition to physical characteristics such as colour, some characteristics that are commonly racialized include language, accent, name, clothing, beliefs and practices. Racial categories are not based on science or biology but on differences that society has created (i.e., "socially constructed"), with significant consequences for people's lives. Racial categories may vary over time and place and can overlap with ethnic, cultural or religious groupings.

Racialized: racialized persons and/or groups can have racial meanings attributed to them in ways that negatively impact their social, political, and economic life. This includes but is not necessarily limited to people classified as "visible minorities" under the Canadian Census and may include people impacted by antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Racism: a belief that one group is superior or inferior to others. Racism can be openly displayed in racial "jokes", slurs or hate crimes. It can also be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs, and are assumptions that have evolved over time and have become part of systems and institutions. Racism includes ideas or practices that establish, maintain or perpetuate the racial superiority or dominance of one group over another.

Restorative Practices: a strategy used to repair the harm done by providing forums for sharing the harm done and harm caused by the actions.

Stereotypes: incorrect assumptions based on ancestry, race, disability, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, creed/religion and other Human Rights Code grounds. Stereotyping typically involves attributing the same characteristics to all members of a group regardless of their individual differences. It is often based on misconceptions, incomplete information and/or false generalizations.

Systemic Barrier: a barrier embedded in the social or administrative structures of an organization, including the physical accessibility of an organization, organizational policies, practices and decision-making processes, or the culture of an organization. These may appear neutral on the surface but exclude members of groups protected by the Human Rights Code or may result in differential treatment.

Systemic Discrimination: where systems, rules, policies, patterns of behaviour or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures or cultures of an organization (whether intentionally or unintentionally, and even if they may appear neutral) have a discriminatory impact on particular people or groups based on Human Rights Code grounds, or that create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for groups identified under the Human Rights Code.

Systemic Racism: also know as institutional racism, is a form of racism that is embedded in the laws and regulations of a society or organization.

Targeted Universalism: a principle that recognizes that everyone benefits from the targeted removal of systemic barriers faced by the most disadvantaged communities. Reducing barriers and disparities leads to a better environment for everyone.

Universal Design Learning: an approach to teaching and learning that gives all students equal opportunity to succeed.

White Supremacy: a racist ideology based on the belief that White identity is the norm, standard and ideal. "It does not refer to extreme hate groups or far right extremists. It is not about good and bad people. It is about the accumulation of social, cultural and institutional power that has and continues to advantage a group of people" (from Addressing Anti-Asian Racism: A Resource for Educators, TDSB and ETFO). It refers to the "pervasiveness, magnitude, and normalcy of White privilege, dominance, and assumed superiority in society" (from Is Everyone Really Equal? An Introduction to Key Concepts in Social Justice Education, Ozlem Sensoy, Robin DiAngelo).

Notes

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing accessible information and communications. If you require an alternative format, please contact the Digital Accessibility Coordinator by email at communications.department@ddsb.ca.

Acknowledgement

Committee Members

Administrators

Roy Cousins

Kevin De Andrade

James Klodnicki

Sharon Knights

Lanya Lewis

Karen Lowhar

Sarah MacDonald

Sean McCormack

Kyla McKee

Cheryl Rock

Debbie Sansford

Elaine Warburton

Teachers

Dalana Parris

Samantha Seto

Anti-Oppression Team

Camille Alli

Chrystal Bryan

Margaret Lazarus

Merrill Mathews

Jacqui Steer

Ed Centre Staff

Arlene Walkes

Parents

Avril Rowe

Nicolle Williams

Students

Amonra Hamilton (Elem)

De-Mario Knowles (Sec)

Compendium of Action for

Black Student Success 2.0

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Anti-Oppression
Department

"We must **open the doors** and we must see to it they remain open, so that others can pass through."

Rosemary Brown

DDSB
Ignite Learning

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

REPORT TO: Durham District School Board   **DATE:** November 6, 2023

SUBJECT: 2023-2024 DDSB Math Achievement Action Plan   **PAGE:** 1 of 5

ORIGIN: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
Georgette Davis, Superintendent of Equitable Education
Erin Elmhurst, Superintendent of Equitable Education
Mohamed Hamid, Superintendent of Equitable Education
Margaret Lazarus, Superintendent of Equitable Education
Stephen Nevills, Superintendent of Equitable Education

1.0   Purpose

The purpose of this report is to share with the Board of Trustees information on the development of the **2023-2024 DDSB Math Achievement Action Plan**.

2.0   Ignite Learning Strategic Priority/Operational Goals

Success – *Set high expectations and provide support to ensure all staff and students reach their potential every year.*

Effective mathematics programming informed by high-impact practices will provide opportunities for both teachers and students to reach their potential.

Well-being – *Create safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces to promote well-being for all students and staff*.

Increased learning and achievement enhances student confidence and self-efficacy which promotes a sense of well-being.

Equity – *Promote a sense of belonging and increase equitable outcomes for all by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement*.

Effective mathematics programming removes barriers to learning and increases equitable learning experiences and outcomes.

Engagement – *Engage students, parents, and community members to improve student outcomes and build public confidence.*

High quality mathematics instruction improves student learning outcomes which will contribute to increased parent and community confidence across the District.

Innovation – *Re-imagine learning and teaching spaces through digital technologies and innovative resources.*

The use of innovative approaches, including digital tools and resources, is an important contributor to student success in mathematics.

3.0 <u>**Background**</u>

As per the spring 2023 Ministry Memorandum titled "2023-24 Math Achievement Action Plan", during the first part of 2023, the Ministry of Education brought together experts in mathematics education to
better understand next steps for math improvement in Ontario. Through this work, the Ministry developed *Taking Action in Mathematics* (Appendix B), an iterative framework to capture areas of focus and to guide actions for improvement.

Informed by the Ministry's *Taking Action in Mathematics* framework, school boards have been asked to develop a **Math Achievement Action Plan** for the 2023-2024 school year. The Durham District School Board (DDSB) 2023-2024 Math Achievement Action Plan is included as Appendix A.

The development of the **DDSB Math Achievement Action Plan** builds on the existing structures designed and implemented to support the release, in Spring of 2020, of *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Mathematics, 2020* followed by the release of the *Grade 9 Mathematics Course, 2021* (de-streamed). Both revised curriculum documents introduced several new concepts and skills.

Successful supports implemented in the DDSB to date include, but are not limited to:

- Math coach assignments specific to the previous 11 Ministry identified elementary Math Strategy Schools as well as facilitator support for the previous 4 Ministry identified secondary schools.
- School-based support/sessions provided by facilitators (e.g., staff meetings, lunch and learn sessions, school-based creative release time).
- Provision of digital tools to support classroom practices (e.g., Math Up, Knowledgehook, Gizmos).
- Development and sharing of DDSB created professional learning materials (videos, print resources, slide presentations), available on the DDSB Professional Learning Hub.

To further support implementation of the **DDSB Math Achievement Action Plan**, DDSB's *Mathematics Grades 1 to 12: A Companion Document to the Ontario Curriculum* (Appendix C) has been created. This document replaces the former DDSB Mathematics Profile: Grades 1 to 12 and was foundational in the development of the **DDSB Math Achievement Action Plan.**

Available in print and digital formats, it is intended to be used as a professional learning resource to:

- Support an increased understanding of the Ontario Mathematics Curriculum (elementary and secondary).
- Inspire conversation/learning which connects the vision and goals of the mathematics curriculums to key principles underlying DDSB's Indigenous Education, and Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism and Equity and Inclusive Education policies and procedures, specific to classroom teaching and learning.
- Support conversations and planning specific to School Learning Plans.

The content of this resource supports an inquiry mindset, with reflective questions strategically embedded throughout to ensure a focus on Indigenous Rights and Human Rights within all classroom/school learning and assessment experiences.

4.0   **Analysis**

Math Achievement Action Plan

The **DDSB Math Achievement Action Plan** includes three sections:

- All schools report to provide board-wide improvement efforts and results in mathematics.
- Priority Schools report to provide intensive improvement efforts.
- Priority Schools Provincial Key Performance Indicators (KPI) report to provide intentional monitoring of student achievement KPIs common to all priority schools across the District.

This plan outlines the board's concrete, visible, and measurable strategies as well as key performance indicators at the board, school, and classroom level under the following areas of focus:

1. Curriculum Fidelity
2. Math Content Knowledge for Teaching
3. Knowing Your Student
4. Measurable Results: Improvements in Math Achievement

Mathematics Grades 1 to 12: A DDSB Companion Document to the Ontario Curriculum

The *Mathematics Grades 1 to 12: A DDSB Companion Document to the Ontario Curriculum* includes sections focused on:

- Indigenous and Human Rights in Mathematics Education
- Joy of Mathematics
- High Impact Practices and Assessment/Evaluation
- Curriculum Strands/Concepts and Supporting Tools/Manipulatives

The development and revision process has been underway since early 2021 and reflects collaboration across central teams/departments. Feedback from a range of central staff/departments has informed ongoing revisions.

The current document reflects all revisions and is available in print form. The electronic document will be posted on the internal Professional Resources Site for the system.

Recommended revisions/enhancements will be available through links and will include:

- Samples of numeracy block planning (by day, week) with variations for each elementary division
- Information links to build deeper connections to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within a mathematics program, beginning with links to high-impact practices

5.0   **Financial Implications**

The cost of implementing the **DDSB Math Achievement Action Plan** was included in the 2023-2024 Priorities and Partnership Funding (PPF). The memo with regards to the funding was shared with school boards in April 2023.

6.0   **Evidence of Impact**

Updates on the implementation of the **DDSB Math Achievement Action Plan** will be shared for information with the Board of Trustees in March 2024 and the final update in June 2024.

The Mathematics Grades 1 to 12: A DDSB Companion Document to the Ontario Curriculum will increase educator and school leader understanding of effective mathematics teaching and learning as aligned to the vision and goals of the Ontario Mathematics Curriculum.

The efficacy of classroom programming will increase as educators reflect on, and implement, the practices and approaches shared in this resource.

7.0   **Communication Plan**

The **DDSB Math Achievement Action Plan** has been provided to union/federation partners and School Leader Associations for feedback on implementation and will be released to the system in November 2023.

The Mathematics Grades 1 to 12: A DDSB Companion Document to the Ontario Curriculum was shared in print form with school principals (one copy per school). Once finalized the electronic version will be shared with school leaders and *Curriculum Currents*.

8.0   ***Conclusion***

This report is provided to the Board of Trustees for information.

9.0   **Appendices**

Appendix A – 2023-2024 **DDSB Math Achievement Action Plan**

Appendix B - Taking Action in Mathematics

Appendix C - Mathematics Grades 1 to 12: A DDSB Companion Document to the Ontario Curriculum
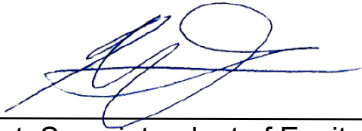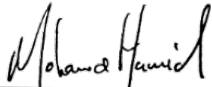
Report reviewed and submitted by:

_____

Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board

_____

Georgette Davis, Superintendent of Equitable Education

_____

Erin Elmhurst, Superintendent of Equitable Education

_____

Mohamed Hamid, Superintendent of Equitable Education

_____

Margaret Lazarus, Superintendent of Equitable Education

_____

Stephen Nevills, Superintendent of Equitable Education

Teaching and Learning Vision

Creating thriving learning ecosystems that prioritize student identity, Indigenous rights and Human Rights in order to create the conditions for all students to thrive, achieving their fullest potential.

1 Innovative Human Centered Professional Learning

2 Humanizing the Learning Environment

3 Thriving Pedagogical Practices

Priority Area	All Schools	Priority Schools
Priority Action #1 Ensuring fidelity of curriculum implementation, including the intentional use of proven strategies that support academic math achievement **School Board Area of Need** Curriculum Alignment: Ensuring the math curriculum is aligned with best practices and implemented consistently across all classrooms.	**Board Level Strategy** **Provide guidelines, resources and supports for mathematics curriculum-aligned long-range plans, unit plans, and lesson plans** Establish a Teaching and Learning Student - Centered Curriculum Advancement Committee to regularly review curriculum making recommendations for enhancement that support innovative pedagogical approaches and resources inclusive of the "Mathematics grades 1 - 12: A DDSB companion guide to the Ontario Curriculum". **KPI:** The percentage of recommendations put forward by the Advancement Committee implemented with reported success.	**Board Level Strategy** **Provide guidelines, resources and supports for mathematics curriculum-aligned long-range plans, unit plans, and lesson plans** Leverage coaching support to collaborate with School Improvement Teams in utilizing the 'Mathematics grades 1 - 12: A DDSB companion guide to the Ontario Curriculum' and recommendations from the Advancement Committee to inform the development and implementation of the School Learning Plan. **KPI:** The percentage of recommendations put forward by the Advancement Committee implemented with reported success.
	School Level Strategy **Other** Protected schedule blocks of at least 60 minutes of daily math instruction. **KPI:** Percentage of classroom schedules with protected daily math blocks	**School Level Strategy** **Other** Protected schedule blocks of at least 60 minutes of daily math instruction, as well as extended opportunities for building automaticity and mathematical fluency **KPI:** Number of classroom schedules with protected math blocks and extensions for practice beyond the blocks.

Priority Area	All Schools	Priority Schools
	Classroom Level Strategy **Draw explicit connections to and between mathematical processes and in lesson planning and use proven instructional and assessment practices (e.g., High-Impact Instructional Practices)** Utilization of "Mathematics Grades 1-12: A DDSB companion guide to the Ontario Curriculum" to guide lesson design and pedagogical practices to effectively implement the 9 High Impact Instructional Practices (HIIP) **KPI:** Number of classrooms who have identified the "Mathematics Grades 1-12: A DDSB companion guide to the Ontario Curriculum" as a foundational resource to guide lesson design and pedagogical practices and are using the High Impact Instructional Practices (HIIP) as part of math learning environments.	**Classroom Level Strategy** **Draw explicit connections to and between mathematical processes and in lesson planning and use proven instructional and assessment practices (e.g., High-Impact Instructional Practices)** Activate coaching support to come alongside educators in using the "Mathematics grades 1 - 12: A DDSB companion guide to the Ontario Curriculum" to effectively implement the 9 High Impact Instructional Practices (HIIP) **KPI:** The percentage of educators who experienced growth in understanding and implementation of the HIIPs.

Priority Area	All Schools	Priority Schools
Priority Action #2 Engaging in ongoing learning on mathematics content knowledge for teaching **School Board Area of Need** Continuous Learning: Providing educators with access to resources that help them stay up-to-date with the latest research and best practices in mathematics education. This includes opportunities for educators to collaborate with peers and engage in reflective practices to improve their math teaching skills to impact student achievement and well-being positively.	**Board Level Strategy** **Prioritize mathematics content knowledge for teaching in professional learning opportunities and in allocation of resources, including staffing** Strengthen central professional learning resources to allow for multiple entry points for educator learning and pedagogical shifts. **KPI:** Number of new/updated resources available on the central teaching and learning site.	**Board Level Strategy** **Prioritize mathematics content knowledge for teaching in professional learning opportunities and in allocation of resources, including staffing** Offer subsidized Math AQ at multiple Priority School locations across the District **KPI:** Percentage of educators in priority schools with math qualifications
	School Level Strategy **Engage in regular collaborative meetings (e.g., team teaching, collaborative analysis of student work, school and/or board networks, classroom visits) to deepen knowledge of mathematics, curriculum, instructional starting points, and interventions** School Teams engage in ongoing collaborative analysis of student learning to determine staff learning needs and guide professional learning, monitoring student progress and improvement. **KPI:** Number of opportunities per term/semester educators engage in collaborative analysis of student learning.	**School Level Strategy** **Engage in regular collaborative meetings (e.g., team teaching, collaborative analysis of student work, school and/or board networks, classroom visits) to deepen knowledge of mathematics, curriculum, instructional starting points, and interventions** Dedicated Math, De-streaming, and Classroom Support Coaches in priority schools supporting collaborative analysis of student learning to determine staff learning needs and guide professional learning, monitoring student progress and improvement. **KPI:** Increase in educator efficacy as a result of engagement in collaborative student learning analysis.

Priority Area	All Schools	Priority Schools
	Classroom Level Strategy **Access resources (e.g., teacher supports on the Curriculum and Resources website), experts (e.g., curriculum consultant, school math facilitator), and professional learning to continuously develop content knowledge for teaching** Educators access and utilize Board created and curated resources to support professional learning and improve student achievement and well-being. **KPI:** The number of hits on the central teaching and learning professional development site per term	**Classroom Level Strategy** **Access resources (e.g., teacher supports on the Curriculum and Resources website), experts (e.g., curriculum consultant, school math facilitator), and professional learning to continuously develop content knowledge for teaching** Activate coaching support to come alongside educators to synthesize and apply Board created and curated resources, to construct an environment where students are excited to learn mathematics and develop into confident math learners. **KPI:** Increased educator confidence in math content knowledge and community building.

Priority Area	All Schools	Priority Schools
Priority Action #3 Knowing the mathematics learner, and ensuring mathematical tasks, interventions, and supports are relevant and responsive **School Board Area of Need** Knowing the Math Learner: Gain a deeper human-centered understanding of the math learner through relationship building and the strategic collection and analysis of conversations, observations, products to determine student learning strengths and areas of growth.	**Board Level Strategy** **Provide a digital math tool to support student mathematics learning at home and/or at school, that can be used by teachers to understand current student learning levels and provide targeted supports for students** Provide Education Perfect (digital math tool) and ongoing training as an additional resource to understand current student learning strengths and areas for growth to provide targeted support for all students. **KPI:** Number of educators trained on Education Perfect.	**Board Level Strategy** **Provide a digital math tool to support student mathematics learning at home and/or at school, that can be used by teachers to understand current student learning levels and provide targeted supports for students** Provide Education Perfect (digital math tool) and ongoing training as an additional resource to understand current student learning strengths and areas for growth to provide targeted support for all students. **KPI:** Number of educators trained and using Education Perfect.
	School Level Strategy **Develop processes to identify and monitor achievement of students achieving below Level 2 in mathematics and provide ongoing supports so that students can access grade-level curriculum** At least once per term/semester, school teams engage in ongoing collaborative analysis of student learning to inform instruction and interventions that are responsive to students not being served. **KPI:** Number of schools with comprehensive student success systems that support the improvement of student achievement.	**School Level Strategy** **Develop processes to identify and monitor achievement of students achieving below Level 2 in mathematics and provide ongoing supports so that students can access grade-level curriculum** Activate coaching support to come alongside school teams to engage in ongoing collaborative analysis of student learning to inform instruction and interventions that are responsive to student not being served. **KPI:** Number of schools with comprehensive student success systems that support the improvement of student achievement and reduce the number of students not being served.

Priority Area	All Schools	Priority Schools
	Classroom Level Strategy **Understand and respond to student mathematics strengths, needs and interests using a variety of sources, including the Curriculum and Resources website, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and collaboration with special education teachers and educational assistants** Educators use the information gathered through the collaborative analysis of student learning to shift pedagogical practices and structures that are gap closing within classroom practice. **KPI:** Percentage of educators who report an increase in student achievement as a result of gap closing structures.	**Classroom Level Strategy** **Understand and respond to student mathematics strengths, needs and interests using a variety of sources, including the Curriculum and Resources website, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and collaboration with special education teachers and educational assistants** Activating coach support in working with educators to synthesize and use the information gathered through the collaborative analysis of student learning to shift pedagogical practices/interventions, to be relevant and responsive to the mathematical learner. **KPI:** Percentage of students not being served that demonstrate improvement.

Taking action in mathematics | Look-fors by provincial action

Math achievement efforts across the province should include multiple proven evidence-informed strategies and approaches to address local learning needs in schools.

The ministry has worked with researchers, math specialists, and school boards to identify three interwoven math actions to be prioritized in the 2023–24 school year. Board Math Leads, as they determine board and school priorities in mathematics achievement, will develop, implement, and monitor a Math Achievement Action Plan that includes meaningful and measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with each of the priority actions below.

A mathematics community of excellence: In order to promote effective math instruction, it is important for educators to foster mathematics communities in classrooms and schools, and to recognize that not all students learn math in the same way or within the same time frames. Effective math instruction is supported by an inclusive, positive, and safe learning environment where all students feel valued and engaged, and in which educators clearly communicate expectations and establish norms and routines with their students at the beginning of instruction. Educators at all levels of the school system have a role to play in establishing a culture of excellence in mathematics and setting conditions for success. This includes leaders reviewing practices to determine barriers to success, creating accountability, and attending to mathematics attitudes and mindsets in school and system improvement plans.
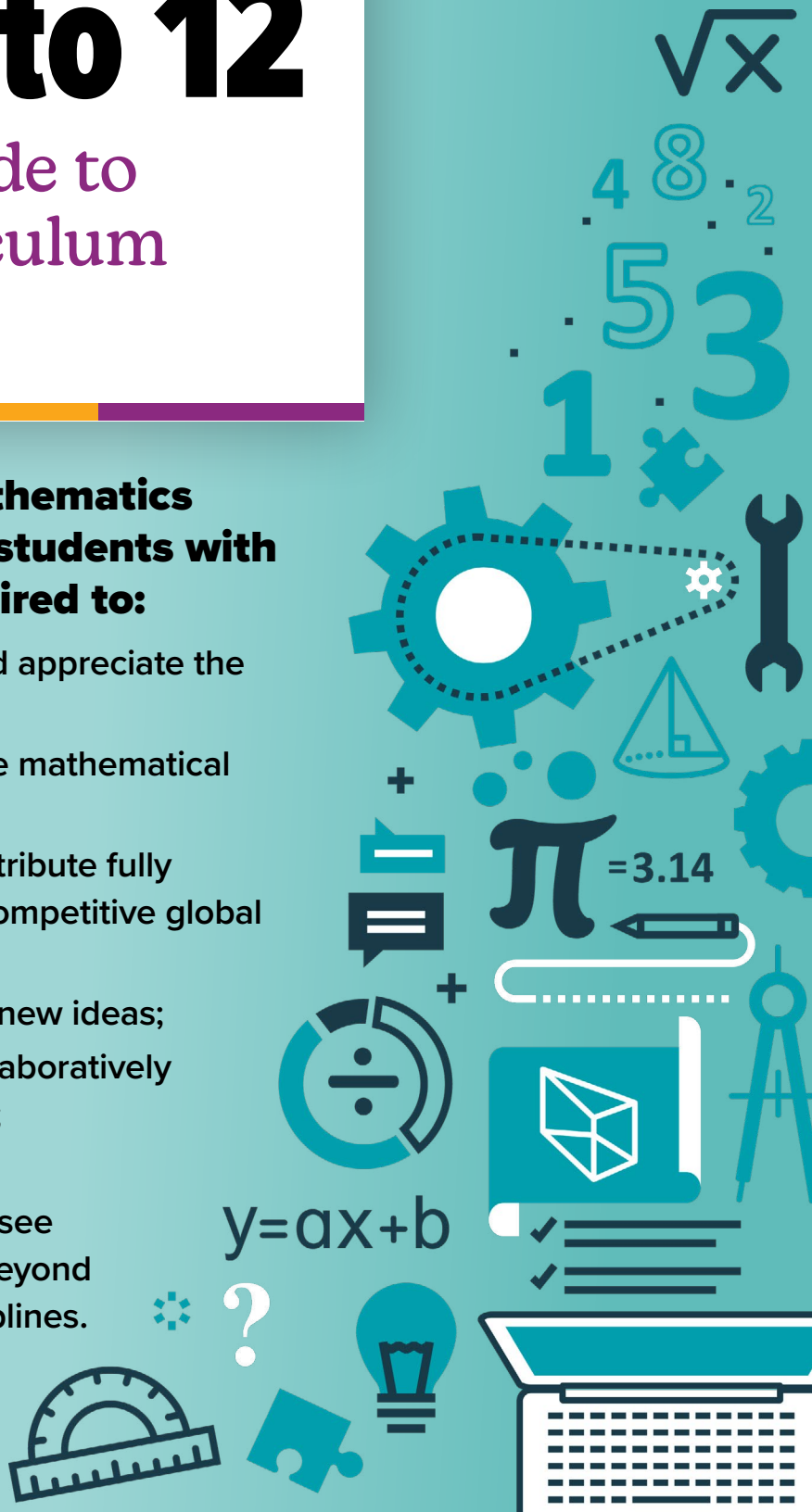
PRIORITY ACTION: Ensuring fidelity of curriculum implementation and use of instructional and assessment practices with a proven track record of enhancing student achievement	PRIORITY ACTION: Engaging in ongoing learning to strengthen mathematics content knowledge for teaching	PRIORITY ACTION: Knowing the mathematics learner, and ensuring mathematical tasks, interventions and supports are relevant and responsive
• How are all educators throughout the system focused on developing a comprehensive understanding and precise implementation of the mathematics curriculum? • How do grade, course, and daily lesson plans reflect the current curriculum, including the mathematical processes and connections between curriculum strands?	• What systems, supports, and resources are available to support teachers and leaders in determining a focus area for their math content knowledge development? • How are all educators engaged in ongoing learning that strengthens their own mathematics knowledge, skills, and attitudes about math teaching and learning?	• How is student assessment data and prior mathematics knowledge used to guide interventions and planning? • How do educators learn about the mathematics strengths, needs and interests of all students to inform their instructional decisions? • How are educators supporting inclusion and engagement for all students, especially those with diverse learning needs?
Board • Prioritize understanding of the curriculum and the continuum of learning across grades • Align resources, including staffing, with mathematics priorities • Provide guidelines, resources and supports for mathematics curriculum-aligned long-range plans, unit plans, and lesson plans • Leverage digital math resources to support curriculum-linked practice at home	**Board** • Utilize student achievement data and student work to establish focus areas for mathematics professional learning • Understand the importance of the relationship between mathematics content knowledge and effective mathematics instruction, as it relates to student achievement • Prioritize mathematics content knowledge for teaching in professional learning opportunities and in allocation of resources, including staffing	**Board** • Align Math Improvement Action Plan with board improvement planning, including using student assessment and demographic data to identify areas of focus • Build capacity in data analysis resources to understand mathematics achievement from a variety of sources, including alignment between EQAO, report cards, and locally-developed assessment tools/tasks • Provide a digital math tool to support student mathematics learning at home and/or at school, that can be used by teachers to understand current student learning levels and provide targeted supports for students • Develop a system-wide attendance strategy for students with more than 10 days of absences as part of board's existing prolonged absence strategy

School

- Directly connect long-range plans, course outlines, lesson plans, and reporting to current curriculum expectations (e.g., educators consult the Curriculum and Resources website regularly to ensure alignment)

- Engage in ongoing professional learning (e.g., in grade/division/ department meetings, learning teams, classroom visits) on the curriculum, including making connections across strands

- Make intentional staffing decisions to ensure teachers of key grades have deep understanding of the curriculum, including understanding instructional practices to effectively teach and assess curriculum concepts and skills

School

- Collaborate with Board Math Lead to identify school/division/grade mathematics content knowledge focus areas, including planning and monitoring associated professional learning

- Engage in regular collaborative meetings (e.g., team teaching, collaborative analysis of student work, school and/or board networks, classroom visits) to deepen knowledge of mathematics, curriculum, instructional starting points, and interventions

- Engage families and communities to support different ways of understanding and doing mathematics (e.g., families and communities are asked to contribute to planning and execution of family math nights)

School

- Determine key content areas, informed by EQAO data, including Strands and Skills reports, to determine where students may be struggling most and if there are gaps between classroom and EQAO achievement

- Integrate common open and parallel learning tasks across grades/divisions that foster student ownership of mathematics, while ensuring all students have accessible entry points into learning

- Monitor and respond to students' perception of and confidence in math (e.g., written surveys, student conferencing, family and community engagements)

- Develop processes to identify and monitor achievement of students achieving below Level 2 in mathematics and provide ongoing supports so that students can access grade-level curriculum

Classroom

- Draw explicit connections to and between mathematical processes and in lesson planning and use proven instructional and assessment practices (e.g., High-Impact Instructional Practices)

- Connect instruction and assessment to curriculum expectations and long-term essential mathematical understandings using developmental continuums

- Use a variety of assessment tools to inform next steps in curriculum implementation (e.g., teacher prompts on the Curriculum and Resources website, exit cards to inform lesson planning in response to student needs)

Classroom

- Access resources (e.g., teacher supports on the Curriculum and Resources website), experts (e.g., curriculum consultant, school math facilitator), and professional learning to continuously develop content knowledge for teaching

- Model a positive and curious learning stance with mathematics to create an environment where students are excited to learn mathematics and develop into confident math learners (e.g., regularly using "think-alouds", making the problem-solving process explicit, integrating math talk prompts and conversations, co-solving mathematics puzzles/ problems with students)

Classroom

- Adapt lesson planning in response to data collected from multiple, frequent assessment opportunities (e.g., interviews, conversations, student agendas, exit tickets, portfolios, surveys)

- Understand and respond to student mathematics strengths, needs and interests using a variety of sources, including the Curriculum and Resources website, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and collaboration with special education teachers and educational assistants

- Plan, teach, and assess learning in culturally responsive and relevant ways that motivate students to take ownership of their learning of, and progress in, mathematics

- Monitor and re-engage students at the earliest sign that attendance is impacting learning (e.g., at 3 days and 6 days of absence) and implement board's 10-day and prolonged absence strategy

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Mathematics Grades 1 to 12

A Companion Guide to the Ontario Curriculum

PUBLISHED 2023

The goal of the Ontario mathematics curriculum is to provide all students with the foundational skills required to:

- Understand the importance of and appreciate the beauty of mathematics;
- Recognize and appreciate multiple mathematical perspectives;
- Make informed decisions and contribute fully to their own lives and to today's competitive global community;
- Adapt to changes and synthesize new ideas;
- Work both independently and collaboratively to creatively approach challenges;
- Communicate effectively;
- Think critically and creatively and see connections to other disciplines beyond mathematics, such as STEM disciplines.

Contents

DDSB's Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Policy

The DDSB's policy outlines our individual and shared responsibilities to protect students' rights at school and to prevent discrimination in all aspects of teaching and learning, based on these prohibited grounds of discrimination:

- Age
- Ancestry
- Citizenship
- Colour
- Creed/religion
- Disability
- Ethnic origin
- Family status
- Gender expression
- Gender identity
- Marital status
- Place of origin
- Race
- Sex/pregnancy
- Sexual orientation
- Socioeconomic status
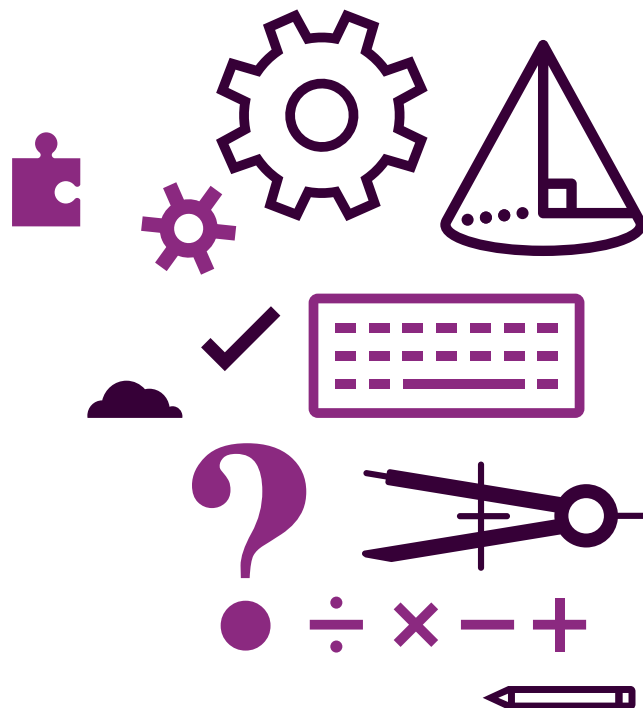
> "Educators create the conditions for authentic mathematics experiences by connecting mathematics learning to students' communities and lives; by respecting and harnessing students' prior knowledge, experiences, strengths, and interests; and by acknowledging and actively reducing and eliminating the systemic barriers that some students face. Mathematics learning that is student-centered allows students to find relevance and meaning in what they are learning, to make real-life connections to the curriculum."[1]

Within the teaching and learning of mathematics, how am I upholding my duty bearer responsibilities to:
- Promote and protect rights, centre dignity, and do no harm?
- Identify and address discrimination/discriminatory barriers?
- Respond to and address barriers?
- Learn and build capacity to understand how human rights applies to all of my work?
- Correct discrimination when it happens?

Teaching and Learning Vision

Creating thriving learning ecosystems that prioritize student identity, Indigenous rights and Human Rights in order to create the conditions for all students to thrive, achieving their fullest potential.

1

Innovative Human Centered Professional Learning

- Commitment to support schools with Human centered learning prioritizing both student achievement and well-being through a critical thinking approach

- Coaching/Mentoring supported by interdepartmental Family of School Teams

2
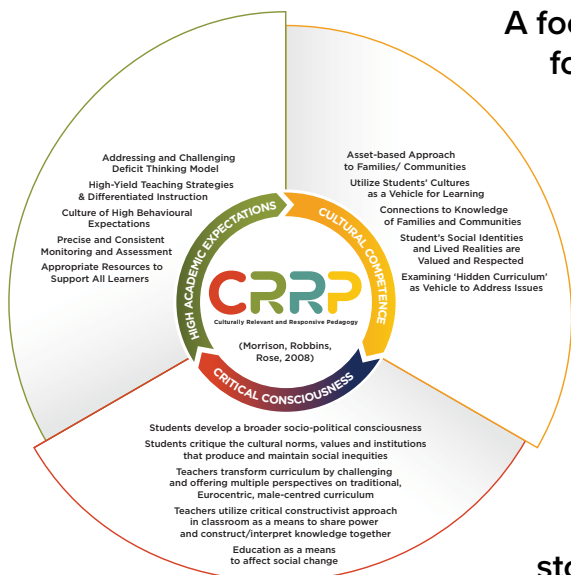
Humanizing the Learning Environment

- Anti-Oppressive Pedagogy and practices
- Universal Design for Learning
  - Destreaming
  - Student Success

3

Thriving Pedagogical Practices

- Literacy
- Numeracy

Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) in the Mathematics Classroom

A focus on critical consciousness in mathematics fosters student engagement. When students see how the math that they are doing is relevant to their lives and when they are encouraged to be curious and to inquire, they feel invested in the process and outcomes.

The 'hidden curriculum' of mathematics has taught students that math was largely constructed and derived from European ways of thinking, being, and knowing. This view of mathematics requires a shift that will provide students with opportunities to learn about the figures of math that have been missing from the story. Teaching about the diverse mathematical figures past and present from different global and identity-based contexts enables students to see themselves as mathematicians, but also to learn about the multiple uses for math and the ways that it exists in all aspects of the world around them.

HIGH ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

"When educators develop pedagogical practices that are differentiated, culturally relevant, and responsive, and hold high and appropriate expectations of students, they maximize the opportunity for all students to learn, and they create the conditions necessary to ensure that students have a positive identity as a mathematics learner and can succeed in mathematics and in all other subjects."[1]

Some examples of holding high expectations may include:
- Recognizing, addressing and challenging deficit thinking
- Appropriate resources to support all learners
- Differentiated instruction

For further information about CRRP in Mathematics, please view: DDSB Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy in the Mathematics Classroom

CULTURAL COMPETENCIES

"All students bring to school their mathematical experiences learned in various contexts. Schools should take advantage of these various experiences so that mathematics classrooms become places of diverse and inclusive learning that value multiple ways of knowing and doing. These places will allow all students to become flexible and adaptive learners in an ever-changing world."[1]

"Knowledge of English language learners' mathematical strengths, interests, and identities, including their social and cultural backgrounds is important. These "funds of knowledge" are historically and culturally developed skills and assets."[1]

Some examples may include:
- Communicating with an asset-based approach to families/communities
- Leveraging students' prior knowledge as vehicle for learning
- Co-constructing of criteria which value students' social identities and lived experiences

CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

"The Ontario mathematics curriculum provides opportunities for all students to investigate and experience mathematical situations they might find outside of the classroom and develop an appreciation for the beauty and wide-reaching nature and importance of mathematics." In fact, in every field of pursuit, the analytical, problem solving, critical-thinking, and creative thinking skills that students develop through the study of mathematics are evident.[1]

"For example, they can apply the problem-solving skills they use in mathematics to their study of the science and social studies curricula... they can look for... applications of mathematical modeling and how it can be used to answer important questions related to global health and the environment or to help solve critical social issues that are relevant to their lives and experiences."[1]

Some examples of critical consciousness may include:
- Developing a broader socio-political consciousness
- Land based learning
- Constructivist teaching as a means of sharing power and constructing/interpreting knowledge together
- Providing opportunities as a means to affect social change
- Exposure to the contributions of mathematicians globally, historically, and present day

CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS

1. Going deep with mathematics
• How do I support students in closely examining the math concept?

2. Leveraging multiple mathematical competencies
• How do I identify and support mathematical contributions from students with different strengths and levels of confidence?
• Am I using a combination of different types of questions?

3. Affirming mathematics learners' identities
• How do I structure my interactions with students to promote persistence with complex math problems?
• How do I discourage my students from linking speed with math "smartness"?
• How can I decenter myself and help students to work more collaboratively and to be more resourceful?

4. Challenging spaces of marginality
• How do I connect my students' knowledge (inside and outside of school) with the main math concept of this lesson?
• How do I make sure that all students have opportunities to demonstrate their mathematics knowledge during the lesson?

5. Drawing on multiple resources of knowledge (math culture, language, family, community)
• How do I make connections with students' previous math knowledge?
• How do I get to know my students' backgrounds and experiences to support math learning in my classroom?
• How do I affirm some of my students' multilingual abilities to help them learn math?
• How am I considering neurodiversity and applying neuroaffirmative practices?
• How can I learn from family and community members to support my students' mathematical confidence and learning?

The Impact of Identity in K-8 Mathematics: Rethinking Equity-Based Practices,
by Julia Aguirre, Karen Mayfield-Ingram, Danny Martin

For further information about CRRP in Mathematics, please visit: PD 'PepTalks—In Mathematics' found on the DDSB Professional Learning Hub

Transferable Skills in Mathematics

1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

• Understand and solve problems flexibly, accurately, and efficiently

• Understand and visualize a situation and make connections to real-life situations

• Communicate and justify solutions

2. Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship

• Solve problems with curiosity, creativity, and a willingness to take risks

• Pose questions, make and test conjectures

• Consider problems from different perspectives to generate new learning and apply it to novel situations

3. Self-Directed Learning

• Reflect on thinking and emotions, foster perseverance, resourcefulness, resilience, and a sense of self

• Initiate new learning, monitor thinking and emotions when solving problems and apply strategies to overcome challenges

• See mathematics as useful, interesting, and doable, and confidently look for ways to apply their learning

4. Collaboration

• Engage with others productively, respectfully, and critically in order to better understand ideas and problems, generate solutions, and refine their thinking

5. Communication

• Use the tools and language of mathematics to describe their thinking and to understand the world

• Use mathematical vocabulary, symbols, conventions, and representations to make meaning, express a point of view, and make convincing and compelling arguments

6. Global Citizenship and Sustainability

• Recognize and affirm multiple ways of knowing, doing, and learning, and value different perspectives

• See how mathematics is used in all walks of life and how engaged citizens can use it as a tool to raise awareness and generate solutions for real-life issues

7. Digital Literacy

• Become discerning users of technology by selecting when and how to use appropriate tools to understand and model real-life situations, predict outcomes, and solve problems, and assess and evaluate the reasonableness of results

Cultivating Genius

Consider:

Do you perform and show the same skills you teach to students? For example, do you routinely check the reasonableness of your answers when you ask students to use this skill?

What creative and innovative ways can you teach skills without lectures or worksheets?

Are students engaged, fulfilled, and thriving in the learning environment? How do you know?

How will you foster an environment that sparks curiosity in mathematics?

How do you provide 'mirrors' in learning mathematics so students see themselves in the learning?

How do you provide 'windows' in learning mathematics so students learn about others in the learning?

Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy by Gholdy Muhammad

For further information about Cultivating Genius, An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy, please visit: The Professional Learning Hub, Student Achievement & Curriculum On-Demand Book Club
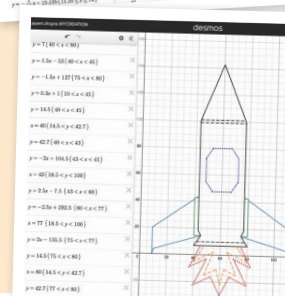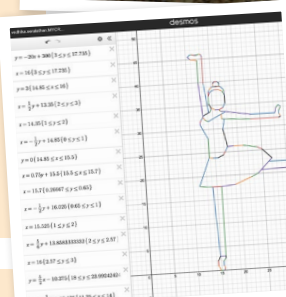
Joy of Mathematics

Mathematics is integral to every aspect of daily life—social, economic, cultural, and environmental. It is part of the story of human history. It is conceptualized and practiced in many different ways across diverse local and global cultural contexts. It is part of diverse knowledge systems composed of culturally situated thinking and practices. When students recognize themselves in what is taught and how it is taught, they begin to view themselves as competent and confident mathematics learners who belong to the larger mathematics community.[1]

It is our responsibility to create learning communities where students feel safe; because, it is only then that they can experience joy. To create a joyful mathematics experience for students we must ask ourselves:

Does our mathematics instruction connect to the world around us?

Do our lessons allow for students to recognize themselves in what and how it is taught and to incorporate their own knowledge and lived experiences?

Are we providing rich, relevant and meaningful learning opportunities for students to thrive and strategically using technology at the point of instruction to enhance learning experiences?

For further information about Joy of Mathematics, please view:
Elementary curriculum document
Secondary curriculum document for Grade 9 MTH1W
Secondary curriculum document for Grades 9 and 10
Secondary curriculum document for Grades 11 and 12

High-Impact Instructional Practices

Teachers understand the importance of knowing the identities and strengths of all students and of choosing the instructional approaches that will best support student learning. The approaches that teachers employ vary according to the learning experiences, outcomes, and the diverse strengths, abilities, and learning needs of the students. Teachers should choose from and use a variety of accessible, equitable, and high-impact instructional practices.

The thoughtful use of these high-impact instructional practices—including knowing when to use them and how they might be combined to best support the achievement of specific math goals—is an essential component of effective math instruction. Researchers have found that the following practices consistently have a high impact on teaching and learning mathematics:

Learning Goals, Success Criteria, and Descriptive Feedback	Direct Instruction	Problem-Solving Tasks and Experiences
Teaching About Problem Solving	Tools and Representations	Math Conversations
Small-Group Instruction	Deliberate Practice	Flexible Groupings

For further information about High Impact Instructional Practices in Mathematics, please view:
High-Impact Instructional Practices in Mathematics Resource and Supports
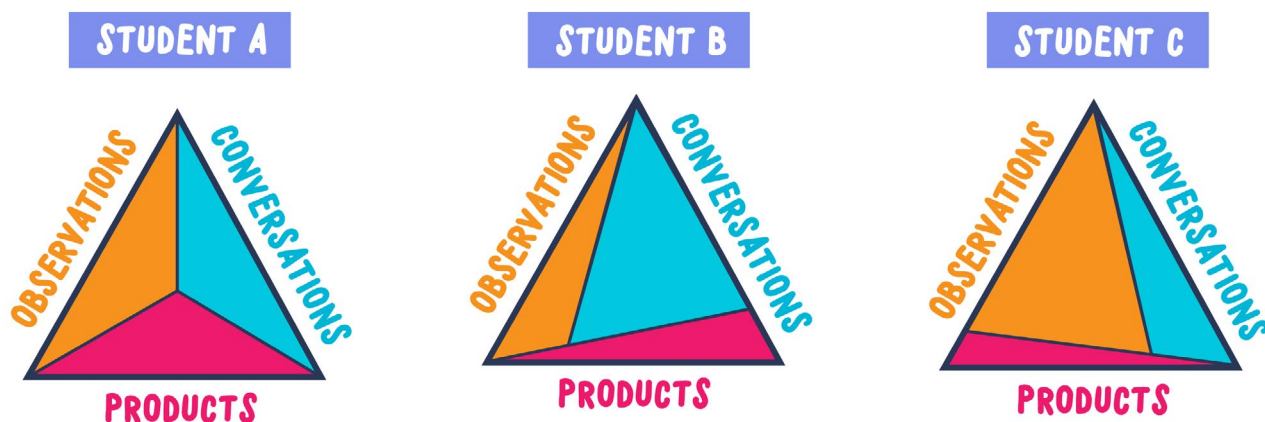
Gathering Evidence of Learning

Teachers use a variety of assessment strategies to elicit information about student learning. These strategies should be triangulated to include observations, student-teacher conversations, and student products. Teachers can gather information about learning by:

- Designing tasks that provide students with a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning
- Observing students as they perform tasks
- Posing questions to help students make their thinking explicit
- Engineering classroom and small-group conversations that encourage students to articulate what they are thinking and further develop their thinking

Teachers then use the information gathered to adjust instruction and provide feedback.[2]

DIFFERENTIATING TRIANGULATION

STUDENT A

OBSERVATIONS CONVERSATIONS
PRODUCTS

STUDENT B

OBSERVATIONS CONVERSATIONS
PRODUCTS

STUDENT C

OBSERVATIONS CONVERSATIONS
PRODUCTS

Adapted from Triangulation, Fair Does Not Mean Equal by Aleda Klassen.

Consider:
- How will I document student thinking when it is evidenced in a variety of ways?
- What am I choosing to document?
- How am I being flexible and encouraging students to show their thinking in the way that best suits their learning?
- Why this task, for this child, at this time and in this way?

For further information about Gathering Evidence of Learning, please view:
Growing Success, Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools

The Achievement Chart For Mathematics

Consider:

- How am I designing tasks to encourage students to demonstrate the range of their learning?
- How am I engaging students in developing the skills of Thinking, Application and Communication?

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING
Subject-specific content acquired in each grade (knowledge), and the comprehension of its meaning and significance (understanding).

Categories

Knowledge of content (e.g., math facts, computational strategies, terminology, mathematical models, money values).	**Understanding of content** (e.g., concepts, theories, procedures, principles, mathematical processes)

THINKING
The use of critical and creative thinking skills and/or processes.

Categories

Use of planning skills (e.g., interpreting and expressing problems, identifying unknown(s), making conjectures and estimates, identifying steps to take, considering the use of models and representations, selecting strategies and tools)	**Use of processing skills** (e.g., carrying out plans: collecting data, questioning, testing, revising, modeling, solving, inferring, forming conclusions; looking back at solutions: reflecting, evaluating reasonableness, reasoning, justifying, proving)	**Use of critical/creative thinking processes** (e.g., making and testing conjectures, posing and solving problems, critiquing solutions, providing mathematical reasoning)

COMMUNICATION
The conveying of meaning through various forms.

Categories

Expression and organization of ideas and information (e.g., clear expression, logical organization) in oral, visual, and/or written forms (e.g., pictorial, graphic, numeric, algebraic forms; gestures and other non-verbal forms; models)

Communication for different audiences (e.g., peers, adults) and purposes (e.g., to generate ideas, present data, justify a solution) in oral, visual, and/or written forms

Use of conventions, vocabulary, and terminology of the discipline in oral, visual, and/or written forms (e.g., terms, symbols)

APPLICATION
The use of knowledge and skills to make connections within and between various contexts.

Categories

Application of knowledge and skills (e.g., representations and computational strategies) in familiar contexts

Transfer of knowledge and skills (e.g., representations and computational strategies) to new contexts

Making connections within and between various contexts (e.g., connections to everyday and real-life situations; connections involving an understanding of the relationships between different measurements; connections among concepts, representations, and forms within mathematics; connections involving use of prior knowledge and experience; connections among mathematics and other disciplines, including other STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics] subjects)

The Assessment Loop in Mathematics

The Big Idea/ Cluster of Expectations

Learning Goal

Interpret the Evidence

Ask Students
**What are you learning?
How are you doing?
How do you know?
Where do you go for help?
How can you improve?**

Success Criteria

Provide Descriptive Feedback

Visible Learning: Anchor Charts & Exemplars

Gather Evidence

The Big Idea/Cluster of Expectations (Why are students doing it?)
- What expectations could be clustered based on higher order thinking?
- What are the big ideas that will be used as the basis for student learning?
- What resources can support the clustering of expectations?
- What prior knowledge, understanding, and skills do your students bring to the new learning?

Learning Goal
- What are students going to do?
- What curriculum expectations are covered in the learning goal?
- What do students need to know to be successful?
- What should they be able to do?

Success Criteria

- How are students going to demonstrate that they are working toward the learning goal?
- How are the learning goals and components of the Achievement Chart (Knowledge, Communication, Thinking and Application) incorporated into the success criteria?
- How does the success criteria offer student choice and provide opportunities to show learning in multiple ways (conversations, observations, products)?
- Do students understand what is expected, and how do you know?

Visible Learning Anchor Charts, Manipulatives, and Exemplars

- How do the anchor charts, manipulatives, or exemplars support your success criteria and student learning?
- How does your learning environment support mathematics learning?

Gather Evidence of Learning

- Do students feel like they have received sufficient time and support to demonstrate their learning? How do you know? How are you monitoring student success and providing guided intervention as needed?
- What will help you know that your students are "getting it"?
- What data sources have you considered (conversations, observations, products)?

Provide Descriptive Feedback

- What questions can we pose that will help move student thinking forward?
- How is your descriptive feedback connected to the learning goals and success criteria?
- What opportunities exist for students to peer and self-assess?
- How are students applying the feedback given?
- How are you monitoring the effectiveness of descriptive feedback?
- How are you varying the modes of feedback to support different learning styles?

Interpret the Evidence

- Who needs more time and support with these ideas?
- How are you monitoring student success and providing guided intervention as needed?
- What will help you know that your students are consolidating their learning?

Balanced Mathematics in Action

Consider:
- How might student voice and student choice inform your instructional approach?
- Why this learning, for this child, at this time and in this way?

Flexible Groupings
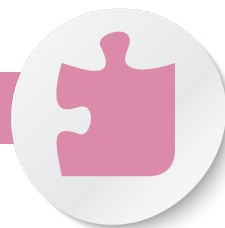
Teachers regularly make decisions about using Flexible Groupings in the classroom. The intentional combination of large-group, small-group, partnered, and independent working arrangements, in response to student and class learning needs, can foster a rich mathematical learning environment. Creating flexible groupings in a mathematics class enables students to work independently of the teacher but with the support of their peers, and it strengthens collaboration and communication skills.

Direct Instruction
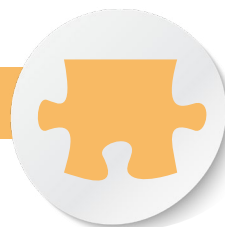
Teachers could be:
- Modeling a think-aloud
- Inviting students to activate prior learning and experiences
- Providing explicit instruction on a concept, skill, tool, or representation
- Facilitating accountable math talk
- Consolidating student learning by highlighting and naming key mathematical ideas connected to the learning goal

Students could be:
- Attending to teacher modeling of a strategy, concept skill, or representation
- Asking questions to clarify learning
- Making connections to strategies shared by the teacher and classmates
- Exploring tools, representations, and strategies to extend their learning

What others might see:
- Teacher and whole class, teacher and small group or student to student interactions
- Teacher recording anecdotal notes as assessment (for, as and of learning)
- Students are engaged in math discussions with peers using specific math vocabulary
- Reflection, discussion and sharing occur at the end of the lesson to bring closure and clarification to the key mathematical ideas through consolidation

Small-Group Instruction

Teachers could be:

- Addressing specific student learning needs with purposefully planned learning experiences and questions

- Developing math content knowledge by modeling mathematical language, use of tools and manipulatives, problem solving, thinking 'self-talk', social emotional learning, and math processes

- Facilitating discussion through prompting questions and accountable talk

- Providing differentiated descriptive feedback connected to the lesson learning goal and success criteria
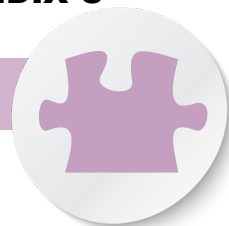
Students could be:

- Developing conceptual understanding through the learning experience

- Engaging in accountable talk related to the mathematical concepts of the lesson

- Selecting and using tools to work through a problem or task together with the teacher and other students at the table

- Acting upon descriptive feedback and setting goals for their learning

- Asking questions to clarify understanding

What others might see:

- Teacher working with small groups in flexible groupings

- Students using tools and talking about their math thinking with immediate descriptive feedback from the teacher

- Teacher recording anecdotal notes as assessment (for, as and of learning)

- Rest of the class engaged in independent, differentiated, deliberate practice activities including working at centres in small groups to explore concepts, make connections and practice skills

For further information about High-Impact Instructional Practices in Mathematics, please view: **High-Impact Instructional Practices in Mathematics resource**

Deliberate Practice

Teachers could be:

- Facilitating, observing and asking key questions as students work
- Monitoring the students as they demonstrate their understanding, practice a skill, or consolidate learning in a developmentally appropriate manner through independent application
- Providing descriptive feedback
- Prompting students to reflect on their learning

Students could be:

- Developing conceptual understanding through the learning experience
- Engaging in accountable talk related to the mathematical concepts of the lesson
- Using tools and manipulatives to work through a problem together with the teacher and the other students at the table
- Selecting and using manipulatives and representations to demonstrate understanding of a concept or skill
- Asking questions to clarify their thinking
- Making connections between skills, concepts, and processes

What others might see:

- Teacher working with small groups in flexible groupings
- Students using tools and talking about their math thinking with immediate descriptive feedback from the teacher
- Teacher recording anecdotal notes as assessment (for, as and of learning)
- Rest of the class engaged in independent deliberate practice activities including working at centres in small groups to explore concepts, make connections and practice skills

Teaching About Problem Solving, Problem Solving Tasks and Experiences

By learning to solve problems and by learning through problem solving, students are given, and create, numerous opportunities to connect mathematical ideas and to develop conceptual understanding. Problem solving forms the basis of effective mathematics programs that place all students' experiences and queries at the centre. Thus, problem solving should be the mainstay of mathematical instruction. It is considered an essential process through which all students are able to achieve the expectations in mathematics and is an integral part of the Ontario mathematics curriculum.[1]

Problem Solving Tasks and Experiences
May Occur Simultaneously with *Teaching About Problem Solving*

- Is the problem being carefully selected and differentiated?
- Are prior knowledge and experiences being built upon?
- Have students ideas been incorporated?
- Is there learning being consolidated?
- Are students provided with opportunities to reason, communicate, represent, connect, and justify their thinking?
- Are key concepts being highlighted?
- Does the problem involve multiple entry points and involve multiple solutions and/or strategies?
- When teaching about problem solving, am I explicitly engaging students in the process of mathematical modeling?
- As an educator, am I explicitly teaching and highlighting problem solving strategies?

Teaching About Problem Solving
May Occur Simultaneously with *Problem Solving Tasks and Experiences*

- Are students engaging in self-talk (metacognition) when solving a problem?
- As an educator, am I valuing struggle as part of a student's understanding that difficulties, misconceptions and errors are part of learning?
- Is there a focus on representations to model the problem solving situation?
- How am I helping students make connections between different types of problems, including comparing and contrasting problems to help students see the structure of various different problems?
- How am I using think-alouds and purposeful math conversations to make the math processes visible to all students?

Consider:

- How am I using open, 3-part problems to engage a range of learners and differentiate the learning?
- How am I using consolidation to make the math explicit to all students?
- Am I leveraging my students' math knowledge inside and outside of school to pose engaging problems for them to explore the mathematics?

Tools and Representations

The use of tools and representations supports a conceptual understanding of mathematics at all grade levels. Chosen carefully, tools and representations provide a way for students to think through problems and then communicate their thinking. Tools and representations explicitly and visually represent math ideas that are abstract.[3]
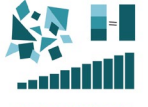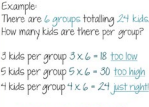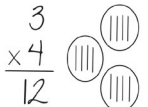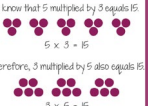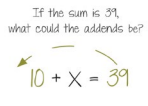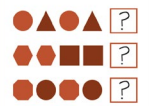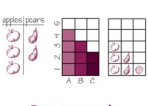
As students progress with their learning, tools and representations should:

- be introduced to model situations in new ways
- be connected to other tools and representations
- include those that will be appropriate for future problems (e.g., those that will work with larger numbers or that can be transferred to other situations)

See strand pages for examples of specific manipulatives useful in each content area.

Problem Solving Strategies

Problem-solving strategies are methods that can be used to solve problems of various types. Teachers can support all students as they develop their use of these strategies by engaging with solving various kinds of problems—instructional problems, routine problems, and non-routine problems. As students develop this repertoire over time, they become more confident in posing their own questions, more mature in their problem-solving skills, and more flexible in using appropriate strategies when faced with new problem-solving situations.[1]

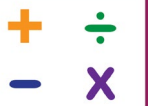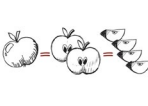*Problem Solving Strategies* posters

Consider:

- How does developing students' ability to use a range of tools, representations and strategies support equitable access to the math?
- How am I ensuring that I understand the use of a variety of tools in order to offer options to students?
- How is the use of tools and representations being valued by all students in the classroom?

Self-Talk in Mathematics

Planning Self-Talk:
This self-talk helps us to organize our thinking. It helps us to think about what we need to do and when we need to do it.

Math Strategy Self-Talk:
This self-talk focuses on the mathematical procedures we are using in our thinking.

Self-Editing/ Monitoring Talk:
This self-talk checks the strategies we are using. It tells us whether we are on the right track and if things are making sense. It may also tell us to change our ideas and try a different approach.

Connections Self-Talk:
This self-talk helps us to think about other times when we have experienced a similar problem or used a specific strategy, whether in mathematics or in our personal lives. It helps us to link math ideas to other ideas and experiences.

Struggle Self-Talk:
This self-talk is what we express when we feel confused or unable to do a specific task. It alerts us that we need to begin to think positively about our work and figure out what to do to complete the task.

Focus Self-Talk:
This self-talk keeps us on track. It reminds us that we need to concentrate on the task, or the small part of the task, that we are completing and not get distracted.

Encouragement, or Growth-Mindset, Self-Talk:
This self-talk helps us to persevere and keep going when we face challenges. It reminds us that we have good math skills and knowledge, and that we should not give up.

Adapted from Teaching Math with Meaning by Cathy Marks Krpan.

Consider:
- How and when will I model self-talk for student?
- How will I provide opportunities for students to use and reflect on their self-talk?
- How will I use explicit self-talk to make thinking visible to all learners?

Mathematical Conversations

Effective math classrooms provide multiple opportunities for students to engage in meaningful math talk. Conversations about math build understanding as students listen and respond to their classmates' expression of mathematical ideas. Using the 5 Talk moves is a great way to support mathematical conversation.[3]

Consider:

- Who is doing the talking? Whose voices are missing?
- How am I structuring the learning to engage more varied voices?
- How are students engaging in math conversations without the teacher voice?

5 Talk Moves for Students

Talk moves to support mathematical thinking and learning in the classroom.

1. RE-STATING

Re-stating someone else's reasoning.

Helps listeners follow the speaker's reasoning and gives everyone more time to process and reflect on the ideas presented.

2. RE-VOICING

Paraphrasing some or all of what someone else has said, and asking them if the interpretation is correct.

Helps to bring clarity to the statement for both speaker and listeners.

3. APPLYING OWN REASONING

Asking a class or group to apply their own thinking to someone's communication of their reasoning.

Helps with 'thinking about thinking' (metacognition) strategies for everyone by highlighting the original speaker's thinking.

4. WAIT TIME

Allowing for a few moments of silence (at least 10 seconds) before a responder is chosen as well as after a question has been asked.

Gives everyone time to organize their thoughts, and more time for everyone to contribute to the discussion, from more points of view.

5. ADDING ON AND PROMPTING FOR PARTICIPATION

Inviting others to join in discussion.

Adds to the collaborative approach to problem-solving, and contributes to active engagement to everyone.

Manipulatives to Support Learning

Manipulatives are essential tools for all students to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. As everyone learns mathematical concepts, they progress through the process of moving from concrete to abstract demonstrations of understanding.

Concreteness Fading
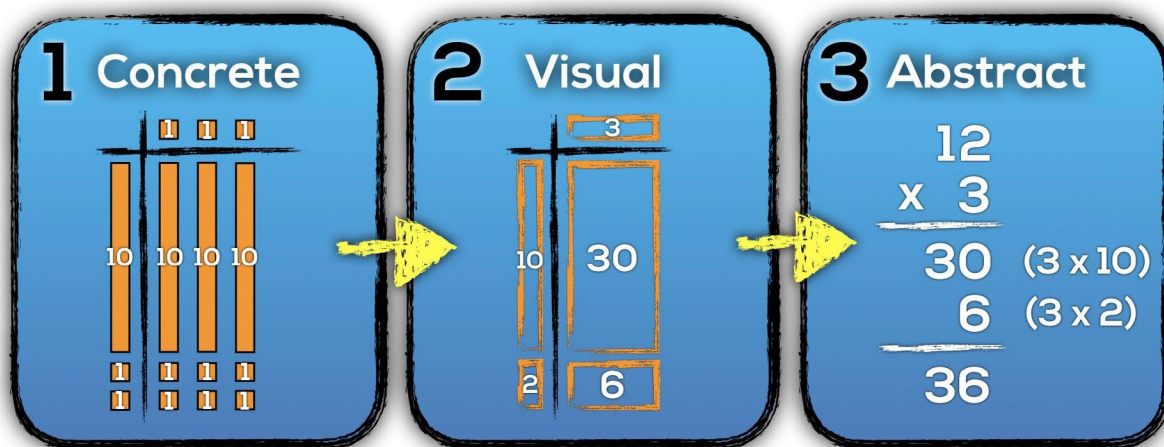
Taken from Making Math Moments with the Concreteness Fading Model, www.makemathmoments.com

This process of conceptual understanding is essential for mathematical understanding and is part of the learning process, regardless of the students' grade level. In meeting students where they are in their learning, they may request to use manipulatives for some topics and not others. Additionally, as students engage in thinking and problem solving activities, students should be encouraged to use manipulatives to support their problem solving skills.

When we as educators create environments that are inclusive for everyone, it helps provide all students with the best opportunities to demonstrate their understanding in various ways, according to their way of knowing. This helps to reduce discriminatory and systemic barriers and improves access for all students.
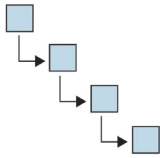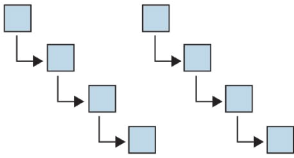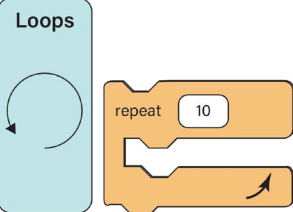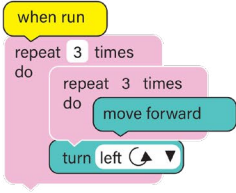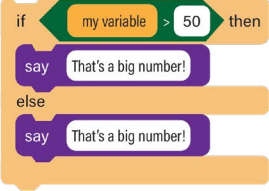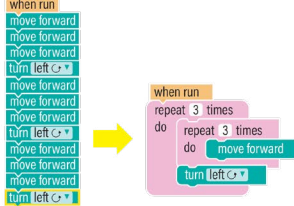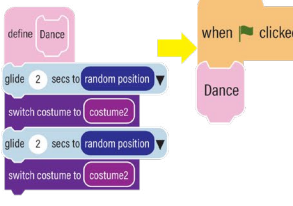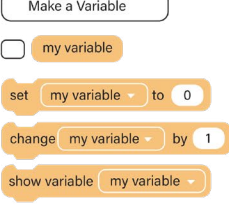
For further information about Manipulatives in Mathematics, please visit:
EduGAINS, edugains.ca
Mathigon, mathigon.org

Coding

Coding is not just a continuum of skills and abilities but rather a mindset and tool for problem solving. Coding can be incorporated across all strands and provides students with opportunities to apply and extend their math thinking, reasoning, and communicating. It's about coding to learn, not learning to code.[1]

Continuum of Coding

Student will learn to solve problems and create computational representations of mathematical situations by writing and executing code, including code that involves events/analysis.

Secondary: Grades 9-12

Coding is a transferable skill that can be leveraged to support STEM-based learning. All skills of the Grade 1-8 Coding curriculum are understood and applied to meet coding expectations in secondary mathematics and science courses.

Consider:

• How do I help students consider the potential for bias in data analysis done through coding?

For further information about Coding, please visit:
Code, code.org
Jump Math, jumpmath.org
Micro:Bit, microbit.org
Ontario Association for Mathematics Education (OAME), oame.on.ca
Scratch, scratch.mit.edu

Mathematical Modeling

Mathematical modeling is an integrated process that is applied in various contexts, allowing students to extend and apply what they have learned in other strands. Students' demonstration of the process of mathematical modeling, as they apply knowledge, concepts, and skills learned in other strands, is assessed and evaluated.

REAL-LIFE SITUATION

1 **Understand the Problem**
- What questions need answering?
- What information is needed?

2 **Analyse the Situation**
- What assumptions do I make about the situation?
- What changes and what remains the same?

SHARE AND ACT UPON MODELS(S)

3 **Create a Mathematical Model**
- What representations, tools, technologies, and strategies will help build the model?
- What mathematical knowledge, concepts, and skills might be involved?

4 **Analyse and Assess the Model**
- Can this model provide a solution?
- What are alternative models?

Consider:
- How are the problems being offered to students relevant to their lived experiences?
- How am I engaging students in inquiry through problem solving?
- How am I offering students an opportunity to ask questions about math and the real world and make connections to other learning?

Mathematical Model

A math model is a representation of a problem, situation, or system using mathematical concepts. For example, a number line is a model to show the order and magnitude of numbers.
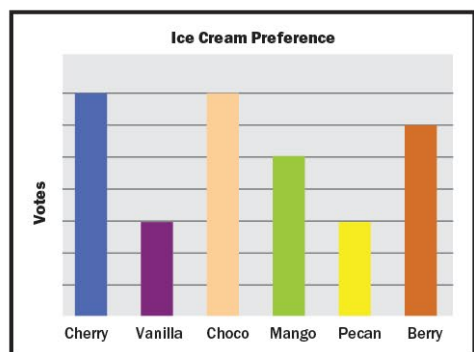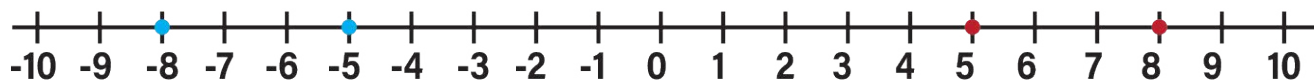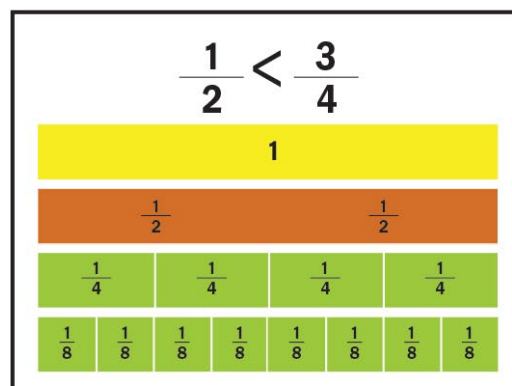
Taken from OAME webinar, Mathematical Modeling.

Characteristics of a Mathematical Modeling problem:

- Presents students with an ill-defined situation to mathematize a real-life, "messy" problem
- Requires students to work through all four components of the process, revisiting thinking and decisions made along the way
- Requires students to understand the problem by answering questions and gathering information
- Requires students to analyse the situation and consider all assumptions and possibilities
- Requires students to create a mathematical model using various tools and representations
- Requires students to analyse and assess the model to ensure the model provides solutions and possible alternatives
- Allows students to take ownership of some of the decisions along the way, ensuring students use research when deciding which sub-questions to explore and which to ignore
- Targets expectations from various strands and subjects
- All Mathematical Modeling problems should have multiple entry points and solutions

OAME has provided a number of sample tasks for Mathematical Modeling by grade level.[4]

Social Emotional Learning and the Mathematical Process

There is strong evidence that developing social-emotional learning skills at school contributes to all students' overall health and well-being and to successful academic performance. It also supports positive mental health, as well as students' ability to learn, build resilience, and thrive. The development of social-emotional learning skills throughout their school years will support all students in becoming healthier and more successful in their daily lives and as contributing members of society.[1]

Social-Emotional Learning Skills
- Identify and manage emotions
- Recognize sources of stress and cope with challenges
- Maintain positive motivation and perseverance
- Build relationships and communicate effectively
- Develop self-awareness and sense of identity
- Think critically and creatively

Mathematical Processes
- Problem solving
- Reasoning and proving
- Reflecting
- Connecting
- Communicating
- Representing
- Selecting tools and strategies

Grades 1 to 8	**Strand B: Number**	**Strand C: Algebra**	**Strand D: Data**	**Strand E: Spatial Sense**	**Strand F: Financial Literacy**
Grade 9	**Strand B: Number**	**Strand C: Algebra**	**Strand D: Data**	**Strand E: Geometry and Measurement**	**Strand F: Financial Literacy**
Grades 10 to 12	**Quadratic Relations, Functions, Trigonometry, Mathematical Models, Personal Finance, Derivatives, Probability, Statistical Analysis**				

Consider:
- How am I making sure that my practice is intentionally anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory?
- As an educator, how am I building a community of math learners?
- How am I building positive math identities in my students?
- How am I purposefully supporting students with Social Emotional Learning and the math processes throughout the year by co-constructing our understanding of what these skills mean and look like?
- How am I consistently applying duty bearer responsibilities to socio-emotional learning and assessment in mathematics?

Social Emotional Learning, Mathematical Identity, and Anti-Discrimination

The overall expectation is that students will be able to apply, to the best of their ability, a variety of social-emotional learning skills to support their use of mathematical processes and their learning in connection with the expectations in the other five strands of the mathematics curriculum. The reality, however, is that there are students for whom lived experiences and systemic barriers have negatively affected opportunities to develop and apply social-emotional learning skills. Teachers will need to adopt a "fix the inequity/injustice" rather than "fix the child" mindset and seek to identify, prevent, address, or minimize barriers for the students so that they can thrive.

School mathematics is both a gateway and a gatekeeper, for various opportunities in and out of school. Teachers will have to do some self-examination to ensure they learn and understand the various mathematical identities of the students in the class to effectively meet the social-emotional needs of all students and facilitate that learning. Understanding that mathematical identity is defined as the "dispositions and deeply held beliefs that students develop about their ability to participate and perform effectively in mathematical contexts and to use mathematics in powerful ways across the contexts of their lives", the correlation between mathematical identity and social-emotional learning is evident and the need for equitable practices becomes clear.

Anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory, and human rights and equity oriented approaches to teaching mathematics include teachers' need to first recognize what factors have contributed to their own mathematical identities and how they can negatively impact their students. Secondly, recognize the crucial role teachers have in deciding which students will or will not have access to these opportunities. Finally, learning how to develop the mathematical identities of the students in their classrooms while recognizing and honouring the rich mathematical knowledge and experiences students bring with them into the classroom.

Reflective Questions:

- What mathematics am I teaching?
- For Whom?
- For what purposes?
- Do all students see themselves within the mathematics I am teaching?
- How might the personal biases I hold impact expectations for student learning and achievement?
- How can I address these biases by upholding duty bearer responsibilities and intentionally using anti-discriminatory approaches?
- What factors other than grades should we consider when suggesting future pathways?

The Impact of Identity in K-8 Mathematics: Rethinking Equity-Based Practices, by Julia Aguirre, Karen Mayfield-Ingram, Danny Martin

Number

Understanding how numbers work is foundational to many aspects of mathematics. Recognizing and understanding number properties is foundational to developing an understanding of branches of mathematics such as arithmetic and algebra. In the Number strand, as students progress through Grades 1 to 8, they learn about different types of numbers and how those numbers behave when various operations are applied to them.

A vital aspect of number work in elementary grades is to build what is often called number sense, where students develop the ability to flexibly relate numbers and relate computations. Students who have developed number sense regularly use number relationships to make sense of calculations and to assess the reasonableness of numbers used to describe situations, for example, in the media.[1]

Moving into secondary school, students will continue to make connections among various number systems, the cultural development of number concepts, and real-life applications. They will extend their learning about positive fractions, positive decimal numbers, and integers to work with negative fractions and negative decimal numbers.[1] Students also extend their knowledge and skills from this strand to rate of change, trigonometry, and functions, all that will build on understanding from ratios, rates, proportions, and more.

Manipulatives

Manipulatives are an important tool for supporting the development of conceptual understanding. It is important to consider: Why this tool, for this learner, at this stage of their development? Not all manipulatives are appropriate at all stages of the learning. For more information, see *Making Math Meaningful by Marian Small.*

Some suggested manipulatives for exploring number concepts:

- Number line
- Hundreds chart
- Counters
- Base 10
- Place Value mats
- Linking Cubes
- Fraction Towers or Strips
- Pattern Blocks
- Calculator
- Relational Rods
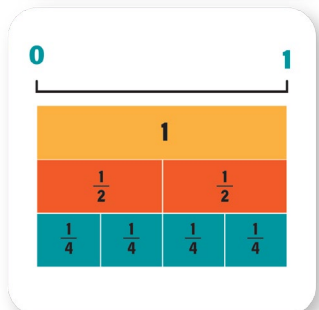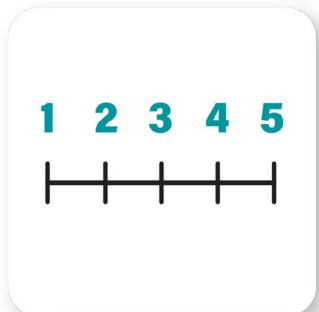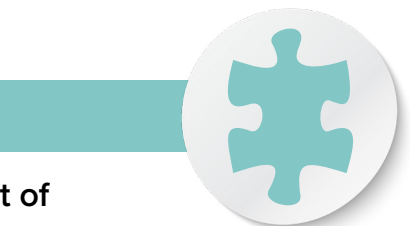
Number Routines

Why are Number Routines Important? Number routines are a way to build a child's procedural fluency, flexibility and automaticity in math. Routines provide a feeling of belonging, ownership and predictability, which makes the classroom a place to take risks, try new things and be successful (*Number Sense Routines, page 13*). Understanding how numbers work is foundational to all aspects of mathematics, and having a daily focus on number can support the diverse learners in every classroom.

What is a Number Routine? A number routine is a quick 5-10 minute daily math activity to activate student's math thinking with number sense concepts. They can be done as a whole group or in a small group to meet the needs of all learners.

How to do a Number Talk? A Number routine can be done as a "minds on" or to re-teach, enrich a concept, and/or reinforce number concepts. There are a variety of resources that can be used to support Number Routines.

Resources to Support Number Routines
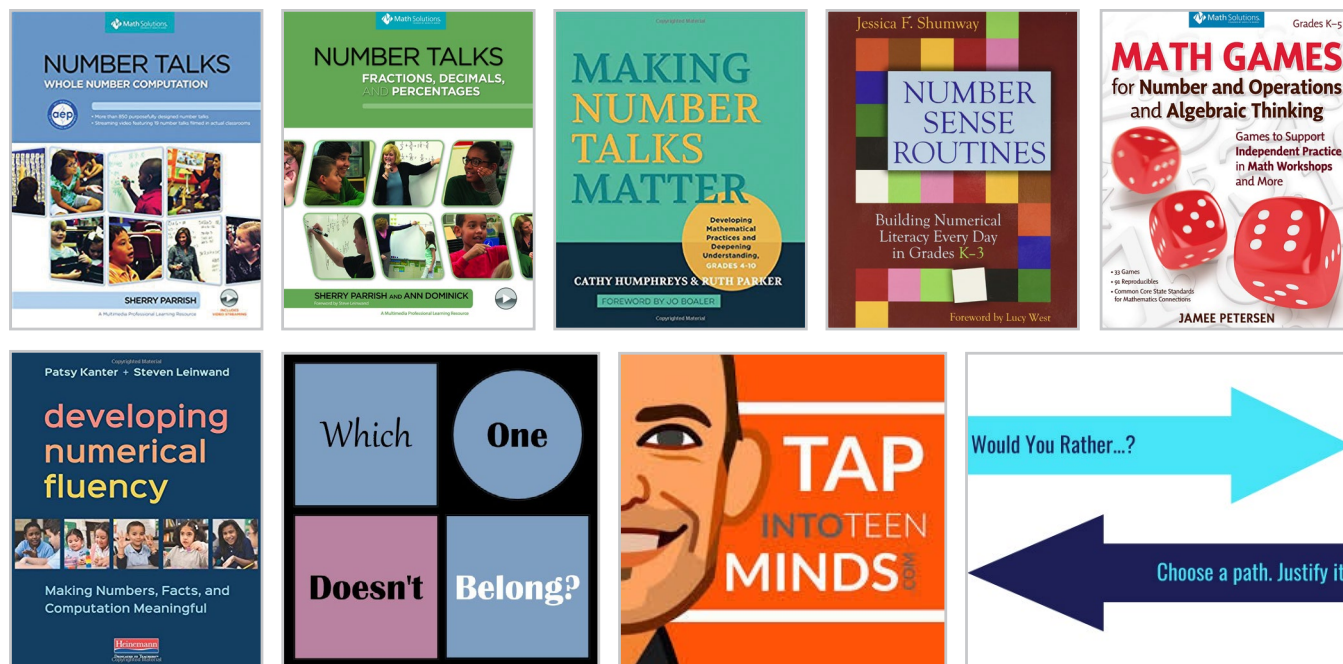
Consider:
- How am I honouring student math strategies shared from their learning at home, and student voice during conversations about math fundamentals?
- How am I recognizing the complex thinking about math that students bring to our conversations?
- How am I amplifying student voice and thinking in conversations about math?
- Whose voice is missing during conversations?

Algebra

In this strand, students develop algebraic reasoning through working with patterns, variables, expressions, equations, inequalities, coding, and the process of mathematical modeling.[1]

As students progress through the grades, they study a variety of patterns, including those found in real life. Students learn to identify regularities in numeric and non-numeric patterns and classify them based on the characteristics of those regularities. They create and translate patterns using various representations. Students determine pattern rules for various patterns in order to extend them, make near and far predictions, and determine their missing elements. They develop recursive and functional thinking as well as additive and multiplicative thinking as they work with linear patterns, and use this thinking to develop the general terms of the patterns to solve for unknown values. Understanding patterns and determining the relationship between two variables has many connections to science and is foundational to further mathematics. In the primary grades, students focus on understanding which quantities remain the same and which can change in everyday contexts, and on how to establish equality between numerical expressions. In the junior and intermediate grades, students work with variables in algebraic expressions, equations, and inequalities in various contexts.[1]

As students progress through the algebra strand in secondary school, students will extend and apply coding skills to dynamically represent situations, analyse mathematics concepts, and solve problems in various contexts. Students will be introduced to various representations of linear and non-linear relations that they will study in more depth in future mathematics courses. Students develop an understanding of constant rate of change and initial values of linear relations, and solve related real-life problems.[1]

Manipulatives

Manipulatives are an important tool for supporting the development of conceptual understanding. It is important to consider: Why this tool, for this learner, at this stage of their development? Not all manipulatives are appropriate at all stages of the learning. For more information, see *Making Math Meaningful by Marian Small.*

Some suggested manipulatives for exploring algebra concepts:
- Balance
- Counters
- Attribute blocks
- Pattern blocks
- Sorting materials
- Linking cubes
- Algebra tiles
- Relational rods
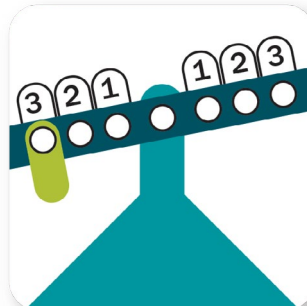
Data

The related topics of statistics and probability, which are addressed in this strand, are highly relevant to real life. The public is bombarded with data through advertising, opinion polls, politics, population trends, and scientific discoveries, to name just a few. Thus, one of the key focuses in this strand is to support students in developing critical thinking skills throughout their development of data literacy, so that they can analyse, synthesize, understand, generate, and use data, both as consumers and producers.[1]

As students progress through the grades, they develop an understanding of qualitative data and both discrete and continuous quantitative data, and use that understanding to select appropriate ways to organize and display data. Students learn the fundamentals of statistics and develop the skills to visualize and critically analyse data, including identifying any possible biases within the interpretation of data. Starting in the junior grades, students make intentional choices in creating infographics in order to represent key information about a set of data for a particular audience and to engage in the critical interpretation of data. In addition, students learn how to use data to make compelling arguments about questions of interest.[1]

As students enter secondary mathematics, they have the opportunity to extend their data literacy skills to examine the collection, representation, and use of data, as well as the implications, from reviewing the data in various contexts. Students consolidate and extend their understanding of data involving one and two variables and its connections to real life.[1] Students will continue to build on these skills as they begin to use additional mathematical tools to represent data and begin to investigate and represent probability.

Manipulatives

Manipulatives are an important tool for supporting the development of conceptual understanding. It is important to consider: Why this tool, for this learner, at this stage of their development? Not all manipulatives are appropriate at all stages of the learning. For more information, see *Making Math Meaningful by Marian Small.*

Some suggested manipulatives for exploring data concepts:

- Concrete graphing materials
- Grid paper
- Spreadsheet software
- Coins
- Spinners
- Two-sided counters
- Number cubes
- Playing cards

Consider:

- How am I helping students build their awareness of bias in data?
- Am I selecting culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate topics for inquiry and data analysis?
- What opportunities am I giving all students to build critical consciousness in these data conversations?
- Whose voice might be missing from the data set? Why?
- How might I determine other perspectives on this issue to inform my thinking?

Spatial Sense/Geometry and Measurement

This strand combines the areas of geometry and measurement in order to emphasize the relationship between the two areas and to highlight the role of spatial reasoning in underpinning the development of both. Study in this strand provides students with the language and tools to analyse, compare, describe, and navigate the world around them. It is a gateway to professions in other STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines, and builds foundational skills needed for construction, architecture, engineering, research, and design.[1]

In this strand, students analyse the properties of shapes–the elements that define a shape and make it unique–and use these properties to define, compare, and construct shapes and objects, as well as to explore relationships among properties. Students begin with an intuition about their surroundings and the objects in them, and learn to visualize objects from different perspectives. Over time, students develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of size, shape, location, movement, and change, in both two and three dimensions. They understand and choose appropriate units to estimate, measure, and compare attributes, and they use appropriate tools to make measurements. They apply their understanding of the relationships between shapes and measurement to develop formulas to calculate length, area, volume, and more.[1]

In secondary school, students make connections among various geometric properties and their real-life applications. Students analyse and create designs to extend their understanding of geometric relationships to include circle and triangle properties. Students solve problems using different units within and between various measurement systems, examine the relationships between the volume of cones and cylinders and of pyramids and prisms, and solve problems that involve the application of perimeter, area, surface area, and volume.[1]

Manipulatives

Manipulatives are an important tool for supporting the development of conceptual understanding. It is important to consider: Why this tool, for this learner, at this stage of their development? Not all manipulatives are appropriate at all stages of the learning. For more information, see *Making Math Meaningful by Marian Small*.

Some suggested manipulatives for exploring spatial sense, geometry, and measurement concepts:

- Pattern blocks
- Linking cubes
- Tangrams
- Base ten blocks
- Rulers
- Geoboards
- 3D solids
- Protractors

Consider:

- How am I ensuring that all of my students are building their spatial sense in order to ensure that they are building skills for future successes?
- How am I ensuring that the problems students explore are relevant to their lived experiences?

Financial Literacy

"Financial literacy is more than just knowing about money and financial matters and having the skills to work with this knowledge. Students develop the confidence and capacity to successfully apply the necessary knowledge, concepts, and skills in a range of relevant real-life contexts and for a range of purposes. They also develop the ability to make informed decisions as consumers and citizens while taking into account the ethical, societal, environmental, and personal aspects of those decisions."[1]

In Grades 1 to 3, students demonstrate an understanding of the value and use of money by recognizing Canadian coins and bills, representing various amounts, and calculating change in simple transactions. In Grades 4 to 8, students extend their learning to the knowledge, concepts, and skills required to make informed financial decisions relevant to their lived experiences and plan simple sample budgets. Students begin to develop consumer and civic awareness in the junior and intermediate grades.[1]

In this strand, for Grade 9, students analyse financial situations to explain how mathematics can be used to understand such situations and inform financial decisions. They extend their financial literacy knowledge to answer questions related to appreciation and depreciation and explain how budgets can be modified based on changes in circumstances. Students compare the effects of different interest rates, down payments, and other factors associated with purchasing goods and services. Students use their learning from other strands to solve financial problems of interest.[1]

Manipulatives

Manipulatives are an important tool for supporting the development of conceptual understanding. It is important to consider: Why this tool, for this learner, at this stage of their development? Not all manipulatives are appropriate at all stages of the learning. For more information, see *Making Math Meaningful by Marian Small.*

Some suggested manipulatives for exploring financial literacy concepts:

- Canadian coins
- Calculators
- Base 10
- Hundreds chart
- Spreadsheet
- Applications
- Number lines

Consider:

- How might my own beliefs, privilege, lived experience and bias impact how I present this content?
- How will I consider and respond to the range of equity issues related to the diverse circumstances and lived experiences of students and their families?
- What opportunities am I giving all students to build critical consciousness in financial literacy conversations?

Innovation, Technology Tools, and Resources

The mathematics curriculum was developed with the understanding that the strategic use of technology is part of a balanced mathematics program. Technology can extend and enrich teachers' instructional strategies to support all students' learning in mathematics. Technology, when used in a thoughtful manner, can support and foster the development of mathematical reasoning, problem solving, and communication.[1]

Consider:

- How am I considering access to technology in my planning and teaching?
- If I don't use a range of technology in my program am I disadvantaging students?
- How can technology support math teaching and learning?

When selecting a digital tool or resource it is important to ensure that it has been approved for use through our DDSB Technology Approval Process (TAP) tool. Some examples of TAP approved math resources include:

- Knowledgehook
- Gizmos
- Desmos
- Braining Camp

Resources and Links

The Ontario Mathematics Curriculum:

Elementary Mathematics, Grades 1-8 (2020)
https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-mathematics

MTH1W, Grade 9, Mathematics (2021)
https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/secondary-mathematics/courses/mth1w

Grade 9 and 10 Mathematics (2005)
https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/math910curr.pdf

Grade 11 and 12 Mathematics (2007)
http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/math1112currb.pdf

[1] The Ontario Curriculum, Grade 1-8, Mathematics Curriculum context, 2020
https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/fbd574c4-da36-0066-a0c5-849ffb2de96e/dab22a67-d9e8-4c42-a2a7-8c98cf1bbbb1/Math_Curriculum%20Context_AODA.pdf

[1] Elementary Mathematics, Grades 1-8 (2020)
https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-mathematics

[1] MTH1W, Grade 9, Mathematics (2021)
https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/secondary-mathematics/courses/mth1w

[2] Growing Success, Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools
https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/assessment-evaluation/introduction

[3] 5 Talk Moves for Students, Adapted from Chapin, O'Connor & Anderson, 2003
Classroom Discussions: Using Math Talk to Help Students Learn. Math Solutions Publications, 2003

[4] Ontario Association of Mathematics Educuation (OAME) Mathematical Modeling Webinar:
https://ontariomath.support/index.php?pg=view&lang=EN&id=29

[5] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1c2vkj3NiCJxAQKSShCtPfdbMbOBEgIeyXvT6NdZ3rdE/edit?usp=sharing

Hyperlinks:

Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy Infographic (Morrison, Robbins, Rose, 2008)
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IOT0PHZPIRZ9SIXP5eCeqma1R8fo_ww5/view

Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy in Mathematics PD "Pep Talks—In Mathematics" found on the DDSB Professional Learning Hub
https://professionallearning.ddsb.ca/d2l/le/lessons/7312/units/6914

Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy by Gholdy Muhammad On-Demand Book Club, Found on the DDSB Professional Learning Hub
https://professionallearning.ddsb.ca/d2l/home/9589

High Impact Instructional Practices in Mathematics, Resources and Support
https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/learning/high-impact-instructional-practices-in-mathematics-resource-and-supports

Making Math Moments with the Concreteness Fading Model
www.makemathmoments.com

Manipulatives in Mathematics:

EduGAINS: http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/HOME/index.html

Mathigon: https://mathigon.org/

Coding:

Code: https://code.org/

Jump Math: https://jumpmath.org/ca/

Micro-Bit: https://microbit.org/

Ontario Association of Mathematics Education (OAME): https://oame.on.ca/main/index.php

Scratch: https://scratch.mit.edu/

Additional Resources:

Cultivating Genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy by Gholdy Muhammad (2020)
https://shop.scholastic.com/teachers-ecommerce/teacher/books/cultivating-genius-an-equity-framework-9781338594898.html

Teaching Math with Meaning by Cathy Marks Krpan
https://www.pearsoncanadaschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PS33G7

The Impact of Identity in K-8 Mathematics: Rethinking Equity-Based Practices, by Julia Aguirre, Karen Mayfield-Ingram, Danny Martin
https://www.nctm.org/Store/Products/The-Impact-of-Identity-in-K-8-Mathematics--Rethinking--Equity-Based-Practices/

Making Math Meaningful by Marian Small
https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/making-math-meaningful-to-canadian/9780176582555-item.html

DDSB Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy
https://durhamschboard.service-now.com/sys_attachment.do?sys_id=952271e647631d50297bf768536d43da&view=true

DDSB Indigenous Education Policy
https://durhamschboard.service-now.com/sys_attachment.do?sys_id=ec61e93cdb073c909b95146139961935&view=true

Ontario Human Rights 17 Grounds of Discrimination
https://www.ohrc.on.ca/pt/node/2873#:~:text=Section%2017%20states%20that%20a,the%20exercise%20of%20the%20right.

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Mathematics Grades 1 to 12

A Companion Guide to
the Ontario Curriculum DRAFT

PUBLISHED 2023

$$y = ax + b$$
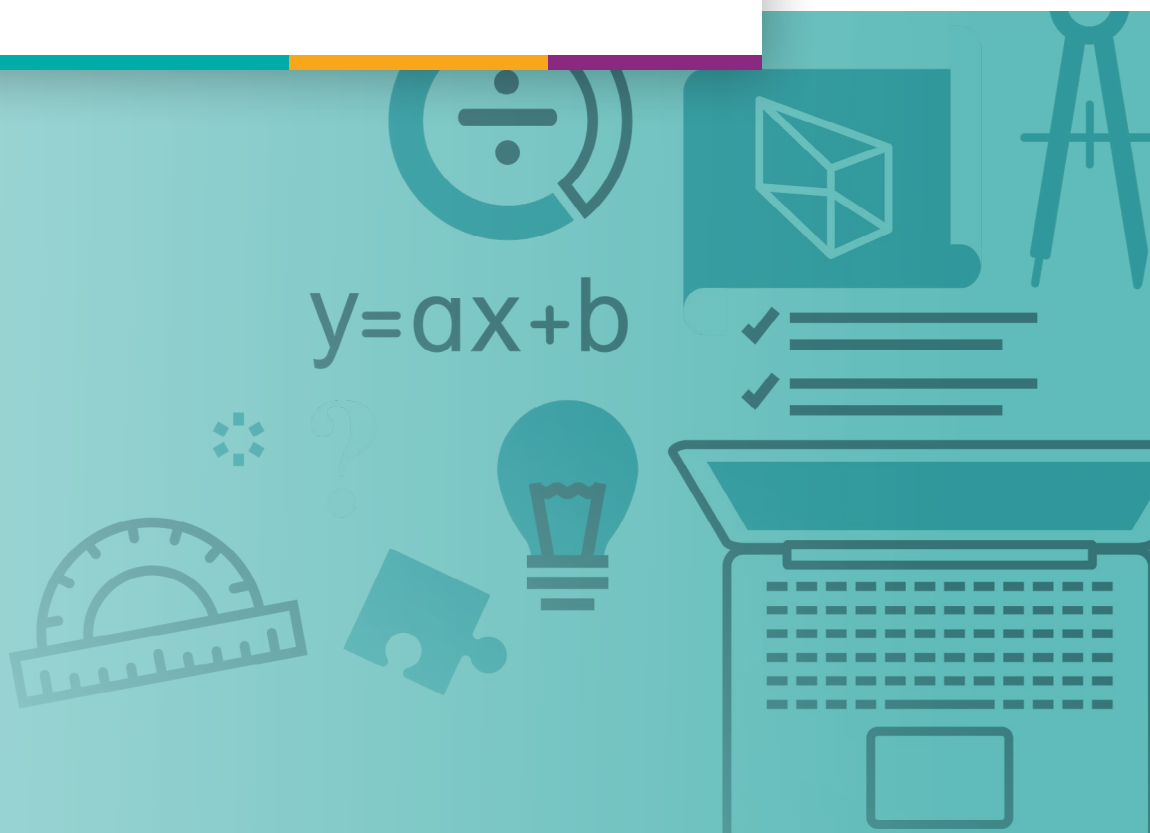
MEMORANDUM
(In Camera)

To: Trustees   **Memo: No. 2324:05**

From: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
Jim Markovski, Associate Director of Equitable Education

Date: October 30, 2023

RE: **Student Excursions and Activities**

Field trips and excursions provide a distinctive educational opportunity for students within the Durham District School Board (DDSB), serving as a natural extension of the in-class curriculum. We are committed to providing the necessary resources and materials for delivering curriculum content in our classrooms, free of charge, to DDSB students. However, in instances where we offer enrichment opportunities and educational experiences beyond the classroom, there may be associated fees.

In the process of organizing trips and excursions, school administrators are tasked with proactively identifying potential barriers to student participation to ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate in these experiences. To facilitate this, the DDSB Excursion Procedure recommends the following guidelines for planning school trips and educational experiences:

- Connecting the excursion to the curriculum to ensure that the excursion has a valuable learning component;
- Pre-planning to carefully identify real/potential barriers that may impact student participation;
- Using human rights, inclusive design, Universal Design for Learning, accessibility and anti-oppression principles when planning activities in order to ensure that all students, parents/guardians and staff are centered and respected throughout all aspects of all excursions;
- Ensuring that the planning and costing process has carefully considered potential barriers and accommodation needs;
- Exploring creative ways to address/mitigate potential barriers and needs (including putting in place appropriate supports) to maximize access, participation and full integration; and
- Budgeting all trip and trip-related costs to ensure that the trip is accessible for all families (i.e., consider families with more than one child).

DDSB School Administrators work collaboratively with students and families on an individual basis to resolve potential impediments or barriers to participation. The dignity of the student and their family is kept at the center of the planning and decision-making process. Below is a sample of financial accommodation strategies currently used by DDSB schools to support student participation:

- Schools may use school-generated funds to subsidize or cover the cost of the excursion for students/families;
- Schools may offer a delayed payment schedule to assist with costs;
- Schools may access Staff/Community School Cash Online donations to subsidize the cost of the trip;
- Schools may connect with the Ignite Durham Learning Foundation to assist with covering the cost of the trip;
- School-based fundraising opportunities may be used to assist with the cost of the excursion for students;
- Financial scholarships are sometimes available through tour companies (i.e., for every 40 travelers, 1 student travels for free, or applying for the tour company to cover the cost of the excursion for a student);
- Schools ask staff to have a pulse on which families may require assistance and to be mindful of the cost of the excursion. Staff are asked to spread out or limit trips so that a financial burden is not created for families;
- In some schools, the School Community Council (SCC) funds a Community Care account which is often used to subsidize the increased bussing costs for trips, and may also be accessed to support families who require assistance;
- Many schools utilize funds from school photo day compensation, pizza days, vending machines, treat days or HST rebates, which are used to cover the costs of trips to ensure all students are able to attend;
- Individual schools begin the year with a survey to families asking for their comfort level with trip costs and use that information as a guideline; and
- In some schools, families (or other third parties) anonymously sponsor individuals who require financial assistance.

The unique nature of each school community requires a tailored and creative approach to the development of strategies put in place to meet all student needs. Our school teams are trained to implement anti-oppression and human rights principles in all of their decision-making. Schools recognize that the individual needs of students and families are unique. It is our responsibility to ensure that we take a thoughtful and caring approach to the excursion planning process where responsive accommodations are in place to meet the needs of every child.

Should you have any questions, please contact Associate Director, Jim Markovski at jimmy.markovski@ddsb.ca.

DDSB
Ignite Learning

MEMORANDUM

To: Trustees   **Memo: No. 2324:6**

From: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
          David Wright, Associate Director, Corporate Services
          Robert Cerjanec, Executive Lead, Strategic Initiatives and External Relations

Date: November 2, 2023

RE: Ministry of Education Capital Priorities Process

Background

Through the Ministry of Education Capital Priorities process, school boards can submit requests for funding to construct new schools or complete major projects such as school additions or school replacements. Annual project requests are ranked by priority/need as identified by staff based on a number of factors including enrolment trends, accommodation pressures, available capacity, facility condition and more. Capital Priorities submissions are accompanied by staff prepared business cases that provide detailed rationale outlining the need for the project.

Once a capital project has received initial approval from the Ministry of Education, it can take approximately three to four years for completion. The timing of school construction does not always align with the speed of residential growth as the approval, funding and construction period can be lengthy.

The previous Ministry of Education approvals process (which applies to all six DDSB schools in development at present) required four stages of Ministry approval:

1. Announcement of funding;
2. Approval of facility space template and permission to appoint an architect;
3. Approval to proceed to tender based on a cost consultant report; and
4. Post tender approval if the tender exceeds the approved funding amount.

The approval process and timeline can be impacted by other factors including steadily increasing construction costs in between approval stages or the purchase of land, which sometimes takes place at the same time as the approvals process.

The Ministry of Education has recently made changes to the capital priorities process, and we are hopeful that the changes will better streamline approvals, provide more cost certainty and help us build schools faster.

DDSB Capital Projects in Progress

To help accommodate the growth in Durham Region, the DDSB has received Ministry of Education approval for five new school builds and one major addition:

Beaver River PS – Scheduled to open in September 2024

Construction is underway and the new school will replace and consolidate Beaverton PS and Thorah Central PS on the Beaverton PS site (270 King St, Beaverton). Ministry of Education approval was initially granted in February 2018. However, the length of delay is primarily due to the Ministry approvals process and that the DDSB re-submitted the project to request a larger building that would better accommodate previously unregistered growth in Beaverton. After receiving Ministry approval to build a larger school, we experienced further Ministry delays in receiving final approval. This situation was an anomaly but contributed to the lengthy development timeline.

Unnamed North Oshawa PS – Scheduled to open in September 2024

Construction is underway and the school will be located at Windfields Farm Drive West and Wintergrace Avenue in Oshawa. Ministry of Education approval was initially granted in October 2020.

Mary Street PS – Building addition is scheduled to open in September 2024

Construction is underway at the current Mary Street PS (110 Mary St N, Oshawa) to replace the existing portapac structure. Ministry of Education approval was initially granted in July 2020.

Unnamed Pickering Creekwood PS – Scheduled to open in September 2025

The DDSB is in the process of acquiring the site located at Tillings Road and Dersan Street from the City of Pickering after they complete environmental remediation of the site. Project development and municipal approvals have continued in tandem while site remediation was undertaken. Ministry of Education approval was initially granted in July 2020.

Unnamed Pickering Seaton PS – Scheduled to open in September 2026

Planning and development is underway for this new elementary school to be located at Burkholder Drive and Azalea Avenue in Pickering. Ministry of Education approval was initially granted in May 2022.

Unnamed North Oshawa SS – Scheduled to open in September 2026

Planning and development is underway for this new secondary school to be located at Windfields Farm Drive East and Bridle Road South in Oshawa. Ministry of Education approval was initially granted in May 2022.

New Capital Priorities Process

In August of 2023, the Ministry of Education announced the 2023-2024 Capital Priorities Program, including changes intended to assist school boards in building new and modern schools faster.

In addition to components previously required for all Capital Priorities submissions, school boards will also have their projects evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Project readiness assessment
- Design standardization
- Board performance assessment
- Enhanced accountability framework

We are hopeful that these changes will better streamline approvals, provide more cost certainty and help us build schools faster. However, this remains to be seen as the fall 2023 Capital Priorities submission from the DDSB is the first under the new program requirements.

Role of Municipalities

Municipalities have an important role in the creation of new schools. Through municipal planning processes, population growth and accommodation needs can be projected based on zoning and site plan applications and approvals and land use planning decisions.

The DDSB works closely with Durham Region and the municipalities of Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa, Uxbridge, Scugog and Brock in order to remain at the forefront of upcoming new development or re-development projects that may lead to accommodation pressures in existing schools and the possible need for new schools.

When undertaking the planning and development process for a Ministry-approved new school build, the DDSB must apply to the municipality for site plan approval and in some cases, rezoning or minor variance applications prior to seeking a building permit. The site plan approval process takes approximately one year to go through depending on the municipality.

Staff Recommendations

While it is anticipated that the new Capital Priorities process will streamline approvals and speed up construction of new schools, staff have identified additional opportunities that could further improve the process:

1. School board access to an expedited or automatic Capital Priorities approval process provided that a submission meets all of the criteria identified in the updated Capital Priorities Program outline.
2. Consideration of a streamlined municipal Site Plan Approval process or exemption from this process for district school boards.

DDSB
Ignite Learning

MEMORANDUM

To: Trustees   **Memo: No. 2324:7**

From: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
Robert Cerjanec, Executive Lead, Strategic Initiatives and External Relations

Date: November 2, 2023

RE: Request for DDSB Support of Toronto Youth Cabinet Statement

---

Purpose

The Toronto Youth Cabinet (TYC), the City of Toronto's official youth advocacy body, has requested the Durham District School Board (DDSB) endorse their statement to the Minister of Education recommending the implementation of a Universal Free School Breakfast and Lunch Program in all Ontario schools (see attached request).

The TYC has also called for the implementation of expanded mental health supports for students including mandatory mental health literacy in school curriculum, mental health days, additional mental health staff, culturally appropriate mental health screening, and expanded collection and reporting of data relating to mental health supports and services in schools.

The TYC has written and advocated on previous topics in the past. Staff have consulted with Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA) staff who indicated they were not involved in this request by the TYC. The DDSB is a member of OPSBA who advocates to the Government of Ontario on matters involving Ontario's publicly funded school boards.

This memo outlines staff comments on both requests and recommends that the Board of Trustees endorse the request on school breakfast and lunch programs, but not the request around expanded mental health supports due to staff concerns and lack of a coordinated advocacy strategy with OPSBA.

DDSB School Breakfast and Lunch Programs

The DDSB recognizes that food insecurity and inflation is at an all-time high resulting in significant increases in students attending school breakfast programs. The DDSB currently has 91 breakfast programs in schools across the District. The Ignite Durham Learning

Foundation (IDLF) has provided $50,000 towards supporting food insecurity in schools and in student homes.

The IDLF has also reported that many schools have exhausted resources for their programs resulting in an emergency campaign for school breakfast and snack programs that delivered 2,431 items to 46 schools. IDLF has already distributed 572 kg of food since the beginning of the school year (September 2023).

On October 5, 2023, the Government of Ontario approved an additional $5 million for the Student Nutrition Program and the First Nations Student Nutrition Program, bringing the total provincial funding this year to $38 million. This funding helps to deliver approximately 90 million meals and snacks to over 600,000 school-aged children and youth in Ontario.

To support the government investment, the province has partnered with the Arrell Family Foundation, the Breakfast Club of Canada, the Schad Foundation, the Grocery Foundation, and Student Nutrition Ontario to launch the Healthy Students Brighter Ontario campaign to work with local groups and businesses to encourage community involvement and to fundraise a combined goal of $10 million.

Cathy Abraham, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) President, commented on this program, "The funding announced today is a great step towards addressing this challenge and ensuring that all of our students have stigma-free access to nutritious foods."

Expanded Mental Health Supports

The DDSB is committed to creating safe, welcoming, inclusive, and respectful learning and working spaces that promote well-being for all students and staff. The DDSB implements the Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan to support the everyday mental health and well-being of students and staff and to connect them to from, and through the pathways for those supports. The TYC recommendations on expanded mental health supports are listed below along with staff responses to the recommendations, including strategies already in place at the DDSB:

Mandatory Mental Health Literacy in School Curriculum

The DDSB is implementing mandatory modules in mental health for students in grades 7 and 8 which include three modules aligned with the current health curriculum. The Early Years Kindergarten program also introduces students to language around well-being and self-regulation. It is important to recognize that mental health literacy is best implemented when there is a whole school approach to mental health promotion.

Mental Health Days for Students

New for the 2023-2024 school year, the DDSB modified the 'illness' attendance code for the reporting of student absences. The code now reads as "(AI) Illness: Health and Well-Being."

Originating from discussions at the Student Success Working Group of DDSB's Student Senate, the addition of 'Well-Being' to the illness code for student absence is a way to

honour the importance of self-care and restorative personal practices. With a focus on the presence of illness alone as a reason for student absence, we miss the opportunity to acknowledge the many ways in which a focus on personal wellness can promote a healthy and resilient lifestyle. We recognize that student attendance and engagement with school is important for student success; however, we also need to recognize that for many students, a well-placed day off to nurture oneself can actually enhance school engagement and success. This new coding addition allows us to support student and family choice to address their own health needs in a way that is both important and recuperative to them.

Additional Mental Health Staff

While teams providing mental health supports to students have increased somewhat through expanded funding, this does not keep pace with increased demand and enrollment numbers. A preferred best practice would be the adoption of a dedicated funding model for a minimum mental health staff to student ratio that reflects the current "1 in 5" mental health need amongst young people.

Collection and Reporting of Data on Mental Health Supports and Services in Schools

The DDSB already reports this suggested data collection to the Ministry, including number of regulated mental health staff (social work and psychological services staff), staff caseloads, waitlist times for services, reasons for services, and number of referrals made to community resources.

It is important to note this data does not speak to historical and systemic structures that have led to and continue to contribute to mental health inequities. Any changes to the collection of data in this area must be considered alongside existing data collection processes and careful consideration should be given to how the collection and interpretation of data has historically been used against marginalized and oppressed groups. A focus on volume and numbers alone in data collection and reporting shifts focus away from the opportunities for mental health promotion and prevention in learning environments.

In addition, the Ministry is preparing to roll out a data collection and reporting process through the existing software used to house Inclusive Student Services student data. The Right to Read initiative will also add a layer of data collection, analysis and reporting, and DDSB staff will be embarking on developing a monitoring strategy for the new Multi-Year Strategic Plan that will include data collection, analysis and reporting components.

School-Based Culturally Appropriate Mental Health Screening for all Grades:

We are committed to supporting staff to connect with students and families, to learn about their unique perspectives, while centering identity, and honouring student voice as they access mental health supports and services. Collaborative approaches help lead to an improved sense of safety and belonging for students while respecting their lived experiences and identities. The DDSB also created and facilitates programs such as BeMe (Black Excellence Made Evident) and Project AFFIRM as part of culturally relevant support programs.

DDSB staff have identified some concerns around the notion of screening. Mental health screening and the use of screening tools may occur when mental health practitioners are working with a student, where there is informed consent, and where an intervention is being sought. There are a variety of screeners that can be used depending on the particular need/circumstance. However, the perception of requiring a universal screener can socialize students to a deficit approach and shift focus away from the importance of mental health promotion and literacy. The emphasis should always be on building capacity amongst staff to create mentally healthy environments and caring relationships with students. Additionally, the importance of empowering youth to be able to recognize and talk about mental health and wellness leads to greater self-advocacy.

Staff Recommendations:

After consultations with mental health staff, concerns and comments regarding the TYC statement have been collected and summarized above. Due to the lack of consultations with the Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA) and the concerns brought forward by DDSB staff it is recommended that the Board does not endorse the TYC statement on mental health.

Board staff facilitating school lunch and breakfast programs welcome the TYC statement on food insecurity and endorse calls to further develop school lunch and breakfast programs in the province.

Appendix A: Email request from Toronto Youth Cabinet to DDSB

Appendix B: Joint Statement on Addressing the Rising Mental Health Crisis Facing Children and Youth in Ontario

Appendix C: Joint Statement on Addressing the Rising Food Insecurity Facing Children and Youth in Ontario

From:	GILLIAN VENNING
To:	GILLIAN VENNING
Subject:	Toronto Youth Cabinet Statement - DDSB Endorsement
Date:	November 2, 2023 9:19:39 AM

From: Stephen Mensah <stephen@thetyc.ca>
To: DOROTHY LEAVER <dorothy.leaver@ddsb.ca>
Cc: Vanessa Erhirhie <vanessa@thetyc.ca>
Subject: Toronto Youth Cabinet Statement - DDSB Endorsement

Caution: This is an **external email** - Do not click **links** or open **attachments** unless you recognize the sender. If this a suspicious email, please report as **"Phish"** in Outlook.

Hello Director Williams - Taylor,

I hope all is well. My name is Stephen Mensah, Executive Director of the Toronto Youth Cabinet (TYC), City of Toronto's official youth advocacy body. We were established in 1998 by Toronto City Council with the mandate of advocating on behalf of Toronto's over 623,000 youth.

I am emailing in regards to a current initiative we have been working on to address the rising youth mental health crisis facing students in Ontario. As I am sure you may have heard, the government has headed our various recommendations for mandatory mental health literacy in the curriculum, mandatory mental health training for all school staff and so much more! However, there is still lots more work to do in this area to ensure we take all the steps to improve our students' health and well-being.

TYC, also launched our calls for a universal free school breakfast and lunch program across Ontario schools to ensure no child goes hungry.

https://www.chch.com/advocates-teacher-unions-call-for-free-school-breakfast-lunch-for-ontario-students/

Ultimately our request is for your school board to join the other boards across the Province in endorsing TYC's statement and calling on the Minister of Education to implement our recommendations more specifically Mental Health Days for Students etc etc. as well as our statement calling for a universal school food program in Ontario. Both statements are attached. We are requesting either yourself or the Board to send 2 separate letters to the relevant Minister(s) and for both letters to be sent to your local MPP's.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you soon. I am cc'ing my assistant Vanessa who will be able to respond to any inquiries on my behalf that I may miss.

Best,

Stephen Mensah (pronouns: He/Him)
Executive Director
Toronto Youth Cabinet

205

Toronto City Hall
15th Floor, East Tower
100 Queen Street West
http://thetyc.ca

The Toronto Youth Cabinet acknowledges that we are situated on the Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee, and most recently the territory of the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation. Tkaranto is built on sacred land that is part of an agreement between Indigenous peoples and then extended to allied nations to peacefully and respectfully care for it. By making this acknowledgment, we are taking part in an act of reconciliation, honouring the land and Indigenous heritage, which dates back over 10,000 years.

April 24th, 2023

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Ave
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

RE: JOINT STATEMENT ON ADDRESSING THE RISING MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS FACING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN ONTARIO

Dear Minister Lecce,

We hope this letter finds you well. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected society in many ways, especially the most vulnerable in our communities. Children and youth have been greatly affected by school closures, isolation from peers and other supports, disconnection from community and by the on-going changes to the way in which they attended school. As a result, we continue to witness the devastating impact that COVID-19 has placed on the health and well-being of children and youth.

According to the Children's Mental Health Association, approximately 70 percent of mental illnesses can be diagnosed before the age of 25. This makes adolescence a critical time for mental health promotion and prevention, including early identification, and effective treatment of mental disorders. Mental illness is increasingly threatening the lives of our children; with Canada's youth suicide rate being the third highest in the industrialized world. According to data from Statistics Canada, suicide remains a leading cause of death among children and adolescents aged 10-14, and the second leading cause of death for youth aged 15 to 24. We know that for Black and Indigenous youth these numbers are far greater.

According to data from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), one in seven Ontario students in grades 7 to 12 say they harmed themselves on purpose in the past year, with one in six having serious thoughts of suicide. Research conducted continues to sound the alarm on the growing mental health crisis that Ontario youth are facing. The time to take vigorous and urgent action on this front is long overdue.

We acknowledge that the Government of Ontario has made some investments to address youth mental health, however we must redouble our efforts to deal with this urgent crisis. Therefore, we are asking you Minister Lecce, to build upon what has been done, and go further by supporting students' mental health in Ontario by implementing the following immediately:

1. **Mandatory Mental Health Literacy in the Curriculum**

   It is critical to ensure that all students receive the necessary education around mental health and school boards must prioritize mental health literacy to ensure that all students are successful. Mental health literacy will help children and youth identify signs and symptoms to better understand their own mental health and identify when help is needed. In addition, normalising these topics and conversations can address the stigma around mental health that still exists among young people. There must be mandatory age appropriate mental health literacy from K-12 in our curriculum and we must ensure that educators have access to extensive mental health resources and on-going professional development to support the cultural shift that we are seeking.

2. **Mental Health Days for students**.

   The Government of Ontario must make changes to the Education Act to allow students to be absent from school for mental or behavioural health reasons; under an excused absence as outlined in the Education Act. The government must also ensure that students who do choose to take *Mental Health Days* are not required to provide their school with a doctor's note. Currently there are seven legally excused absences a student can take from school, and while mental health may be included under the "sickness excused absence" another category will not only emphasize the importance of self-care and prioritizing mental health but will also aid in destigmatizing mental health and allow for more open conversations amongst students, parents and teachers.

3. **Additional mental health clinicians, and student support staff, such as; mental health professionals, school psychologists, child & youth workers, social workers, nurses, guidance counsellors, and mental health crisis intervention workers.**

   The current ratio of social worker/child and youth worker to student, school psychologist to student, guidance counsellor to student and mental health worker to student exceeds the recommended average of 1:250, 1:700 and 1:375 respectively. Not only is there a need for additional staff, but we are calling on the province to ensure that these staff are representative of the school populations. Access to culturally appropriate mental health supports, will ensure that all students are able to receive the best support possible from individuals who share their lived experiences. There is also a need to boost up community support, to ensure that a wrap-around of services are available for students to access to the broader system of mental health care.

4. **Collection and reporting of data on mental health supports and services in schools.**

   Currently, there is a lack of publicly available data, therefore, we are asking for a province-wide reporting system to track mental health supports and services to ensure that students in need receive support in a timely manner. Examples of data that should

be included in the report are: the ratio of mental health clinician to the number of students, how often they are available to see those students, how long student wait times are from request of support to receiving support, how many students are accessing support, and what students are accessing support. There must also be data to measure the overall mental health status of students. This data should be made available to the public and should be collected in a disaggregated way to expose hidden trends and enable the identification of which students are more vulnerable and may require more support.

5. **School-based culturally appropriate mental health screening for all grades.**

    Culturally appropriate social-emotional screening should be utilised in schools and done throughout a students' education. Screening students in their early years will help in early identification and intervention as well as serve as a preventive measure, with a focus on maintaining wellness.

The recommendations highlighted above have been researched, tested and proven to improve students' mental health. We have seen other jurisdictions take these steps and we must ensure here in Ontario we act on them all expeditiously. These recommendations are inter-connected, and so acting on one without taking action on the other will be detrimental in our quest to improve student mental health in Ontario. We must also ensure that any implementation of these recommendations be done in consultation with students, teacher and education unions, children's mental health stakeholders and other relevant partners.

On January 26th the Toronto Youth Cabinet released their student mental health survey informed by the participation of 1,042 students from across Ontario between the ages of 12 to 19 on the state of their mental health. The data collected provided insights into how best the provincial government and school boards can better address the rising youth mental health crisis.

The results of our survey are as follows:

- 94.9% of students said they would be supportive of mandatory mental health literacy in the Ontario curriculum.
- 98.2% of students said they would be supportive of mandatory mental health training for teachers and all student-facing staff.
- 43.7% of students said their school does not have a mental health professional.
- 79% of students said they struggled to access mental health support in schools.
- 67.7% of students said access to BIPOC mental health workers is important to them.

The full details of the survey can be found on the Toronto Youth Cabinet website.

We acknowledge that the government recently took steps to commit to mandatory mental health training for educators and we thank them for listening to students' voices. An overwhelming majority of students surveyed indicated they support this initiative. It is essential that all staff are

able to not only recognize when a student needs mental health support, but is able to appropriately respond in urgent situations. The province must guarantee that schools are provided with the sufficient resources and funding to ensure that staff are trained and are able to support students' mental health concerns.

Young people made it clear that a prerequisite to their academic success is good mental health. Together we the underlying signatories, stand in solidarity and demand action on the recommendations highlighted. Thank you Minister Lecce for your attention on this matter. We hope for immediate action on this.

CC: Premier of Ontario Doug Ford
        Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Michael A. Tibollo
        Minister of Health Sylvia Jones
        Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education Patrice Barnes
        Leader, Official Opposition, Marit Stiles
        Education Critic, Chandra Pasma
        Mental Health and Addictions Critic, Lisa Gretzky
        Health Care Critic, France Gélinas

Sincerely,

1. Toronto Youth Cabinet
2. Ontario Student Trustees Association (OSTA-AECO)
3. Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA)
4. Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF)
5. Association des enseignantes et des enseignantes franco-ontariens (AEFO)
6. People For Education
7. Wellesley Institute
8. Jack.org
9. Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario

NOTE: Toronto Board of Health during their April 17, 2023 meeting endorsed this statement.

tyc Toronto Youth Cabinet

OSSTF/FEESO

ONTARIO ENGLISH
Catholic
Teachers
ASSOCIATION

Wellesley
Institute
advancing urban health

People for
Education

Public education. Public good.

æfo | Association des enseignantes et
des enseignants franco-ontariens

OSTA AECO

youth
wellness
hubs
ONTARIO

jack.org
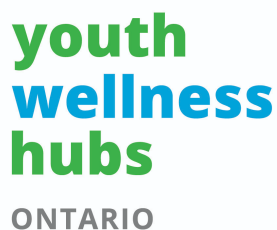
May 24th, 2023

The Honourable Michael Parsa
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
7th Floor, 438 University Ave
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Ave
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

RE: JOINT STATEMENT ON ADDRESSING THE RISING FOOD INSECURITY FACING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN ONTARIO

Dear Minister Parsa and Minister Lecce,

We hope this letter finds you well. Ontario and all parts of Canada and North America are seeing a cost of living crisis, with rising inflation and unaffordability of basic necessities. In Canada, food inflation is at 10.6% as of February 2023, more than double the rate of overall inflation.

According to a 2022 report by Feed Ontario, 30 percent of food bank clients are children and youth under the age of 18. A study by the University of Toronto on food insecurity found that 1 in 5 children are food insecure in Canada. In Toronto according to the Daily Bread Food Bank and North York Harvest Food Bank, 1 in 4 of their users were children in March. The first time in 25 years.

Ontario is facing a calamitous hunger crisis that calls on the government to act, and act urgently to address it. In Ontario the base funding of $28 million for student nutrition programs has remained consistent since 2014, despite the cost of food having increased dramatically over the last decade.

Across the province student nutrition programs are at a breaking point, with many having to reduce meals given to students or close down operations despite increased demand by schools. No young person should go hungry, but the simple truth is that far too many children are. The ramifications of food insecurity are far-reaching and have a profound impact not only on the health and well-being of individuals, but also the quality of education they receive. Simply, we can not expect a hungry student to do good in math, be focused and attentive, happy and ready to learn.

We acknowledge that the government took steps last year to mandate food literacy and nutrition across all grades and into the science curriculum to ensure students are taught and more knowledgeable of the benefits of locally grown food, different approaches to agriculture and so much more. However, it is indefensible to solely learn about food and its benefits, while being deprived of accessing it yourself.

That is why the Toronto Youth Cabinet and all underlying signatories are calling on the Province of Ontario to provide a universal free school breakfast and lunch program to all Ontario students. The province must also guarantee that schools are provided with the sufficient infrastructure, resources and funding to hire and train staff who will be responsible for preparing these nutritious meals.

In a province as wealthy and abundant as Ontario, it is unacceptable to have children be deprived of their right to food and adequate nutrition in supporting them to reach their full potential. Although I recognize that with rampant inflation, the government will be wary of increased spending, a universal school food program has the huge potential to support families in a meaningful way who are facing unprecedented financial pressures. The benefits of such a program are far-reaching, not only is it a cost-effective way to drive economic growth by investing in local Ontario farmers and producers and creating a healthier society, it has proven to contribute to increased student achievement, reduced absenteeism and increased health promotion.

Thank you Minister Parsa and Minister Lecce for your attention on this matter. We hope for immediate action on this. Let us continue to work towards making Ontario's publicly funded education system much stronger, more equitable and the best in the world!

CC: Premier of Ontario Doug Ford
       Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
       Logan Kanapathi
       Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education Patrice Barnes
       Leader, Official Opposition, Marit Stiles
       Children, Community and Social Services Critic, Monique Taylor
       Education Critic, Chandra Pasma

Sincerely,

1. Toronto Youth Cabinet
2. Food Banks Canada
3. Breakfast Club of Canada
4. Feed Ontario
5. Daily Bread Food Bank
6. North York Harvest Food Bank

7. Food Share Toronto
8. Food Secure Canada
9. Second Harvest Food Rescue
10. Coalition for Healthy School Food
11. Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA)
12. Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF)
13. Association des enseignantes et des enseignantes franco-ontariens (AEFO)
14. Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
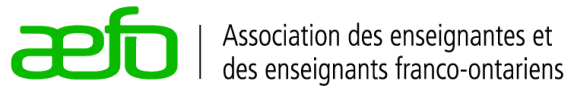
UNDER SEPARATE COVER

Agenda Item: 9.(c)

Update: Multi-Year Strategic Planning Process

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

REPORT TO: Durham District School Board   **DATE:** November 6, 2023

SUBJECT: Update: Multi-Year Strategic Planning Process   **PAGE:** 1 of 6

ORIGIN: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
Robert Cerjanec, Executive Lead, Strategic Initiatives and External Relations

1.0   Purpose

This report is to provide the Board of Trustees with an update on activities related to the Multi-Year Strategic Planning process since the last update on June 19, 2023 and to outline next steps.

2.0   Ignite Learning Strategic Priority/Operational Goals

Success – *Set high expectations and provide support to ensure all staff and students reach their potential every year.*

Well-being – *Create safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces to promote well-being for all students and staff.*

Leadership – *Identify future leaders, actively develop new leaders and responsively support current leaders.*

Equity – *Promote a sense of belonging and increase equitable outcomes for all by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement.*

Engagement – *Engage students, parents and community members to improve student outcomes and build public confidence.*

Innovation – *Re-imagine learning and teaching spaces through digital technologies and innovative resources.*

3.0   Background and Analysis

The Ontario Education Act requires that every school board develop a Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) spanning a minimum of three years. The purpose of the MYSP is to help school boards articulate shared values, set long-term commitments, and establish strategic priorities. It is a compass that guides collective actions for ongoing improvement across the learning organization.

The DDSB's current MYSP, Ignite Learning, was adopted in 2018. The Ignite Learning Plan was extended through to December 31, 2023.

The work to establish a new strategic plan began in the fall of 2022. Reports were presented to the Board of Trustees on October 3, 2022, November 21, 2022, April 17, 2023, and June 19, 2023.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) to select an external consultant was published through December 2022 and January 2023. In February 2023, a working group was formed to consider proposals and select a consulting firm. The working group was made up of four Trustee members,

the Director of Education, the Executive Lead of Strategic Initiatives and External Relations, and the Manager of Purchasing and Distribution Services. Together the working group determined that external consultant Maximum City, was the best fit to support Trustees through the strategic planning process.

An introductory session for Trustees and Student Trustees with Maximum City took place on March 1, 2023, with a focus on the following:

- Fundamentals of multi-year strategic planning, including the role of Trustees in the process, components of a strong strategic plan and the phases of strategic plan development;
- Best practices of strategic planning development and consultations;
- Timeline; and
- Proposal for a path for the work.

Development of the MYSP follows four phases, and we are presently working through Phase 3: Synthesis & Development, now that Phase 2: Consultation & Gathering Information has been completed.

Figure 1: MYSP Development Phases

WE ARE HERE.

Phase 1: Review, Reflect & Visioning — Completed

Phase 2: Consultation & Gathering Information — Apr. to Sept. 2023

Phase 3: Synthesis & Development — Sept. to Dec. 2023

Phase 4: Communication, Implementation & Monitoring — > 2024

Development

Phase 1 – Review, Reflect and Visioning

Visioning sessions took place through April 2023, where Trustees, Student Trustees and senior staff had the opportunity to engage in workshops guided by the consultant to review the current MYSP, share aspirations, identify priorities for the next term, and work towards a draft direction for the new strategic plan.

Following introductory and visioning sessions, a Trustee Working Group was formed to guide the strategic plan consultation and development process. The Trustee Working Group was coordinated by Maximum City and is comprised of Trustees, Student Trustees, the Director of Education, both Associate Directors, and the Executive Lead, Strategic Initiatives. In addition, a Staff Working Group with the consultant has been formed to ensure effective resourcing and coordination of the consultative process, communication plan, operational alignment and the back-end work required to develop the strategic plan.

Through April and early May, the working groups met to develop survey questions, a consultation plan and communication plan. The Trustee Working Group provided direction and clear feedback around the expectations for consultation. This resulted in a detailed and multilayered plan for consultation.

Phase 2 – Consulting and Gathering Information

The consultation period was launched in mid-May and closed in mid-October. An overall summary of engagement through Phase 2 is noted below and a detailed summary of engagement including methods of consultation, audience and type of feedback received is included in Appendix A, the Phase 2 Consultation Report.

Consultation strategies were informed by findings from external and internal board scans, aspirational thinking, and the lived experience of students, families, staff, and community members. The goal of the consultation phase was to involve and collaborate with as many individuals and groups connected to the DDSB as possible for the purpose of creating a strengthened plan developed through multiple engagement pathways.

Throughout Phase 2 the consultation process remained dynamic and progressive, with efforts taken to address any gaps in feedback. Follow-ups and additional reach outs took place in early-September to coincide with the start of the new school year to ensure that many groups and individuals had an opportunity to participate. This has helped to ensure a broad cross-section of members of the DDSB community have been consulted throughout Phase 2.

Figure 2: Engagement Summary

MYSP Engagement by the Numbers

4,362 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS*

675 STUDENTS
- FACILITATED SESSIONS
- POP UP EVENTS
- SURVEY
- VIRTUAL WEBINAR
- SKETCHNOTES

2,334 PARENTS, CAREGIVERS & FAMILIES
- FACILITATED SESSIONS
- POP UP EVENTS
- SURVEY
- VIRTUAL WEBINAR

1,067 STAFF & EDUCATORS
- CONSULTATION TOOLKIT
- FACILITATED SESSIONS
- POP UP EVENTS
- STAFF WORKING GROUP
- SURVEY
- THOUGHT EXCHANGE
- VIRTUAL WEBINAR

271 COMMUNITY & ORGANIZATIONS
- FACILITATED SESSIONS
- POP UP EVENTS
- SURVEY
- VIRTUAL WEBINAR

15 TRUSTEES
- POP UP EVENTS
- SURVEY
- TRUSTEE WORKING GROUP

* Participants were able to provide feedback in multiple forums

Phase 2 was formally closed and completed on October 11, 2023.

Phase 3 – Synthesis and Development

Themes

Following completion of the consultation phase, all feedback collected has been analyzed by our consulting partners at Maximum City and nine themes have been drawn from the data (themes are listed below):

Indigenous Rights and Ways of Knowing

Advancing Equity

Dissatisfaction and Disengagement

Learning and Living in Community

Meaningful Learning

Multiple Pathways

Multi-Year Strategic Plan Structure and Monitoring

Staff Support and Development

Well-being and Knowing Your Students

Appendix A provides detailed descriptions and key words connected to the themes, the methodology applied throughout analysis, number of pieces of feedback collected directly relating to each of the themes, illustrative quotes, and additional themes drawn from analysis.

Phase 3 represents a critical time for the Trustee Working Group in progressing towards the final phase of MYSP development, which can take many iterations. In early October, while final consultation opportunities were nearing completion, an interim Phase 2 Consultation Report was presented for information and feedback to the Trustee and Staff Working Groups.

Next Steps

Draft recommendations for the new MYSP are in development and will be presented to the Trustee Working Group later this week to start the process of translating recommendations into strategic directions. A draft of the MYSP will then be developed and will go back to the Trustee Working Group for additional feedback. A community information session will take place via public webinar in November.

The November public webinar will provide an opportunity for the DDSB community to consider the themes developed through analysis of all feedback collected during Phase 2. Staff and the consulting team will be seeking confirmation through the webinar that what we heard throughout Phase 2 from students, families, staff, education partners and community groups is accurately represented in the nine themes and in the draft of the new MYSP. Adjustments will be made following the webinar as needed based on feedback collected. All members of the DDSB

community will be encouraged to attend the November webinar. It is not necessary to have provided feedback during Phase 2 in order to participate in the Phase 3 webinar.

The final draft of the new MYSP will be presented to the Board of Trustees in January 2024.

Phase 4 – Communication, Implementation and Monitoring

Following approval by the Board of Trustees, Phase 4 will formally begin.

Development of a District and community-wide rollout plan for the new MYSP will be developed for launch beginning in January 2024. Staff are currently compiling an inventory of all webpages, resources and other public and internal facing documentation that will need to be updated to incorporate the new MYSP.

A communications plan is in development which will aim to spread awareness of the new plan, reiterate key messages and embed the new plan in everything the DDSB does. The communications plan will consist of various forms of internal and external communication including e-mails, social media, web content, advertising, pitches to media outlets, videos and new virtual and printed materials that will be shared through departments and schools.

Once a new MYSP is approved and as part of Phase 4, staff will consider the key elements needed for an operational planning and reporting structure, taking into consideration examples from other school boards and the District's past practices. The senior team will collaborate and determine the key operational initiatives needed to implement the MYSP and provide an information report to the Board in 2024 on the work being undertaken across the District and initiatives underway.

4.0   Financial Implications

A budget of $95,000 has been allocated to the MYSP process and is estimated to include all costs associated with facilitation of consultations and the creation of the new strategic plan.

5.0   Evidence of impact

In the past, staff have provided reports to the Board of Trustees for information at three points in time throughout each school year related to the staff-led operational side of the multi-year strategic plan:

1. Fall Report, Annual Operational Plan – outlines key initiatives that form the focus of work across the District for School Operations and Corporate Services staff.
2. Update Report, Annual Operational Plan – provides a status update on work related to key initiatives.
3. Year End Report, Annual Operational Plan – a detailed progress update including outcomes and data from each key initiative.

Planning as part of Phase 4 will determine whether a similar or different staff-led operational plan structure will be implemented going forward.

6.0   **Communication Plan**

A Communication Plan was developed to inform our educational partners (students, parents/caregivers, staff, organizations, and community members) of the MYSP development process and opportunities to engage and provide input. The Communication Plan included promotion across DDSB's website, social media platforms, through email, an informational video, and internal and public meetings to raise awareness of the MYSP process and opportunities for engagement throughout Phase 2.

The MYSP webpage included links to the MYSP Survey for Students, Parents/Caregivers/Families and Community Partners/Organizations, a Facilitation Guide for self-directed consultations sessions, previous reports to the Board, a helpful Q and A section as well as contact information for further inquiries to dedicated MYSP voicemail and email.

As part of Phase 4 – Communication, Implementation and Monitoring, a detailed communication plan rolling out the new MYSP is in development.

7.0   **Conclusion and/or Recommendations**

This report is provided to the Board of Trustees for information.

8.0   **Appendices**

Appendix A: Phase 2 Consultation Report

Report reviewed and submitted by:

_____
Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board

_____
Robert Cerjanec, Executive Lead, Strategic Initiatives and External Relations

Durham District School Board MYSP

Phase 2 Consultation Report
November 2023

Prepared by Maximum City

Table of Contents

Introduction

Background

In February 2023, Maximum City was contracted by the Durham District School Board to assist with the development of its next Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). This report summarizes the results of what we heard during the Phase 2 consultation, including a list of themes to inform the development of the new MYSP.

The development of the MYSP is following four phases, and we are currently in Phase 3.

Figure 1: MYSP Development Phases

WE ARE HERE.

Phase 1: Review, Reflect & Visioning — Completed	Phase 2: Consultation & Gathering Information — Apr. to Sept. 2023	Phase 3: Synthesis & Development — Sept. to Dec. 2023	Phase 4: Communication, Implementation & Monitoring — > 2024

Development

Summary of Engagements

In collaboration with staff and trustees, Maximum City engaged students, staff, families, community members and organizations regarding their experience in the DDSB. From April through October, we led or supported more than 35 consultation forums with over 4,300 participants in both online and in-person modes, which are summarized in Table 1 below. Additionally, there were several consultations facilitated independently by DDSB staff. Available data from these sessions were included in our analysis for this report.

Table 1: Summary of Engagements

Method	Audience	Description / Purpose	Number of Participants* (*approximate for some events)	Date
Visioning Sessions (x2) & Visioning Survey (x2)	Trustees and Senior Staff	Establish a common vision and goals for the project	26	May 2023
Trustee Working Group (x2)	Trustees	Ongoing strategic support	15	May - June 2023
Staff Working Group	Senior Staff	Ongoing strategic and operational support	14	May 2023
Thought Exchange	School Leaders	Low-barrier digital forum for safely sharing ideas and feedback among school administrators	159	June 2023
Online Survey Conducted in six languages	All Participant Groups	Collect input from a broad audience of participants on their DDSB experience.	2,834	May - Sept 2023
Facilitated Sessions (x6) Led by Maximum City & DDSB Staff. Supported by DDSB staff & trustees	Key Participant Groups	Convene focused discussions with specific participant groups: - Student Senate - Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee - Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) (DDSB-led) - Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) - Durham Region Anti-Racism Task Force - Indigenous Education Advisory Committee	281	June - Oct 2023

Pop-Ups (x7) Led by Maximum City and supported by DDSB staff & trustees	All Participant Groups	Reach participant groups where they are already spending their time: • Living Compendium Community Engagement Evening • Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) & Durham Partners Symposium • Cypher Black Male Empowerment Conference (DDSB-led) • Student Art Gallery • Summer School Sessions at Sinclair Secondary School (x3)	491	June - July 2023
Self-Facilitation / Group Consultations (x15) Led by DDSB and supported by staff & trustees	All Participant Groups	An invitation for a variety of groups to lead engagement through existing structures and events. Toolkit provided. • Purchasing & Distribution Department • Union / Federation Partners • People & Culture Team • Senior DDSB Team • Keenanow Indigenous Employees Network • Grade 2/3 Class Focus Group • Elementary School Sketchnotes (x5) • Black Fathers Network • Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Conference • Affinity Networks • Durham East Asian Network of Employees	379	June – Sept 2023

Consultation Webinars (x2) Led by Maximum City and supported by DDSB Staff	All Participant Groups	Digital forum for informing and gathering feedback on key questions ● All-Staff Consultation ● Public Consultation	188	Sept 2023

Engagement by the Numbers

In total, over 4,300 participants provided nearly 12,000 comments through the various consultation forums. It should be noted that the totals do not represent unique respondents as the participants could provide input in multiple ways.

Figure 2: Engagement by the Numbers

675 STUDENTS
• FACILITATED SESSIONS
• POP UP EVENTS
• SURVEY
• VIRTUAL WEBINAR
• SKETCHNOTES

2,334 PARENTS, CAREGIVERS & FAMILIES
• FACILITATED SESSIONS
• POP UP EVENTS
• SURVEY
• VIRTUAL WEBINAR

4,362 TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS*

1,067 STAFF & EDUCATORS
• CONSULTATION TOOLKIT
• FACILITATED SESSIONS
• POP UP EVENTS
• STAFF WORKING GROUP
• SURVEY
• THOUGHT EXCHANGE
• VIRTUAL WEBINAR

271 COMMUNITY & ORGANIZATIONS
• FACILITATED SESSIONS
• POP UP EVENTS
• SURVEY
• VIRTUAL WEBINAR

15 TRUSTEES
• POP UP EVENTS
• SURVEY
• TRUSTEE WORKING GROUP

* Participants were able to provide feedback in multiple forums

Image 1-2: Pop-Up Sessions at the Living Compendium

Image 3-4: Summer School Pop-Up Consultations at Sinclair Secondary School

Image 5: Pop Up at Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) & Durham Partners Symposium

What We Heard: Summary of Results

The nearly 12,000 comments from 4,362 participants represent a very robust qualitative data set from students, staff, parents, and community members that complements other quantitative measures in assisting the DDSB to develop a multi-year plan that is responsive to local needs, as per the Ministry of Education's recent memorandum on the *The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act*. In our experience as MYSP consultants, this compares favourably to the reach of consultation efforts in other southern Ontario school districts.

Through an analysis of the nearly 12,000 comments collected in the consultation period, we have identified the following **themes** in terms of common priorities, challenges, and values across participant groups to inform the development of the multi-year plan.

LIST OF THEMES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

- Advancing Equity
- Dissatisfaction & Disengagement
- Indigenous Rights & Ways of Knowing
- Learning & Living in Community
- Meaningful Learning
- Multiple Pathways
- MYSP Structure & Monitoring
- Staff Support & Development
- Well-Being & Knowing Your Students

Image 6: Pop Up at Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) & Durham Partners Symposium

Below is a count of consultation comments organized by the themes, followed by summaries of themes. It should be noted that the themes can and often do overlap. Many comments warranted two themes and were coded as such. Additionally, the table presents qualitative data quantitatively, which can lead to misinterpretation or overlooking the content in individual comments.

Table 2: Count of Themes by Participant Group and Number of Comments

Group	THEMES	Advancing Equity	Indigenous Rights & Ways of Knowing	Meaningful Learning	Disengagement & Dissatisfaction	Learning & Living in Community	Multiple Pathways	MYSP Structure & Monitoring	Staff Support & Development	Well-Being & Knowing Your Students	Additional Insights	Inflammatory Language	TOTAL
		1,582	140	3,606	569	4,105	344	212	2,927	2,944	122	44	16,595
STUDENTS	SUBTOTALS	39	2	868	109	582	195	1	168	557	43	4	2,568
	Survey	16	2	705	108	520	180	1	132	455	42	4	2,165
	Facilitation	23	0	163	1	62	15	0	36	102	1	0	403
PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS	SUBTOTALS	1,232	10	2,433	384	3,007	81	20	1,507	2,085	53	38	10,850
	Survey	1,151	9	2,342	381	2,866	75	19	1,439	2,028	53	38	10,401
	Facilitation	81	1	91	3	141	6	1	68	57	0	0	449
STAFF	SUBTOTALS	163	37	220	55	293	38	147	1,178	216	16	0	2,363
	Survey	94	3	158	53	130	10	6	930	150	15	0	1,549
	Facilitation	49	31	43	2	127	28	127	56	50	0	0	513
	Thought Exchange	20	3	19	0	36	0	14	192	16	1	0	301
COMMUNITY	SUBTOTALS	142	91	78	21	198	21	15	74	76	10	2	728
	Survey	36	3	41	21	72	8	1	26	40	6	2	256
	Facilitation	106	88	37	0	126	13	14	48	36	4	0	472
TRUSTEES	SUBTOTALS	6	0	7	0	25	9	29	0	10	0	0	86
	Facilitation	6	0	7	0	25	9	29	0	10	0	0	86

Methodology

Our process for analyzing the qualitative data started by reading the comments and identifying key words that led to the development of **themes**. The themes then became the categories we used to group and code comments from all participants in order to help us make sense and meaning out of the data set. Theme coding captured both positive and negative comments that were either supportive or critical of the theme topic, which has been elaborated on in the summaries. The key words and themes were updated multiple times throughout the coding process, which took place over the summer and fall months. Three people reviewed the data set to check for errors and mitigate bias, with one person leading the coding and two assisting. It should be noted that themes can and often do overlap, and are not to be treated as siloed categories. Therefore, some key words appear in more than one theme and many comments were assigned two themes. The names of the themes were reviewed and revised based on input from the staff and trustee working groups.

All comments were treated equally from facilitated sessions and the survey, and are presented at an aggregate level, but can be disaggregated by participant groups if desirable. We were careful not to overlook individual or isolated comments even if they only appeared once, and included them as additional insights. A small number of comments with inflammatory language from the survey were omitted from the analysis. Blank, "NA" and incomplete responses were not coded, as well as a small number of comments we could not make sense of. It should be noted that parents and caregivers are proportionally overrepresented as a group in the data set, which is common in a process such as this. Intentional effort was made to include and centre student voice throughout the consultation process.

The majority of the consultations were conducted in May, June and July. In September and early October, consultations were conducted with specific groups and students to give a more complete picture of different DDSB experiences, a deeper understanding of what students are thinking about, their values, and what directions the district should pursue to best prepare them for what is ahead. Additionally, we included methodological recommendations from Board resources where appropriate, such as the DDSB Listening Tour Report Feb 2023, Workforce Census and Listening Tour and Additional Analysis May 2022. We also pulled recommendations from the Indigenous Staff and Families Engagement Summary Report Fall 2022, directly referenced in the Indigenous Rights and Ways of Knowing theme summarized on page 18-19.

Theme: Advancing Equity

Figure 3: Word Cloud of Key Words for Advancing Equity

more opportunities for historically marginalized groups

equity of outcomes

diverse staff

dignity and respect

access and inclusion

removing bias

2SLGBTQI + rights

advancing

diversity and representation

Black experience and anti-Black racism

distinct Indigenous rights

representation and access for children with disabilities

equity

equitable resourcing

learning as a practice of freedom

allyship as a verb

equity as an ongoing process

structural barriers and biases

duty-bearer responsibilities

culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy

human rights

Many comments in this category acknowledged the good work the DDSB is doing on Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, but signalled the need for an ongoing process to advance equity through an anti-oppression approach. Many comments expressed a desire for a firm, action-based commitment that continuously improves equity, diversity, and inclusion in the academic program and the learning organization, aligning with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Many comments from parents in particular wanted to see more culturally relevant pedagogy and a more diverse curriculum, including texts and materials that honour the diversity of the DDSB community. Some parents wanted to expand Afrocentric programming, such as the Black Excellence Made Evident (BeMe) program, to other schools. Some students wanted more of a curricular and co-curricular focus on topics such as gender & sexuality, anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, and women's rights. Other students noted that there has been good support from their peers and staff who have taken an interest and active role in supporting Black student success encompassing academic, extracurricular, and well-being domains.

Many comments highlighted the importance of equity-focused events and programming, such as Critical Consciousness Practitioner Inquiry (CCPI), The Living Compendium of Action for Black Student Success, Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Conference, Black Excellence Made Evident (BeMe), Cypher Black Male Empowerment Conference, and many others. These events play a key role in honouring, affirming, and communicating values and

accomplishments related to advancing equity. Some comments suggested an expansion of similar programming to address anti-Indigenous racism and the unique needs of other groups and communities, such as addressing anti-Asian racism, and including events like Iftar dinners at schools. Some comments from students, parents, and staff focused on their positive feelings of belonging through the representation of multiple religious holidays and perspectives in and out of the classroom, and were interested in the further inclusion of different secular and faith-based holidays. Some comments requested additional support for prayer space and halal food options, while others expressed a concern for certain practices such as fasting or religious absences impacting academic and classroom activities. Some comments noted the importance of coming together as a community to have uncomfortable conversations, including having dialogue opportunities, healing circles, listening sessions, as well as community safety town halls and forums with students in leadership roles.

Many comments recognized the diversity of DDSB staff that reflects the communities in which they live and learn, including the hiring and promotion of diverse leadership teams. Some comments specified a need to continue anti-racism training, cultural awareness, and unconscious bias. Some commenters recommended that administrators should be better trained in how to address particular incidents of anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism, while others provided advice on how to get help outside of the DDSB system. Many comments from students and parents also expressed the need for staff to consistently address bullying, racism, sexism, and homophobia in school communities. Some comments from students expressed ongoing issues with homophobia and the need for more outreach and education, especially regarding gender and the trans community in high schools. Some comments from students spoke to repeated and unresolved incidents of harassment and stalking towards girls from other students.

Some parents in particular expressed concern over their perception that the DDSB is ideologically driven to promote equity at the expense of student learning and the overall student experience. Their comments included requests for more communication and transparency on gender, sexuality, and 2SLGBTQI studies, as well as having the school require consent in allowing their child to participate in these discussions. Some parents requested age-appropriate curriculum, while others asked for more recognition of other world religions and home values in the classroom. The majority of Inflammatory comments were found in this category, and were removed.

Many comments from students, parents, staff, and community members focused on the need to ensure better accessibility and inclusion, which are perceived as ongoing unresolved barriers. Many comments focused on the need to enhance support for students with disabilities, exceptionalities, Individual Education Plans (IEP), and other learning and access needs. Many comments focused on the importance of staff support towards them, while others focused on updates to building and school infrastructure such as the function of elevators and doors, and not making accessibility an afterthought in campus facilities.

Many comments from students focused on listening more to student voices and better inclusion of student agency at all levels of education (K-12). Some comments from students focused on taking on leadership roles within their community to become a voice for their peers, particularly from marginalized groups. Distinct child rights were also addressed, as some students noted a perceived lack of equality for students themselves, mirrored in some parent comments stating that students' human rights were also at risk.

Illustrative Quotes for Advancing Equity

"The DDSB is ahead of other Boards when it comes to equity. Equity is moving in the right direction by recognizing needs, creating an inclusive learning environment."
- *Community*

"I feel supported by the Superintendent and System Lead. I appreciate the work that is being done with Human Rights, Anti-Black Racism and the Indigenous Education Policy and the support we are given to do the work."
- *Staff*

"Something that's working well is knowing you have commitments such as CCPI and The Living Compendium, GSA Conference, etc. within the Board and that you are putting significant resources towards Anti-Oppression work. I am very grateful for this and that you are also ensuring that all schools are doing this work."
- *Parent*

"I use events like the Living Compendium to embrace Blackness and feel connected to my community, despite not always having other Black students and staff in my everyday experiences."
- *Student*

"Equity can't just be words in a plan, not just empty policy – needs to be grounded in action."
- *Staff*

"What's important to me is supporting our students' identities in every way. Intersectionality as living beings with many strengths. How can the DDSB embed that with everything we do?"
- *Community*

"I would like to see concrete solutions that name an action plan to combat anti-Black racism in our system. It needs to be named and addressed in this plan. The last census made it clear that we are not doing enough and it deserves a place in this plan."
- *Staff*

"School would be better if we were equal."

- *Student*

"The most important thing for me is being a voice for POC [people of colour] students who may not be provided with the same opportunities as other students do."
- *Student*

"Sadly, you have to advocate, advocate, advocate. The daily stresses of having a child with exceptionalities shouldn't, in my opinion, be compounded by having to use up your reserve tank to campaign for basic rights that are available to other students."
- *Parent*

"Listen to the students better, as it's all about 'equality' 'till it comes to us."
- *Student*

"I would like to see more communication and transparency on gender studies. Also, include that 'we understand these values may not align with all world religions, but we create a space of love and respect for everyone regardless of our differences.'"
- *Parent*

Image 7: Responses from Parent Involvement Committee & Durham Partners Symposium
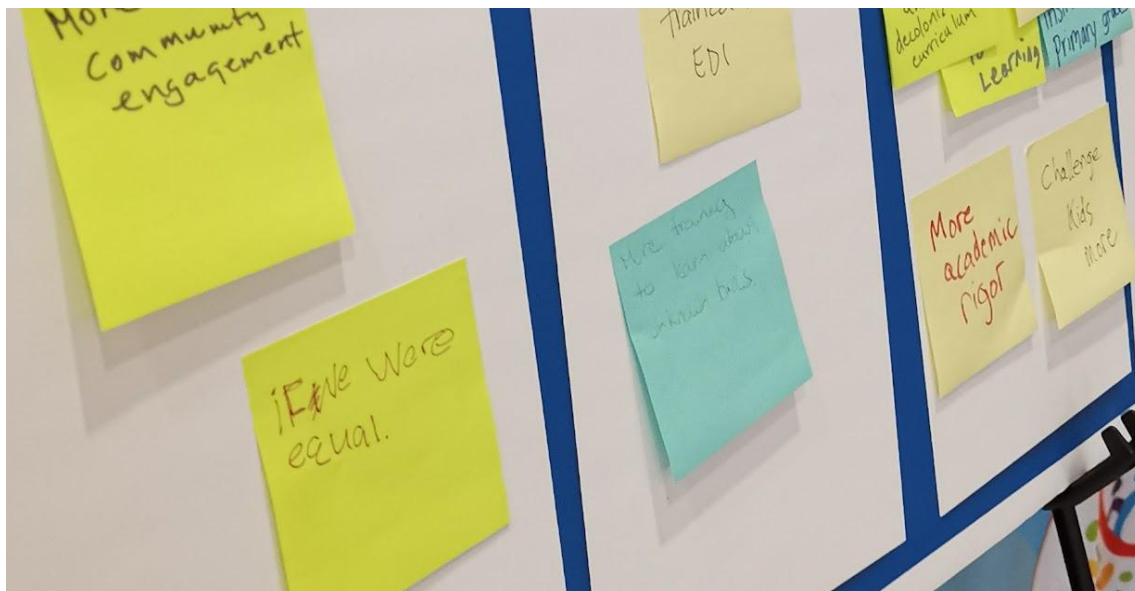
Theme: Dissatisfaction & Disengagement

Figure 3: Word Cloud of Key Words for Dissatisfaction & Disengagement

burnout

boredom   staff leaving the profession   school choice

dissatisfaction & disengagement

lack of purpose

apathy

lack of progress   lack of action

giving up & checking out   frustration

Comments in this category spoke to a general frustration and disengagement from school matters. Comments included responses that nothing was working well, being bored at school, or totally burned out from work and looking to leave the profession.

Some comments from students advised their peers not to enrol in the DDSB, and these were usually grounded in experiences of being bullied or not feeling heard by staff. Similarly, some comments from staff expressed feelings of dissatisfaction and disengagement from a lack of trust, not being valued or respected, and burned out from overwork and lack of purpose. Some staff comments noted that aside from their positive relationships with students and other staff, not much else was working, while others noted that the prevalence of behaviour and relationship issues in their school community was detrimental to their well-being. Some specifically noted an absence of support or poor communication from administrators as a contributor to stress. Some comments, specifically from staff who had been teaching for decades, marked a change in the last few years that shifted their ability to do the work effectively and meaningfully, while seeing little progress in the right direction. This and other similar comments from staff indicated that system-wide concerns related to teaching and lack of support may be causing a push to leave the profession.

Comments in this category from parents and caregivers expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of progress year-over-year in student learning, or a perceived lack of educational quality in the DDSB. Some comments spoke of seeking alternatives through tutoring and school choice, including leaving the Board for homeschooling, private or Catholic education.

Illustrative Quotes for Dissatisfaction & Disengagement

"I can't remember the last time I thought that things were working well at work."
- *Staff*

"Explore the possibility of attending a different board or make sure you understand educational procedures and human rights so that you can fully advocate for your child."
- *Parent*

"Every year is more upsetting than the previous. No learning, just wasting time and resources."
- *Parent*

"Not much is working well for me right now. I feel unsupported, isolated and without resources to serve the needs of my school and class. I do NOT feel valued."
- *Staff*

Theme: Indigenous Rights & Ways of Knowing

Figure 4: Word Cloud of Key Words for Indigenous Rights & Ways of Knowing

Many comments in this category spoke to the need to recognize distinct and inherent Indigenous Rights. These rights should be regarded as separate from Equity, Diversity, and Human Rights, with a focus on centring Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing in the DDSB. Many comments in this category acknowledged the importance of implementing the new Indigenous Education Policy and Procedure, while expressing the need for honouring treaties between Indigenous nations, recognizing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and addressing the DDSB's response to the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission related to education. Comments appreciated the updates to the Operational Plan 2021-2022 that centre Indigenous and human rights, while at the same expressing a desire to ensure that the Indigenous Education Policy and Indigenous Rights inform the MYSP, with demonstrable commitments beyond tokenism.

While many staff comments in this category recognized that the existing Indigenous Education Policy and Procedure was well written and useful in building capacity, some comments also signalled further action was needed. Some staff communicated gaps in the implementation of the policy, noting the need for specific direction on Indigenous education during staff meetings, additional training around cultural sensitivity, and appropriate education methods, as well as professional development geared specifically to Indigenous educators. Some comments from staff noted benefits to working with a team that centres Indigenous rights, encouraging opportunities for connecting with other Indigenous staff regularly and sharing their identity.

Across this category, there was an interest in embedding Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing across departments and disciplines, not just within specific Indigenous courses or programs. And while some parents in this category expressed concern over what

they see as the promotion of Indigenous education at the expense of student learning and the overall student experience, many parents, staff, and community members wanted further incorporation of Indigenous education, narratives, training, and visibility into the school community. Some students, as well, wanted more of a curricular and co-curricular focus on topics such as Indigenous rights. Some suggestions for achieving this included, by celebrating the art, knowledge, history and resilience of Indigenous communities, with a renewed focus on Indigenous language revitalization.

Some comments from community members spoke to the need for an enhanced Indigenous Education Department to support Indigenous learners by maintaining and elevating what Indigenous students need to graduate as they face educational and structural barriers within colonial education systems. There was a desire for Indigenous students to see themselves reflected in the classroom, and for addressing incidents of anti-Indigenous racism and microaggressions. Community members in particular shared concerns around funding and resourcing of the Indigenous Education Department, noting unequal experiences between schools across the Board, along with the funding challenges of bringing Indigenous voices into the classroom. Some comments spoke to the need to engage Indigenous leadership to help facilitate and implement the work of incorporating Indigenous rights and ways of knowing, including a superintendent who identifies as Indigenous and is focused on Indigeneity.

Some comments in this category spoke to the challenges experienced by Indigenous students and families, which include consultation fatigue, distrust, using colonial approaches to consultation, the intersectionality of Indigenous identities, timing, and lack of capacity or resources. Comments recommended engaging Indigenous groups earlier in the process to build trust and co-create methods. Other comments spoke to the Board's responsibility to include Indigenous voices in an era of Truth and Reconciliation, particularly Indigenous student voices. Other comments suggested that a review of the content and recommendations from the Indigenous Staff and Families Engagement Summary Report (ISFES 2022) would be an additional way to include more Indigenous perspectives to inform the development of the MYSP.

Based on the above suggestion, a review of the ISFES report was conducted with the goal of pulling relevant MYSP recommendations. In the report, self-identified Indigenous staff, students, and families expressed a desire for an overall organizational community culture that reflects and respects their diverse cultures, languages and truths. There was specific reference to the DDSB honouring the Board's Indigenous Education Policy through a regular operational review "to ensure that programs, procedures and practices reflect an Indigenous focus."

The ISFES report affirms much of what was heard in the survey and facilitated sessions in this category, with additional insights such as:

- Recommendations for ongoing connection opportunities for youth and family voice, including Indigenous family cultural events, and working with the Indigenous Education Department for direct engagement;
- Specific recommendations on integrating Indigenous content and pedagogical practices into classrooms, including knowledge of Indigenous contributions, treaties, residential schools, and true histories of Indigenous peoples;
- A desire to work with elders and traditional knowledge keepers to teach skills, cultural traditions and community values to students and staff, including advising the Board on policy and procedures.

Illustrative Quotes for Indigenous Rights & Ways of Knowing

"What works well is that there is an Indigenous Education Policy and Procedure in place that has been well written and is thoroughly comprehensive."
- *Staff*

"Ensuring the Indigenous Education Policy, and Indigenous Rights continue to be at the centre of the strategic plan. There needs to be a demonstrable commitment to this, and not for tokenistic purposes."
- *Community*

"What could be improved is recognizing inherent Indigenous rights, honour treaties and the 94 calls to action of the truth and reconciliation report specifically education."
- *Parent*

"This Board is doing a lot to get Indigenous language and culture out there, with outdoor education, other programming. But not every school can do it, and it's not part of the official curriculum. Woven in but not on paper."
- *Community*

"Communication with teachers and principal and the support of the Indigenous Education department is working well."
- *Parent*

"As an Indigenous education coach, I like feeling welcomed into schools. I like when teachers WANT to make changes to their practice."
- *Staff*

"Education regarding social issues (Indigenous rights in Canada, education of gender & sexuality, anti-black racism, women's rights, etc.) is working well."
- *Student*

"I would like to be able to comfortably share my Indigenous History without parameters."
- *Staff*

Theme: Learning & Living in Community

Figure 5: Word Cloud of Key Words for Learning & Living in Community

Many comments in this category focused on the importance of the DDSB connecting students, staff, parents and caregivers, and the community in intentional and meaningful ways. Improving communication in all forms was central to this category, as the word "communicate" and its variants appeared over 750 times. There was a clear thread from parents who expressed the need for a stronger connection and better communication between home and school on topics such as their child's learning progress, as well as more transparent decision-making and policy at the Board level. Many parents suggested more consistent communication through improved report cards and more parent-teacher interviews, as well as occasional fun community events that include the entire school community. Some wanted to see schools become community hubs and act as anchor institutions in local neighbourhoods.

Many parents expressed a desire for a single, consolidated resource to find all information and to communicate with the Board, school and teachers. While some parents saw the benefits of the many communication channels and tools (School Calendar, Remind App Parent Portal, School Messenger, etc.), others noted that some processes seem dated, redundant, inaccessible, or nonfunctional. Some suggested that consistency in the tools used, or an investment in a single central digital tool, would be helpful. Some community members noted that dissemination of messaging is happening, but not equitably across the system, while others noted mixed messaging from the Board compared to staff. A community member suggested that the DDSB website be set up with nested questions and answers targeted to parents or other groups, making it easier for them to find information.

Parents expressed that the onus was too often on them to reach out and advocate for their children by communicating with staff, noting long waits for support systems to come to them. Some community members had concerns about access for newcomers, parents, or staff getting to decision makers, while others noted that ongoing support for parents, caregivers, and families is important, suggesting more notice for introducing events or programs to provide adequate support to families. Some comments from community members in particular expressed that parents may be interested in learning from credible professionals how to best ask questions about schooling, reduce anxiety, and manage their own mental health issues. Others noted that students, parents, and staff should reach out to their local settlement agency for support. Yet another community member suggested having an open house at the beginning of the year to gather resources and support for students and families.

Many comments discussed the need for consistency within and between schools, as well as increased funding for events, facilities, and infrastructure. Many students and parents provided feedback on preferred times for school start and end time, as well as the length of classes, citing a balance for extracurricular activities, employment, and the sleep needs of adolescents. Some parents noted the impacts on quality of life and the learning experience of distance to school, access to after-school programs, and school placement. Some comments also focused on the benefits and challenges of the modified calendar system, with some requesting further promotion and others suggesting its cancellation. Some comments provided feedback on access to French Immersion, noting that it is a desirable program and should receive more resources and support.

Community members in particular noted the importance of the Board establishing agreements and ongoing communication with organizations to facilitate co-ops, internships, after-school programs, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) programs, and in-classroom placements for students, as well as more opportunities and spaces for community partners to engage with staff and students. Community members also wanted more partnerships and collaboration with municipalities and other agencies for joint problem-solving and sharing goals.

Many comments from students and parents expressed a need to improve access to and maintenance of facilities and other state-of-good repair concerns, including working air conditioning and heaters, affordable food and events, clean bathrooms, inclusive bathrooms, portables, better wifi for chromebooks, and public elevators for multiple floor schools. Some students requested improvements in the school environment for comfort and focus such as taller desks, wheely chairs, and more freedom to wear hats and chew gum in the classroom, while others wanted more consistent support for menstruation, including the restocking of sanitary napkin dispensers and the need for a comfortable place to rest during cramps or sensory overload. Some comments from students and parents noted the benefits of dress codes and school uniforms, while others saw them as too restricting. The concepts of

collaboration, building relationships, and finding support in community were evident in this category.

Illustrative Quotes for Learning & Living in Community

"It is critical for staff to make connections with students and families in order to be successful both academically and non-academically."
- *Staff*

"More school communication and more school/community engagement would be my biggest requests. I also feel it is important for the board to plan proactively for the growing population in Oshawa. The new schools that are being built are overpopulating so quickly and the shortage of space and resources is really being felt by students."
- *Parent*

"By the time events trickle down to me as a front line community partner I have less than a week's notice. There is often no space / meeting room to present the idea of the event/program face to face (and an email inbox is a bad place to land a brand new concept)"
- *Community*

"I wish there was a communication app or program that is the hub for EVERYONE and EVERYTHING."
- *Parent*

"Sometimes it's a challenge to keep track of everything and remember passwords. E.g. Parent portal vs Remind app vs School messenger vs DSTS account vs Email vs Twitter vs Instagram vs Text messaging vs voicemail etc."
- *Parent*

"Something that would improve my school experience is less expensive ways to participate in school events. I really can't afford this."
- *Student*

Image 8-9: DDSB Living Compendium & Student Art Gallery

Theme: Meaningful Learning

Figure 6: Word Cloud of Key Words for Meaningful Learning

curricular focus

student leadership · service learning · critical thinking · literacy & numeracy

experiential

academic excellence · differentiated instruction · problem solving

metacognition

innovation · back to basics · **meaningful learning** · alignment of focus · creativity

quality of program & instruction · learning beyond the classroom · high expectations

STEM · extra & co-curriculars · technology

fundamental skills · learning environment · student voice & agency · citizenship

evidence-based instruction · contribution to society · inquiry

Many comments in this category focused on the need to continuously pursue a responsive and high quality teaching and learning program for all staff and students. Many comments from staff in particular wanted to see more room for creativity and flexibility in instructional practices and curricular content in order to best reach their students. Many comments centred students and student success, including different definitions of success, as what they valued most in their work. There was a strong sense that building both academic and life skills for students should regain a more prominent position as a priority for the DDSB in the face of many competing priorities. Student comments emphasized that their learning and schooling should be meaningful to their lives as young people, better reflect the world they live in, and the values they hold. Even the youngest students expressed a desire for teachers who can help them learn new and important skills and knowledge that reflect their changing world.

While many comments in this category had a curricular focus, or expressed a desire to return to core subjects such as Math and Language Skills in tandem with a renewed focus on student achievement, others wanted to move beyond narrow or traditional definitions of learning and success in order to promote all kinds of learning both in and out of the classroom. Common examples include service learning, field trips, students co-designing inquiry topics or guest speaking events, integrating technology, athletics, programs like SHSM or STEM, small group learning, tutoring or coaching. The comments spoke to the importance of events like the Living Compendium as essential for sharing and celebrating

the remarkable work of students guided by teachers under the right conditions. There was also a desire to focus on evidence-based instructional practices such as phonics.

Some comments focused on staffing issues, staff to student ratios, and class sizes. Though these matters can fall outside the purview of Board decisions, many comments noted that having more staff available and smaller classes would make a significant positive difference in students' lives, which is the core objective of the work they do. Some parents noted that DDSB@Home and other hybrid options have continued to be beneficial for students, especially in providing additional focus for learning and a safe environment. Some students noted that online options should eliminate barriers such as those students being restricted from on-campus events like outdoor sport meets.

Student comments in particular focused on the importance of maintaining good grades while also expressing a strong desire for more engaging and creative ways to learn. Many students wanted better coordination of assessments among teachers and improved access to technology and resources. Many students wanted a more balanced workload, reduced homework they don't see value in, and more in-class support for improved learning.

Many parent comments in this category focused on the need for supportive teachers who spend time getting to know students, consistent and transparent assessment and evaluation practices, and the importance of preparing students for postsecondary and career opportunities. Some parent comments wanted to see a return to core subjects and less of a focus on equity and gender issues in the curriculum, which they perceive as overemphasized. Other comments focused on the importance of students learning how to learn rather than straight knowledge acquisition, developing transferable skills such as problem solving and communication, and more opportunities for experiential, active and play-based learning rather than relying on technology and rote learning.

Illustrative Quotes for Meaningful Learning

"Personally, the most important thing about my experience in school is that I'm in a respectful, equality based, represented, understanding, compassionate, kind, professional environment, to achieve and perform at my best."
- *Student*

"The most important thing to me is that there is space for me as an educator to be creative and think outside of the box."
- *Staff*

"We are failing them terribly by letting the students who may need a bit more help academically fall through the cracks. We just continue to push them through without the skills they need to succeed, not only in school but in life itself."
- *Staff*

"Some instructors refuse to meet obligations involving reading and discussing IEPs with extraordinary students leaving some students lacking the support meant for them as decided by the DDSB."
- *Student*

"Not saying I'm an irresponsible student, I just feel there is far too much workload and pressure placed on students to compete with their colleagues and meet expectations. Lessen the stress."
- *Student*

"The current system favours a business model that is not designed with student learning in mind but rather achievement. The two should not be conflated."
- *Staff*

"Something that would improve my child's school experience is standardized marking strategies for fair and consistent marking, not based on how the teacher feels in the moment or how they feel about the student."
- *Parent*

"The most important thing is real education. Primary focus of actual things important in life. Language, grammar, spelling, math, science. Kids need education on academics. Not personal beliefs."
- *Parent*

"The most important thing to me is academics accompanied by student voice, having a say in what you're learning and how you're learning it."
- *Student*

"What would make school better for me is expanding on more learning of the world and things that actually matter for us to individually, but unitedly learn how to be our best person our own way."
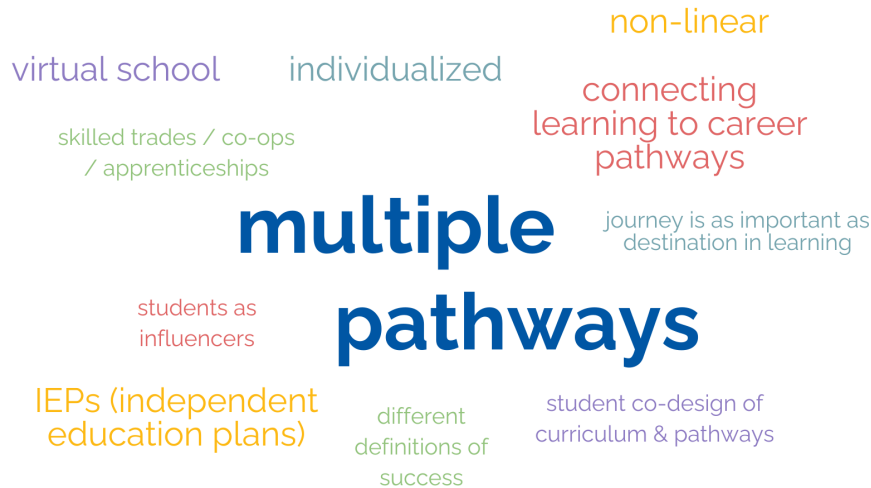- *Student*

"The most important thing is that I and my fellow students have many opportunities to engage in fun, visual and hands-on learning."
- *Student*

Theme: Multiple Pathways

Figure 7: Word Cloud of Key Words for Multiple Pathways

non-linear

virtual school   individualized

connecting learning to career pathways

skilled trades / co-ops / apprenticeships

multiple pathways

journey is as important as destination in learning

students as influencers

IEPs (independent education plans)

different definitions of success

student co-design of curriculum & pathways

Comments in this category focused on the importance of recognizing and valuing the different pathways students may take on their journey. Success can be defined differently, as students enter school with different goals, knowledge levels, expectations, abilities, disabilities, needs and wants. Many student and parent comments in this category spoke to what they see as the limitations of secondary education because of a lack of real-world learning and experience, and limited options for flexibility. Students wanted better preparation for the future, such as school and life transitions, financial literacy, guest speakers, co-op placements, and field trips. Students and parents were appreciative of the flexibility and support they received from guidance counsellors, and the ability to take advantage of Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM), online schooling via DDSB@Home, or a modified calendar, as methods for opening up these pathways.

Some student comments noted barriers to their career interests due to how challenging certain courses are, with others suggested that the classroom should be a space to explore learning and different fields of study in an immersive and hands-on environment. Some students also spoke of the lack of time in their day to engage in more exploratory learning or life activities due to the amount of time spent on school work, noting impacts on their mental health and well-being. Others struggled with the expectations of school as a defined pathway towards a linear future of graduation and post-secondary studies. Many comments from parents in this category also indicated that students with disabilities or exceptionalities required additional support or adapted programs to meet specific learning needs and follow individualized pathways.

<u>Illustrative Quotes for Multiple Pathways</u>

"*Having a wider choice in courses and different paths to take would make school better.*"
- Student

"*I want to have the ability to gain experience in the possible careers I want. Being able to be ready for university.*"
- Student

"*As a student, I would like to have more people such as guidance counsellors at school to help my educational development and guide me in the right direction.*"
- Student

"*Being a part of ICT SHSM has been working well for me as a student in the DDSB.*"
- Student

"*I'd like a completely different system that will almost definitely not be achievable within the next 30 years. The whole grading system and course selection seems ridiculous. School would be better if teens didn't have to decide a path in life. School would be better if universities did not look at high school grades.*"
- Student

"*Cater to the children the reality of going to school and learning about the things to help them become great citizens and leaders.*"
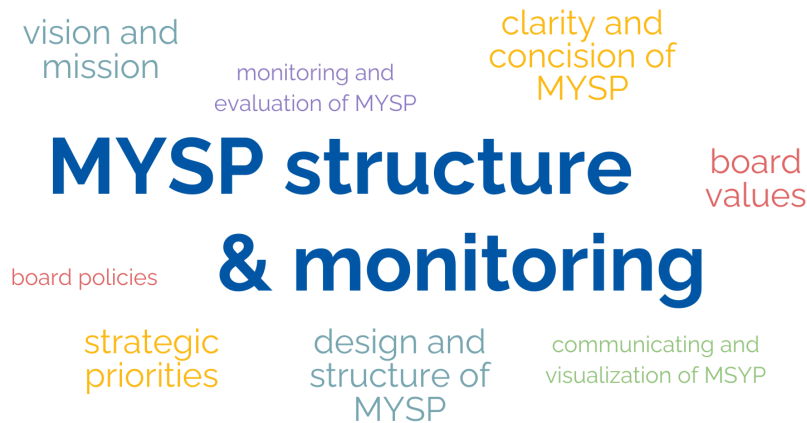- Parent

"*Keep virtual school (DDSB@Home) a permanent choice for all families, not based on numbers but always as an option so those who do not wish to attend in person for whatever reason can still learn but from the comfort of their own home.*"
- Parent

Theme: MYSP Structure & Monitoring

Figure 8: Word Cloud of Key Words for MYSP Structure & Monitoring

vision and mission

monitoring and evaluation of MYSP

clarity and concision of MYSP

MYSP structure & monitoring

board values

board policies

strategic priorities

design and structure of MYSP

communicating and visualization of MSYP

Comments in this category focused on ways to improve the structure, communication, implementation, and monitoring of the next MYSP. Most of the comments in this category came from staff, with a small number from parents and community members.

Many comments in this category spoke to the desire to have a concise, clear, resonant MYSP that includes relevant and representative images of students and staff. While some comments appreciated the distinctiveness of the current six strategic priorities as pillars of the plan, others wanted to see more interrelatedness across pillars and specific updates to language such as "Success" and "Innovation," which felt outdated. Some comments expressed that "Ignite Learning" was a recognizable and resonant wordmark that was distinct to DDSB. An Indigenous community member specifically asked to use the Ignite Learning symbol as a way to teach about the Three Fires Confederacy.

Staff comments in this category noted the challenge of aligning board-wide policies and initiatives with the daily work done with students in the classroom. Others felt they were able to understand the core priorities and how they fit into their work as educators, which made them more achievable. There was an advantage to having a short list of clear priorities; however, some staff felt that, on the operational side, competing priorities were diluting focus and core priorities. There was a sense that small, purposeful, intentional "'inches'" to action would be more successful as opposed to big, daunting, overwhelming plans and goals. Some staff noted that for the DDSB to have a meaningful mission and values, there is a need for stronger implementation of Board policies, seeing them in practice, and identifying when leaders are not aligning with them.

In terms of communication, staff comments appreciated that the current MYSP is easy to communicate to other staff, students, and families, and would like to see this clarity and precision continue. Comments expressed a desire for Board policies to be clearly communicated in common language, with a renewed focus placed on the importance of the DDSB being present and visible in the community.

In terms of implementation, comments expressed a desire to see greater alignment and clear direction around three DDSB policies (DDSB Indigenous Education Policy, 2021; DDSB Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Racism Policy, 2022; DDSB Safe and Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention Policy, 2022) to give strategic-level policy more teeth through action-based and operational plans.

In terms of monitoring, comments spoke to the need to include qualitative measures rather than relying on quantitative data. Some staff requested open-ended goals to tailor more to the needs of individual schools, while others acknowledged that leaving certain responsibilities with the school community means harmful systemic practices may remain. Some staff noted that it takes a strong and healthy workplace culture to achieve departmental and organizational goals towards the MYSP.

Illustrative Quotes for MYSP Structure & Monitoring

"*I want staff who work in and for our schools to have demonstrated commitment to the MYSP and Policies.*"
- Staff

"*For the multi-year strategic plan: I would like to see concrete solutions that name an action plan to combat anti-Black racism in our system. It needs to be named and addressed in this plan. The last census made it clear that we are not doing enough and it deserves a place in this plan.*"
- Staff

"*Ensuring the Indigenous Education Policy, and Indigenous Rights continue to be at the centre of the strategic plan.*"
- Community

"*A nurturing, supportive learning environment accepting of all students through action, not just empty policy.*"
- Parent

"*Continue to build upon the incentives and policies that the DDSB is in the process of implementing, but also make sure that they are being carried out effectively.*"

- Parent

"*Be prepared to have numerous initiatives thrown at you that will claim to improve student learning and teachers' delivery, but in reality you need to figure out what works best for you in the classroom to get your students to actually attend and submit work.*"

- Staff

Theme: Staff Support & Development

Figure 9: Word Cloud of Key Words for Staff Support & Development

better resourcing · leadership opportunities · consistency and coherence · parental pressure and involvement · discipline, follow through and consequences · feeling heard · work-life balance · interdisciplinary collaboration · collegiality · trust · class size · **staff support & development** · HR issues and planning · professional development · moral purpose · satisfaction · safe working environment · independence, autonomy and flexibility · Ministry pressures · Board-level policy · staff growth · accountability and integrity · fulfillment · burnout and low morale · well-being · compensation

Many comments in this category focused on the paramount importance of staff feeling safe, supported, trusted, heard and valued. The word "safety" appeared over 50 times in staff comments, referring to both staff and students needing to feel safer in their working and learning environments. There was a strong sense of moral purpose in the comments, with many staff speaking to their commitment to make a positive difference in students' lives as what they value most about their work. Many staff underscored the importance of autonomy and flexibility in determining the best ways to support students' growth and development. Teachers and administrators expressed that feeling valued and supported as professionals is essential for student success.

While many comments spoke to feeling supported by colleagues, leadership, and resources, others expressed that they experienced a lack of support and resources, or too many competing demands and initiatives that diluted their primary commitment to centreing and supporting students. Many comments wanted to see more resources dedicated to supporting all learners, including students at risk and those with disabilities and exceptionalities. Some instructional staff expressed that consumable budgets were too low and too restricted by approved vendor lists. Others wanted to see more professional development opportunities for new curriculum roll outs, structured literacy, STEM, best practices, and equity, diversity, anti-racism, and anti-colonialism. Many comments expressed that there were good opportunities for collaboration and professional development, while

others noted that professional development would be better scheduled during school hours rather than after school or evenings. Some comments spoke to the need for better onboarding, networking and knowledge sharing for new and existing staff, and more consistent direction from leadership both at the school and system level, including firmer decision making.

Similarly, many comments from students focused on the importance of developing good relationships with educators, with many sharing praise for the care, commitment and expertise of their teachers. Students noted that some teachers encouraged engagement with leadership opportunities and other co-curriculars, while others were disappointed in uneven experiences depending on which teachers were assigned. Some students felt well supported by staff and recommended other students to connect if there were concerns, while others noted a lack of action from staff when students are reaching out for help. Some comments from students spoke to a perceived lack of trust and privacy from teachers.

Many comments from staff focused on the need to protect and promote staff mental health and well-being, noting that staff who are not well cannot lead schools or classrooms effectively. Some comments expressed an appreciation for staff and student wellness initiatives, and for the greater awareness of mental health in general, while others wanted to see more resources devoted to mental health and well-being. Some comments spoke to the workload becoming unmanageable, leading to feelings of burnout and low morale, stress, or feeling overwhelmed and not able to focus on what matters most.

Staff raised concerns about consistent expectations and consequences around student behaviour and discipline, noting that they sometimes feel unsupported by administrators and parents in their professional judgement, and at times there is no consistent follow through on discipline and academic integrity matters.

Many comments from parents focused on the desire to have more training for master teachers who are skilled at creating safe and engaging learning environments. Some comments from parents focused on a perceived shortage of qualified teachers and supply staff impacting the stability of learning in the classroom. Some comments from parents noted that students with diverse learning needs were not receiving the support they were promised in the classroom. The concepts of feeling heard, collegial support, and well-being were evident in this category.

Illustrative Quotes for Staff Support & Development

"Something that's working well is our kind, caring, supportive principal who respects my professional judgement and shows appreciation for the work that I do. He also is protective of our mental health and prioritizes our wellbeing, which in turn, makes us happier, healthier, and more productive."
- *Staff*

"I wish I felt safe, respected and supported in my workplace."
- *Staff*

"The most important thing to me is I want to feel I have made a difference in the lives of my students, and to help them realize their hopes and dreams for the future."
- *Staff*

"I want teachers to be involved in the teaching experience, to want to be a teacher."
- *Student*

"The most important thing to me is that I feel supported, given autonomy and have the resources to do my job well."
- *Staff*

"The support I'm getting from my admin has been phenomenal. Working together with team teachers certainly lightens the load."
- *Staff*

"Administrators have more diverse responsibilities than ever before. Administrators want to do well in all aspects of their work but when focus gets too divided it is difficult and stressful."
- *Staff*

"Stop parent-pleasing, and start student-pleasing!"
- *Staff*

"There is not enough training for the average teacher or even for many SERTS. There are not enough EA's. Not providing these necessary supports and expertise makes it difficult for all kids to function in a classroom, and it makes it difficult to be understanding of different needs when the needs are negatively impacting them."
- *Parent*

"My children have had so many disruptions to their learning this year because of staffing issues and this has been a major challenge as they have just come back to in person school this year after having been online for 3 years. A year that should have been offering stability for them became very stressful and chaotic because of staffing shortages."
- *Parent*

Image 10-11: Staff Consultation (Union & Federation Partners)
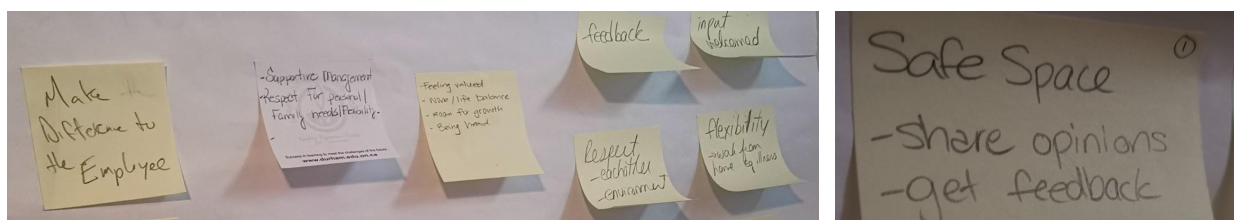
Theme: Well-Being & Knowing Your Students

Figure 10: Word Cloud of Key Words for Well-Being & Knowing Your Students

self-
regulation
different
definitions of
success
removing bias
well-being
holistic heath
understanding
child's living
situations
pandemic
recovery
belonging
teachers caring for and
supporting students
knowing
each student
well-being &
knowing your
students
social and
emotional learning
leadership and
responsibility
relationships
life skills
trust
children are not
their behaviour
shared
values and
norms
physical
health and
activity
kindness
centering
students
safety
mental
health
spirituality

Many comments in this category focused on the importance of knowing and understanding students for their full selves. Many comments from staff in particular expressed the need for safe, healthy, inclusive and welcoming school environments to honour the different gifts students bring as individuals. At the core of many of the comments in this category was the foundational importance of relationships in schooling: teachers knowing their students and students knowing their peers and teachers. There was a strong desire to see more effort and emphasis on building relationships in order to create the best social and academic environment for students to thrive. Additionally, some younger students wanted their teachers to provide more advice during times of transition, such as entering a new grade.

Many comments focused on the need to provide more support and services for students with disabilities and exceptionalities, students at risk, vulnerable students, and students with ill health. Many comments from parents in particular wanted to see teachers intentionally invest in getting to know their students, building social and life skills such as confidence and resilience, and creating safe and inclusive learning environments where students can express their ideas freely. The word "included" appeared over 80 times in comments from parents in this category. Students and parents wanted clear pathways to care, and for students to be known by as many adults in their school buildings as possible.

Some comments wanted to see more efforts to reduce bullying, discrimination, and bias from social and academic environments, while others wanted to see more of an emphasis on behavioural norms, holistic health, getting more sleep, and healthy movement — noting that physical health, well-being and learning are all strongly linked. Many comments from students in particular wanted to see personal growth opportunities, increased trust, as well

as staff and peer support for mental health and a sense of belonging. Some students felt unable to take care of their personal needs due to being overwhelmed with the school environment and expectations, while other students recommended putting effort into interpersonal relationships through friendship and socialization as well as learning about their own identity. The concepts of care, kindness and understanding were evident throughout the comments in this category.

Illustrative Quotes for Well-Being & Knowing Your Students

"Caring teachers who can understand the needs and changing behaviours of their students. Teachers should focus less on labelling students as problem kids and try to identify what may be the cause. Praise students rather than put them down. The world does enough of that."
- *Parent*

"Personally, I believe school would be a better place if students wouldn't feel the need to give and or feel peer pressure whether it's acting a certain way, hiding who they truly are, feeling the need to impress someone whether it's their friends, family, teachers etc."
- *Student*

"The most important thing is that my child feels safe and included."
- *Parent*

"Improving the mental health and inclusive student services supports for schools is ESSENTIAL."
- *Parent*

"Something that is working well is teachers talking to each other, clubs, recess, friends, teachers being chill understanding this generation and building bonds with each student and being easy to talk to,"
- *Student*

"I would like to see more emphasis on curiosity, self-determination and holistic well-being of our students and staff. More time outdoors for everyone, integrating principles of land-based learning and land-connection is a very inexpensive way to focus on curiosity and self-determination."
- *Staff*

"Do not be afraid to speak your mind. Always be respectful with your delivery, but know your voice is just as important as anyone else's. Just because you are a student, a young teen or teenager, does not mean your opinions and thoughts don't matter. Remember to respect those who are preparing you for the world and ask as many questions as you feel fit."
- *Student*

"Students need mental health support after the pandemic. Teachers need to understand them so they have someone to talk to."
  - *Parent*

Image 12-13: Student Art Gallery Pop-Up Consultation

Image 14-15: DDSB Trustees Working Group Meeting

Next Steps

With the completion of the Phase 2 consultation period in October, we have begun to work with staff and trustees to draft directions for the new multi-year plan based on the synthesis of the consultation results summarized in this report and other board data. The staff and trustee working groups have shared their feedback on this report, along with recommendations for incorporating its findings in the new MYSP. In the second half of November, there will be a Community Information Session to share the results of the consultation and draft directions for the new MYSP with the DDSB community.

The new MYSP is scheduled to be presented to the Board in January 2024.

Table 3: Next Steps

Milestones	Timeline
Phase 3 Synthesis & Development	September - December 2023
Community Information Session	November 2023
MYSP Presentation to the Board	January 2024
Phase 4 Implementation, Communication & Monitoring	February 2024 and beyond

team@maximumcity.ca
www.maximumcity.ca

MAXIMUM CITY