



Program and School Services Committee Agenda

PSSC:004A

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

4:30 p.m.

Electronic Meeting

Trustee Members:

Rachel Chernos Lin (Chair), Trixie Doyle, Alexandra Lulka, Dan MacLean, Chris Moise,
Patrick Nunziata

	Pages
1. Call to Order and Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands	
2. Approval of the Agenda	
3. Declarations of Possible Conflict of Interest	
4. Delegations	
To be presented	
5. Opportunity for Oral Updates From Co-Chairs of Community Advisory Committees	
Timed Item at 6 p.m.	
5.1. Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee Report, March 22, 2022	1
(For receipt)	
5.2. Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee Report, April 25, 2022	3
(For receipt)	
5.3. Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee Reports, January 3, February 7 and March 7, 2022	7
(For receipt)	
5.4. Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee Report, April 4, 2022	13
1. Implicit Bias Training Implementation	

5.5.	Community Use of Schools Community Advisory Committee Reports, March 8 and April 12, 2022	15
	(For receipt)	
5.6.	Environmental Sustainability Community Advisory Committee Report, April 5, 2022	23
	(For receipt)	
5.7.	Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee Reports, October 25 and November 29, 2021 and January 24, 2022	25
	(For receipt)	
5.8.	French-as-a-Second-Language Community Advisory Committee Reports, October 12, 2021 and March 10, 2022	31
	(For receipt)	
5.9.	Inner City Community Advisory Committee Report, March 24, 2022	39
	(For receipt)	
5.10.	Parent Involvement Advisory Committee Reports, February 15 and April 19, 2022	41
	(For receipt)	
5.11.	Special Education Advisory Committee Report, April 11, 2022	49
	1. Priorities for Implementing Recommendations of the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee	
	2. Affirmation of Mandate of the Special Education Advisory Committee	
	3. Appointments to the Special Education Advisory Committee	
6.	Staff Reports	
6.1.	Indigenous Education: Annual Report [4317]	
	To follow	
6.2.	Caring and Safe Schools: Annual Report 2020-21 [4318]	63
6.3.	Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Update [4316]	89
7.	Adjournment	



Name of Committee: Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 22, 2022

A meeting of the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee convened on Tuesday, March 22, 2022, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. via Zoom., with Elder Dr. Joanne Dallaire presiding.

<p>Attendance:</p>	<p>Present: Elder Dr. Joanne Dallaire, Elder Pauline Shirt, Elder Dr. Duke Redbird, Elder Clayton Shirt , Tanya Senk (System Superintendent, Indigenous Education, UIEC and Kâpapâmahchakwêw / Wandering Spirt School, TDSB), Robert Durocher (Centrally Assigned Vice-Principal, TDSB), Isaiah Shafqat (Indigenous Student Trustee, TDSB), Tracy Mackenzie (Community Liaison, TDSB), Marilyn Hew (TYRMC), Joe Rock (City of Toronto, Early ON), Reta Red Sky (City of Toronto, Early ON), Waabshkaa Mkwa (2 Spirited People of the 1st Nation), Dr. Susan Dion (York University), Sean Gale (Student Success Teacher, TDSB), Michelle Blackie (Vice-Principal), Michael Sanders (Principal), Jim Spyropoulos (Executive Superintendent, Human Rights, and Indigenous Education), Sandy Spyropoulos (Executive Superintendent, Learning Centre 4), Elise Twyford (Centrally Assigned Vice-Principal), Trustee Alexander Brown (Ward 12), Dan McLean (Ward 2), Michelle Aarts (Ward 16), Stephanie Donaldson (Ward 9), Christopher Mammoliti (Ward 4)</p>
<p>Regrets:</p>	<p>Christina Saunders (Principal, TDSB), Stephen Hepburn (Vice Principal, TDSB), Ixchel Bennett (Centrally Assigned Vice-Principal, TDSB), Saby Chandi (Principal, TDSB), Natasha Gleeson, (Instructional Leader, TDSB), Shannon Judge (Community), Suzanne Brunelle (Senator, Toronto & York Region Métis Council), Danielle Noel (Centrally Assigned Vice-Principal, TDSB)</p>

Part A: Recommendations

N/A

Part B: For Information Only

Conversations continue to be held with union partners to better explore ways of implementing Indigenous Sovereignty hiring practices.

Hiring Practices, Recruitment, Retention, and Mobility

Audley Salmon Associate Director, (Learning Transformation and Equity, TDSB)

- The Board is moving towards affirming sovereignty in hiring practices. The Board recognizes the need to change how we hire, and must be able to support the Elders, Tanya Senk to make decisions around hiring within our Board.

National Day of Truth and Reconciliation (September 30th)

Audley Salmon Associate Director, Learning Transformation and Equity, Pardeep Nagra, Manager, Employment Equity Office

- The Board is looking into how to best move forward with the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, with regard to time off, Ministry mandated instructional time, and other operational matters relating to the forementioned.

The Elders Council will meet to further discuss. Update will be provided soon.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

Report Submitted by: Tracy MacKenzie



Name of Committee: Alternative Schools Community Advisory Schools (ASCAC)

Meeting Date: 25 April 2022

A meeting of the Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee convened on Monday, April 25, 2022, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. via Virtual Meeting (Zoom) with Angela Matich and Laurie McAllister (Co-Chairs) presiding.

<p>Attendance:</p>	<p>Joanne Huber (Parent, High Park Alternative JS, ASCAC Member), Olga Ingram (Parent, Alternative Scarborough Education 1, ASCAC Member), Shelley Laskin (Trustee Ward 8, ASCAC Trustee Member); Angela Matich (Parent, Equinox, ASCAC Co-Chair); Dan MacLean (Trustee Ward 2, ASCAC Member), Laurie McAllister (Parent, Avondale Secondary Alternative School, ASCAC Co-Chair), Ben Singer (Parent, Mountview Alternative JS, ASCAC Member), Sara Wilken (Parent, Beaches Alternative & Horizon, ASCAC Member)</p>
<p>Regrets:</p>	<p>Gaia Friedman (Student, Spectrum Alternative Senior School, ASCAC Elementary School Student Member), Yo'av Kaplan (Parent, Avondale Secondary Alternative School, ASCAC Member), David Smith (Trustee Ward 17, ASCAC Member)</p>

Part A: Recommendations

N/A

Part B: For Information Only

2022-23 Secondary Alternative Schools: Staff Allocation

Caroline Lam, Manager, Staff Allocation & Reporting and Associate Director, Audley Salmon, presented information about the 2022-23 Staff Allocation for the Secondary Alternative Schools. The stated principles of staffing allocation include: allocating within established limits; fairness and equity; transparency; complies with legislative and collective agreement requirements. Caroline mentioned that due to the pandemic and families moving out of the city we have seeing a decline in enrolment. Caroline reviewed how staffing is determined (for teachers, guidance, and librarians) through the formula that is used, and that

supplementary allocations are determined by the Staff Allocation Committee. Caroline and Associate Direct Salmon answered questions after the presentation.

Elementary Alternative Schools: Enrolment Allocation

Andrew Gowdy, System Planning Officer, and Giovanna De Girolamo, Educational Planning Coordinator, presented information on the enrolment allocation for elementary alternative schools. Andrew explained the general methodology used by the Planning staff and talked about the allocation for elementary alternative schools and what parameters are applied to ensure that class sizes are consistent with those across the system.

The Planning department are discussing the use of waiting lists and developing a process for elementary alternative schools to request expansions to their enrolment. The expansion process would consider number of applicants in prior years and number of current applicants; space availability with no fit-up cost; and the proposed expansion must achieve the class size with those across the system. Andrew and Giovanna answered questions after their presentation.

P023 – Parent and Community Involvement Policy Review

Michelle Munroe, Central Coordinator for Parent and Community Engagement Office (PCEO) presented information about the Parent and Community Involvement Policy (P023) review. Michelle mentioned that the policy is being reviewed to establish a framework for shared responsibilities of parents, caregivers, the Board, and the trustees for the implementation of effective strategies to increase and improve parent and caregiver engagement in the Board. Michelle reviewed some of the key and slight differences between the current policy and the new policy. Michelle encourages everyone, either individually or as a group, to provide their feedback. The consultation link can be found on the TDSB's Public Consultation site and will be open until the end of May 2022.

ASCAC Secondary Alternative Schools Sub-Committee

Laurie McAllister, ASCAC Co-Chair provided for the ASCAC Secondary Alternative Schools Sub-Committee. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 9 starting at 7pm. ASCAC's Secondary Alternative School Staffing recommendation to PSSC in February resulted in a supplement of 17 teachers for the 21 secondary alternative schools. Sub-committee feels the staffing allocation formula across all schools needs to be reviewed.

ASCAC's Secondary Alternative School Staffing recommendation to PSSC in February included a definition of "program viability", it was noticed that it wasn't included as part of the recommendation and the sub-committee would like to know how/ why the definition which formed part of the recommendation was missing, Trustee MacLean offered to follow up. Once

Trustee MacLean reports back, the subcommittee can discuss how they want to approach the interpretation of “program viability” and if this is something they will be addressing next.

The ASCAC Secondary Alternative Schools Sub-Committee would like to ensure that ASCAC is engaged in meaningful consultation on the Secondary Alternative Schools Program Review, including its mandate, process, rollout, and regular updates and opportunities for feedback throughout the Review.

Laurie also mentioned that Denis Lopes and Rizwana Jafri will be retiring at the end of this school year and mentioned that between the two of them they supervised 18 secondary alternative schools. Laurie thanked them for all their hard work and wished them well.

ASCAC Community Building Sub-Committee

Angela Match, ASCAC Co-Chair, provided an update for the ASCAC Community Building Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee has two more events that need to be completed before the end of the 2021-22 school year. The first event, scheduled for Wednesday May 4, is the *Secondary Alternative Student Community Share & Learn Zoom Event*. Purpose of this event is for ASCAC to meet/ connect with student representatives from each secondary alternative schools to hear directly from the students as to how ASCAC could assist them with any issues/ challenges they may have.

The second event (still in the works), hoping to take place in May, is the *Middle School Fun Day event*. The event is being piloted with two middle schools and will be for students in grades 7 and 8 in hopes that they will do some knowledge sharing and community building. Megan Wiigs, a Sub-Committee member, is taking a lead on this event.

ASCAC Equity Sub-Committee

Angela Match, ASCAC Co-Chair, provided an update on the ASCAC Equity Sub-Committee which met in April. The Sub-Committee has two suggestions/recommendations they want to bring forward. The first suggestion, Angela has already reached out to Peter, is that at a future ASCAC meeting staff from the Special Education Department be invited to speak/present about Special Education Staffing Allocation.

The second suggestion is about School Councils’ email address being a challenge. Angela has received a possible solution which she will send to Peter. She asks that Peter forwards the email to the appropriate person for consideration.

TDSB Website – Find Your School

Peter Chang, System Superintendent and ASCAC Staff Resource Person, provided a quick update regarding ASCAC’s TDSB Website – Find Your School recommendation (passed at the January 19, 2022, PSSC meeting). The updating of the Find Your School web page has been in place since 2019 when the Board wanted to harmonize the website to ensure equity of

access for all our students. To ensure equitable access and that ASCAC's recommendation, the mapping functionality will be updated to show not only the designated schools by address but also the System-Wide offerings available throughout the city. The new mapping feature will include the legacy technical commercial schools, the student interest programs (formerly known as specialized programs), and the elementary and secondary alternative schools. The Planning Department will be invited to a fall ASCAC meeting to provide an update.

Alternative Schools Policy (P062)

Peter Chang provided an update on the Alternative Schools Policy (P062). The Alternative School Policy Work Plan went to the April 27, 2022, Governance and Policy Committee meeting to get their approval to commence the review of P062 during the 2021-22 school year instead of the 2022-23 school year. At the May 2021 Board meeting ASCAC's recommendation to have a centralized elementary alternative schools admission form was approved though we were also asked to create one set of clear and detailed admissions procedures. The Working Group has been working on the form and procedures and was informed that the procedures need to align with a policy. Since Alternative Schools are not a part of the Out of Area or Student Interest Programs policies, we need to revise P062 to ensure that the procedures have a policy to align to. Once the revised policy is approved the Alternative Schools Procedure (PR584) will be reviewed and revised as required.

Open Floor

Meeting participants were welcomed to ask questions, provide feedback and or let the Committee know of any concerns they may have.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

N/A

Report Submitted by: Peter Chang, System Superintendent and ASCAC Staff Resource Person



Name of Committee: Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: January 3, 2022

A meeting of the Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee convened on January 3, 2022, from 7:05 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. In a virtual meeting with Co-Chair Trustee Chris Moise and Alexis Dawson (Community Co-Chair) presiding.

Voting Members:	Alexis Dawson, Community Co-Chair, Trustee Chris Moise (Trustee Co-Chair), Sophia Ruddock (Parent Rep), Mohamed A Mohamed (Social Service/CAS), Sharon Beason (Canadian Parent for French), Tina Beason (Community), Dennis Keshinro (EPAC Rep.), Michelle Aarts (Trustee), Nana Adwoa Alicia Malcom-Anderson (Communications/Media), Kwasi Adu-Poku (Black/African History), Lisa-Marie Williams (Legal), Mikhail Burke (Education/Guidance) Sophia Ruddock (Education/Health/Law)
Staff Representatives:	Audley Salmon Interim Executive Superintendent, Lorraine Linton System Superintendent, Lisa White Administrative Support
Community	Kurt Lewin, Karen Murray, Yvette Blackburn, Ayan Kailie, Valarie Taitt, Randy Samuel, Gloria Emenogu, Andrea Cross, Cherie Mordecai-Steer, Bianca Parris, Osagyefo McGregor, Grace-Malvern (Family RC) Adrian Roberts
Guest	Marisa Chiu (Executive Officer, Business Services), Baba Kofi Sankofa (Community Recourses)
Regrets:	Craig Snider (Associate Director)

Part A: Recommendations

N/A

Part B: For Information Only

Marisa Chiu, Executive Officer, Business

- Gave an overview with regards to the 2022/2023 budget development process and an overview of the strategic budget drivers.

Center of Excellence for Black Students

- Updated the committee on upcoming events

African Heritage Educators Network

- Reported that a letter regarding Anti-Black Racism (ABR) was sent out to the senior team leaders, along with the trustees.

Elder Baba Kofi Sankofa

- Presented the committee with an update on some of the mental health services available to TDSB employees

Co-Chair updates included:

Alexis Dawson, Community

- Informed that Human Rights department will be attending our February meeting.

Trustee Moise

- Provided updates on the TDSB and Senior Team's progress and new developments based on the Provincial government COVID mandates.

Staff update:

Superintendent Salmon

- Gave an update on information from the province that will affect students learning.
- The senior team will be meeting with principals to provide updates
- Gave an update about African Heritage month Activities.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

NIL

Report Submitted by Audley Salmon



Community Advisory Committees

Name of Committee: Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: February 7th, 2022

A meeting of the Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee convened on February 7th, 2022, from 7:03 p.m. to 9:40 p.m. In a virtual meeting with Co-Chair Trustee Chris Moise and Alexis Dawson (Community Co-Chair) presiding.

Voting Members:	Alexis Dawson, Community Co-Chair, Trustee Chris Moise (Trustee Co-Chair), Mohamed A Mohamed (Social Service/CAS), Sharon Beason (Canadian Parent for French), Tina Beason (Community), Dennis Keshinro (EPAC Rep.), Patrick Nunziata (Trustee) Kwasi Adu-Poku (Black/African History), Lisa-Marie Williams (Legal), Mikhail Burke (Education/Guidance) Sophia Ruddock (Education/Health/Law) Mikael Blacksmith Ben-Moodie (Police), Mikhail Burke (Education/Guidance), Raymund Guist (Tropicana Community Services), Simonne Cumberbatch (Health/Mental Health), David Smith (Trustee)
Staff Representatives:	Audley Salmon Interim Executive Superintendent, Lorraine Linton System Superintendent Lisa White Administrative Support
Community	Kurt Lewin, Karen Murray, Yvette Blackburn, Ayan Kailie, Valarie Taitt, Randy Samuel, Gloria Emenogu, Andrea Cross, Jamea Zuberi, Cherie Mordecai-Steer, Bianca Parris, Osagyefo McGregor, Grace-Malvern (Family RC) Adrian Roberts, Lorelei Eccleston, Novlette Mitchell, Peter Emmanuel, Randy Samuel, Raymund Guiste, Ronell Matthews
Guest	Cinzia Williams, Andre Harriott, Khadra Hussein, Jermaine Wallace, Marcia McCurdy Dagan, Marcia Thompson, Paula Mclaughlin, Michelle Davis, Monique Willacey, Neil Logik (Stolen from Africa), Adrian Roberts, Anton Skerritt, Janine Small, Denyse Stewart, Tanitia Munroe, Toheeb Ayinde

Part A: Recommendations

N/A

Part B: For Information Only

Center of Excellence for Black Students Achievement

- The Center of Excellence presented events and program that are taking place during African Heritage month and beyond. (over 40 live stream broadcasting for educators and families).

African Heritage Month Planning Committee

- Shared their initiatives for African Heritage Month.

Osagyefo McGregor (Guest)

- Gave a report about his program “Nu Narrative Literacy Empowerment.

Co-Chair updates

Alexis Dawson, Community

- Reminded the committee about the budget driver survey and the upcoming Terms of Reference committee meeting.

Trustee Moise

- Reported on the successful African Heritage Month launch
- Gave an update regarding the participation of students on CAC committees.

Staff update

Superintendent Salmon

- Reported on the TDSB 2022 census launch.
- Acknowledged the outstanding African Heritage Month and congratulated the committee and all the individuals involved.

Superintendent Linton

- Reported on the technology distribution questions posed from January's meeting.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

NIL

Report Submitted by Audley Salmon



Community Advisory Committees

Name of Committee: Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: March 7, 2022

A meeting of the Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee convened on March 7, 2022 from 7:06 p.m. to 9:10 p.m. In a virtual meeting with Co-Chair Trustee Chris Moise presiding.

Voting Members:	Trustee Chris Moise (Trustee Co-Chair), Mohamed A Mohamed (Social Service/CAS), Sharon Beason (Canadian Parent for French), Tina Beason (Community), Dennis Keshinro (EPAC Rep.), Kwasi Adu-Poku (Black/African History), Lisa-Marie Williams (Legal), Mikhail Burke (Education/Guidance), Sophia Ruddock (Education/Health/Law), Mikael Blacksmith Ben-Moodie (Police), Simonne Cumberbatch (Health/Mental Health), Yasmina Drame (Corrections)
Staff Representatives:	Audley Salmon Interim Executive Superintendent, Lorraine Linton System Superintendent Lisa White Administrative Support
Community	Andrea Cross, Ayan Kailie, Cherie Mordecai-Steer, Karen Murray, Kevin Sutton, Kurt Lewin, Mahnaz Mirkhond-Chegini, Patrick Nunziata (Trustee) Monique Willacey, Neil ‘Logik’ Donaldson, Pixie George-Benjamin, Randy Samuel, Raymund Guiste, Roaslie Griffith, Salome, Janine Small, Yvette Blackburn, Jamea Zuberi, Michelle Aarts (Trustee), Dan MacLean (Trustee)
Regrets:	Alexis Dawson (Community Co-Chair)

Part A: Recommendations

NIL

Part B: For Information Only

Co-Chair updates included:

Alexis Dawson sends her regrets, Community. (Trustee Moise read her report)

Thanked everyone who completed the Budget Drivers Survey.

- A written summary of results will be sent out for April’s newsletter.

- The CAC co-chairs and other community advisory committee members met with Michelle Munroe for a policy review consultation.

Trustee Moise

- Shared the results and strategies on the TDSB Racism Bias and Hate Portal data from September 2021 to December 31, 2021.
- Condolences were expressed for the family of Jahiem Robinson.
- The TDSB is exploring additional measures to further enhance staff and student safety.

Terms of Reference committee:

- They welcomed new members in early 2022 and met with Michelle Munroe to discuss and review governance questions.

Staff update:

- Staff provided updates on some historical motions that BSACAC brought forward on specific topics. The topics included: The Re-Naming of Schools, Specialized Programs and SEL (Social Emotional Learning).

Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement:

- An update provided on current and upcoming programs.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

NIL

Report Submitted by Audley Salmon



Name of Committee: Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: April 4th, 2022

A meeting of the Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee convened on April 4th, 2022, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:18 p.m. In a virtual meeting with Co-Chair Trustee Chris Moise and Alexis Dawson (Community Co-Chair) presiding.

Voting Members:	Trustee Chris Moise (Trustee Co-Chair), Alexis Dawson (Co-Chair, Community) Sharon Beason (Canadian Parent for French), Tina Beason (Community), Dennis Keshinro (EPAC Rep.), Sophia Ruddock (Education/Health/Law) Mikael Blacksmith Ben-Moodie (Police), Yasmina Drame (Corrections), Raymund Guiste
Staff Representatives:	Audley Salmon Interim Executive Superintendent, Lorraine Linton System Superintendent Lisa White Administrative Support
Community	Andrea Cross, Ayan Kailie, Cherie Mordecai-Steer, Mahnaz Mirkhond-Chegini, Patrick Nunziata (Trustee) Monique Willacey, Randy Samuel, Roaslie Griffith, Yvette Blackburn, Jamea Zuberi, Michelle Aarts (Trustee), Amani, Moe, Valarie Taitt
Guest	Irit Kelman (Senior Manager, Human Rights)
Regrets:	Regrets: Kwasi Adu-Poku (Black/African History)

Part A: Recommendations

Proposed Motion: Be it moved that the Board retain the services of a consulting firm to direct the implementation of IBT-Implicit Bias Training for all Anti-Black Racism/ Equity trainers along with Senior Team, Central Staff, Human Rights and Trustees during the 2022/23 school year.

Suggestion was made to retain TNT Justice Consultants via Dr. Peter Jones (UK).

Part B: For Information Only

Human Rights Presentation

Irit Kelman, Senior Manager, Human Rights

- Reported on the Combating Hate and Racism Student Learning Strategy that the Director presented at the March 2 PPC meeting.
- Presented information on RBH and PR 728

Co-Chair updates included:

Alexis Dawson, Community

- Sent out newsletter with information with regards to the budget along with the attachment, as well as upcoming events.
- Human Rights will be presenting their 2020/2021 report to the Trustees at the PSSC meeting on Wednesday April 6th, 2022

Trustee Moise

- Reported that the 2SLGBTQ committee will be spending a portion of their next meeting speaking about racism and hate.
- They will also discuss Pride. If anyone is interested in participating feel free to join the meeting on April 26th.

Staff update: N/A

Part C: Ongoing Matters

NIL

Report Submitted by Audley Salmon



**Community Advisory
Committees**

Name of Committee: Community Use of Schools Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 8, 2022

A meeting of the Community Use of Schools Community Advisory Committee convened on 8 March 2022 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:52 a.m. via Zoom with Chair Judy Gargaro presiding.

<p>Attendance:</p>	<p>Judy Gargaro (Etobicoke Philharmonic Orchestra), Patrick Rutledge (Big League Book Club), Alan Hrabinski (Toronto Basketball Association), Graham Welsh (Toronto Sports Social Club), Sam Glazer (Congregation Beth Haminyan), Jonathan Wood (Toronto Accessible Sports Council), Heather Mitchell (Toronto Sports Council), Lynn Manning (Girl Guides of Canada, Ontario Council), Susan Fletcher (SPACE), Alex Viliansky (Felix Swim School), Susan Orellana (Jack of Sports Foundation), Doug Blair (North Toronto Soccer Club).</p> <p>Also present were TDSB Staff: Maia Puccetti (Executive Officer, Facilities & Planning), Jonathan Grove (Senior Manager, Plant Operations), Tina Androutsos (Executive Assistant, Facilities & Planning), Ndaba Njobo (Facility Permitting Coordinator), Meenu Jhamb (Administrative Assistant).</p>
<p>Guests:</p>	<p>Craig Snider (Interim Associate Director), Terrance Philips (Phillips Basketball Academy), Jody Halsall (Extreme Sports Toronto Sports Club), Elizabeth Lukie (Hutt Piano Class), Sharon Beason (Guest, Ward 11), Josh Ray (Scarborough Ontario Safe Free Toronto), Elizabeth Pounsett (Young People’s Theatre), Dave McNee (Quantum Sports and Learning Association), Dennis Keshinro (Belka Enrichment Centre), Michelle Aarts (Trustee), Leke Kesh (_____), Annie Maher (C3 Toronto).</p>
<p>Regrets:</p>	<p>James Li (Trustee), Zakir Patel (Trustee), Ugonma Ekeanyanwu (Acting Facility Permitting Team Leader).</p>

Part A: Recommendations

Part B: For Information Only

Update on Permit Use

The committee requested further information regarding the number of permits that can be issued per building on evenings and weekend. Staff explained that the Ministry of Education continues to require enhanced cleaning to be undertaken between school and permit use, as well as between different permit groups. The number of permit groups/activities per building reflects the time needed for caretaking staff to undertake the enhanced cleaning.

There was a discussion regarding the definition of “spectators” when applying for a permit. Typically, community groups are asked to identify and include all participants on the permit, including for example, any helpers or coaches. “Spectators” are not allowed unless there is a special event permit issued, in which case, the permit holder would be required to provide additional insurance. Other safety factors such as the maximum occupancy and exiting requirements for the space are also considered when there is a request for a special permit. The Committee is seeking clearer language and understanding of what qualifies under the definition of “spectators” – for example, are parents or guardians who stay in the gym to watch their children’s activity, to be considered as spectators. TDSB will work on clarifying this definition and providing further information at the next CUSCAC meeting.

March Break 2022 Status Update – The permit unit staff report to the Committee that all permits have been processed and issued.

Local Neighbourhood Support Programs (LNSP) – Staff reported that there are currently 26 camps in schools. All permits have been processed for March Break camps. They will also be allowed to operate Monday to Friday during Community Use of School hours. Further to this information, staff also reported that there are 17 Parks and Recreation camps in schools and the March Break permits have been issued.

Summer 2022 Permits Update – Staff reported that Permits will be opening soon for summer camps, but TDSB summer school programs as well as planned renewal work will be prioritized. The permit unit is in the process of finalizing the list of facilities that will be available for permits this summer with the Continuing Education and the Design and Renewal departments.

Communication and Website Updates – As discussed and approved at the previous February CUSCAC meeting, communications or website updates will be part of a standing item at every meeting. Based on feedback received from the Chair, there have been some improvements made to the permit website including a “Quick Tips” feature and a link to an eBase “how to”

video, to assist with completing a permit application. Staff also noted that all TDSB website information must be AODA compliant. A Client Survey link available has also been added to the website.

Trustee Update:

There was no Trustee update for the March CUSCAC meeting.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

Staff from Focus on Youth will attend the April CUSCAC meeting to provide an update.

Report Submitted by: Maia Puccetti, Executive Officer Facilities and Planning



Name of Committee: Community Use of Schools Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, April 12, 2022

A meeting of the Community Use of Schools Community Advisory Committee convened on 12 April 2022 from 8:02 a.m. to 9:49 a.m. via Zoom with Chair Judy Gargaro presiding.

<p>Attendance:</p>	<p>Judy Gargaro (Etobicoke Philharmonic Orchestra), Patrick Rutledge (Big League Book Club), Alan Hrabinski (Toronto Basketball Association), Graham Welsh (Toronto Sports Social Club), Sam Glazer (Congregation Beth Haminyan), Jonathan Wood (Toronto Accessible Sports Council), Heather Mitchell (Toronto Sports Council), Lynn Manning (Girl Guides of Canada, Ontario Council), Susan Fletcher (SPACE), Alex Viliansky (Felix Swim School), Susan Orellana (Jack of Sports Foundation), Doug Blair (North Toronto Soccer Club), Elizabeth Pounsett (Young People’s Theatre), Dave McNee (Quantum Sports and Learning Association), Dennis Keshinro (Belka Enrichment Centre) and James Li (Trustee).</p> <p>Also present were TDSB Staff: Maia Puccetti (Executive Officer, Facilities & Planning), Tina Androutsos (Executive Assistant, Facilities & Planning), Ndaba Njobo (Facility Permitting Coordinator), Meenu Jhamb (Administrative Assistant), Ugonma Ekeanyanwu (Facility Permitting Team Leader).</p>
<p>Guests:</p>	<p>Terrance Philips (Phillips Basketball Academy), Jody Halsall (Extreme Sports Toronto Sports Club), Marisa Chiu (Interim Executive Officer, Finance), Norbert Costa (Centrally Assigned Principal, Continuing Education), Peter Chang (System Superintendent, Continuing Education), George Malouf (Sunnyside Up Camp).</p>
<p>Regrets:</p>	<p>Zakir Patel (Trustee), Jonathan Grove (Senior Manager, Plant Operations).</p>

Part A: Recommendations

No recommendations

Part B: For Information Only

Permit Unit Update:

- Staff informed the committee that the Permit unit is on target for the release of field permits for the May 15th deadline. There are no COVID restrictions on outdoor permits based on current conditions. With regards to indoor permits, as the province has not lifted the enhanced cleaning requirements, the number of permits offered at the same time in a school is still being managed to allow time to do the enhanced cleaning (between permits) as well as to provide some geographical separation between the permitted spaces within the building (swimming pool and gymnasium for example).
- There was a brief discussion regarding whether permit groups can install signage in the school, to provide information regarding an event or their organization. Staff confirmed that posters and other printed materials may not be left in the school. If a permit group puts up a sign or poster in the space for the duration of the permit, these materials must be removed by the permit holder at the end of permit.

March Break Report:

- Local Neighbourhood Support Programs (LNSP) - Staff updated the committee that the March Break camps and permits proceeded without issue. There were 42 schools permitted during March break. Staff reminded the Committee that March Break is the time that caretaking staff undertake deep cleaning of the schools and there are also construction projects that are initiated during the week of school closure.
- Parks and Rec – Staff reported that final confirmation is expected shortly from both the Summer School program staff as well as the Design and Renewal department confirming the schools that will not be available for summer permits. As soon as this confirmation is received, summer permits will be issued – target date is by the end of April or early May. There will be a higher number of summer renewal work given that the board received additional funding to undertake ventilation upgrades and other health and safety work. This work can only occur during the summer when the schools are not occupied.

Permit and eBase Website Improvements:

- Staff updated that the Communications working group which includes the Chair and another Committee member, met with staff on March 24 and there were several items tabled. Staff plan to provide further updates at the end of April. Staff have been working with eBase to ensure that the Permits website is AODA compliant. There have been a few other updates to the website, which is the same platform used by other boards.

Focus on Youth (FOY) Presentation for Summer 2022:

- Executive Officer Chiu informed the committee that Focus on Youth supports and engages 400 to 600 students, from approximately in 160 schools. This year approximately 230 students will be placed in TDSB departments (permits, legal, caretaking, etc).
- The Board received \$3.08 M. funding in support of Focus on Youth for the 2022/2023 school year. This funding is from the province – there is no Federal funding included.
- The Committee asked if the list of community agencies that receive Focus on Youth funding can be shared with CUSCAC. Staff will follow up to ensure there are no confidentiality issues with regards to sharing this information.
- The Committee also asked if there is an consideration given to prioritise students with disabilities. Staff responded that this process happens every year and that principals at schools that serve students with disabilities are contacted directly to see if there are any students interested in summer employment through Focus on Youth.
- Staff explained that the majority of students hired through Focus on Youth are 15 to 18 years old. There are a few exceptions where 18 to 21 year old students may be engaged. Staff review the agencies to ensure the positions available are suitable for the students' age and abilities.
- The Committee requested that there should be increased communication and outreach this spring about the Focus of Youth program, given that there is a greater need to engage and help students arising from the impact of the pandemic. Staff acknowledged the importance of this.

Outstanding Action Items

- **Pools Working Group Update** – Committee member A. Viliansky reported that the season is in full swing and staff are doing essential cleaning.
- **Baseball Working Group Update** – No update to report but Committee member H. Mitchell noted that some cricket groups are concerned about the condition of fields. Staff will follow up and provide an update at the next CUSCAC meeting regarding the Board's annual spring field maintenance program.
- Committee Goals for 2021-22: (deferred).
- **CAC Co-Chair meeting** – Chair Judy Gargaro attended this meeting which included a speaker on equity and understanding the differences between equity and equality. Chair Gargaro will ask for a copy of the presentation on Equity to share with our committee members.
- **Accessibility of TDSB documents – Annual Report and Self Evaluation** – Staff provided an update that the Board has transitioned all the Community Advisory reports, including the Annual Committee reports to be AODA complaint. Staff will follow up regarding the annual survey.
- Communication and website Working Group Update (addressed in Permit update)

Trustee Report –

- Trustee Li reported that as many of the pandemic restrictions have been lifted, the Board, is returning to normal operations. Overall, the Board's rental revenue is within 5% of budget which is around one million dollars. Everyone is working hard within all committees/teams and all programming is back in place as are in-person graduations and summer programs. He noted that the majority of the Board's community partners are in a good position and working well with the community. Trustee Li also updated the Committee that he will be providing information regarding upcoming budget consultations.

Other Business

- The Committee was informed that the Board did not receive additional COVID-19 funding from the province to support the additional tasks associated with enhanced cleaning. As the Staff discussed with the Committee, the challenge will be how to balance work loads and the needs of the system, based on pre-pandemic staffing allocations.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

- No matters to carry forward.

Report Submitted by: Maia Puccetti, Executive Officer Facilities and Planning

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Name of Committee: Environmental Sustainability Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: 5 April 2022

A meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Community Advisory Committee convened on April 5, 2022 from 6:36 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. via Zoom Video Conferencing, with Trustee Manna Wong presiding.

Attendance:	<p>Manna Wong (Trustee, Ward 20), Mark Buchner (Seneca), Michael Chang (Seneca Student), Esther Collier (Community Member), Barbara Falby (For Our Grandchildren), Sunday Harrison (Green Thumbs Growing Kids), Hailey Higdon (Natural Curiosity), Hilary Inwood (OISE), Anne Keary (Parent, Climate Fast, Climate Action Network), Bob Spencer (Community Member, Beach Community Energy). Emily Sapitan (Seneca Student), Andrea Stephens (For Our Kids Toronto), Shlok Vijay Salunke (Seneca Student), Vivy Vuong (Seneca Student)</p> <p>Also present were: Biz Ahrens (TDSB), Richard Christie (TDSB), Kristen Evers (TDSB), Linda Naccarato (TDSB), Maurice Buonastella (TDSB), Robert Cram (TDSB), Karen Dobrucki (TDSB), Albert Mirkhond-Chengini (TDSB), Gigi Shanks (TDSB)</p>
Regrets:	<p>Mieke Foster (Community Member), Dan Maclean (Trustee, Ward 2)</p>

Part A: Recommendations

No recommendations to report.

Part B: For Information Only

Seneca students presented their solution to the Sustainability Hackathon –TDSB Challenge. ESCAC members were invited to share feedback on how technology could be used to help with future strategic tree planting initiatives.

TDSB Manager of Energy and Climate Action, Maurice Buonastella, presented the TDSB School Energy Profiles. ESCAC members provided feedback on how energy data could be used to help with energy reduction and lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

ESCAC members affirmed Anne Keary as ESCAC Community Co-Chair.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

No ongoing matters to report.

Report Submitted by: Richard Christie



Community Advisory Committees

Name of Committee: Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: Monday, October 25, 2021

A meeting of the Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee convened on Monday, October 25th, 2021 from 6:42 pm to 7:59 pm on Zoom with Parent Co-Chair Aleem Punja presiding.

Members in Attendance:	Aleem Punja (Parent Co-Chair), Dennis Keshinro (Community Co-Chair), James Li (Trustee), Pablo Vivanco (Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre), Sharon Beason (Parent)
Staff Present:	Jacqueline Spence (System Superintendent), Irit Kelman (Manager, Human Rights Office), Ryan Eaton (Human Rights Assistant)
Observers:	Vivienne Thompson, Derik Chica
Regrets:	Dan MacLean (Trustee), Catherine Maloney (Parent), Sophia Ruddock (Parent)
No Response:	Tesfai Mengesha (Success Beyond Limits), michael kerr (Colour of Poverty-Colour of Change)

Part A: Recommendations

Nil

Part B: For Information Only

Trustee Co-Chair Update

Trustee Co-Chair gave an update to the committee on the:

- PSSC looking at the 2021/2022 Parents Reaching Out Grant provided to school councils by the Province of Ontario for community engagement
- Caring and Safe Schools Annual report data with the topic focus of disproportionate suspension rates
- The Board's consultations on changes to the Specialized Schools and Program Policy.
- Finance, Budget, and Enrolment Committee, noting the drop of enrollment in elementary and secondary schools leading to a budget deficit

New Membership Working Group

- Group was provided applicants' information on a spreadsheet to short-list the large number of people who applied to join the committee
- A timeframe and deadline were suggested to choose the new members

Discuss Goals for the Year

The following items were discussed:

- The data on disproportionate suspension rates as noted in the Caring and Safe Schools Annual Report
- Disproportionate impact of achievement and well-being of students currently being analyzed by the Research Department
- TDSB's Research Department will be joining EPCAC at the December 13, 2021 meeting to present and seek input on the upcoming student census

Other Business

- Suggestions made to include more information and links in the EPCAC website

Part C: Ongoing Matters

Nil

Report Submitted by: Irit Kelman



Community Advisory Committees

Name of Committee: Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: Monday, November 29th, 2021

A meeting of the Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee convened on Monday, November 29th, 2021 from 6:40 pm to 8:29 pm on Zoom with Community Co-Chair Dennis Keshinro presiding.

Members in Attendance:	Aleem Punja (Parent Co-Chair), Dennis Keshinro (Community Co-Chair), Christopher Mammoliti (Trustee Co-Chair), James Li (Trustee), Sharon Beason (Parent), Catherine Maloney (Parent), Sophia Ruddock (Parent)
Staff Present:	Jacqueline Spence (System Superintendent), Irit Kelman (Manager, Human Rights Office), Ryan Eaton (Human Rights Assistant)
Presenters:	Sevgul Topkara-Sarsu (Manager, Community Services), Fatma Toufexief (Community Services Supervisor, Newcomer Services), Suzan Joueid
Observers:	Rishia, Ayana
No Response:	Tesfai Mengesha (Success Beyond Limits), michael kerr (Colour of Poverty-Colour of Change), Pablo Vivanco (Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre)

Part A: Recommendations

Nil

Part B: For Information Only

Trustee Co-Chair Update

Trustee Co-Chair gave an update to the committee on the:

- Motion passed supporting advocacy for free public transit for high school students
- Ongoing consultations – Specialized Schools and Programs Policy and Anti-Sex Trafficking Policy Consultation
- Trustees reorganized among the CACs
- Special meeting with regards to the adjustment and allocation of staff, in regard to funding.

New Membership Working Group

- Group was provided applicants' information on a spreadsheet to short-list the large number of people who applied to join the committee
- Sub-committee is to pick new parent and community members to present to the December 13th meeting and have new members join in January 2022.

Presentations

Titles of presentations:

- Creating Conditions that Support EELs Success and Well-Being – by Suzan Joueid (Centrally Assigned Principal for ESL, Library Learning Resources, Social Studies, and World Issues)
- Community Services-Welcoming Communities Program – by Sevgul Topkara-Sarsu (Manager, Community Services) and Fatma Toufexief (Community Services Supervisor, Newcomer Services)

Other Business

- Committee was updated in regard to most recent Community Co-Chair Meeting

Part C: Ongoing Matters

Nil

Report Submitted by: Irit Kelman



Name of Committee: Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee (EPCAC)

Meeting Date: Monday, January 24th, 2022

A meeting of the Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee convened on Monday, January 24th, 2022 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. via Zoom with Parent Co-Chair Aleem Punja presiding

Attendance:	Aleem Punja (Parent Co-Chair), Dennis Keshinro (Community Co-Chair), Christopher Mammoliti (Trustee Co-Chair), James Li (Trustee), Sharon Beason (Parent), Catherine Maloney (Parent), Sophia Ruddock (Parent), Pablo Vivanco (Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre), Janina Cherkewich (Parent), Rachel Mansell (The Mosaic Institute), Hemangi Shroff (Black Canvases), Shayna Sayer-Wolfe (Planned Parenthood Toronto), James D’Souza (Licensed to Learn Inc), Charlene Dunstan (Parent), Jean-Paul Ngana (Parent), michael kerr (Colour of Poverty-Colour of Change), Shahinaz Abbas Osman (Parent), Jacqueline Spence (System Superintendent), Irit Kelman (Interim Senior Manager, Human Rights Office), Ryan Eaton (Human Rights Assistant)
Presenters:	Stefanie De Jesus (Research Coordinator, Research and Development), Pardeep Singh (Manager, Employment Equity Office)
Guests:	Derik Chica, Raneem Azzam
Regrets:	Tesfai Mengesha (Success Beyond Limits)

Part A: Recommendations

No recommendations to report

Part B: For Information Only

Trustee Co-Chair Update

Trustee Co-Chair gave an update to the committee on the:

- Redistribution of COVID-19 testing kits over the 2021 Winter holidays
- Finance and Budget Committee predicting a \$65.1 million deficit
- Cost of Chromebooks for students - \$11 million per year, not factored into budget
- Trustee motions pushing for long-term sustainability around the public education system due to effects from Pandemic

New Members

- EPCAC welcomed 8 new members (4 Parent and 4 Community representatives)

Presentation

- Presentation/Consultation regarding 2022 Staff Census by the Staff Steering Committee

Part C: Ongoing Matters

No items to report

Report Submitted by: Irit Kelman



Community Advisory Committees

Name of Committee: French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee
Meeting Date: 12 October 2021

A meeting of the French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee convened on October 12, 2021 from 7:00pm-9:32pm via virtual Zoom with Parent Vice-Co-Chair Lisa McAvoy presiding.

Attendance:	Lisa McAvoy (Parent Vice-Co-Chair W2), Charles Zhu (Parent-Vice-Co Chair W11), Sharlene Henry (Parent Vice-Co-Chair W5/W6 Alt), Doug Kwan (W2 Alt), Crystal Stewart (W6), Matt Forrest (W9), Hans Bathija (W10), Randy Samuel (W14), Gail Miller (W22) Also present were: Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin (Trustee Co-Chair W11), Trustee Robin Pilkey (W7), Trustee Dan MacLean (W2), Mary Cruden (Canadian Parents for French), Sharon Beason (CPF Alt), Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini (Executive Superintendent), Angela Caccamo (Centrally Assigned Principal), Linda Edwards (Centrally Assigned Principal, Virtual French Programs), Kirsten Johnston (Program Co-ordinator)
Guests:	Katherine Fisher (parent)
Regrets:	Lynne LeBlanc (Parent Co-Chair W8), Deloris Williamson-Braham (W5/13), Mandy Moore (W7), Sarah Smith (W15), Kathleen Meek (W15 Alt), Christie Dunbar (W16), Nancy White (W16 Alt), Rosemary Sutherland (CPF Alt), Michelle Munroe (Parent Engagement)

Part A: Recommendations

Nil

Part B: For Information

Membership Reflection Report

Annual survey of parent/community members was conducted at the end of the 2020-21 school year. (see Appendix A)

French Review Update

JK/SK Double Cohort Entry Communications

The EFI application process communication plan includes many modes to ensure we reach not only TDSB families, but also surrounding communities and those not currently attending a TDSB school. New this year: a paid social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram, with algorithm to target families of children born in 2017/2018 and information sessions at 4 new and historically under enrolled sites. Virtual Information Sessions are scheduled for Nov 8-7pm, Nov 15-10am and Nov 23-7pm. Trustees receive FSL application information via Trustees’ Weekly allowing for sharing at meetings and via their social networks/media.

PR597 Revisions

Staff presented revisions to PR597, as information, given the transition to the entry point for the early FI program from SK to JK in September 2022. The changes encompass housekeeping items, the phase out of the Intensive Extended French Grade 6 program and changes to section 6.8 (b), specifically the Last Date of Admission to remove a systemic operational barrier to families who move during the waitlist period. The December cut-off was in place when Kindergarten was a half-day program. It created a procedural conflict between the EFI on-time applicant wait list and families that move during the waitlist period which is compounded for families with siblings. The new cut-off will be September 30th.

French Review Outcomes

Staff stated the importance of giving 5-7 years for the changes/new program sites to develop and be successful. Accessibility to French programs is fundamental to the French Review initiative and Board direction/mandate.

Staffing Update

As per the central Employee Services (ES) staffing process, Fall reorganization (right-sizing classes) is underway, soon to be completed. This process includes filling staffing vacancies at in school and virtual learning classes. ES recruits French teachers from across the country, throughout the year. Teachers apply for the in-school and virtual learning class positions posted. Currently, staff do not know the structure of learning/modality (e.g., virtual learning classes, other) for Sept 2022. Applications and actual enrolment in FSL programs (including Sept 2022 JK & SK double cohort entry) drive staffing needs. FSL staff work with the Planning Dept. and ES to plan for staffing.

Inclusion Strategy

As a system, Staff continue to trouble the IEP practices across the Board. Racialized students continue to be overrepresented in IEPs. Staff are challenging the notion of why the IEP is required and interrupting the “automaticity” of implementing an IEP in certain cases; challenging instructional practices, informing the practice, and what sets students up for success. IEPs will continue for those students for whom it is determined appropriate via IPRC process. The French Dept Inclusion module is available to FSL teachers and will be available soon to Administrators. The FSL Department will collaborate on professional learning for Special Education staff with the Special Education Department. Special Education and FSL will also collaborate on a module in the Special Education Part I Additional Qualification (AQ) that focuses on issues of Special Education and Inclusion in FSL programs. . FSL staff is also contributing to the monthly Special Education newsletter. Members expressed concern about FSL students and having their special education needs met.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

Nil

Report Submitted by Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini

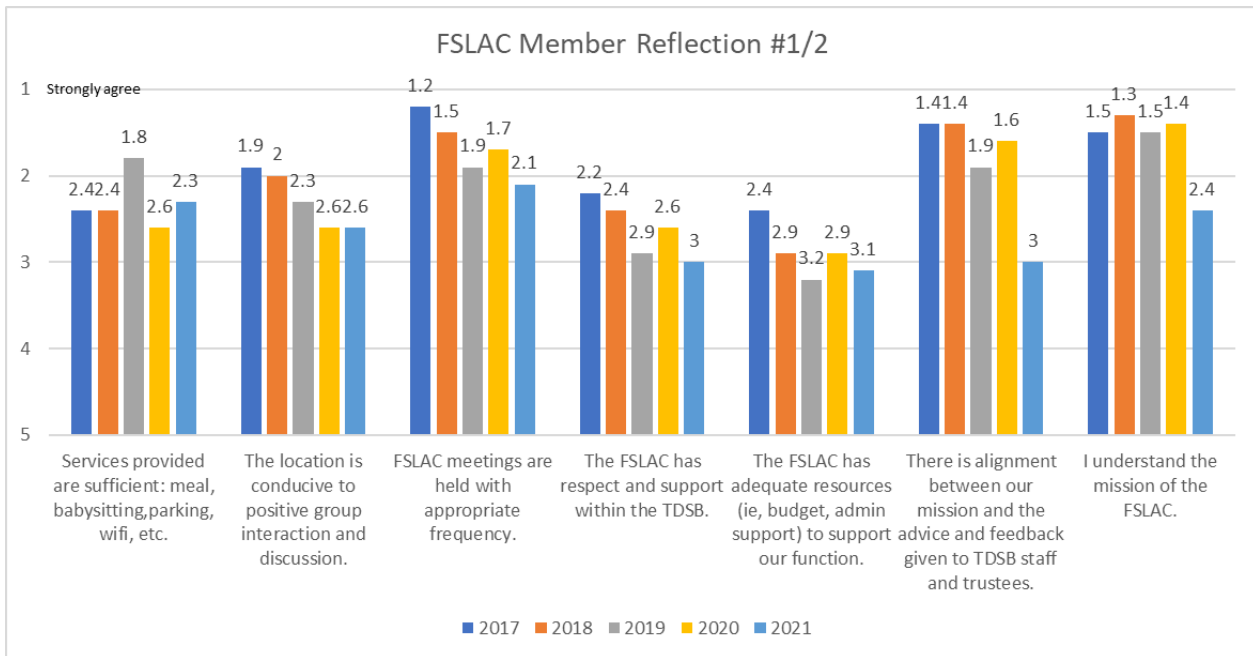
Appendix A

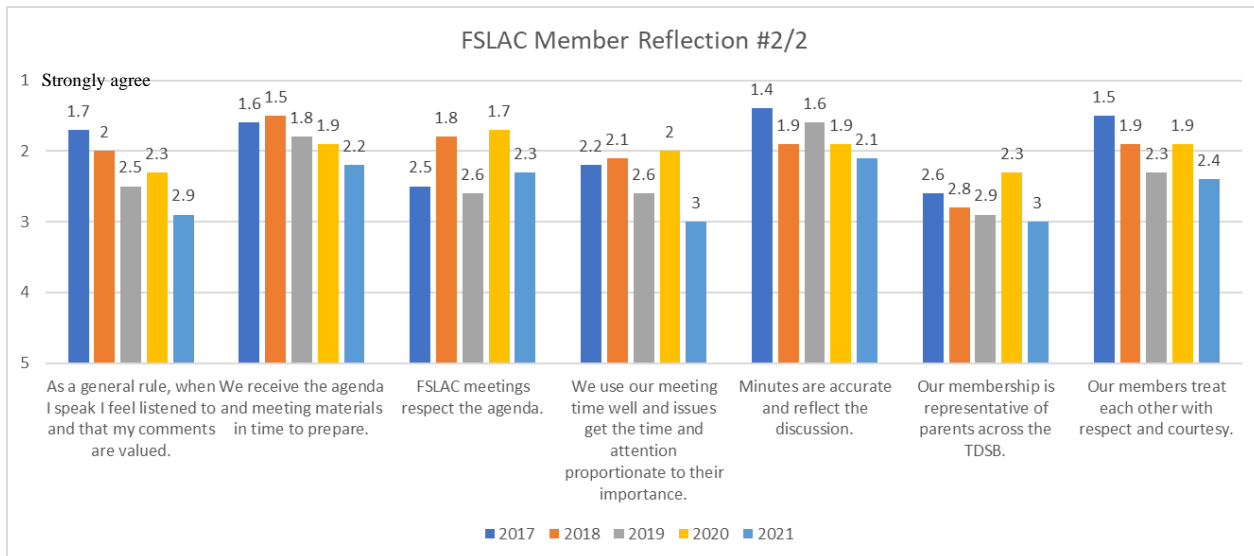
FSLAC 2020-21 Member Reflection Survey Report - October 12, 2021

The report reflects FSLAC parent/community member responses to fourteen survey questions that are asked after the last meeting of the school year in June. Number of respondents by year:

- 2016 – 2017: 13
- 2017 – 2018: 8
- 2018 – 2019: 13
- 2019 – 2020: 7
- 2020 – 2021: 9

We ask respondents to rate their agreement with each statement, with 1 being “strongly agree” and 5 being “strongly disagree.” The questions were provided by the Parent and Community Engagement Office. When reading the chart, remember that a lower number reflects more agreement with the statement. The survey also gives respondents the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback. For 2020-21, we also asked for reflections on meeting by Zoom due to Covid.





Additional likes, dislikes and suggestions on how to improve the FSLAC:

Un gros merci to Lynne who did a great job as parent co-chair during a very challenging year.

All interested parties that want to be re-elected Ward Reps or Co-Chairs should be present at the AGM in June, at least via teleconference or virtually.

FSLAC reports to PSSC should focus on member feedback and be submitted by the parent co-chair as the work of the committee.

Important to encourage new members to participate and to educate them on the history of FSLAC, context, roles, meeting process and terminology so they can feel comfortable and better serve and reflect their community.

Unsure of impact FSLAC has on the TDSB. Parents react, staff nods and then we go our separate ways.

Suggested goals for next year:

For FSLAC work: encourage ward reps to connect with their ward community and report on French Second Language (FSL) only; better introduction to FSLAC for new members; increase membership with a focus on underserved areas.

For FSL students and programs: improve childcare access for EFI; every student having either an EFI or MFI entry school within walking distance; add secondary FI sites in underserved areas; improve communication to parents and families about changes to programs, double cohort year; monitor implementation and impact of French Review Recommendations.

Zoom Meetings:

For 2021-22 FSLAC meetings, Covid protocols permitting, 89% of respondents prefer in person meetings with video and phone in options while 11% preferred in person meetings with phone in option like pre-Covid meetings. No respondents preferred Zoom over in person.

Comments:

Zoom meetings were good, we managed and adapted well; equitable way to allow members to participate when childcare and the commute to 5050 Yonge is too challenging; option of Zooming in may help attract new members.

Quite long at 2 hours; hard to gauge consensus, have a laugh and encourage broader participation and collaboration; missed the casual before and after the meeting conversations that help get the work done; concerned that it is easy for any participant in a Zoom meeting to record them without permission from participants.



French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: March 10, 2022

A meeting of the French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee convened on March 10, 2022 from 7:00pm-9:00pm via virtual Zoom with Parent Co-Chair Lynne LeBlanc presiding.

Item	Invitee Name
Attended:	Lynne LeBlanc (Parent Co-Chair W8), Sharlene Henry (Parent Vice-Co-Chair W5/W6 Alt), Lisa McAvoy (Parent Vice-Co Chair W2 Alt), Doug Kwan (W2), Katherine Fisher-Laxa (W3), Crystal Stewart (W6), Cheryl Batty (W8 Alt), Matt Forrest (W9), Randy Samuel (W14) Also present were: Mary Cruden (Canadian Parents for French), Sharon Beason (CPF Alt), Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini (Executive Superintendent), Angela Caccamo (Centrally Assigned Principal), Linda Edwards (Centrally Assigned Principal, Virtual French Programs), Kirsten Johnston (Program Co-ordinator)
Guests:	Michelle Munroe (Parent Engagement), Madelaine Hamilton, Stacey Peterson, Andrew Waters
Regrets:	Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin (Trustee Co-Chair W11), Charles Zhu (Parent Vice-Co Chair W11), Frances Shawera (W2 Alt), Deloris Williamson-Braham (W5/13), Mandy Moore (W7), Hans Bathija (W10), Sarah Smith (W15), Kathleen Meek (W15 Alt), Christie Dunbar (W16), Nancy White (W16 Alt), Gail Miller (W22), Rosemary Sutherland (CPF Alt)

Part A: Recommendations

Nil

Part B: For Information

French Review and Professional Development

Middle FI central application and placement is now complete. The registration process has been passed to the local school Principals. Staff are rolling out the 5-module series of professional learning for the transition of EFI SK entry to JK entry.

While the TDSB is not participating in DELF this year, TDSB staff participated in the DELF refresher in preparation for next year. Additionally, internal PD offered to TDSB French educators has included:

- Work with Beginning Teachers
- Meeting with CLs and ACLs -- French and Academic Pathways
- Reading assessment
- Return from the Pandemic (meeting students where they are)
- Repeated GR 4 MFI modules
- Targeted instruction for JK entry vs SK entry

Virtual Learning

The TDSB is not offering FI/EF in virtual learning (elementary) or virtual school (secondary) students next year. Core French will be offered in the virtual offering. However, looking past the pandemic, we are looking to focus on in-school offerings. Note switching between in-person and virtual learning will not be allowed next year, as those who choose virtual learning for the next year are asked to do so as a preference for learning, as opposed to strictly a pandemic response. For clarification, E-learning is a different offering from virtual learning which is mandated for another year by the Ministry.

Information regarding re-admission to the French programs after extended absences from the program (e.g., no virtual offering in 2022/23) is subject to Operational Procedure PR597.

Ward/CPF and Chair Reports

W2, W3 and W8 reported. For further details, please see the March 10th Meeting Minutes. The March FSLAC Newsletter is available on the FSLAC landing page.

CAC Review/Report

Michelle Munroe, Central Co-ordinator for Parent and Community Engagement, responded to questions from the membership regarding the CAC Review recommendations report which is tracking to Governance and Policy Committee for Mar 23. FSLAC can get on the delegations list for this meeting.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

Nil

Report Submitted by Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini

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Name of Committee: Inner City Community Advisory Committee (ICCAC)

Meeting Date: 24 March 2022

A meeting of the Inner City Community Advisory Committee convened on March 24, 2022 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:10 p.m. Virtual Meeting, with Trustee Michelle Aarts presiding.

Attendance:	Trustee Michelle Aarts, Co-Chair; Diane Banks, Toronto Public Library; Rachel Chernos Lin, Trustee Ward 11; Laurie Green, St. Michael’s Hospital; Omar Khan, Parent; Dan MacLean, Trustee Ward 2; Ingrid Palmer, Parent; Robert Spencer, Parent; Crystal Stewart, Parent
Regrets:	Anna Kay Brown, Jane Finch Education Action Group; Trixie Doyle, Trustee Ward 14; Josette Holness, City of Toronto; michael kerr, Colour of Poverty, Colour of Change; Cherie Mordecai Steer, Parent; Emmy Pantin, Parent Co-chair; Sejal Patel, Ryerson University; Amir Sukhera, The Neighbourhood Organization; Fiona Yang, Catholic Crosscultural Services

Part A: Recommendations

N/A

Part B: For Information Only

As part of ICCAC’s commitment to having ongoing Equity and Anti-Racism Training, Karen Murray, Karen Murray, Centrally Assigned Principal; David Cameron, Senior Manager; Salima Kassam, Centrally Assigned Principal; and Rukiya Mohammed, Coordinator, facilitated a conversation with the Committee regarding the role of equity and anti-oppression in addressing poverty.

Rukiya Mohammed, Coordinator, The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement and MSIC provided an update on the ongoing work that is taking place in all the schools across the district.

Hugh Keane, Community Support Worker – Learning Centre 3 provided an update on the ongoing work that is taking place across the LCs regarding Parent Academies and the Ambassador Program.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

The Working Group Updates item was deferred to the April 28, 2022 meeting.

Report Submitted by: Sandy Spyropoulos, Executive Superintendent, Learning Centre 4



Statutory Committee

Name of Committee: Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC)

Meeting Date: 15 February 2022

A meeting of the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee convened on 15 February 2022 from 7:01 p.m. to 9:39 p.m. via Zoom with PIAC Co-Chairs Felicia Seto-Lau and Andrew Waters presiding

<p>Attendance:</p>	<p>Kaydeen Bankasingh (W8), Janice Barnett(W11), Shanti Chand (W19), Erin Clarke (W1), Liesha Earle (W12), Cecile Farnum (W9), Jenny Gannon (W14), Sharon Grant (W4), Anshu Grover (W8), Madelaine Hamilton(W16), Zuojun Han(W20) Lenni Jabour (W7), Nadia Judunath(W22), Felicia Lau (PIAC Co-Chair), Susan Lee(W 12) , Chris Levien(Ward 20), Nicole Marshall (W22), Towhid Noman (CLG), Kate Leuschen Millar (W16), Seema Mitchell(W18), Abdul Azeem Mohammed (W21), Aretha Phillip (W13), Alice Romo (W7 Rep), Jessica Ruiz (W4), Saira Somani (W3), Nazerah Shaikh (W14), Crystal Stewart (W6), Lauren Tedesco(W3), Mirian Turcios (W6), Andrew Waters (PIAC Co-Chair), D.Williams (PIAC -OPICA Liaison),Exec Superintendent Shirley Chan, Marisa Chiu (Exec Officer TDSB), Associate Director Linda Curtis, Associate Director Andrew Gold, Trustee Christopher Mammoliti, Michelle Munroe (Central Coordinator, PCEO), Peter Singh Exec Officer, Tony Rossi (Manager, TDSB)</p>
<p>Regrets:</p>	<p>Sharleen Ahmed (W15), Sarah Ali (W2), Denese Gascho (W10), Lenni Jabour (W7), Nicole Marshall (W22), Anees Munshi(W21) Mark Ramcharan (W18), Alice Romo (W7), Frances Shawera (W2), Lauren Tedesco (W3), Charles Zhu(W11),</p>

Part A: Recommendations

None

Part B: For Information Only

Staff Update

IT/Tech support

Existing IT supports to school councils will be augmented, unresolved IT issues will be escalated to issue a ticket and additional tech support to be provided.

By-law template

The revised by-laws template is centered on equity and human rights policy, adhering to the 612 regulation directives.

French immersion

Application deadline for French Immersion is in November and the deadline date for the current school year was November 26, 2021. The early years department aligned the information and application process and was publicized in a variety of ways to reach both TDSB and non TDSB parents.

COVID Cases

As per ministry's directions school boards are no longer required to submit COVID cases numbers. TDSB has made the decision to continue to inform directly impacted positive cases as confirmed by the PCR tests.

Virtual Learning

Students in virtual learning are connecting with their home school and receiving communications from their home school.

Graduation ceremonies

Staff are working on the ceremonies for participation for students in virtual learning to be part of the home school.

School Council Insurance Program

School councils' insurance is now covered under TDSB's existing general liability coverage as of January 1, 2022, at no extra cost.

PIAC Co-Chair Update

Programs and School Services Committee (PSSC)

PIAC Chairs attended the January 19 PSSC meeting and presented PIAC's recommendations on anti-racism and fundraising review policy.

PIAC Orientation date

The orientation by PCEO to be done on March 2, 2021.

OPICA (Ontario Parent Involvement Committee Association)

Ministry consultation with OPICA on February 8, 2022, for input and discussion of the following:

- Graduation Requirements- secondary school diploma requirements
- Modernization learning opportunities
- Entrepreneurial role, Secondary pathways and Course types and pathways
- Curriculum review cycle, revision of curriculum documents and implementation curriculum

PIAC Post

January PIAC Post to be available and posted on PIAC website. February POST to be posted soon on PIAC website.

New Member

Crystal Stewart from Ward 6 was welcomed.

School Shooting in David and Mary Collegiate.

PIAC members discussed the tragedy that occurred at the David and Mary Collegiate in Ward 17. It was noted that there was no PIAC Rep for Ward 17 and PIAC needs to support the Trustee to engage with the community and to recruit PIAC Reps for the ward.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

Report Submitted by: Executive Superintendent Shirley Chan, Executive Superintendent Uton Robinson and Michelle Munroe Central Coordinator PCEO

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Statutory Committee

Name of Committee: Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC)

Meeting Date: 19 April 2022

A meeting of the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee convened on 19 April 2022 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:54p.m. via Zoom with PIAC Co-Chairs Felicia Seto-Lau and Andrew Waters presiding

<p>Attendance:</p>	<p>Kaydeen Bankasingh (W8), Janice Barnett(W11), Shanti Chand (W19), Erin Clarke (W1), Liesha Earle (W12), Cecile Farnum (W9), Jenny Gannon (W14), Denese Gascho (W10), Sharon Grant (W4), Madelaine Hamilton(W16), Felicia Lau (PIAC Co-Chair), Susan Lee(W 12), Seema Mitchell(W18), Kate Leuschen Millar (W16), Nicole Marshall (W22), Abdul Azeem Mohammed (W21), Aretha Phillip (W13), Mark Ramcharan (W18),Alice Romo (W7 Rep), Jessica Ruiz (W4), Nazerah Shaikh (W14), Saira Somani (W3), Crystal Stewart (W6), Andrew Waters (PIAC Co-Chair), D.Williams (PIAC -OPICA Liaison), Charles Zhu(W11)</p> <p>Reiko Feuntes CAP, Associate Director Andrew Gold, Jason Kandankery CAP, Irit Kelman Sr Manager, Exec Superintendent Shirley Chan, Latha John (Committee Assistant), System Superintendent Lorraine Linton, Michelle Munroe (Central Coordinator, PCEO), Karren Murray, CAP, CEBSA, Amie Presley Research, Associate Director Audley Salmon, Peter Singh Exec Officer, Superintendent Lynn Strangway, Director Colleen Russell-Rawlins</p>
<p>Regrets:</p>	<p>Sharleen Ahmed (W15), Sarah Ali (W2), Anshu Grover (W8), Zuojun Han(W20), Lenni Jabour (W7), Nadia Judunath (W22), Chris Levien(Ward 20), Anees Munshi(W21)Towhid Noman (CLG), Frances Shawera (W2), Lauren Tedesco (W3)</p>

Part A: Recommendations

- None

Part B: For Information Only

PIAC Co-Chair Update

Parents and Caregivers as Partners Conference

The conference is scheduled for October 2022.

Membership status update

- 11 Vacancies
- 8 ward rep terms have expired.

Director of Education Update:

Return to Extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activities are being done at different degrees at different schools.

Pandemic Response -Sixth wave of the COVID

Staff have weekly meetings with Toronto public health on the appropriate restrictions and guidance.

Student Safety

\$5.6 million for additional staffing to support students and youth engagement. Board is working to

David and Mary incident

Third party investigations on the incident and for safety review on the board's caring and safe school's policies and procedures across all schools.

Supporting youth

Programs to support young people during summer, youth employment using board funding, working with community partners and other levels of government.

TDSB Student Achievement

90% of TDSB students are passing in academic mathematics for grades nine and ten.

Student Equity Collective

27 students were selected to a student equity collective to make school a more engaging and respectful experience.

Staff update

IT backlog issues

- 350 requests for assistance were processed
- Instructions provided for school staff to support school councils accounts
- Communication on IT supports for school councils were distributed to all school staff

Po85 Student Attendance, Safe Arrival and Safe Departure Policy review presentation

Staff presented the policy review process, the timelines and link

Parents Spring Survey

Research staff to gather data on the effects of the pandemic on learning.

PCEO Update

- PO23 Policy will be presented at the May meeting.
- Reallocation of Parent Reaching Out funds

Part C: Ongoing Matters

Equity and Human Rights Presentation -Response to PIAC's Anti-Racism Recommendation

- Staff presented PR728 – Procedure and responding to racism incidents involving or impacting students in schools.
- Staff were requested to comeback and provide updates at future PIAC meetings.

Report Submitted by: Executive Superintendent Shirley Chan, Executive Superintendent Uton Robinson and Michelle Munroe Central Coordinator PCEO

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Statutory Committee

Name of Committee: Special Education Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: April 11, 2022

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee convened on April 11, 2022, from 7: 00 p.m. to 9:28 p.m. via Zoom with SEAC Chair Steven Lynette and Vice-Chair Diane Montgomery

Attendance:

Melissa Rosen (Association for Bright Children (ABC), Steven Lynette (Epilepsy Toronto), Richard Carter (Down Syndrome Association of Toronto), , Tracey O'Regan (Community Living Toronto), Aliza Chagpar (Easter Seals), Tania Principe (Integrated Action for Inclusion (IAI), David Lepofsky (VIEWS for the Visually Impaired), Juanita Beaudry (CADDAC), Shanna Lino (VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children), Nadia Persaud (Learning Disability Association), Lisa Kness (Autism Ontario), Tracey Burrell (BPSG), Aliza Chagpar (Easter Seals) , Aline Chan LC1, Nora Green LC1, Jean-Paul Ngana LC2, Jordan Glass LC2, Kirsten Doyle LC3, Olga Ingrahm LC3, Diane Montgomery LC4, Izabella Pruska-Oldenoff LC4, Trustee Michelle Aarts, Trustee Alexander Brown, Trustee Dan MacLean

Alternates attending: Julie Diamond (Autism Society), Ioanna Agelothanasis (LC2), Caren Watkins (LC1), George Petrovic (LC4). Adebukola Adenowo-Akpan (Easter Seals Ontario), Nerissa Hutchison (BPSG)

Regrets:

Staff:

Andrew Gold, Associate Director, Audley Salmon, Associate Director, Janine Small, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education, Andrea Roach, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education LC4, Effie Stathopoulos, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education LC1, Susan Moulton, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education LC2, Jennie Petko, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education LC 3, Wendy Terro, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education, Special Education, Mun Shu

Wong, Media Services, Lianne Dixon, SEAC Liaison, Shameen Sandhu, System Leader, Mental Health

Part A: Recommendations

K-12 Motion (passed at March 2022 SEAC meeting)

- Four measures which the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee has recommended were identified as priorities for the board (**Appendix A**)

SEAC - motion #2022-2 – Legislated Mandate

- Motion Affirming SEAC's Mandate and Requirement to Provide Advice and Recommendations on Any and All Special Education Matters (**Appendix B**)

Membership Motions (Appendix C)

Resignations:

- Juanita Beaudry (CADDAC),
- Tania Principe (IAO),
- Nora Green LC1,
- Elaine Dodsworth (Alternative, DSAT)
- Lisa Kness (Autism Ontario)

Nominations:

- New member and alternate for CADDAC (Beth Dangerfield and Judi Coulson)
- New member for Inclusion Action in Ontario (IAO) (Nora Green)
- New member for Autism Ontario (previously alternate member) (Julie Diamond)

Part B: For Information Only

Leadership, Learning and School Improvement Department Reports and Updates:
Appendix D

OnSIS Data

TDSB OnSIS Data from 2020 regarding special education categories of exceptionality and placement types was shared with SEAC.

Psychological Assessment and IPRC Statistics

Data for March 2022, as well as cumulative data for assessments and IPRC's was shared with SEAC,

Part C: Ongoing Matters

Working Groups

The Special Education Plan working group presented Section C of the Special Education Plan.

The K-12 Working Group requested a meeting prior to next meeting with staff and shared a report from their previous meeting (Appendix D)

Report Submitted by: Lianne Dixon

Appendix A

Motion Passed by SEAC March 22, 2022 – K-12 Implementation Priorities

Whereas the Ontario Government appointed the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act to make recommendations to create a barrier-free, accessible education system for students with disabilities in Ontario schools.

And whereas the Ontario Government made public the initial report of the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee on June 1, 2021.

And whereas at its February 14, 2022 meeting, SEAC passed a motion that recommends that TDSB implement the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee's recommendations.

And whereas it would be good for TDSB to start by implementing measures that are readily achievable and that would be high-impact for students with disabilities.

SEAC therefore recommends that TDSB give initial priority to implementing these four measures, which the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee has recommended:

1. TDSB should invite parents/guardians of any student for whom an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is being considered or developed to an "IEP" meeting with school staff (in person or virtually), to work collaboratively on what the IEP should include. The Parents/guardians should be told that they can bring with them any support people or professionals they wish to help at the IEP meeting. If the school does not agree to provide an accommodation, service, support or program that the parents/guardian request, they should be given the reason for this.
2. Because too many parents/guardians of students with disabilities do not know what services, supports, placements or options are available for their child at TDSB, or to whom or how to advocate for them, TDSB should develop and implement a comprehensive plan in consultation with SEAC to effectively let parents/guardians of students with disabilities know, in plain language and multiple languages, the options available for their child at TDSB, and to whom and how to advocate for them, including an explanation of the processes of the Individual Education Plan and the Identification and Placement Review Committee.
3. TDSB should establish a new fair, speedy, impartial and expert dispute resolution process for parents/guardians of students with disabilities who believe that their child's disability-related needs are not being met, e.g. because their IEP is insufficient or is not being fully implemented.

4. For TDSB trustees to be more fully and directly engaged in overseeing TDSB's accessibility issues, TDSB's trustees should establish an Accessibility Committee of the Board. SEAC should be invited to send two members to serve on that committee.

Appendix B

Motion Passed at SEAC – April 11, 2022 - Legislated Mandate

Motion Affirming SEAC’s Mandate and Requirement to Provide Advice and Recommendations on Any and All Special Education Matters

WHEREAS O. Reg. 464.97: “Special Education Advisory Committees” under the Ontario Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2 set up the requirement that every school board in Ontario have a Special Education Advisory Committee (“SEAC”), and that SEACs may “make recommendations to the board in respect of any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the board” and “[b]efore making a decision on a recommendation of the committee, the board shall provide an opportunity for the committee to be heard before the board and before any other committee of the board to which the recommendation is referred”. O. Reg. 464/97, s. 11.

AND WHEREAS TDSB staff have made significant changes to Special Education, without consulting or disclosing these changes to SEAC in advance,

AND WHEREAS some of the significant changes made by TDSB to Special Education without consulting or disclosing to SEAC in advance, include the following examples of changes to special education policies, procedures, and practices:

- (a) “Primary IEP Strategy”: TDSB staff did not consult or inform SEAC before implementing this very significant change to eliminate and substantially reduce access to Primary Individual Education Plans (“IEPs”);
- (b) Cancellation of and Significant Delays to Special Education Assessments, IEPs, Identifications, Placements, and other Supports: initially “in response to the new pandemic”, but persisting significantly for many months thereafter;
- (c) Elimination of DHH (Deaf and Hard of Hearing), BLV (Blind and Low Vision), and other Itinerant Specialist special education staff’s “write” access to IEPs;
- (d) Undisclosed cancellation of the entire SEPRC (“Special Education Placement and Review Committee”) meeting and process for almost all new students with special education needs and issues.

AND WHEREAS these changes restrict access to necessary, efficient, and effective supports for many students with identified and unidentified special education needs;

AND WHEREAS TDSB staff did not disclose these significant changes to SEAC prior to their implementation;

AND WHEREAS as a result SEAC was not able to provide its advice and recommendations on these issues and changes, as it is fundamentally required to do

pursuant to O. Reg. 464.97: "Special Education Advisory Committees" under the Ontario Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2 (the "Legislation") and as is in the best interest of the vulnerable children that we represent.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS RESOLVED:

THAT all of the preamble ("WHEREAS") statements above are included as part of this "IT IS RESOLVED" and recommendation section of this motion;

AND THAT TDSB staff fully inform and consult with SEAC about all previous changes made to Special Education policies, procedures, and practices;

AND THAT TDSB be required to now submit and provide to SEAC full information about these and all changes to special education policies, procedures, and practices (herein collectively referred to as "Special Education Policies") in order to allow SEAC to consult on these issues and provide its recommendations;

AND THAT TDSB then consider this advice and recommendations, and consider amending and / or retracting these Special Education Policies based on these recommendations;

AND THAT going forward TDSB staff comply with the Legislation's mandate to fully inform and consult with SEAC on matters pertaining to the education of students with special education needs IN ADVANCE of decisions to implement changes to Special Education policies, practices, and procedures, AND BEFORE the implementation of any of these changes.

Appendix C

Membership Motions

The following members will be resigning from SEAC, effective for the June 2022 SEAC meeting.

- Juanita Beaudry (CADDAC)
- Tania Principe (IAO)
- Nora Green LC1
- Elaine Dodsworth (Alternative, DSAT)
- Lisa Kness (Autism Ontario)

Nominations:

Motion – CADDAC (Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada)

Juanita Beaudry, Executive Director of CADDAC, has nominated Beth Dangerfield as Association Member Representative, and Judi Coulson as Association Alternate Representative. These nominees meet the criteria outlined by Regulation 464/97 for membership.

Motion – IAO (Inclusion Action Ontario)

Paula Boutis, President of Inclusion Action Ontario, has nominated Nora Green as Association Member Representative for IAO. This nominee meets the criteria outlined by Regulation 464/97 for membership.

Motion – Autism Ontario

Lisa Nightingale, Region and Volunteer Supervisor for Autism Ontario, has nominated Julie Diamond as Association Member Representative. This nominee meets the criteria outlined by Regulation 464/97 for membership.

Appendix D

Leadership Report

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

April 11, 2022

Leadership Report

Leadership, Learning and School Improvement

Audley Salmon, Associate Director Learning Transformation and Equity
Andrew Gold, Associate Director Student Well-Being & Innovation
Nandy Palmer, System Superintendent of Special Education & Inclusion

Welcome

Virtual Learning 2022-2023

Families were provided with the opportunity to register for virtual learning for the entire 2022-2023 school year. This option also included special education Intensive Support Programs (ISPs). Staff allocation to support students in special education secondary and elementary virtual learning is provided through a combination of Ministry COVID Funds and shifting of resources.

Over 4000 students and families have selected virtual learning for the 2022-2023 school year, of which 19.7% of those are students with special education needs. The registration data shows that of all students receiving special education support, approximately 21% are in ISP programs and the remaining in regular class through resource support.

TDSB OnSIS Data - Report 2020

In 2020, TDSB reported a total headcount of 241,151 students elementary and secondary with **45,513** or **18.9%** of students receiving special education programs and/or services. Of those receiving special education programs and/or services, approximately **73.4%** were in regular class with the setting Indirect Support, Resource or Withdrawal and **26.6%** were in special education classes with the setting of Fully- Self Contained or Partial Integration.

Of all students receiving special education programs and/or services, approximately **58%** were not identified by an IPRC, whereas **42%** were identified as exceptional by an IPRC.

Table 1: Special Education Categories (Exceptionalities and Placement Types*) for Elementary and Secondary Students for October 2020

Table 1: Special Education Categories (Exceptionalities and Placement Types*) for Elementary and Secondary Students for October 2020

Exceptionalities: Regular Classes
Percent of Enrolled Students – 3.6%
Number of Students – 8760

Exceptionalities: Special Education Classes
Percent of Enrolled Students – 4.3%
Number of Students – 10324

Exceptionalities (excluding Gifted): Regular Classes
Percent of Enrolled Students – 2.3%
Number of Students – 5576

Exceptionalities (excluding Gifted): Special Education Classes
Percent of Enrolled Students – 2.5%
Number of Students – 6126

Non-Exceptional (has an IEP): Regular Classes
Percent of Enrolled Students – 10.2%
Number of Students – 24667

Non-Exceptional (has an IEP): Special Education Class
Percent of Enrolled Students – 0.7%
Number of Students – 1762

Total Student Enrollment
Percent of Enrolled Students – 18.9%
Number of Students – 45513

Students not Receiving Special Education
Percent of Enrolled Students – 81.1%
Number of Students – 195638

Total Enrolment
Percent of Enrolled Students – 100%
Number of Students – 241151

When excluding Gifted, Learning Disability continues to be the exceptionality with the highest number of students across the province with **27%** in TDSB and Autism with **14.7%** continues to be the fastest growing exceptionality across the province and in TDSB. This is aligned to the provincial trends.

Note: OnSIS data does not include exceptionality or IEPs by grade. However, we are able to provide this data based on the number of students receiving special education programs and/or services in TDSB.

Table2: Elementary and Secondary Students with Special Education Exceptionalities or Non-Identified as of October 31, 2020

Autism

Number of Students: 2809

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 14.7%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 6.2%

Behaviour

Number of Students: 577

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 3.0%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 1.3%

Blind/Low Vision

Number of Students: 35

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 0.2%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 0.1%

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Number of Students: 254

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 1.3%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 0.6%

Deaf/Hard of Hearing/Pre-School

Number of Students: 0

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 0%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 0%

Developmental Disability

Number of Students: 1111

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 5.8%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 2.4%

Giftedness

Number of Students: 7382

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 38.7%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 16.2%

Language Impairment

Number of Students: 87

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 0.5%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 0.2%

Learning Disability

Number of Students: 5162

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 27.0%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 11.3%

Mild Intellectual Disability

Number of Students: 1456

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 7.6%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 3.2%

Multiple Exceptionalities

Number of Students: 1

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 0.0%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 0.0%

Physical Disability

Number of Students: 210

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 1.1%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 0.5%

Speech Impairment

Number of Students: 0

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 0.0%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 0.0%

Total Exceptionalities

Number of Students: 19084

Percent of Students with an Exceptionality: 100%

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 41.9%

Non-Identified

Number of Students: 26429

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 58.1%

Total Students Receiving Special Education

Number of Students: 45513

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education: 100%

Psychological Assessments - March 2022

Provided below is the report of assessments completed in March.

LC1 Referrals -

Completed: 647

In Progress: 209

Waiting: 286

Removed: 112

Total Referrals, LC1: 1254

LC2 Referrals -

Completed: 787

In Progress: 249

Waiting: 239

Removed: 188

Total Referrals, LC2: 1463

LC3 Referrals -

Completed: 497

In Progress: 219

Waiting: 301

Removed: 101

Total Referrals, LC3: 1118

LC4 Referrals -

Completed: 845

In Progress: 302

Waiting: 393

Removed: 223

Total Referrals, LC4: 1763

IPRC - March 2022

IPRC completed 100

IPRC scheduled 244

IPRC cumulative since August 2021 1526

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Caring and Safe Schools: Annual Report 2020-21

To: Program and School Services Committee

Date: 11 May, 2022

Report No.: 05-22-4318

Strategic Directions

- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being
- Transform Student Learning

Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be received.

Context

The annual Caring and Safe Schools Report presents an overall summary and an analysis of the suspensions and expulsions that occurred in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) during the 2020-21 school year. One of the most important elements of this report is the consideration that must be given to the unusual circumstances resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Public schools in Ontario, including TDSB schools, were ordered to close to in-person learning for extended periods of time under an order of the provincial government. There were far fewer students in schools during the 2020-21 school year as one third (33%) of TDSB students chose full-time virtual learning. It is significant to note that even students who were learning “in-school” did so through reduced hours. These conditions resulted in a lower number of suspensions/expulsions in 2020-21 when compared to school years before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite the conditions, Board staff continued the work of challenging and interrupting streaming through student discipline processes which impose suspensions and expulsions.

The data presented in this report, albeit impacted by Covid-19, is a valuable tool for helping schools foster a positive learning culture and support evidence-based decision making and accountability. Schools should be safe and welcoming places where all students feel respected, included and valued in their learning environments. In the Toronto District School Board, we are committed to creating these positive environments and recognize their impact on student success. By directly addressing the role that student discipline plays in a school's overall climate as well as the potential in streaming students towards specific pathways and outcomes. We are making positive changes to the lives of students.

Key Findings

In the 2020-21 school year:

- There were much fewer suspensions than in the years prior to the Covid-19 pandemic: 852 suspensions (to 754 students), and 5 expulsions. The suspension rate is 0.31%;
- There were only 4 suspensions in the primary grades (Kindergarten to Grade 3);
- School yards and classrooms continued to be the most likely locations where incidents were to happen;
- 40% of the suspensions were one-day suspensions;
- Incidents motivated by bias, prejudice or hate accounted for 21% of the suspensions;
- 98% of the suspensions had been followed up with interventions. A meeting with parents or guardians was the most used intervention, followed by restorative practices;
- Male students accounted for 85% of the suspensions/expulsions;
- Students with special education needs (excluding Gifted) were responsible for the 48% of the suspensions/expulsions;
- Students who were born in Canada or spoke English as the primary language at home accounted for the majority of the suspensions/expulsions;
- Students who lived with one parent (particularly with mother only) or were from low-income families, had disproportionately high representations in the suspensions/expulsions;
- In the school years prior to the pandemic, self-identified Black, Middle Eastern and Mixed students were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions, while East Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian students were under-represented. The pattern is much different for the 2020-21 school year in which schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods, and one-third of the students chose virtual learning. In the 2020-21 school year, White students were responsible for 37.6% of the suspensions/expulsions, followed by Mixed students (16.6%), Black students (14.5%), South Asian students (9.5%), and East Asian students (7.3%).
- Self identified Indigenous students accounted for fewer than 10 suspensions;
- Fewer than 10 suspensions were issued to self-identified 2SLGBTQ+ students.

Some groups of students including Self-identified Indigenous students and Black students are suspended at rates much higher than their respective representation within the broader TDSB student population.

Board staff continue to work in specific ways to address this serious issue of systemic racism. The entire Caring and Safe Schools (CSS) team continues to engage in anti-racism and anti-oppression training with a focus on anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism by working more intentionally collaborate with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement and to ensure that discipline matters involving Indigenous and Black students are analyzed thoroughly through an anti-oppressive lens that holds anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism at the centre of all conversations and decisions related to student discipline for self-identified Indigenous and Black students

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

In August 2019, the Ministry of Education directed school Boards to eliminate discretionary suspensions for students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. Subsequently, TDSB Trustees passed a motion that directed staff to eliminate all historic suspensions from student records, both electronic and hard copies, issued to students when they were in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. The motion further directed that moving forward, a formal retention schedule be set for all suspensions issued regardless of grade.

All historic records of suspensions for students in Junior Kindergarten to grade 3 will be removed by September 2022.

It is important to note once again that in the 2020-21 school year there were no suspensions to students in Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten or grade 1.

In response to the Board Motion of November 11, 2020 *Dismantling System Barriers to Inclusion in Discipline Procedures* a suspension/expulsion retention schedule has been developed by staff (Appendix A)

To support students' achievement and well-being, to reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions, and to address the over-representation of some groups who are suspended and expelled, we will continue to:

- More effectively address how issues of identity – such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, special education needs and gender – connect with each other and influence decisions regarding the student discipline process;
- Review the detailed breakdown of suspension and expulsion data to identify trends, patterns and opportunities for improvement;

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- Support the Caring and Safe Schools team and all school administrators to examine bias, power and privilege as they relate to the student discipline process;
- Support school administrators in the application of human rights, anti-racism and anti-oppression principles in student discipline;
- Review Caring and Safe Schools practices to ensure consistency with principles of anti-racism and anti-oppression;
- Provide learning opportunities for more staff to be trained in Restorative Practices;
- Develop alternatives to suspension programs;
- Work collaboratively with the Centre of Excellence for Black Students Achievement and the Urban Indigenous Education Centre to challenge unconscious bias, engage in joint problem-solving and ensure that Black and Indigenous students are treated equitably when it comes to decisions about suspensions and expulsions in each school through collaboration between Principals and Superintendents;
- Consider and act on the intersectionality's of the data provided in this report, Board Special Education staff must also be involved in the analysis of student discipline matters to ensure that any biases in the student discipline process and any subsequent decisions are being acknowledged and eradicated through interrogation and interruption of practices that appear to be automatic responses to student discipline issues and;
- Work with families and community partners to develop relevant approaches and supports for students.
- Explore opportunities for programming for students outside of regular school hours

Resource Implications

Funding will be provided through current existing budget allocations while exploring possible options for partnerships for the provision of programming outside of regular school hours.

Communications Considerations

The Caring and Safe Schools report will be shared with key stakeholders through existing TDSB communication channels.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

- Caring and Safe Schools Policy (P.051)
- Programs for Students on Long Term Suspension or Expulsion (PR586)

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- Police-School Board Protocol (PR698)
- Promoting a Positive School Climate Procedure (PR697)
- Non-Discretionary and Discretionary Student Transfers (PR 540)

Appendices

- Appendix A: Caring and Safe Schools: Annual Report 2020-21

From

Executive Superintendent Jim Spyropoulos, Human Rights and Indigenous Education,
at jim.spyropoulos@tdsb.on.ca or at 416-397-3678



CARING AND SAFE SCHOOLS REPORT

2020 - 2021

The annual Caring and Safe Schools Report presents an overall summary and an analysis of the suspensions and expulsions that occurred in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) during the 2020-21 school year. One of the most important elements of this report is the consideration that must be given to the unusual circumstances resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Public schools in Ontario, including TDSB schools, were ordered to close to in-person learning for extended periods of time under an order of the provincial government. There were far fewer students in schools during the 2020-21 school year as one third (33%) of TDSB students chose full-time virtual learning. It is significant to note that even students who were learning “in-school” did so through reduced hours. These conditions resulted in a lower number of suspensions/expulsions in 2020-21 when compared to school years before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite the conditions, Board staff continued the work of challenging and interrupting streaming through student discipline processes which impose suspensions and expulsions.

The data presented in this report, albeit impacted by Covid-19, is a valuable tool for helping schools foster a positive learning culture and support evidence-based decision making and accountability. Schools should be safe and welcoming places where all students feel respected, included and valued in their learning environments. In the Toronto District School Board, we are committed to creating these positive environments and recognize their impact on student success. By directly addressing the role that student discipline plays in a school’s overall climate as well as the potential in streaming students towards specific pathways and outcomes. We are making positive changes to the lives of students.

This work, guided by our Multi-Year Strategic Plan, has focused on a number of key actions:

- Identifying trends, patterns and opportunities in past suspension data for improvement;
- Supporting the Caring and Safe Schools team to examine bias, power and privilege as they relate to student discipline process;
- Supporting school administrators in the application of human rights, anti-racism and anti-oppression principles to student discipline;
- Reviewing Caring and Safe Schools practices to ensure consistency with principles of anti-racism and anti-oppression; and
- Providing learning opportunities for more staff to be trained in restorative practices.

Through intentional work by the Caring and Safe School team, school administrators engaged in professional learning that examines bias, power and privilege and their connection to student discipline. This learning has encouraged Principals to better understand the lived experiences of each of their students, which has not only led to Principals better exercising their discretion when they have an option to not suspend, but also has helped them identify, confront and remove barriers proactively to create more inclusive and equitable learning cultures.

A positive school environment is the foundation of a culture of trust, high expectations and a sense of belonging. We will continue to emphasize programming that encourages and supports positive behaviour and allows us to intervene early to better engage and support our students.

Key Findings

In the 2020-21 school year:

- There were much fewer suspensions than in the years prior to the Covid-19 pandemic: 852 suspensions (to 754 students), and 5 expulsions. The suspension rate is 0.31%;
- There were only 4 suspensions in the primary grades (Kindergarten to Grade 3);
- School yards and classrooms continued to be the most likely locations where incidents were to happen;
- 40% of the suspensions were one-day suspensions;
- Incidents motivated by bias, prejudice or hate accounted for 21% of the suspensions;
- 98% of the suspensions had been followed up with interventions. A meeting with parents or guardians was the most used intervention, followed by restorative practices;
- Male students accounted for 85% of the suspensions/expulsions;
- Students with special education needs (excluding Gifted) were responsible for the 48% of the suspensions/expulsions;
- Students who were born in Canada or spoke English as the primary language at home accounted for the majority of the suspensions/expulsions;
- Students who lived with one parent (particularly with mother only) or were from low-income families, had disproportionately high representations in the suspensions/expulsions;
- In the school years prior to the pandemic, self-identified Black, Middle Eastern and Mixed students were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions, while East Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian students were under-represented. The pattern is much different for the 2020-21 school year in which schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods, and one-third of the students chose virtual learning. In the 2020-21 school year, White students were responsible for 37.6% of the suspensions/expulsions, followed by Mixed students (16.6%), Black students (14.5%), South Asian students (9.5%), and East Asian students (7.3%).
- Self identified Indigenous students accounted for fewer than 10 suspensions;
- Fewer than 10 suspensions were issued to self-identified 2SLGBTQ+ students.

Addressing Systemic Barriers

Suspensions – Students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3

In August 2019, the Ministry of Education directed school Boards to eliminate discretionary suspensions for students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. Subsequently, TDSB Trustees passed a motion that directed staff to eliminate all historic suspensions from student records, both electronic and hard copies, issued to students when they were in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. The motion further directed that moving forward, a formal retention schedule be set for all suspensions issued regardless of grade.

All historic records of suspensions for students in Junior Kindergarten to grade 3 will be removed by September 2022.

It is important to note once again that in the 2020-21 school year there were no suspensions to students in Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten or grade 1.

Reducing Suspension Rates for Indigenous Students, Black Students and Students with Special Education Needs

Self Identified Indigenous students and Black students are suspended at rates much higher than their respective representation within the broader TDSB student population.

The CSS team will more intentionally collaborate with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement and to ensure that discipline matters involving Indigenous and Black students are analyzed thoroughly through an anti-oppressive lens that holds anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism at the centre of all conversations and decisions related to student discipline for self identified Indigenous and Black students.

Board staff continue to work in specific ways to address this serious issue of systemic racism. The entire Caring and Safe Schools (CSS) team continues to engage in anti-racism and anti-oppression training with a focus on anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism. This training, however, is simply not enough.

Indigenous Students

It is of critical importance to continuously engage Indigenous Communities with respect to discipline of self identified Indigenous students. The Caring and Safe school team engage staff at the Urban Indigenous Education Centre to ensure that to the greatest extent possible these discipline proceedings are informed by Indigenous ways of working, of knowing and being. There were fewer than 10 suspensions given to self identified Indigenous students in 2020-21.

Black Students

Historically, Black students in TDSB are suspended at a rate approximately three times that of their representation within the larger student population. While the data for 2020-21 shows a significant reduction in that rate, this outcome may be dramatically impacted by the conditions noted earlier related to the Covid-19 pandemic. This data will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis to capture relevant trends and patterns. CSS staff will continue to work closely with the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement to deepen their learning related to how anti-Black racism manifests itself in student discipline proceedings. In turn, their work with school administrator colleagues will extend their learning in ways that deepen capacity to arrive at decisions which are more equitable for all students.

Special Education

The Caring and Safe Schools team is working closely with staff in Special Education to act on the data which shows that students with special education needs are suspended at a rate disproportionately higher than their representation within the larger TDSB student population. To this end, the action plan moving forward will focus on the intersectionality's related to identity. Special

Education staff are being involved in the analysis of student discipline matters as a further step towards ensuring that potential biases in the student discipline process are addressed.

Suspension/Expulsion Retention Schedule

In response to the Board Motion of November 11,2020 *Dismantling System Barriers to Inclusion in Discipline Procedures* the following retention schedule has been created.

Retention Period JK – 12	Condition-PPM145
One Year	Suspension was quashed or withdrawn, and the record of suspension expunged
Three years	Suspended for the violent incident A violent incident is defined as the occurrence of any one of the following or the occurrence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm • physical assault causing bodily harm requiring medical attention • sexual assault • robbery • using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person • extortion • hate and/or bias-motivated occurrences
Five years	Expelled for the violent incident A violent incident is defined as the occurrence of any one of the following or the occurrence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm • physical assault causing bodily harm requiring medical attention • sexual assault • robbery • using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person • extortion • hate and/or bias-motivated occurrences

A: Student Suspensions and Expulsions in 2020-21

Table 1 shows the overall suspension and expulsion information for TDSB elementary and secondary schools throughout the entire 2020-21 school year¹. The suspension rates² were calculated as the number of students suspended during the school year divided by the student enrolment as of October 31st.

Table 1: Suspensions and Expulsions in the 2020-21 School Year

Panel	Total # of Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate (%)	# of Expulsions
Elementary	638	555	0.33%	0
Secondary	214	199	0.28%	5
Total	852	754	0.31%	5

Table 2 shows the overall suspension and expulsion information in the last five school years. For a more detailed analysis of trends in suspensions/expulsions please see Section D Suspensions and Expulsions by Student Demographics of this report.

Table 2: Suspensions and Expulsions in the Last Five School Years

Panel	School Year	Total # of Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate (%)	Total # of Expulsions
Elementary Schools	2016-17	3,570	2,304	1.34%	1
	2017-18	3,165	2,034	1.18%	0
	2018-19	2,578	1,720	0.99%	0
	2019-20*	1,718	1,244	0.71%	0
	2020-21**	638	555	0.33%	0
Secondary Schools	2016-17	3,736	2,623	3.55%	63
	2017-18	3,056	2,268	3.08%	51
	2018-19	2,954	2,186	2.99%	30
	2019-20*	1,868	1,486	2.05%	12
	2020-21**	214	199	0.28%	5
Elementary and Secondary Schools	2016-17	7,306	4,927	2.01%	64
	2017-18	6,221	4,302	1.74%	51
	2018-19	5,532	3,906	1.58%	30
	2019-20*	3,586	2,730	1.11%	12
	2020-21**	852	754	0.31%	5

*Schools were closed to in-person learning from March 16, 2020 to the end of the school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic;

**Schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods; one-third of students chose virtual learning for the school year.

Table 3 shows the number of suspensions and suspension rate for each grade/division in the 2020-21 school year.

Table 3: 2020-21 Suspensions by Student Grade/Division

Grade	# of Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate
Junior Kindergarten	0	0	0%
Senior Kindergarten	0	0	0%
Grade 1	0	0	0%
Grade 2	1	1	0.01%
Grade 3	3	3	0.02%
Primary Division	4	4	0.00%
Grade 4	41	35	0.21%
Grade 5	82	72	0.42%
Grade 6	127	110	0.65%
Junior Division	250	217	0.42%
Grade 7	200	169	1.01%
Grade 8	184	165	0.96%
Intermediate Division	384	334	0.98%
Grade 9	49	45	0.27%
Grade 10	58	52	0.31%
Grade 11	42	40	0.24%
Grade 12	65	62	0.28%
Senior Division	214	199	0.28%

B: Details of the 2020-21 Suspensions and Expulsions

This section provides details of the 2020-21 student suspensions and expulsions, such as incident locations, infraction types, and police involvement. This information can be used when planning for conduct management, prevention-oriented strategies, mediation, and violence prevention at the school, learning centre, and system levels.

Figure 1: 2020-21 Suspensions/Expulsions by Incident Location

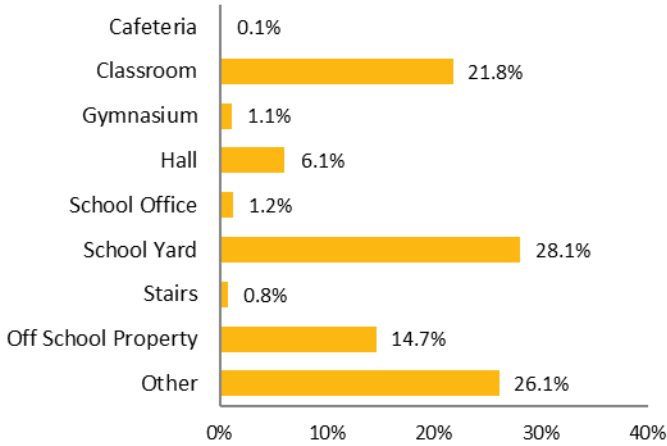
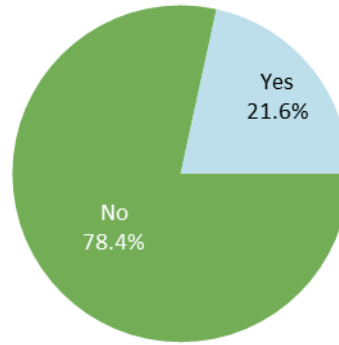


Figure 2: 2020-21 Suspensions/Expulsions with Police Involvement



School yards (28.1%) and classrooms (21.8%) were the most likely locations where incidents were to happen (Figure 1). Police were involved in 21.6% of the suspensions or expulsions in the 2020-21 school year (Figure 2). The other category includes spaces such as student washrooms, virtual learning settings, social media, school bus, public transportation, school common area, park and recreation centres and private residence.

Among the students suspended in the 2020-21 school year, 89.9% had one suspension only, and 10.1% had two or more suspensions during the school year (Figure 3). One-day suspensions accounted for 39.9% of the total suspensions in the 2020-21 school year. Two-day and three-day suspensions accounted for 24.4% and 11.8% respectively (Figure 4).

Figure 3: % of Students with One or More Suspensions in 2020-21

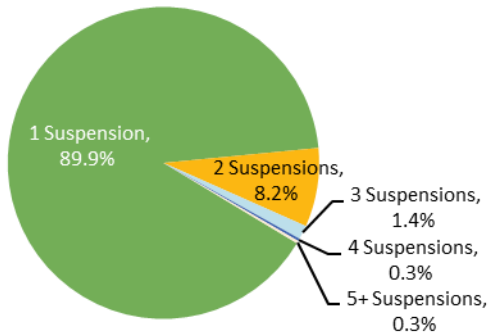
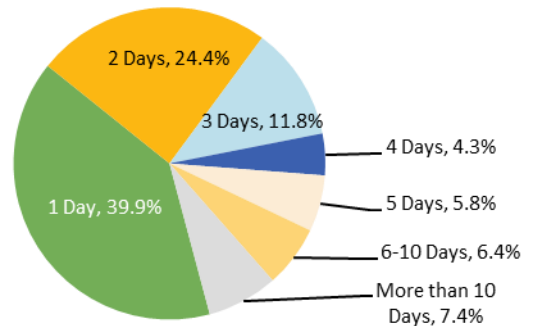


Figure 4: 2020-21 Suspensions by Length in Days



Tables 4 and 5 show the infraction types of the 2020-21 suspensions and expulsions, as defined by the Education Act. Incidents motivated by bias, prejudice or hate accounted for 21.1% of the suspensions in the 2021-21 school year.

Table 4 2020-21 Suspensions by Infraction Type

Types Defined by Section 306. (1) of the Education Act	Count	Percent
Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person	18	2.1%
Possessing alcohol, illegal drugs or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis	3	0.4%
Being under the influence of alcohol or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis	4	0.5%
Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority	22	2.6%
Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school	1	0.1%
Bullying	24	2.8%
Types Defined by the Board According to Section 306. (1) 7. of the Education Act		
Willful destruction of school property; vandalism causing damage to school or Board property or property located on school or Board premises	7	0.8%
Use of profane or improper language	75	8.8%
Use of tobacco	7	0.8%
Theft	0	-
Aid or incite harmful behaviour	32	3.8%
Physical assault	60	7.0%
Being under the influence of illegal drugs	1	0.1%
Fighting	75	8.8%
Possession or misuse of any harmful substances	2	0.2%
Extortion	0	-
Inappropriate use of electronic communications or media devices	81	9.5%
An act considered by the school principal to be a breach of the Board's or school code of conduct	31	3.6%
Immunization	0	-
Types Defined by Section 310. (1) of the Education Act		
Possessing a weapon, including a firearm	25	2.9%
Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person	18	2.1%
Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	18	2.1%
Committing sexual assault	9	1.1%
Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs, or in cannabis	2	0.2%
Committing robbery	0	-
Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor	0	-

Bullying if, i) the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying and, ii) the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person	0	-
Any activity listed in section 306(1) motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor	180	21.1%
Types Defined by the Board According to Section 310. (1) 8. of the Education Act		
Possession of an explosive substance	0	-
Sexual harassment	16	1.9%
Hate and/or bias-motivated occurrence(s)	60	7.0%
Distribution of hate material	0	-
Racial harassment	37	4.3%
An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct	44	5.2%

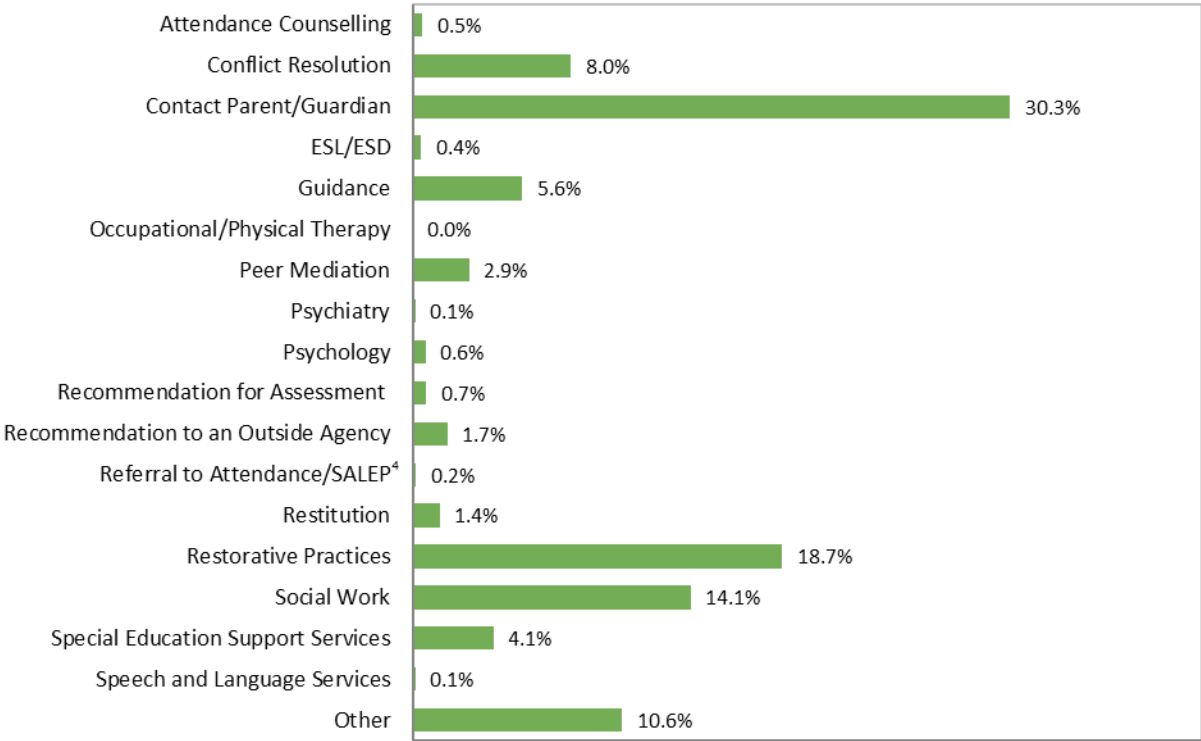
Table 5: 2020-21 Expulsions³ by Infraction Type

Infraction Type	Count	Percent
Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	0	-
Committing robbery	0	-
Committing sexual assault	4	80.0%
Possessing a weapon, including a firearm	0	-
Sexual harassment	0	-
Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs	0	-
Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person	0	-
An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct	1	20.0%

C: Interventions Used by Schools in 2020-21

Of all the suspensions in the 2020-21 school year, 98% had been followed up with interventions by schools. Figure 5 shows the most used interventions by schools.

Figure 5: Most Used Interventions by Schools in the 2020-21 School Year



A meeting with parents or guardians was the most used intervention (30.3% of all interventions), followed by restorative practices (18.7%) and social work (14.1%).

D: Suspensions and Expulsions by Student Demographics

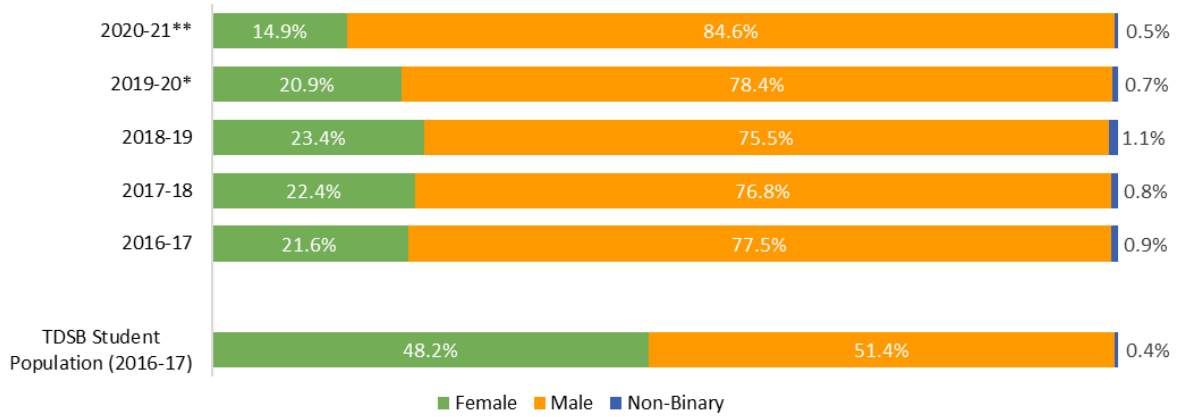
In this section, the 2016-17 to 2020-21 student suspensions and expulsions were analyzed by student characteristics such as gender identity, self-identified ethno-racial background, student and parent birth place, parent presence at home, language spoken at home, estimated family income, and special education needs, as captured by the Board’s School Information System, and its Student/Parent Census (the most recent one was conducted in the 2016-17 school year). As the number of expulsions is very small, in the following analyses they were combined with suspensions since expelled students must be suspended first pending their expulsion outcome.

Since in-person learning had been closed for extended periods in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the data for these two school years, and their comparison with the data from the pre-pandemic years, should be interpreted accordingly.

By Student Gender Identity

Figure 6 shows that male students accounted for the vast majority of the suspensions/expulsions (84.6% in 2020-21) in the last five school years.

Figure 6: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Student Gender Identity

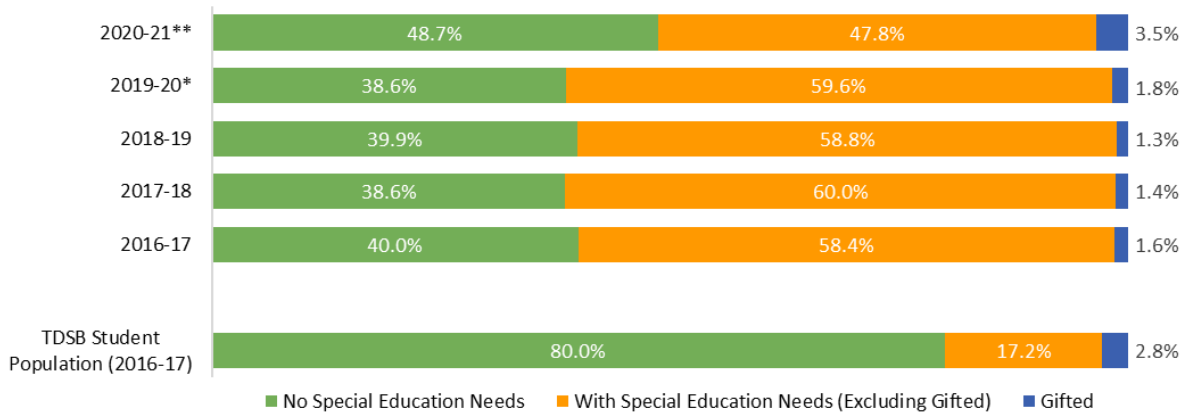


According to the 2016-17 Census data there were 1,067 non-binary students, representing 0.4% of the TDSB student population in that school year. Figure 6 indicates that although they only accounted for about 1% of the total suspensions/expulsions, non-binary students were proportionately over-represented in the suspensions/expulsions in all these school years.

By Special Education Needs

Figure 7 shows the distributions of suspensions/expulsions in the last five school years by students’ status of special education needs.

Figure 7: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Special Education Needs

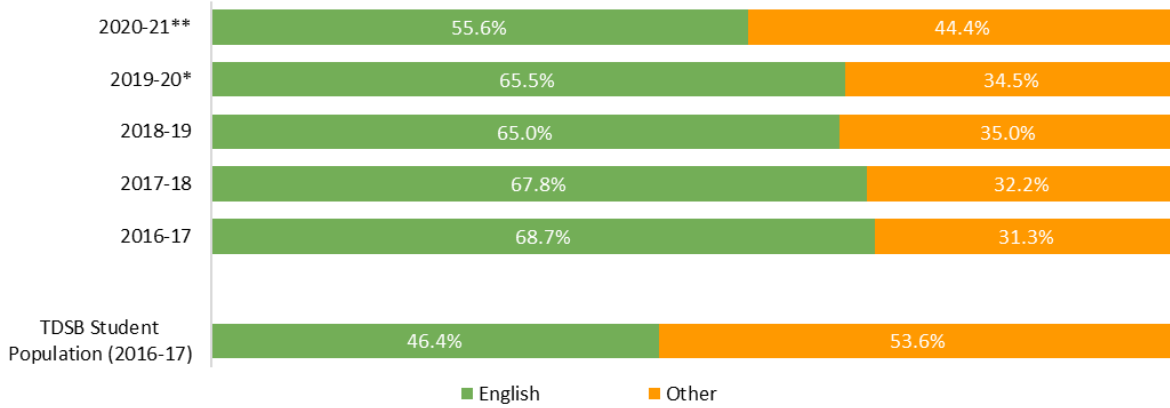


Students with special education needs (excluding Gifted) accounted for the 48-60% of the suspensions/ expulsions. Since they represented about 17% of the TDSB student population, they were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions (47.8% in 2020-21).

By Primary Language at Home

Figure 8 shows the distributions of the suspensions/expulsions in the last five school years by students’ primary language spoken at home. English-speaking students accounted for the majority (55.6% in 2020-21) of the suspensions/expulsions.

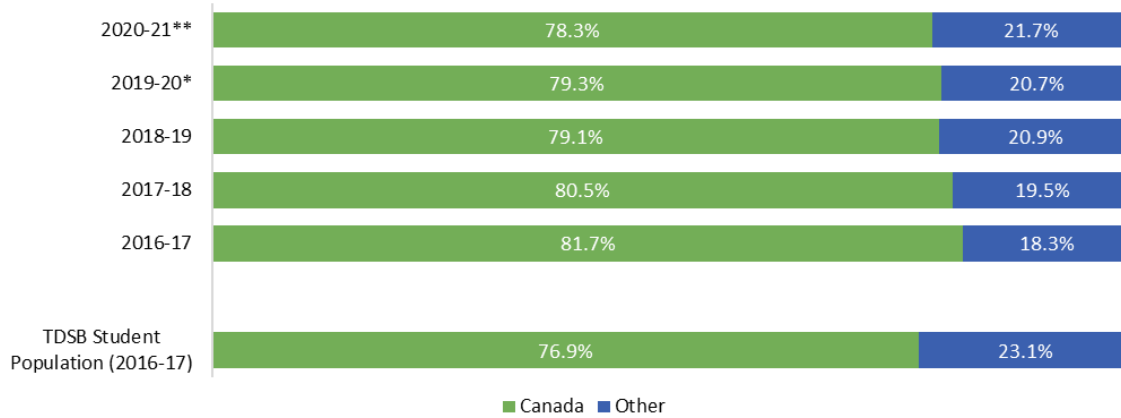
Figure 8: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Primary Home Language



By Student Birth Place

Slightly over three quarters (76.9%) of the TDSB students were born in Canada. Figure 9 shows that they accounted for the majority (78.3% in 2020-21) of the suspensions/expulsions.

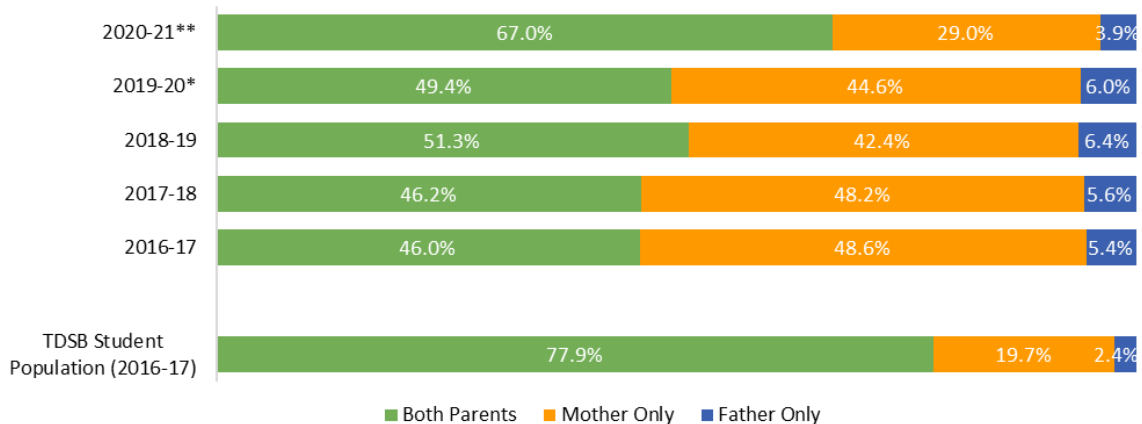
Figure 9: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Student Birth Place



By Parent Presence at Home

According to the student registration data, more than three quarters (78%) of the TDSB students lived with both parents at home. Figure 10 shows the distributions of student suspensions/expulsions in the last five years by their parents' presence at home.

Figure 10: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Parent Presence at Home

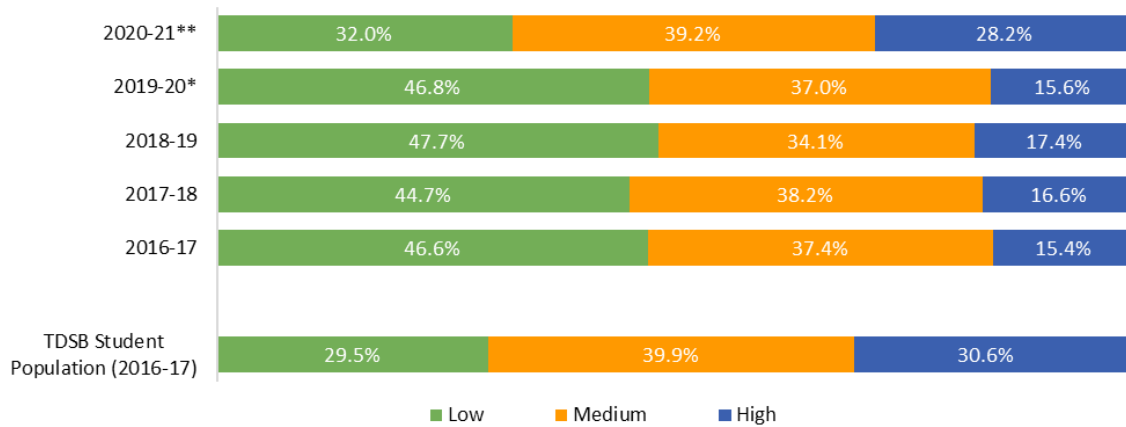


Students who lived with one parent, particularly with mother only, had disproportionately high representations in the suspensions/expulsions in all five school years.

By Estimated Family Income

Almost all TDSB students' postal code information could be linked to the projected median household income data from Environics at the neighborhood level, i.e. for each postal code area in Toronto. This estimated household income data was then classified into ten equal categories (a decile), with Categories 1-3 being low, 4-7 being medium, and 8-10 being high income levels. Figure 11 shows the distributions of student suspensions/ expulsions in the last five years by their estimated family income level.

Figure 11: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Estimated Family Income

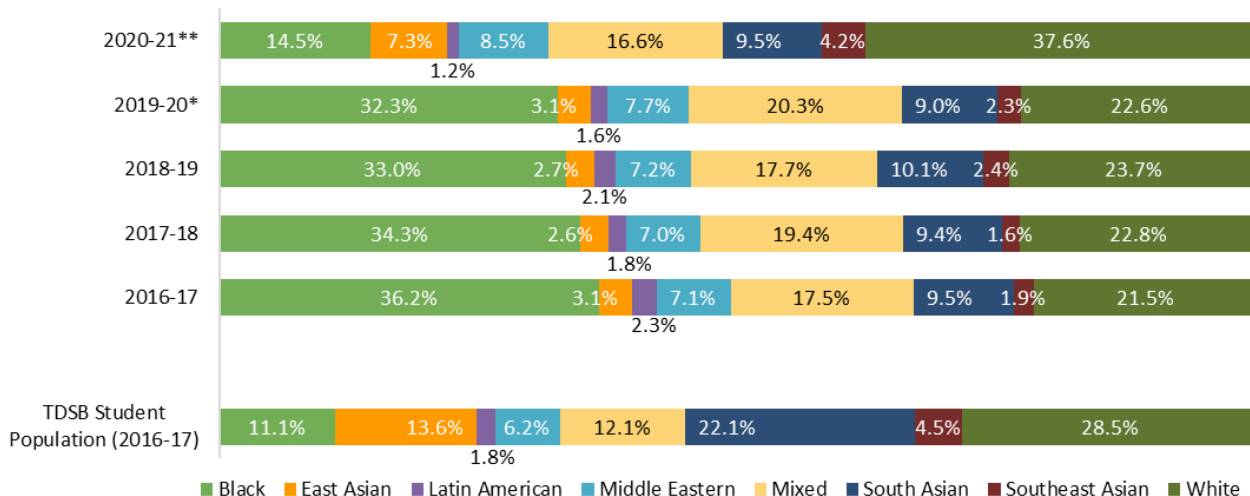


Students from low-income families were over-represented in the suspensions/expulsions in all five school years.

By Student Ethno-Racial Background

In this analysis students' self-identified ethno-racial background was derived from participants' responses to the TDSB's Student/Parent Census (the most recent one was conducted in the 2016-17 school year). As some students and parents did not participate in the Census, 59% of the suspensions/expulsions in the 2020-21 school year could be linked to the Census data.

Figure 12: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Student Ethno-Racial Background

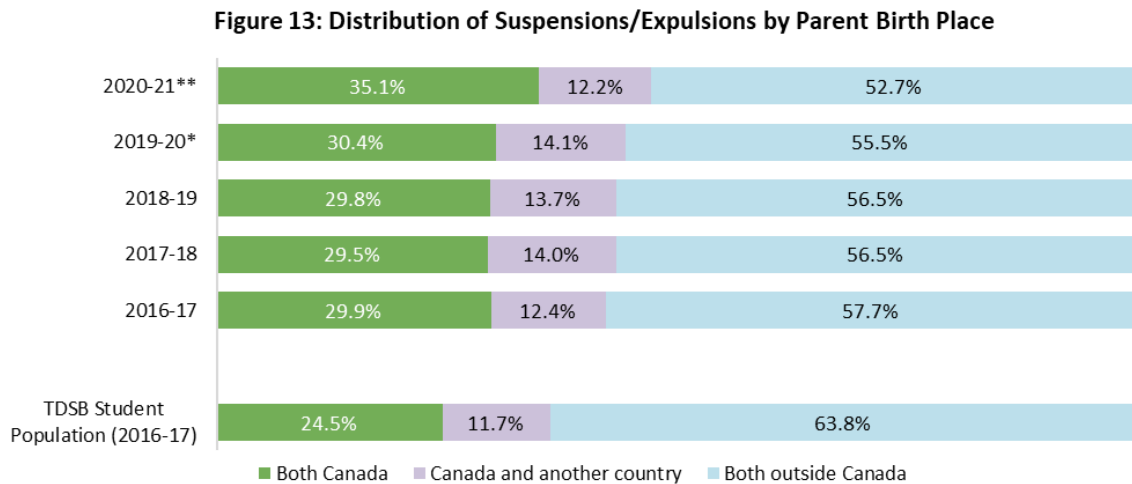


As show in Figure 12, in the school years prior to the pandemic, self-identified Black, Middle Eastern and Mixed students were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions, while East Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian students were under-represented. The pattern is much different for the 2020-21 school year in which schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods, and one-third of the students chose virtual learning. In the 2020-21 school year, White students were responsible for 37.6% of the suspensions/expulsions, followed by Mixed students (16.6%), Black students (14.5%), South Asian students (9.5%), and East Asian students (7.3%).

To protect the privacy of self Identified Indigenous Students who accounted for fewer than 10 suspensions, were excluded from this analysis.

By Parent Birth Place

According to the 2016-17 TDSB Census the majority (64%) of students had both parents born outside of Canada, 12% had one parent born in Canada, and 25% had both parents born in Canada. Over half (58%) of the suspensions/expulsions in the 2020-21 school year could be linked to this Census data.



Students with both foreign-born parents accounted for the majority of suspensions/expulsions (52.7% in 2020-21). See Figure 13.

E: 2020-21 Suspensions/Expulsions and Academic Achievement

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all provincial standard assessments were cancelled in the 2020-21 school year. However, research from previous school years indicates that there are strong correlations between student suspensions and their academic achievement. Suspended students had lower levels of achievement on the provincial standard assessments, report cards, and credit accumulation than students not being suspended. They also had a much lower graduation rate than students who did not have any suspension during their school years.

Similar trends were observed in the 2020-21 school year with the Grade 4-8 report card results for elementary school students, and with the Grade 9-12 credit accumulation for secondary school students. See Figures 14-15.

Figure 14: % of Gr. 4-8 Students Achieving Levels 3 & 4 on the 2020-21 Report Cards by Number of Suspensions

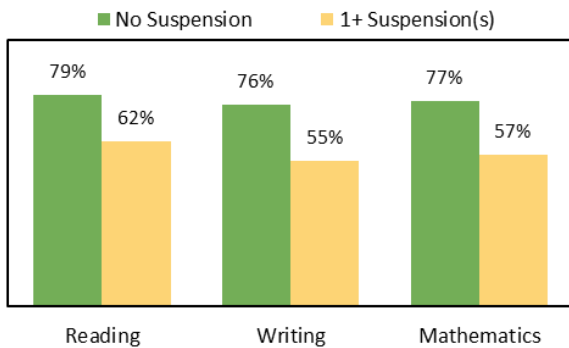
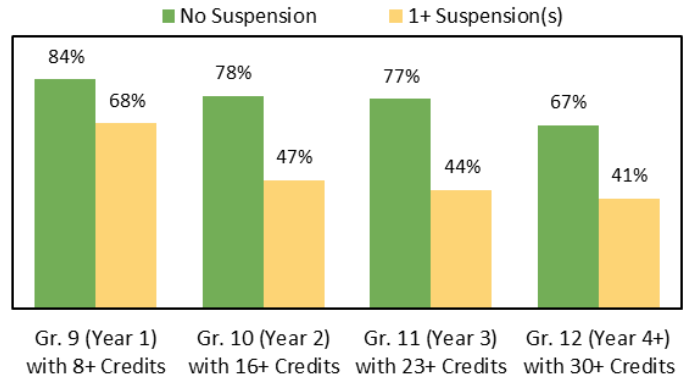


Figure 15: % of Gr. 9-12 Students Meeting Expectations on the 2020-21 Credit Accumulation by Number of Suspensions

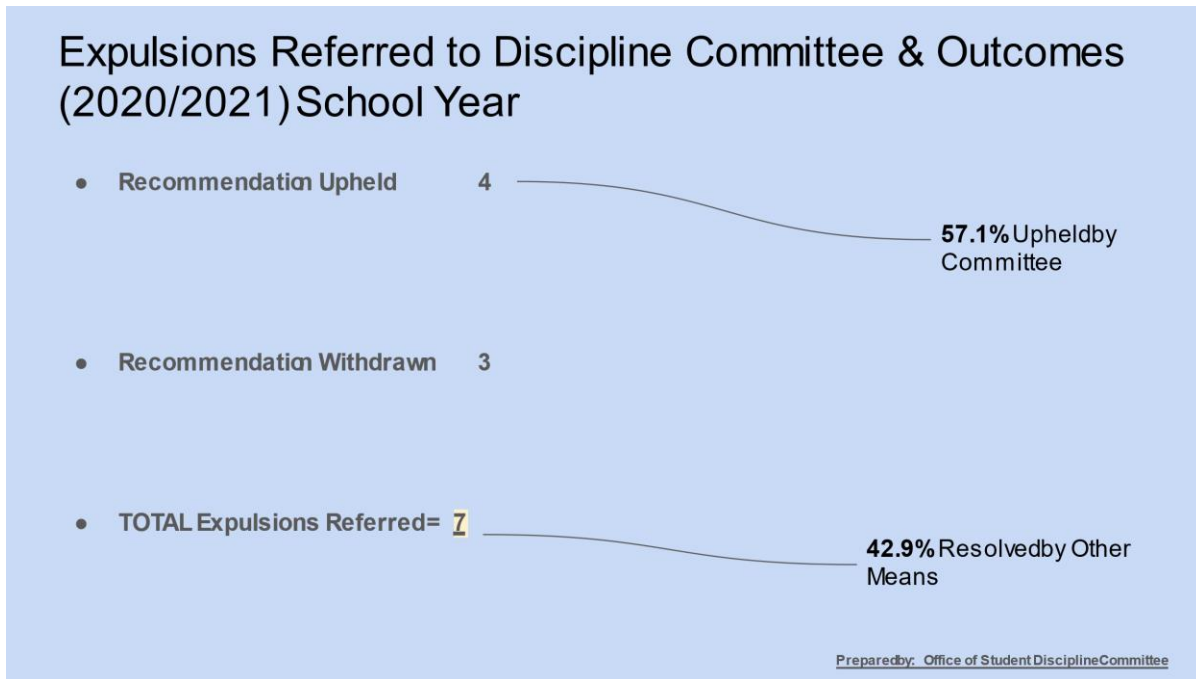


F: 2020-21 Suspension/Expulsion Appeals

Suspension Appeals Filed & Outcomes (2020/2021) School Year



Prepared by: Office of Student Discipline Committee



G: 2020-21 Caring and Safe Schools Alternative Programs

Our schools are safe, nurturing, positive, and respectful learning environments that enable all students to succeed and reach their full potential. Our schools and program sites are places that promote peaceful problem solving, academic excellence, and a sense of belonging for all students. Students are expected to demonstrate respect for human rights and social justice and promote the values they need to become responsible members of society. The Caring and Safe Schools team of administrators, advisors, child and youth counsellors, and court liaison workers will continuously provide direction and support to administrators, staff, parents, students, and communities through:

- Strong school leadership, with consistent discipline policies and procedures;
- School-wide Caring and Safe Schools programs and instructional components focused on inclusive contributions;
- Evolving and expanded prevention-based knowledge and skills;
- Ongoing support and professional growth in emotional intelligence, conduct management, prevention-oriented strategies, mediation, and violence prevention;
- Inclusive and developmentally appropriate materials, activities, and programs being championed and utilized;
- Strong efforts to develop relationships and partnerships within the entire school community; and
- Clear assessment, evaluation, and monitoring of student performance, combined with differentiated programming.

Board policies and procedures have been developed in accordance with provincial legislation and Ministry directives to ensure that our schools are caring and safe communities.

Table 6 shows the Caring and Safe Schools alternative programs for the suspended/expelled students in the 2020-21 school year.

Table 6: Caring and Safe Schools Alternative Programs 2020-21

Program Site	Division	Area	Program Description
C&SS Elementary Itinerant @ Vaughan Rd	Pr./Jr./Int.	LC 1-4	Elementary Itinerant Team – Program Coordinator and Child and Youth Counsellors - provide “push-in” non-academic support in the student’s school.
C&SS Elementary @ Lawrence Heights MS	Pr./Jr.	LC1	Elementary Support Programs (Suspended/Expelled/ Assessment & Support Placements) are provided for elementary school students who have been suspended, expelled, or in alternative placements, and are in need of short- and long-term support. Programs provide both academic and non-academic support. Academic support is provided by a teacher and non-academic support is provided by a Child and Youth Worker at each site. C&SS Social Workers and Psychologists provide services to the sites as required. Suspended/Expelled/Assessment & Support students are referred through the Caring and Safe Schools process.
C&SS Elementary @ Lawrence Heights MS	Jr./Int.		
C&SS Elementary @ Shoreham PS	Pr./Jr.	LC2	
C&SS Elementary @ Shoreham PS	Jr./Int.		
C&SS Midland Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alt. Studies	Pr./Jr.	LC3	
C&SS Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Pr./Jr.		
C&SS Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Jr./Int.		
Barrhead Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Barrhead Learning Centre	Sr.	LC1	Secondary Suspension/Expulsion/Assessment & Support Programs are provided for secondary school students who have been suspended for more than five days or who have been expelled. Site teachers provide academic support and Child and Youth Workers provide non-academic support to students. Suspended and expelled students are referred through the Caring and Safe Schools process. Assessment & Support
Bickford Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Bickford Centre	Sr.	LC4	
Midland Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Sr.	LC3	

Pharmacy Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Terraview Learning Centre	Sr.	LC2	students in need of both academic and non-academic support are referred by Caring and Safe Schools Learning Centre Administrators for placement. C&SS Social Workers and Psychologists provide services to the sites as required.
Arrow Rd. Assessment & Support Program – Jamaican Canadian Association (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC2	Assessment and Support Programs provide both academic and non-academic support to students. The site teacher and Educational Assistant support programming focusing on core curriculum courses (English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, and Learning Skills). Non-academic support is provided by an agency Child and Youth Worker or a TDSB Social Worker. C&SS Social Workers and Psychologists provide services to the sites as required. Students are referred through Learning Centre Caring and Safe Schools Administrators.
Stanley Road Assessment & Support Program	Sr.	LC2	
Operation Springboard Assessment and Support (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC3	
East Metro Youth Services Assessment and Support (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC3	

H: Community Engagement

Effective community engagement is of critical importance in creating positive welcoming caring and safe schools. The Caring and Safe Schools team continues to engage community partners across the Board to support programming both during the regular school day as well as during off school hours. In order to leverage the wisdom and experience which exists within communities. An important element of these partnerships is that they provide the Board with significant expertise related to underserved communities.

The following Educational Programming community partners support Caring and Safe schools programming:

180 Change Street, Agincourt Community Services Association, Argonauts GP Inc., Brave Education Inc, CAFCAN, John Howard Society of Toronto, Neighbourhood Group Community Services, PEACE BY PEACE, Peacebuilders International (Canada), TAIBU Community Health Centre, Think Don't Shoot Inc. and Victim Services Toronto

I: Action Plan and Associated Timelines

Our emphasis continues to be providing safe, caring and welcoming schools. Building relationships with students is a key part of that work because knowing who our students are allows us to create learning environments that connect directly with their experiences and needs. This work is underscored by our commitment to human rights, equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression.

As part of removing systemic barriers, in August of 2019 the Ministry of Education directed school Boards to eliminate discretionary suspensions for students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. Subsequently, TDSB Trustees went a step further and passed a motion that directed staff to eliminate all historic suspensions from students' records, both electronic and hard copies, issued to students when they were in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. The motion further directed that moving forward, a formal retention schedule be set for all suspensions issued, regardless of the grade.

TDSB staff are in the process of implementing this motion.

Systemic changes like the ones made through the Board motion noted above will make a difference in creating student discipline processes which are more equitable and fair for all students. Other factors which have made a positive difference in recent years have been revisions to the Caring and Safe School data base related to "infraction type", the ongoing commitment to professional learning on how identity impacts student discipline, the expansion of community partnerships and the provision of programming outside of regular school hours.

To support students' achievement and well-being, to reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions, and to address the over-representation of some groups who are suspended and expelled, we will continue to:

- More effectively address how issues of identity – such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, special education needs and gender – connect with each other and influence decisions regarding the student discipline process;
- Review the detailed breakdown of suspension and expulsion data to identify trends, patterns and opportunities for improvement;
- Support the Caring and Safe Schools team and all school administrators to examine bias, power and privilege as they relate to the student discipline process;
- Support school administrators in the application of human rights, anti-racism and anti-oppression principles in student discipline;
- Review Caring and Safe Schools practices to ensure consistency with principles of anti-racism and anti-oppression;
- Provide learning opportunities for more staff to be trained in Restorative Practices;
- Develop alternatives to suspension programs;
- Work collaboratively with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and the Centre of Excellence for Black Students Achievement and to challenge unconscious bias, engage in joint problem-solving and ensure that Indigenous students and Black students are treated equitably when it comes to decisions about suspensions and expulsions in each school through collaboration between Principals and Superintendents;
- Consider and act on the intersectionality's of the data provided in this report, Board Special Education staff must also be involved in the analysis of student discipline matters to ensure that any biases in the student discipline process and any subsequent decisions are being acknowledged and eradicated through interrogation and interruption of practices that appear to be automatic responses to student discipline issues and;
- Work with families and community partners to develop relevant approaches and supports for students.

Contact Us

For more information about this report, please contact:

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Endnotes

- * Schools were closed to in-person learning from March 16, 2020 to the end of the school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ** Schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods; one-third of students chose virtual learning for the school year.0
 1. Reported suspensions and expulsions for a school year may include suspensions and expulsions carried over from the previous school year.
 2. Suspension and expulsion rates for a school year may include students who came to TDSB schools after October 31st when the total enrolment number was taken and used for calculating the rates.
 3. Including expulsions carried over from the previous year
 4. SAL: Supervised Alternative Learning
 5. Percentages may not add up to 100 due rounding.

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Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Update

To: Program and School Services Committee

Date: 11 May, 2022

Report No.: 05-22-4316

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Create a culture of student and staff well-being
- Provide equity of access to learning opportunities for all students

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Update report be received.

Context

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement is the first of its kind in K-12 public education in Canada. It is one of Toronto District School Board's responses to dismantle anti-Black racism within the school board and improve both experiences and outcomes for Black students. The creation of the Centre of Excellence is also responsive to the voices of the Black communities who consistently advocated for deeper systemic change within the TDSB.

The concept of a Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement was first proposed through community voice over a decade ago and then in TDSB in 2017 by the [Enhancing Equity Task Force](#). This work involved extensive community consultation which surfaced systemic barriers that are experienced by many TDSB students and disproportionately impeded the academic success of Black students. The Task Force's recommendations led to a number of action plans in the Board's [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#), specifically pertaining to [Toward Excellence in the Education of Black Students](#). These action plans have the goal of removing practices that stream students and decrease the educational opportunities of underserved groups of students, especially Black students. On June

17,2020 TDSB Trustees unanimously approved funding to create the new *TDSB Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement*.

On June 1st, 2021, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement launched virtually highlighting the aspirations of current TDSB students and alumni and key messages from community advisory groups. The [launch event](#) also featured a research-informed panel of leading scholars and experts in the fields of Black student achievement and community-based approaches to African-centred education.



Ascend Towards the Light created by Robert Small

“Ascent Towards the Light”, designed by the Order of Canada recipient, Robert Small is an oil painting capturing the essence of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement. The waves illustrate the turbulence and difficulties Black youth face within the educational system. The mountains represent the adversity Black youth face in society. The light on the top of the mountain represents the hopes and aspirations of African-Canadians. The confidence on the face of the teenage girl (the artist’s daughter Sade Ali Small) who appears in this painting demonstrates the strength, confidence and ability of Black youth to reach the top of the mountain.

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement builds on community voices as well as past and present efforts through a direct, multi-faceted strategy for meaningful and sustained change. The Centre of Excellence focuses proactively on academic success and experiences of belonging of Black students through ongoing authentic relationship building initiatives with community partners. It provides a more coordinated and well-resourced approach leading to systemic transformation. Through the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement, there are enhanced supports for impacted individuals and a forum to develop solutions that are authentic and relevant for Black students, families and staff.

Mandates of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement is guided by the following mandates:

Students

- Provide support to Black students in TDSB schools to combat racism, navigate complaint processes, identify barriers to success and access appropriate resources (e.g., scholarships, networking, mentoring);
- Identify, develop, and facilitate culturally responsive and relevant healing practices for students;
- Establish effective mechanisms for monitoring improvement in the achievement of Black students; and
- Inform changes to policies and procedures so that all students may benefit from the learning and innovative practices developed by the Centre.

Families/Communities

- Support meaningful engagement and advocacy of caregivers for their children in TDSB schools and programs and improve the lines of communication to them about Black student success, system navigation and complaint processes; and
- Engage in strategic community partnerships related to education within the identified approved annual budget for this purpose.

Staff/System

- Use evidence to highlight promising practices and engage in meaningful research on topics relevant to Black students that are then integrated across schools and at the system level within the TDSB;
- Create professional learning in anti-Black racism and collaborate with other staff in facilitating learning in decolonization, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and human rights, while recognizing the similarities and intersections of various forms of oppression; and
- Provide annual accountability reports and recommendations to the Board of Trustees and staff.

Physical Location

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement is situated within Winston Churchill Collegiate Institute located in the Dorset Park neighbourhood of Scarborough. This location was selected for several reasons, including but not limited to:

- The Leonard Braithwaite Program (LBP), which is the first Africentric program offered at the secondary school level in Canada. The Africentric curriculum at Winston Churchill delivers a student and community centred approach to learning. Highlighting the perspectives, experiences, history, and knowledge systems of people of the African diaspora;
- Availability of a large, safe, and accessible environment to continue strengthening community relationships and partnerships with families across the system; and
- Proximity to transit to ensure programs, initiatives and opportunities made available by the Centre of Excellence are readily accessible to Black students, their families and communities.

The physical site is in the final stages of construction. We look forward to welcoming families to the new location on June 1st, 2022 for the launch of the physical home of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement.

Staffing

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement has approximately 21.5 full time staff positions, all focused on improving Black students' experiences, identifying various ways in which anti-Black racism is operating in TDSB and implementing possible solutions to eradicate it. These staff composition currently consist of:

- Centrally Assigned Principal
- Program Coordinator
- Graduation Coaches for Black Students
- K-12 Learning Coaches
- Research Coordinator
- Social Workers
- Child and Youth Counsellor
- Communications Officer
- Office Administrator

Additional staffing to be finalized:

- Community Support Workers
- Student Equity Program Advisors

Graduation Coach for Black Students Program

The Graduation Coaches for Black Students provides student programming and support to 11 schools within the 2021/22 academic year. As part of their work at the Centre of Excellence, the 5 Graduation Coaches roles and responsibilities consist of the following duties :

- improve student engagement and support their well-being;
- contribute to student credit accumulation;
- support and assist with student transitions (e.g., grade to grade, school to work, school to post-secondary); and,
- enhance communication and engagement between school administration and staff, students, their caregivers/families, and community partners.

Supporting Black-identifying Students within the TDSB

Student Programming

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement offers a variety of programs, initiatives, and engagement opportunities for Black-identifying students. This is an essential component of the multi-faceted strategy utilized to enhance and support classroom-based learning and school improvement plans. These intentional opportunities

focus on honouring Black students' experiences and strengths, and ensuring their socioemotional needs are met. The commitment of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement to improve the academic outcomes and experiences of belonging for Black students, has cultivated nurturing and sustainable partnerships with community organizations. These community partnerships and collaborations are designed to fulfill the mandates of the Centre and are in alignment with the TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan *Towards Excellence in the Education of Black Students: Transforming Learning, Achievement and Well-being*. These partnerships have led to the co-development of 10 multiple week-long student programming opportunities and 3 scholarship and internship-based experiences. All these opportunities and experiences were grounded in areas of student mentorship, development of transferable skills, supporting pathways to career opportunities and wholistic enhancement of student positive racial identity.

Further to student programming, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement offered 35 daily live-streamed student learning experiences. These online engagements took place over the course of three months (January - March 2022) as part of the broadcasts for Short Term Virtual Learning Supports. To complement educator curricular experiences, a calendar of events was developed offering rich and relevant learning opportunities led by community-based educators. This compilation of resources was created to promote positive identity development, enhance joy and belonging and affirm the identities and well-being of students. The live-streamed learning experiences included:

Literacy and Writers' Workshop Sessions

- Dwayne Morgan - Spoken Word
- Randell Adjei - Identity Affirmations
- Itah Sadu - Storytelling
- Faduma Mohamed - Poetry

Wellness Wednesdays

- Lance Cumberbatch - African Drumming
- Coco Collective - West African Dance
- Kevin Carrington - Reggae/cise

STEM and History/Geography Sessions

- Uncle Tom's Cabin - African Heritage History
- Canadian Multicultural Inventors Museum - STEM

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement is committed to ongoing work to critically examine the pedagogical approaches that focus on extending inclusion of and accessibility for all learners. In addition, a menu of diverse offerings including twelve recorded asynchronous learning opportunities has been uploaded on the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement staff website under the '[Student Learning Experiences](#)' tab for system use. For greater details pertaining to the student programming and daily learning experiences offerings, please review [Appendix A: Report - Student Programming - \(Key Actions and Impact\)](#).

PreK-K Africentric & Culturally Relevant Summer Learning Program

Created in 2014, this yearly summer experience provides a new type of entry to families within the TDSB. As part of the Black Students Success and Excellence Initiative, the Centre of Excellence in collaboration with the Early Years Department and Continuing Education continued to provide this opportunity for Black and racialized students through a virtual experience in Summer 2021. Across 13 TDSB sites, over 150 students ages 3-6 participated in the remote *Inspired to Excel* Early Years Pre-Kindergarten/ Kindergarten Summer Learning Program. *Inspired to Excel* connects play and learning to children's identities, lived experiences, and interests while affirming the cultural capital of families and their communities as partners within the learning journey. This summer learning experience focused on play and inquiry-based learning and developed early literacy and mathematical behaviours through Africentric and Culturally Relevant and Responsive frameworks.

A special component of this remote learning program was a backpack/resource package filled with rich and intentional resources that each participating family received. The resource package was centered around child(ren)'s unique lived experiences, identities and cultures and included a variety of picture books and materials to support literacy and numeracy development through play and inquiry. For access to the learning experiences curated to support students, staff and families, please see [Appendix B: Pre-K-K Taskcards](#). We are currently in the planning stages for summer 2022, which we aim to be in person.

Black Student Summer Leadership Program

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement remains committed to collaborating with internal and diverse external partners to provide leadership experiences for students tied to career pathways and occupations where Black professionals are systematically underrepresented. The career pathways were informed recommendations provided by students during community consultations. In an effort to bridge this gap, the Graduation Coaches for Black Students collaborate with the Continuing Education department, Focus on Youth team, and the Research and Development department, to support Black students' interests via the Black Student Summer Leadership Program (BSSLP).

The BSSLP provides self-identifying Black students from grades 10-12 with experiential learning opportunities through partnerships with community educators, organizers, and corporate partners. Students are given the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge as junior researchers by learning about Youth Participation Action Research (YPAR). In summer 2021, over 140 self-identified African, Afro-Caribbean, and Black (ACB) students applied for this experience with 85 students representing 30 TDSB schools successfully completing the 5-week program.

As part of the BSSLP, each student received compensation for their contributions. Graduation Coaches for Black Students collaborated with 18 for-profit and not-for-profit organizations to support students in their critical exploration of areas of passion and

professional interest. The BSSLP provided an affirming affinity space for TDSB Black students to explore their experiences through reflective activities and facilitated discussions. Through the collaboration with TDSB's Research Departments, students were able to identify, design and reflect on their experiential learning placements through YPAR. This upcoming summer, the 2022 BSSLP program will host 115 students.

For greater insight into the Black Student Summer Leadership Program, please review [Appendix C: Infographic - Black Student Summer Leadership Program](#).

Supporting TDSB Staff Capacity-Building and System-wide Initiatives Addressing Anti-Black Racism

Professional Learning and Capacity Building

After the launch of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement, diverse capacity-building sessions were provided to educators to deepen their understanding of anti-Black racism, Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) and principles of Africentricity.

Over the 2021-2022 school year, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement has been facilitating learning experiences guided by our inquiry question: *In what ways might we cultivate the necessary conditions to support building positive racial identity within instructional programming to promote the achievement and well-being of Black students and disrupt deficit narratives rooted within anti-Black racism?* As part of this inquiry, the Centre of Excellence staff engaged in a multi-faceted strategy of professional learning opportunities to support educators in cultivating school and classroom environments focusing on enhancing joy, building positive racial identity development, and affirming students' experiences and identities. These experiences build on research-based understanding of the topics presented and explored concrete strategies for building children's positive racial identity focused on Blackness and African-centred practices. Some of the synchronous professional learning experiences offered include:

- 11-Part Positive Racial Identity Development Series
- 3-Part Anti-Black Racism: Facilitating, Interrupting and Disrupting Series
- 4-Part Black Student Success and Excellence Foundational Series (this series was provided twice throughout the year)

To support ongoing professional development, some of the capacity building sessions were recorded. These opportunities can be accessed on our Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement website under the '[Professional Learning](#)' tab along with accompanying guides for continued growth. Furthermore, in collaboration with various TDSB departments, and community organizations, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement curated resources aimed at dismantling anti-Black racism and supporting students and families. These tools are available under the '[Resources](#)' tab of our website.

For greater details pertaining to the professional learning and capacity building opportunities offered by the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement, please review [Appendix D: Report - Staff and Community Capacity Building \(Actions and Impact\)](#).

Black Student Success and Excellence

In collaboration with Ontario's Anti-Racism Directorate and the TDSB Research Department, the Black Student Success and Excellence (BSSE) initiative focuses on improving the achievement of self-identifying Black students across the system. This professional learning and student engagement initiative engages secondary schools and their elementary feeder schools serving high populations of Black students.

The Black Student Success and Excellence (BSSE) initiative entered Year 4 within the 2021-2022 school year. This year sought to implement the recommendations from previous iterations which include engaging in capacity building with over 150 educators; implementation of critically conscious practitioner inquiries; and in-class/in-school co-teaching and curriculum design with educators and administrators. Furthermore, participating schools increased from 17 to 23 schools across all four learning centres. As part of the BSSE, schools have been engaging in parent/community initiatives focusing on building Black parents' understanding of the school system which includes supporting the development and delivery of resources for families.

Sankofa Black Heritage Collection

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement in collaboration with English/Literacy and Teachers Learning and Leading departments are developing a [Teachers' Guide](#) for use with the Sankofa: Black Heritage Collection. The guide will model for junior and intermediate teachers the use of anti-racist and culturally relevant pedagogy. The guide also supports the TDSB's DIAL (Addressing Debt in Adolescent Literacy) goals for student success in literacy. Rubicon's Sankofa Black Heritage Collection is a series of 15 books, each written by an author of African Descent. Each book includes a variety of genres, historical and contemporary content, identifying past and present views of the African-Canadian experience. Each title provides motivation for literacy success, features differentiated instruction, and topics that have students' interest in mind, supports curriculum expectations and features cross-curricular connections, Canadian perspectives, and leaders. A set of Sankofa books has been ordered for all schools in the BSSE and DIAL initiatives.

Black Studies Courses

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement sought to provide a menu of courses exploring African heritage and history, as well as building positive Black identity

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development. This two-part conversation, which began August 19, 2021, was launched with a keynote by Natasha Henry who shared strategies, conditions, and explorations of Black Canadian Counternarratives. 62 administrators and system leaders were engaged in an exploration of six staff-developed, Black-focused courses. The following courses were highlighted:

- Sound Messages
- Politics in Action
- Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice
- Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism
- The African Diaspora
- Redefining the ManDem

To access two of the Black focused courses: *Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism* and *Redefining the ManDem*, please visit the '[Black Studies Courses](#)' tab of our website.

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) Access Pathways for Black Educators

In collaboration with Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement established a series of structures and supports that enhance the numbers and experiences of Black educators in the preservice program. Intentional placements of 14 Master of Teaching candidates with educators within the Black Student Success and Excellence initiative were coordinated. Over the course of five-months, this partnership sought to engage in action research inquiry projects with school personnel, promote intentional development of affinity spaces during the six-week practicum block and curate purposeful teaching experiences with students.

Human Library Podcast Series, Season 2: Conversations around Black Student Success and Excellence

Season 2 of the TDSB Human Library Podcast Series, comprises a collection of audio episodes on topics that challenge educators to critically reflect on their pedagogy. Episodes explore innovative ways educators can centre students, deepen relationships with families and enhance community partnerships. Grounded within the mandates of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement, the latest season, *Conversations around Black Student Success and Excellence*, introduces audience members to leading scholars, emerging thinkers, and fellow educators dedicated to creating learning spaces dedicated to Black student success, well-being and positive racial identity. This edition highlights strategies that support meaningful engagement and advocacy of caregivers and communities and offers guidance with navigating the education system. Some of the topics and enduring understandings include:

1. Supporting Positive Racial Identity in the Early Years - Dr. Kerry-Ann Escayg
2. Teaching & Learning: The Archeology of Self, Unpacking of Self in Anti-Oppression Work - Dr. Nicole West-Burns
3. Accountability and Recommendations from Consultations - Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Research Team

Equity Department Referrals

To facilitate the process of connecting with the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement, the Equity, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression referral process is being used to further serve Black students and families. The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement is actively engaging in responding to referrals specifically tied to addressing anti-Black racism, enhancing students' experiences of belonging within school environments and engaging in intersectional support of Black-identifying students within the TDSB (e.g., students who identify as Black and Muslim, students who identify as Black and within the 2SLGBTQIAP+ community).

Additional Qualifications: Addressing Anti-Black Racism in Pedagogy and Practice

In March 2022, the Ontario College of Teachers launched the provincial guidelines for the Additional Qualifications course *Addressing Anti-Black Racism in Pedagogy and Practice*. In May 2022, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement will be engaging in the development process of Part 1 for the additional qualifications. This course will provide opportunities for educators to self-reflect, deepen knowledge, and explore ways to embed African-centred practices within educational environments. During summer 2022, the Additional Qualifications course *Addressing Anti-Black Racism in Pedagogy and Practice, Part 1* will be provided for TDSB staff by the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement.

Community Engagement and Outreach

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement recognizes that the process of dismantling anti-Black racism and improving outcomes for Black students requires the ongoing collaboration and support of families, communities, and partner organizations. The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement aims to be responsive to the voices of Black communities who continue to advocate for systemic change within educational institutions through strategic community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships.

Community Consultations

The Centre of Excellence research team sought to understand and learn more about ongoing concerns from stakeholders. Consultations were developed as part of the Centre's commitment to deepen and strengthen these partnerships, while focusing on the shared responsibility to support Black students within our schools. Recognizing the recommendations of Black communities to partner and cultivate environments that centre Black student voices, their agency and joy, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement continues to implement strategies to highlight and leverage familial and cultural capital and community-based teachings within learning experiences.

Community Partnerships

The Multi-Year Strategic Plan addresses the importance of identifying, curating, and co-developing community partnerships to ensure students can see themselves reflected within curricular programming. Community educators are invaluable contributors to this educational process.

During summer 2021, in collaboration with Model Schools for Inner Cities and the Continuing Education department, students and families had the opportunity to engage in rich and relevant cultural learning opportunities in partnership with community-based arts educators. 38 school locations across three different summer learning programs participated in 110 Arts learning experiences including African Drumming, Storytelling, Visual Arts, West African Dance and Reggaecise sessions. Through these experiences, children were able to extend their understanding of self and explore methods of creative expression.

Over the course of the 2021-2022 school year, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement has been actively engaging in increasing the number of Black-identifying, Black-serving community organizations and service providers partnering with the TDSB. In response to the mandates of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement, we have actively developed a new community-based process that is grounded in principles of reciprocity and relationality with educational partners. This process, leveraging the expertise and brilliance of community organizations and service providers, has led to the co-development of 10 educational programming opportunities with community partners for Black students within the TDSB. These partnerships are essential to ensuring representative organizations who offer educational programming centering the identities, experiences, and cultural legacies of people of African descent. We currently have 72 community organizations and service providers affiliated with the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement focused on [African Heritage educational programming](#) (Appendix E). This list continues to be updated through our relationship with the Partnerships Office.

Parents as Partners

In November 2021, families, caregivers, and community members were invited to engage in an intimate conversation with the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement. These sessions sought to discuss innovative programming and strategies rooted in Black Joy and Excellence, highlight opportunities for ongoing collaboration and partnership and share ways to further connect with the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement for ongoing advocacy.

Communications

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement continues to actively connect with families, caregivers, and community through a variety of channels, leveraging both

traditional and digital media. Messages are shared daily with our community through social media channels including the @tdsb_cebsa [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts and shared through the TDSB social media channels of our partner organizations and community pages.

Communications Officers also distribute content to our audience via quarterly newsletters that are emailed directly to a mailing list of over 1400 subscribers. The newsletter, which also captures the voices of students, staff and partners through feature stories can be found on both internal and external TDSB web platforms.

Furthermore, traditional media channels such as the CBC, Globe and Mail, Toronto Star as well as Caribbean Camera, Share and ByBlacks.com have shared information about the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement to a national audience, thus increasing the awareness and the reach of the department. The current programs, opportunities and resources offered by the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement can be found on the newly launched Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement public facing website tdsb.on.ca/cebsa. In addition, resources for staff can be found on an [internal staff website](#), which continues to be updated regularly to offer diverse staff and student learning opportunities.

Research

The Centre of Excellence integrates research, within all of its work with TDSB staff, community members, students and families. Key areas of students' experiences and outcomes across each initiative and project within the Centre of Excellence use research both formatively and summatively to refine, adapt, and evolve work throughout the year. Research is embedded into the Centre of Excellence work design. This past year the Centre of Excellence integrated research within the following three core areas:

- Providing professional learning for educators in anti-Black racism and collaborating with other staff in facilitating learning in decolonization, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and human rights, while recognizing the similarities and intersections of various forms of oppression
- Developing school leadership competencies for key school and classroom conditions that support Black student success, and
- Consultations with Black communities on core and critical areas of Black student success

The partnership between the Centre of Excellence and Research and Development in the TDSB is representative of the Centre's commitment to use research and evaluation to continually improve and meet its core mandates. To illustrate, this past fall, the Centre of Excellence partnered with Research and Development to organize a team of Black researchers all with expertise in core areas of Black student success and community voice. The research team conducted Toronto-wide community consultations in eliciting perspectives from the community in relation to the role of the Centre of Excellence and

TDSB as a whole in supporting Black student success and outcomes. In an in-depth report (due to be published), lead author Tanitiã Munroe, detailed participants—students, parents, and community members rich perspectives on key areas critical to successfully addressing the Centre’s core mandates.

The report outlines four areas grounded from perspectives of participants as follows:

- Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Black Families
- Learning Conditions in Classrooms
- School and Family Relationships
- Support for Black Student Achievement

Students, families, and community members shared recommendations to improve classroom conditions, negotiate school communities and improve partnerships. Many of the suggestions visualized a much broader concept of education that moved beyond “schooling” at TDSB and into areas such as students’ wellbeing, equity of access, parent empowerment, and increased partnerships. This coincides with the Centre of Excellence mandates and the initiatives outlined in the Board’s Multi-year Strategic plan that underscore the need to build strong relationships with students, staff, and families so they may engage in discussions and learning opportunities on critical issues that impact their schooling experiences [1]. More importantly, developing and supporting a research-based family engagement framework is essential to determine when programs are working and how to improve them. Therefore, this report concludes with a framework of action generated through the suggestions and recommendations from African, Afro-Caribbean, and Black (ACB) students, families, and community members.

[1] TDSB (2018). *Multi-Year Strategic Plan*.

https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/leadership/board_room/Multi-Year_Strategic_Plan.pdf

Moving Forward

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement is excited and looking forward to our future collaborations and engagements. Our aim is to continue to work with students, families/caregivers, diverse communities, and staff to operationalize the mandates of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement. Essential components of our future plans include:

- Formalizing our Elders’ Circle and Advisory Committee for the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement.
- Engaging in a multi-layered approach to acquiring TDSB staff voice (e.g., surveys post-sessions to further inform professional development). To ensure we are responsive to the needs and aspirations of self-identifying Black staff, we will be curating a series of consultations to hear from staff pertaining their experiences, concerns, and aspirations through a collaborative approach in the Fall of 2023.

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- Shifting our focus for professional learning experiences in the 2022-2023 school year toward culturally responsive healing strategies to further cultivate experiences of belonging and centre the wellbeing of Black students, staff, and families.
- Increasing the number of partnerships, we have with Black-identifying, Black-serving community organizations and service providers who offer educational programming opportunities.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s):

- [Policy P037 – Equity](#)
- [Policy P031 – Human Rights](#)
- [Protecting and Promoting Human Rights and Addressing Discrimination in Schools](#)

References:

- [Enhancing Equity Task Force](#)
- [Supporting Black Student Achievement and Dismantling Anti-Black Racism at the TDSB](#)

Appendices:

- [Appendix A: Report - Student Programming - \(Key Actions and Impact\)](#)
- [Appendix B: Pre-K-K Taskcards](#)
- [Appendix C: Infographic - Black Student Summer Leadership Program](#)
- [Appendix D: Report - Staff and Community Capacity Building \(Actions\)](#)
- [Appendix E: African Heritage educational programming](#)
- Appendix F: Focussed Conversations with African, Afro-Caribbean and Black Students, Families and Community

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TDSB Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Report

Appendix A: Student Programming - Key Actions and Impact

FOCUS AREAS
<p>Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Mandates</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide support to Black students in TDSB schools to combat racism, navigate complaint processes, identify barriers to success and access appropriate resources (e.g., scholarships, networking, mentoring). 2. Identify, develop and facilitate culturally responsive, and relevant healing practices for groups of students. 3. Establish effective mechanisms for monitoring improvement in the achievement of Black students. <p>Inform changes to policies and procedures so that all students may benefit from the learning and innovative practices developed by the Centre.</p>
<p>Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Pathways & Transitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve the sense of belonging, well-being, and rates of achievement of Black newcomer/refugee students. ● Increase graduation rates of Black students. ● Increase support for students taking academic programming.
<p>Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Student Voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To increase the influence of students’ individual and collective insights on decision-making, particularly as it relates to improving engagement, academic achievement, equity, well-being and school climate.
PROGRAMMING
<p>ADVANCE Music Discovery Program: In collaboration with ADVANCE Canada’s Black Music Business Collective, grade 11 and 12 students with a passion for music business explore pathways into the Music Industry (e.g., content creator, data analyst, royalty administrator, marketing manager, etc.). This 9-week Music Industry Discovery Program features high profile guest speakers and mentors from a variety of areas in the business.</p> <p>Impact: 13 students representing 13 schools (program); 9 students representing 9 schools (mentorship)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3 Graduation Coach schools (Humberstone CI, Thistleton CI, Birchmount Park CI). ● 2 Black Student Success and Excellence School (Winston Churchill CI, West Hill CI) ● Students will have the opportunity to attend the sound check 2022 Juno Awards and will receive access to potential summer employment opportunities.
<p>Black Aviation Professionals Network (BAPN) Partnership: Learning experiences and experiential opportunities that promote professional aviation careers to Black students are provided by Black professionals currently in the industry. This includes programming for students who have identified an interest and already enrolled in the <i>Aviation and Aerospace</i> SHSM within the TDSB, and also students who have a passion in aviation.</p> <p>Impact: 22 students attend the program representing 18 schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2 Graduation Coaches (Central Tech SS, Humberstone CI) ● 2 Black Student Success and Excellence schools (Westview C SS, West Hill CI)

TDSB Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Report

Black Girls' Book Club: The Black Girls' Book Club establishes identity-affirming spaces for Black girls. This literary opportunity provides Black girls with the opportunity to read current literature that speaks to the diversity of the Black identity and also develops their skills and competencies as readers. This year, three iterations of the Black Girls' Book Club have been held: two sessions for self-identifying Black girls in secondary school, and one offering for middle school.

Impact: 11 self-identified Black girls representing 10 schools

- 3 Graduation Coach schools (Newtonbrook CI, Harbord CI, Westview C SS)
- 1 Black Student Success and Excellence School (Westview C SS)
- 4 Black girls facilitated an English Literacy workshop entitled *Show Me Literacy Episode 3: Black Girls' Book Club: Creating Courageous Spaces for Black Sisterhood* to 170 TDSB staff

Black Students in Business Collective: In collaboration with Ivey Business School at Western University, Schulich School of Business at York University, and Smith School of Business at Queen's University, Gr. 10 Black students who have expressed an interest and passion within business are able to explore different career pathways in business, postsecondary programs and receive guidance throughout their business journey.

Impact:

Gr. 10 Programming - 36 students representing 19 schools

- 7 Graduation Coach schools (AY Jackson SS, Birchmount CI, Forest Hill CI, Humberside CI, Kipling CI, Newtonbrook SS, Westview C SS)
- 3 Black Student Success and Excellence schools (Oakwood CI, West Hill CI, Winston Churchill CI)

Gr. 11 & 12 Enhanced Programming - 23 students representing 15 schools

- 5 Graduation Coach schools (Albert Campbell CI, Forest Hill CI, Harbord CI, Humberside CI, Westview C SS)
- 4 Black Student Success and Excellence schools (Oakwood CI, West Hill CI, Westview C SS, Winston Churchill CI)

Black Student Leadership Course:

- Courses: Grade 11 CPC301 - Politics in Action: Making Change
- Grade 12 HSE4M1 - Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice

Impact:

- 6 Students attend the CPC 301- Politics in Action: Making Change
- 14 Students attend the HSE4M1 -Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice

Pathways to Public Relations: In collaboration with Humber College Faculty of Media and Creative Arts along with Code Black Communicators Network, students in grades 11 and 12 explore academic and career pathways in Public Relations and Communications (e.g., media relations, social and digital media communication, public affairs, event management, content creator, etc.). This 3-week program supports an understanding of areas that are not often explored in traditional education settings, and also includes support for scholarship submission.

Impact: 14 students representing 13 schools

- 1 Grad Coach school (Kipling CI)
- 1 Black Student Success and Excellence school (Weston CI)

Informational Technology and Coding: In partnership with Interac, quarterly program whereby participating students engage in learning experiences and experiential opportunities situated within

TDSB Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Report

informational technology and coding.

Impact: 7 self-identified Black students representing 6 schools (Thistletown CI, West Humber, Weston CI, CW Jeffreys, Emery, Oakwood CI)

- 1 Black Student Success and Excellence school (Oakwood CI)

Lead with Cause: Social Innovation Challenge: In collaboration with Intuit, participating schools co-identify and address barriers Black students, families and communities have with regards to financial literacy, digital equity and design thinking for innovative community-based change. This core programming also includes professional development opportunities for staff and experiential learning experiences for students.

Impact: A group from George Vanier SS was selected as both a national winner and earned 2nd place in the international Intuit competition. The group received \$3000 in scholarship funds and international recognition for their achievement.

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR): Graduation Coaches in collaboration with TDSB research associates will continue with the Youth Participatory Action Research initiative.

Impact: This year, 6 students are currently registered.

OPPORTUNITIES

Sunnybrook Hospital Focused Ultrasound Lab Summer Internship: In collaboration with Sunnybrook Hospital connected with students in Grade 11 and 12 who are considering post-secondary studies in the field of health science and engineering. Students hired through the Sunnybrook Hospital Ultrasound Lab Summer Program will explore education and career pathways in the fields of health research, science and engineering while contributing to new ideas. Students will receive 1:1 mentorship, gain hands-on knowledge through project areas including Experimental, Programming, Biology or Engineering and Technology Development.

Impact: 31 students representing 17 schools

- 6 Graduation Coach schools (Albert Campbell CI, Birchmount Park CI, Harbord CI, Humberside CI, Thistletown CI, Westview C SS)
- 4 Black Student Success and Excellence schools (Georges Vanier, Oakwood CI, Weston CI, Westview C SS)

University of Toronto Engineering Blueprint: In collaboration with University of Toronto Faculty of Engineering connected with students in Grades 10 and 11 who are interested in careers in Science, Technology Engineering and Math with a strong interest in Engineering. Blueprint is an academic enrichment program that includes four weeks of summer programming taking place from July 11 to August 5, 2022. In addition to year-long student engagement— including monthly webinars and scheduled meet-ups—students will have the opportunity to hear from researchers in the STEM-fields.

Impact: 13 students representing 9 schools

- 3 Graduation Coach schools (Albert Campbell CI, Central Tech, Westview C SS)
- 3 Black Student Success and Excellence schools (Oakwood CI, West Hill CI, Westview C SS)

Learn and Work Bursary Program: The Learn and Work Bursary Program provides a \$1,000 bursary to Grade 11 and 12 students who face diverse barriers in completing their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The bursary is to mitigate financial barriers these students may be facing and support them to stay in school.

TDSB Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Report

Impact: 29 students representing 12 schools

- 10 Graduation Coach schools (AY Jackson SS, Birchmount Park CI, Central Tech, Forest Hill CI, Humberstone CI, Kipling CI, Newtonbrook SS, Thistletown CI, Westview C SS)
- 2 Black Student Success and Excellence schools (Weston CI, Westview C SS)

LEARNING EXPERIENCES (BROADCASTS)

January 17, 2022 - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day: As the TDSB reflected on the life and achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., along with the importance of deepening our understanding of the global impacts of racial discrimination, more specifically in Canada, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement hosted two live-streamed learning experiences for K-12 classes:

1. Storytelling with Itah Sadu (Kindergarten to Grade 8)
2. Spoken Word with Dwayne Morgan (Grade 7 - Grade 12)

Impact: In total throughout the day, there were 1,145 viewers for the session with Itah Sadu and 1,130 viewers for the session with Dwayne Morgan. There continue to be increased viewership as these two sessions are available asynchronously on the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement [website](#)

Daily Broadcast Experiences: The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement offered weekly student broadcast experiences within various fields in collaboration with community partners from January to March 2022. This partnership sought to ensure students and their families remained connected to their school community during transitional periods of in-person and remote learning. Key foci of these experiences include honouring and affirming Blackness and embedding African-centred practices in instructional pedagogy. These experiences included:

- Dwayne Morgan - Spoken Word
- Uncle Tom’s Cabin - African Heritage History
- Randell Adjei – Identity Affirmations
- Coco Collective - West African Dance
- Canadian Multicultural Inventors Museum – STEM
- Itah Sadu - Storytelling
- Faduma Mohamed – Poetry
- Kevin Carrington – Reggaecise

Impact: The impact of these daily learning experiences is quite extensive and far-reaching. At the time of these experiences, a hybrid teaching structure was in place, whereby students learning remotely, and full in-person classes participated in the learning. It is difficult to know during the livestream sessions, whether one view equated to one full class (around 25 students) or one individual (e.g., the Literacy sessions below note 1077 views, but this could equate to 26,925 students who attended the sessions during the course of the literacy broadcasts).

- *Literacy* (Dwayne Morgan, Itah Sadu, Randell Adjei and Faduma Mohamed): 1077 collective views
- *Wellness* (Kevin Carrington, Coco Collective, and Lance Cumberbatch): 957 collective views
- *STEM* (Canadian Multicultural Inventors Museum): 409 collective views
- *History/Geography/Social Studies* (Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site): 1014 students across 15 schools

There continues to be increased viewership as twelve sessions are available asynchronously on the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement [website](#).

INSPIRED TO EXCEL

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Summer Learning Program and Experiences

Task Cards
2021

Dear Families and Caregivers,

We would like to welcome you to our 2021 *Inspired to Excel Summer Learning Program*: July 5 - 30, 2021 from 9am -12pm.

The Inspired to Excel program cultivates a strong sense of self-awareness, positive identity development and belonging in all of our students. It promotes self-love while honouring the lived experiences and identities of our early learners. The program connects play and learning to a child's identity and interests. It aims to value and affirm families and their community as partners within the educational process. This program, designed, through Africentric and Culturally Relevant and Responsive frameworks, focuses on embedding strong literacy and numeracy practices for student development.

We are delighted that you and your child will be joining us this summer. A special component of this program is that we will be sharing with you and your child a resource package of texts and learning materials to use at home throughout the program. This resource package is centered around children's unique lived experiences, background, history and culture. It aims to honour and validate the voices within families, while supporting student engagement and achievement. During our online learning experiences, students will be provided with the opportunity to extend their learning with these resources.

The books and learning opportunities provided encourage young children to celebrate who they are, appreciate themselves and others, and feel a strong sense of belonging. In addition, your child will receive a bag of loose parts. Loose parts are open-ended materials that can be assembled, combined, or manipulated in a variety of ways to create something new and innovative. The possibilities for play and learning with these materials are endless!

During play and learning experiences, your child might use loose parts to show how their thinking connects to the learning. They may also wish to express their thinking using the writing materials and start experimenting with writing symbols that resemble letters. This can look like writing letters, words and/or drawing pictures. We are encouraging your child to explore writing as much as possible.

We hope that this resource package and the materials offered will support learning at home, while affirming the cultural background of your child and family.

Your commitment to being a part of this program amidst these transformative times will support your child's continued success, growth, and development.

In partnership,

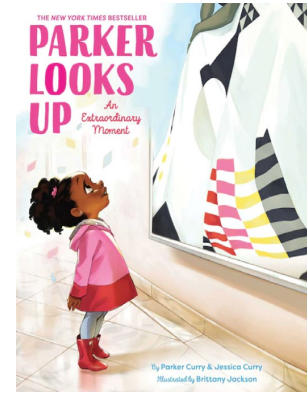
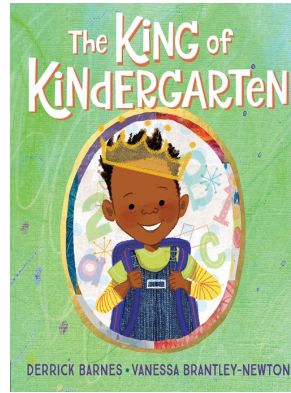
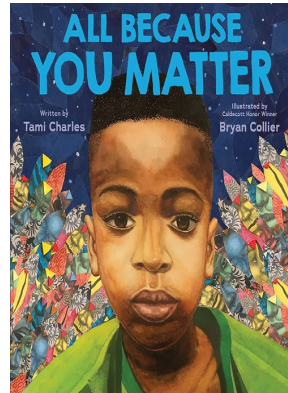
Anastasia Poulis

Anastasia Poulis
Centrally Assigned Principal
Early Years

Karen Murray

Karen Murray
Centrally Assigned Principal
Equity, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: Resource Package Contents



Title: Mae among the Stars
Author: Roda Ahmed
Illustrator: Stasia Burrington

Title: All Because You Matter
Author: Tami Charles
Illustrator: Bryan Collier

Title: King of Kindergarten
Author: Derrick Barnes
Illustrator: Vanessa Brantley-Newton

Title: Parker Looks Up
Authors: Parker Curry and Jessica Curry
Illustrator: Brittany Jackson

LOOSE PARTS



Feathers



Buttons



Tree Rings



Wooden People



Clothespin



Jewels

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Math Materials

Markers, Pencil Crayons and Crayons



MAE AMONG THE STARS

Roda Ahmed

This story explores the childhood of Dr. Mae Jemison, the first Black female astronaut. Join little Mae as she shares her dream and passion of dancing in space among the stars and planets?



WONDER

1. What do you dream about?
2. How does it feel to accomplish a goal or dream that we have?



IDENTITY

Mae told everyone she wanted to be an astronaut. Even when some people did not think she could do it, she believed in herself. She trusted in her abilities and her talents.

1. Use the loose parts (jewels, feathers, buttons, clothespins) or draw a picture showing yourself doing something you dream of becoming.
 - a. Finish the sentence "I dream I can be..."
2. Draw:
 - a. two things you believe you can do.
 - b. one thing you want to learn to do.
3. Use the book to help you write the words to what you drew.



LITERACY

On pages 17-18, Mae dreams she is in space and can see the Earth "floating" and "turning" like a shining crystal ball. What might be some words you could use to describe how Mae moves in space (e.g., spinning, gliding, soaring). Think of as many words as you can.

1. Our words are made up of syllables and sounds. To help us hear the syllables in words we can clap the words (e.g., The words shining, and crystal have 2 syllables: shin/ing, cry/stal).
 - a. Clap the syllables in the moving words. Share with someone the number of claps you can hear in each word.
2. Draw a picture of yourself moving in space. How are you moving? Use the book to help you write your moving words.



MAE AMONG THE STARS

Roda Ahmed

This story explores the childhood of Dr. Mae Jemison, the first Black female astronaut. Join little Mae as she shares her dream and passion of dancing in space among the stars and planets?



NUMERACY

On pages 17-18, Mae dreams she is in space “surrounded by billions of sparkling stars.” To count to one billion is like counting each grain of salt that comes in a salt container or like counting each grain of sand in a sandbox. That is a lot of counting!

1. Start at 1 and begin counting. How far can you count?
 - a. Now, think about the number you stopped at. Can you count by 2’s, 5’s or 10’s to reach that same number?
2. On the same pages, there are many stars in Mae’s dream.
 - a. How many stars do you notice on these pages? How did you come to this number?
 - b. Is there another way to show this number? Use loose parts to help you. (For example, “I saw eight stars near Mae. I counted them one by one. I can also make two piles both with 4 beads because 4 and 4 to make eight.”)



MOVE

Mae really wanted to explore space and reach the stars.

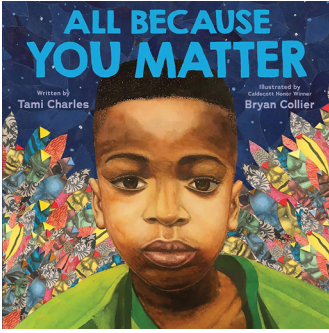
1. Talk to someone about space: What is space? Where is it? How might we get to space? What do you want to learn about space?
2. Mae makes her own astronaut costume and rocket at home to recreate space.
 - a. How might you create your own planet using objects at home? What might you call the planet?
 - b. What might you build to help you reach the stars?



REFLECT

On page 37, it says, “... when she returned home, Mae followed her childhood dream of going to space, and she accomplished many firsts.”

1. What are some firsts you’ve accomplished (e.g., tying shoes, writing my first story, building a castle using blocks, etc.)?
2. Share a story of how you accomplished one of these firsts. Who helped you? How did it feel to accomplish this first?



ALL BECAUSE YOU MATTER

Tami Charles

'Matter' is anything we can see and touch. *All Because You Matter* is an empowering story that speaks to scientific matter and also teaches us that regardless of who we are, we always matter. This book highlights belonging and celebrates the greatness that lives within us.



WONDER

1. What is 'Matter'?
2. What does it mean to matter? How do you matter?



IDENTITY

On page 7 it says, *"On the night you were born, stars sprayed across the sky, each one full of light, hope, love, and all the moments in your life that would matter."*

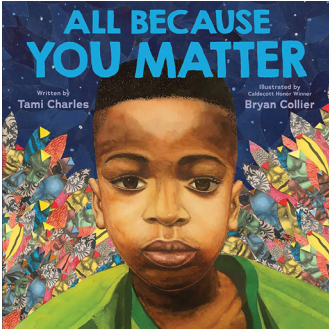
1. Think back to all the moments in your life that matter e.g. your first step, first words, the first time you opened a book you how did you feel?
2. How did these first moments help you to have more first moments in your life?
3. Share with someone at home the 'firsts' that have mattered to you? How did you feel during these moments?



LITERACY

Look through the pictures together and talk about what you see. What do you notice on the pages of the book?

1. We see the word "matter" often in the book. Matter is anything we can see and touch. Everything is made up of matter including us! The word "matter" begins with the letter "m" which makes the sound /m/. Look through the book together to see which pages you can find words that begin with the sound /m/.
2. What other words can you find that begin with the sound /m/ or another sound of your choice?
 - a. Draw pictures of your words.
 - b. Write the letters that make up the words in your pictures.



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NUMERACY

On pages 25-26 there are many hands holding the petal pieces of the quilt.

1. Guess how many petal pieces there are in the hands. How did you make this guess?
 - a. Use the buttons to make the number that you have guessed.
2. Count the petal pieces in the picture. What is the total number of petal pieces in the hands?
 - a. Use the buttons to make your new number.
 - b. Is the new number larger or smaller than the number you guessed? How do you know?
3. Write/Draw two ways to show the number you guessed and the actual number.



MOVE

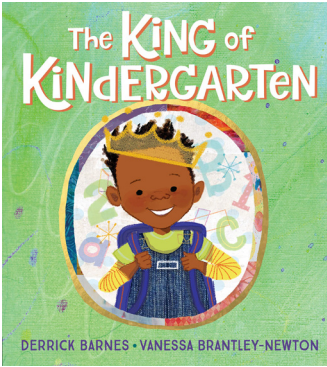
On page 11 it talks about "climbing a ladder to the sky"

1. We climb many things daily. For example, sometimes I climb my building stairs to get to my apartment, or the steps to reach the slide at the park. When was the last time you climbed something? Where did it take you?
2. Create a performance retelling your climbing experience.
3. Share your performance with someone.

REFLECT

On page 23 it says "Did you know that you are the earth? That strength, power and beauty lie within you?"

1. What is the strength, beauty and power that is in you? How do you know?
2. Who helps you find that strength, beauty, or power?



KING OF KINDERGARTEN

Derrick Barnes

The *King of Kindergarten* is an entertaining story highlighting the experiences of a child who is entering kindergarten for the first time. He approaches his experience with joy and pride as he moves throughout his first day of school journey.



WONDER

1. What does it mean to experience something for the first time?
2. When do we feel a sense of pride?



IDENTITY

When the main character of the story wakes up to get ready for school, his mother announces, “*you are going to be the King of Kindergarten!*” Throughout the story, he uses words such as “royal” and “pride” when talking about his first day of school experience.

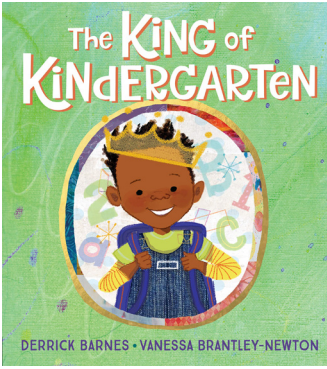
1. What experiences did you have at school that made you feel good about yourself?
2. What sorts of things make you feel a sense of pride? For example,
 - a. “I feel a proud when I learn how to do something new”
 - b. “I feel proud when I share with a friend”
3. Purple is a colour that is often used to show royalty. Choose a colour that reminds you of the way you feel when you are proud. Use this colour to draw a picture of yourself feeling proud.



LITERACY

In the book there are a few words that begin with the same **tr** sound. Repeat these words three times to yourself or aloud “**trucks**”, “**trains**”, “**tractors**”.

1. What other words do you know that have the **tr** sound? Write these words down.
2. Look through the book once again. Choose a new sound (e.g., **fr**, **str**). Using the loose parts, create and draw some of the words that have the sound you chose (e.g., **strawberry**).
3. Use the words you wrote down to make some sentences. How many sentences can you create?



KING OF KINDERGARTEN

Derrick Barnes

The *King of Kindergarten* is an entertaining story highlighting the experiences of a child who is entering kindergarten for the first time. He approaches his experience with joy and pride as he moves throughout his first day of school journey.



NUMERACY

When he is being measured by his Dad, the main character says, "One day, I'll be taller than you, Daddy, and you'll be my lil' man."

1. What are some different ways to measure people and objects?
 - a. What tools do we use? (e.g., shoelaces, foot size, ruler)
 - b. What words do we use? (e.g., taller, shorter, bigger, smaller)
2. Find some objects around you. How would you measure them?
3. Think about how you would sort your objects (e.g., colour, size, weight, height, etc.). Draw a picture of your sorting.



MOVE

In the book, the author writes, "After a royal rest, you'll arise to sing and dance and bop to a rhythmic beat." Think about the beat to your favorite song.

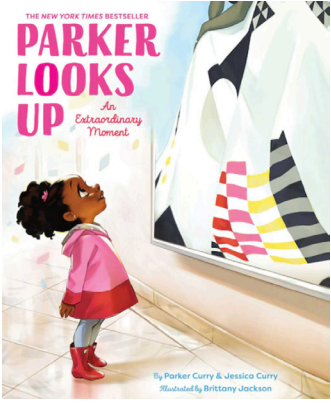
1. Show how you sing, dance and bop to that beat.
2. Create a performance for someone at home. What might you use as instruments or costumes to bring your performance to life?



REFLECT

Think back to your first day of kindergarten or the first day of another experience.

1. What did you see?
2. What were some of the feelings you had?
3. What was the most memorable thing about your day?
4. Did you share any of the same experiences as the main character in the book?
5. Using loose parts (jewels, feathers, buttons, clothespins) show yourself during that experience.



PARKER LOOKS UP

Parker Curry and Jessica Curry

Co-authored by Pre-K student Parker and her mother, Jessica, this story follows their journey to the museum with Parker's younger sister and their friend. It is during this museum visit that an extraordinary moment of representation, hopes and dreams come to life through a magical painting of former First Lady Michelle Obama.



WONDER

1. What makes us unique?
2. What does it mean to see ourselves in someone else?



IDENTITY

After seeing the portrait of Michelle Obama, Parker "froze in her tracks". The longer she looked at her portrait, Parker began to feel "powerful and strong".

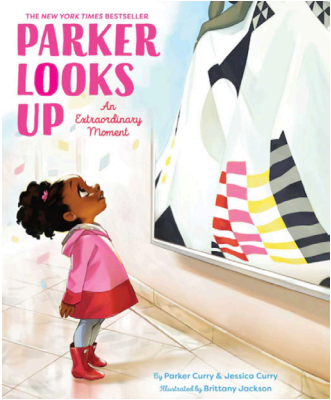
1. Why do you think she felt that way?
2. What stories, pictures or words have you seen, read, or heard that made you feel "powerful and strong"?
3. Why did it make you feel this way?



LITERACY

On pages 28 and 29, Parker's mother uses different words to describe Michelle Obama. Some of these words are *caring*, *courageous*, *smart*, *inspirational*, *mentor*, *friend* and *honest*.

1. What do you notice about the words *caring*, *courageous* and *confident*? What about *honest*, *hero* and *hopeful*?
2. What other words on these pages have similar sounds? How do you know?
3. What words would you use to describe yourself?



PARKER LOOKS UP

Parker Curry and Jessica Curry

Co-authored by Pre-K student Parker and her mother, Jessica, this story follows their journey to the museum with Parker's younger sister and their friend. It is during this museum visit that an extraordinary moment of representation, hopes and dreams come to life through a magical painting of former First Lady Michelle Obama.



NUMERACY

At the museum, Parker sees the portrait of Michelle Obama wearing a dress with many shapes.

1. Using the loose parts, create and label the shapes you notice on her dress. How many of each shape are there?
2. What objects around your home also look like these shapes?
3. Are there new shapes you notice?



MOVE

As a dancer, Parker loves "twirling and leaping in the air".

1. What do you love to do?
2. What movements represent what you love to do? For example, I love to play football, so I might pretend to throw the ball, run, and jump to catch the ball in mid-air. See if someone at home can guess what you love to do based on your movements!



REFLECT

Role models are people we admire or look up to. They can be someone you know, like a family member, a teacher, a community member, or someone you don't know but you really like. In this book, Parker looks up to Michelle Obama and says she has "rich brown skin just like Parker".

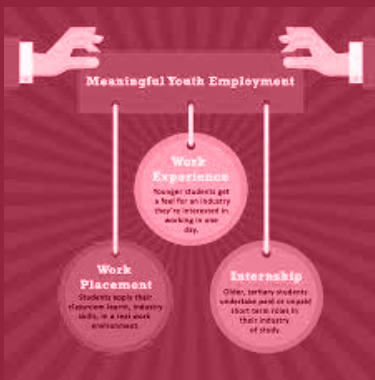
1. Who is your role model? Think of someone you hope to be like. Draw a picture of this person.
2. Why do you admire them? Talk to someone at home about their personality, appearance, and their talents.
3. After seeing the portrait of Michelle Obama, the authors wrote, "In that moment, Parker saw more than just a portrait — she saw a road before her with endless possibilities". A road that doesn't end. Think of something that you thought was impossible to do. How does your role model help you think it is possible?

2021 BLACK STUDENT SUMMER LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (BSSLP)

The BSSLP is a unique program that offers leadership training and paid work experiences for self-identified Black students in secondary schools across the TDSB. This year, the five-week program brought together 85 Black students and community partners and provided students with experiential learning opportunities in various career fields. The primary aim of the BSSLP is to support the development of Black students' leadership skills and enhance their knowledge about various careers or industries that often see less people represented from Black communities.



OVERVIEW



Students were able to do their placement in various sectors including: business, media and creative industries, technology and trades, information technology and entrepreneurship.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AREAS

1. Improving their interpersonal skills including communication, teamwork, and leadership skills;
2. Gaining work experience related to their career interests;
3. Networking;
4. Developing a greater sense of self;
5. Financial benefits;
6. Improving their employability and chances for professional success.



REASONS STUDENTS CHOSE TO PARTICIPATE!



STUDENTS ENGAGED IN YOUTH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (YPAR)

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is grounded in critical pedagogy and gives youth an opportunity to research a problem that's affecting them in schools or their community.

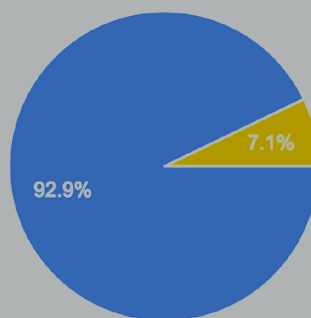
- Black students worked alongside a research team, including teachers, to develop their research skills and investigate an issue of concern in their community or work placement.
- Students had the option of working together or alone to brainstorm possible ways to address the issue.
- At the end of the program, presented and shared the results of their action research.
- Through YPAR, Black students developed the skills and attitudes necessary to think about and engage in issues that mattered to them, thus, preparing them to understand what it means to participate in a positive and critical civic discourse.

Experiential partners commented on the opportunity the BSSLP offered them in relation to mentorship and developing student leaders. 49.2% of the experiential partners “strongly agreed” with the benefits of having students placed in their organization or program. This was followed by 35.7% who “agreed” for the having the opportunity to engage with Black students from the Toronto Community.



INSIGHTS FROM COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Are you interested in collaborating with the BSSLP next year?
14 responses



- Yes
- No
- Maybe

COMMUNITY PARTNERS RESPONSE TO FUTURE COLLABORATION



BEING A COMMUNITY PARTNER!

DOING YPAR!

IMPROVING BLACK STUDENTS KNOWLEDGE ON DIFFERENT CAREER PATHS

“Thank you for sharing this wonderful opportunity for TVO to support the Black youth in the Toronto community. It was a pleasure to expose, develop and mentor 5 student leaders.” Overall, the partners agreed that BSSLP students’ knowledge of issues that are relevant to young people helped their own understanding in connecting with youth, particularly Black youth.” - TVO team

“I also realize that as a university student and political coordinator, I’ll be doing a lot of writing, so I want to use this research opportunity to better my writing skills and have a piece of work to introduce to the McGill administration when I begin my studies.” - Grade 11 student

“My placement explained to me how vast the hands-on career path is. Before I started the placement, I only knew of the more known career paths like engineering. But I learnt what skilled trades are, and how vast it was. so, I decided to take my time and reconsider my career path and my variety of options.” - Grade 10 student

TDSB Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Report

Appendix D: Staff and Community Capacity Building - Key Actions

FOCUS AREAS

Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Mandates

- Support meaningful engagement and advocacy of caregivers for their children in TDSB schools and programs and improve communication to them about Black student success, system navigation and complaint processes
- Use evidence to highlight promising practices and engage in meaningful research on topics relevant to Black students that are then integrated across schools and at the system level within the TDSB
- Create professional learning in anti-Black racism and collaborate with other staff in facilitating learning in decolonization, anti-racism, anti-oppression & human rights recognizing the similarities and intersections of various forms of oppression
- Provide annual accountability reports and recommendations to the Board of Trustees and staff

Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Community Engagement

- To strengthen the processes by which all parents and caregivers have opportunities to contribute to the direction of the Board and their local school's improvement planning efforts.
- To strengthen engagement of all stakeholders as we determine and implement systemic and equitable change.

Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Towards Excellence in the Education of Black Students: Transforming Learning, Achievement and Well-being

- Early Years - To improve the overall experience of Black students in the Early Years, specifically focusing on entry experiences and academic achievement in literacy and numeracy
- Suspension & Expulsion - To create a system plan to reduce the number of Black and racialized students who are suspended and/or expelled.
- Leadership Development - To integrate professional learning about anti-racism and anti-Black racism into all leadership development opportunities.
- Pathways and Transitions - Improve academic and well-being outcomes of Black students in transition to and during high school.
- Initiate a professional learning and student engagement focus with six to eight secondary schools and their elementary feeder schools serving high populations of Black students.

Anti-Black Racism: Facilitating, Interrupting and Disrupting: Three-part professional learning series focuses on developing a leader's capacity in facilitating, interrupting and disrupting anti-Black racism within school communities. Educators build their understanding of key terminology encompassing anti-racist work and engage in critical self-reflection as they build their facilitation skills in engaging in conversations about anti-Black racism.

TDSB Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement Report

Black Student Success and Excellence Foundational Series: This four-part series was for educators who would like to refreshen their understanding or are new to the Black Student Success and Excellence initiative. This learning opportunity seeks to support foundational understandings and inquiry work tied to Black Student Success and Excellence.

Positive Racial Identity Series: This 11-part series sought to support educators and caregivers in cultivating environments focusing on enhancing joy, building positive racial identity development and affirming children’s experiences and identities. The offerings were grounded in a research-based understanding of the topics presented and explored concrete strategies for building children’s positive racial identity focused on Blackness and African-centred practices. The sessions included:

- Dr. George Dei, African Elders and Eldership within Education
- Dr. Kerry-Ann Escayg, Honouring Black students’ racial identities in Early Years classrooms
- Dr. Bettina Love, We Gon’ Be Alright, But That Ain’t Alright: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom
- Lawrence Hill, Identity Loss and Formation - Lawrence Hill in Conversation with TDSB Educators
- Lawrence Hill, Introducing Beatrice and Croc Harry with TDSB Students (Grades 3-8)
- Lawrence Hill, Identity Affirming Stories with TDSB Families
- Lawrence Hill, In Conversation with Lawrence Hill: Sharing Feedback and Experiences (Grades 3-8)
- Dr. Alfred Tatum, Advancing Literacy for Black boys
- Dr. Eugenia Duodu Addy, Advancing STEM Equity: Opportunities for supporting meaningful inclusion and belonging in STEM
- Itah Sadu, Counterstories and Reimagining Community Partnerships
- Dr. Molade Osibodu, Impact of Racial Identity in Mathematics Learning

“Show Me” Literacy Series: The “Show Me” Literacy series continues with new sessions focusing on Culturally and Relevant Responsive Pedagogy and teaching practices that affirm the racial identity of Black students. Some of these episodes include:

- Sankofa Black Heritage Collection Teacher's Guide

Black Girls’ Book Club: Creating Courageous Spaces for Black Sisterhood

COVID-19 Black Youth Vaccination: The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement in collaboration with Black Physicians’ Association of Ontario, the Black Scientists’ Taskforce on Vaccine Equity and the Black Health Vaccine Initiative shared information related to the COVID-19 infection and vaccine. This webinar explored evidence-based choices for Black children's health and education.

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AFRICAN HERITAGE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING PARTNERS

- Below is the list of agencies that have current educational programming partnership agreements with TDSB that specifically support Black students, families and communities.

- If you have guests invited for special events, initiatives and programming, who are interested in providing their sessions more often, perhaps throughout the year or in more than one school annually: Please invite them to submit a partnership proposal the public website, www.tdsb.on.ca/partnership

- TDSB Staff can search and see all details and contact information for our current Educational Programming Partners on the internal web at <http://tdsbweb/partnership>

Partner	Program	Brief Description	Content
Alpha Rhythm Roots	African Musical Journey	Expose students to African history, cultures, and traditions through music, drumming, and dance. Offered in French and English.	Arts & Culture
Agincourt Community Services Association	Student Leadership & Youth Empowerment (SLYE)	This peer to peer (P2P) leadership program helps those students facing social and economic barriers to build essential leadership qualities and agency to positively engage in the community.	Mental Health & Well Being
Aliyah Burey	Youth Empowerment Spoken Word	Using spoken word poetry, Aliyah Burey speaks an uplifting and empowering message to youth through the narrative of her life experience.	English/Literacy
Alpha Rhythm Roots	African Musical Journey	Expose students to African history, cultures, and traditions through music, drumming, and dance. Offered in French and English.	Arts & Culture
B Current Performing Arts Co.	Anti-Oppression, Black History and Storytelling	Using storytelling as a tool for expression and resilience to teach anti-oppression.	Dramatic Arts
Canadian Multicultural Inventors Museum	Inspiring Innovation	Mobile exhibit celebrates and showcases technological STEM inventors and innovators from around the world and in particular those people of African descent from ancient times to present day.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
Canadian Youth of East Africa	YEA Elevate	Career mentorship workshops at Kipling CI for students of East African and Black descent in grades 9 and 10 pair them with young black professionals from diverse professions for informal networking sessions.	Guidance & Careers
C-Flava	Fit With Flava	These fitness workshops and performances introduce students to traditional West-African and Caribbean dance steps infused with modernized choreography through a high-intensity workout routine.	Health & Phys Ed (HPE)
Children's Peace Theatre	Freedom School Toronto	Black History programming for students in all grades, and Professional Learning for staff on inclusion, equity and anti-Black racism.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
City of Toronto	International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD) Schools	Support select schools in development of community engagement, anti-black racism training, professional learning and curriculum development as part of the International Decade for People of African Descent Schools (IDPAD) initiative.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
Coco Collective	Journey Through Diasporas	A group of intergenerational artists deliver a series of culturally-relevant arts workshops with specialty in African and Caribbean arts. Students gain a cultural education from the diaspora, positive identity formation, leadership skills, performance expression and intercultural understanding.	Arts & Culture
Dance Caribe Performing Company	Art of Dance	Dance workshops incorporate traditional Caribbean as well as contemporary dance styles for students to learn about music, culture and how they are interpreted through body language.	Dance
Dance 'N' Culture	Cultural Dance Workshops	Dance workshop introduces foundational movements and concepts on a variety of cultural dances. Dance styles offered include Bollywood, Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Chinese Folk, West African, Soca, Afrobeats and Colombian Folk.	Dance
Debbie Deer Productions	Turn Up 10 Tour! 10 Steps to Living Your Best Life	An inspirational presentation utilizing motivational speeches, musical performances, live DJ and video projections empowering students to achieve their goals and live their best lives, especially for African students.	Mental Health & Well Being
Drums Et Al	African Drumming, Dance, and Storytelling	The themes of leadership, character development and connection with those around us are explored in these interactive African drumming, dance and storytelling presentation and workshops.	Music
Dwayne Morgan	Amplifying Student Voice	Motivational assembly on creating a life built around our passions using spoken word and creative writing. Students develop creative writing skills, spoken word performance, and the introduction of poetry slams.	English/Literacy
Generation Chos3n	Generation Chosen	Culturally relevant and responsive emotional intelligence training to those students from marginalized communities.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
Hello Hope Canada	Hello Hope	Aubrey Noronha offers two presentations, in-person or virtual, to instill hope and better equip students, staff and parents to make their school and community a safe one.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
Inspiration Republic	YOU, Me, US	African Canadian history presentation takes a look at historical African Canadian figures who have made substantial contributions in the black community and Canadian culture while facing racism and oppression.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
Isaac Akrong	African Dance Ensemble (ADE): Dance, Drumming, Music, and Stories	The cultural history, meaning and context of African music and dance comes alive in these presentations and workshops to the school community.	Arts & Culture
Itah Sadu	Stories For Our Time	Highly theatrical and always inspirational, Itah Sadu uses oral tradition and storytelling to share contemporary and traditional stories and folklore from across the African and Caribbean Diaspora.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
Jeff A.D. Martin	You Are Worth It	Motivational assembly and leadership workshops targeted to building up and fostering character development among students.	Mental Health & Well Being
Kareative Interlude	Nu Narrative Literacy Empowerment Program	This workshop series supports black and marginalized students to develop their voice, vision and representation by writing, illustrating and creating their own book.	English/Literacy
Kouraba Toronto Centre for Cultural Adv	Kouraba Foli	Students have a rare opportunity to experience authentic West African music traditions, oral histories and dance from an ancestral perspective delivered by Master percussionists, dancers and musicians; in-person or by video-conferencing.	Music
Love & Guidance Project	Children's Yoga	Culturally relevant stories from the African diaspora are shared alongside yoga, reflective practice, music and movement activities in these in-person or video-conferencing workshops for students in Kindergarten to grades 2.	Mental Health & Well Being
Mabinty Sylla	LANYANA: West African Drumming and Dance	An immersive dance and drumming workshop for students to learn West African culture.	Music
Make It Happen	Gateway 2 Adulthood	Program enhances pro-social behaviour and life-skills for black, underserved, and/or marginalized students in grades 8-12 to actualize and realize their potential.	Guidance & Careers
Mario Rigby	Crossing Africa: Overcoming An Impossible Journey	Canadian adventure explorer, Mario Rigby, shares his story of how he trekked across 12,000 km across Africa by foot and kayak using his three pillars of success: vision, preparation, action.	Guidance & Careers
Maurice Gordon	A Positive Narrative of African/Black Canadian History	Musical presentation assembly that educates, celebrates and presents the achievements of Black/African Canadians who have contributed to making Canada for what it is today.	Music
Nia Centre for The Arts	Creative Connect	These free workshops support Black, African, Caribbean and Afro Diasporic students who have found their purpose in art by providing post-secondary and employment pathways, career exploration and mentorship opportunities.	Guidance & Careers

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P.E.A.C.E.	A Piece of P.E.A.C.E.	Motivational workshops and assemblies use hip Hop, spoken word, poetry and other urban art-forms to explore self-expression, leadership, equity and diversity.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
Quantius Education Foundation	InspireHer	Program provides opportunity for secondary students to gain a better understanding of career and leadership opportunities in underrepresented knowledge-based sectors including Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Entrepreneurship and Math (STEEM) from women and BIPOC industry leaders.	Guidance & Careers
Sellove Youth Wellness and Empowerment	Make Ur Mark Virtual Series: Resilience & Restoration	Hosted by mentor and Black leader, Kym Niles, this live conversation brings together in a question and answer format, Black leaders who share their experiences in overcoming systematic barriers and how they managed their mental well-being in their pursuit to achievement.	Mental Health & Well Being
Skills For Life Inc.	Youth Empowerment Through Life Skills	These in-person or virtual sessions help develop important life skills and to develop the right personal and professional networks for success	Guidance & Careers
Stolen From Africa/Volê D'Afrique	Stolen From Africa	Interactive assembly and arts-based workshops in French or English promote social justice and builds cross cultural understanding for racialized and marginalized students.	Social Studies, Humanities, Geography (SSHG)
TAIBU Community Health Centre	The PLUG Project	The project focuses on violence prevention and developing conflict mediation skills for student success especially for Black and/or marginalized students.	Caring & Safe Schools
The Multicultural Theatre Space Inc.	Stories of Justice	Issues of integration and communication with peers give voice to newcomers, marginalized and racialized youth in these workshops facilitated by multicultural artists	Dramatic Arts
The Youth Empowerment Program	Youth Skills for Life	Workshops offer practical tools to empower vulnerable/BIPOC youth with the skills to increase self awareness, self confidence and self-esteem.	Mental Health & Well Being
Total Man Development Inc.	TMD Envision	This mentorship program provides empowering male influence to youth boys, in-person or by video-conferencing. The program focuses on masculinity, moral courage, communication/conflict resolution, resilience, leadership skills, vision and purpose.	Mental Health & Well Being
University of Toronto	Experiential Learning Design Program	Delivered by graduate students, this program provides students in Grades 11-12 an opportunity to enhance their understanding of design thinking and architectural design.	Guidance & Careers
Urban Rez Solutions Inc.	The R.E.A.L. School	Reality Education Applied Life Skills (R.E.A.L.) program provides students in grades 7 and 8 with life and social skills required to ensure measurable positive impact.	Caring & Safe Schools
West African Cultural Exchange	African Traditional Music (Drumming, Dancing and Singing)	Master Drummer Fred Kwasi Dunyo leads workshops that are designed to fully immerse students in African culture through music, rhythm, song and dance.	Music
Zya Brown	Think Twice	The program facilitates workshops and motivational speaking geared towards youth violence, gang involvement and criminal activity.	Caring & Safe Schools
EMG Education Company	African Canadian History Theatre	Presents dynamic productions that focus on Canadian history and its contributions by Black Canadians and women.	Social Studies, Humanities, Geography (SSHG)
Blank Canvases	Blank Canvases	The program offers students specialized visual arts workshops on the history of local Toronto artists alongside Artist Educators.	Arts & Culture
180 Change Street	180 Change Street	This program identifies and engages youth in a targeted intervention strategy designed to bring about comprehensive change in students. This educational and awareness raising program provides a curriculum that includes one-on-one mentoring, life coaching and training to students	Caring & Safe Schools
BAM Children's Entertainment Inc.	Opening Young Minds with Aunty B & Friends Theatre	Interactive storytelling through life-size puppets and live characters create conversations on inclusion, diversity, Black History, racism and equality.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
CAFCAN	Life Skills and Community Engagement	Life Skills & Community Engagement sessions on various topics that are aimed towards youth who have faced complex challenges in school and in the local community.	Caring & Safe Schools
En'tyce Your Beauty - Naturally	Be-You-tiFul: Holistic Health & Wellness Series	Be-You-tiFul hosts presentations that educate students on healthy eating habits and lifestyle choices to increase students' self-esteem, physical and emotional well-being.	Health & Phys Ed (HPE)
Errol Lee	Errol Lee Caring Concerts	This motivational assembly is specifically designed to teach, nurture, and model positive character traits.	Arts & Culture
Facing History and Ourselves	Facing History: Professional Learning Opportunities	These interactive professional learning sessions equip educators, schools and systems with mindsets, knowledge and skills to shape thoughtful, equitable, just and academically challenging environments for student learning.	Aboriginal / Indigenous Education
Heart of a Man (HOAM) Ltd.	Welcome Wellness	Overcome, elevate, inspire. Donovan is a motivational speaker who inspires others by sharing his story of mental health and wellness.	Mental Health & Well Being
Jessica Dubeau	Freedom Dance Athletics	Dance enrichment workshops provide choreography in historically black influenced dance genres such as: Hip Hop, Jazz, African, Caribbean (Soca, Dancehall), Contemporary, Musical Theatre, and Disco styles.	Dance
John Howard Society of Toronto	H.I.P.P (Helping Individuals Plan Positively)	HIPP is a youth centered program for those aged 16 years and older whom are at risk of becoming engaged in pro-criminal behaviours.	Caring & Safe Schools
Just Aissi	Gumboots Workshops	Introduce students to a unique and engaging dance where the body becomes a musical instrument through the use of rubber boots.	Dance
Kevin Carrington	Reggaeise	Kevin Carrington leads a reggae-inspired cardio fitness dance program that improves student's physical literacy and emotional well-being.	Health & Phys Ed (HPE)
Live Your Legacy Academy Inc.	Live Your Legacy	This assembly presentation tells inspiring life stories of cultural icons through hip hop, music, video, multimedia, and rhyme.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
MeBookz Inc.	I Am Me - Comfortable in My Own Skin	A literacy workshop series that sparks a student's view of themselves as superheroes with innate powers to change their world.	English/Literacy
Northstarr Entertainment Inc.	Stay Driven	Motivational presentations combine hip hop, rapper performances with life lessons.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
Real Talk Learning Experiences	Black History - A Canadian Perspective	Sessions delivered in person or through video-conferencing focus on the experiences of African people in Canada to share the rarely discussed history of the African diaspora in Canada.	Social Studies, Humanities, Geography (SSHG)
The Message LLC	The Message Media Literacy Program	The Message helps youth to tap into the power of mass media by enhancing their media literacy and critical thinking skills.	English/Literacy
Tre-Lystikz Inc.	imPower 2day	The imPower 2day motivational, inter-active and arts-based presentation aims to engage elementary students by providing them with the tools to promote anti-bullying and inclusion and to increase their self-confidence, self-esteem, and sense of self-efficacy.	Dance
Ukuu Centre	The Bridge	This workshop series is available for participants who racially identify as African, Black and Caribbean, to support their personal, academic and career development	Equity and Inclusive Schools
University of Toronto	UTSC Imani Academic Mentorship	Mentors offer academic and social supports to African Canadian students in selected Learning Centre 3 middle and high schools.	Equity and Inclusive Schools
Urban Non-Violent Initiatives Through Youth	UNITY Charity Artists in Schools	Performance based, motivational sessions, and workshops in various performance Arts are available for secondary school students.	Arts & Culture
YouthLink	LINK'D FAST	Grades 7 & 8 students develop life and leadership skills that foster social emotional learning that increases their ability to effectively problem solve and cope with difficult emotions.	Caring & Safe Schools
Basketball Beginnings Inc.	Yes I Can: Physical Literacy & Mentorship	Sessions in physical literacy build referred students' engagement in building their school communities through developing their leadership skills, and pairing with a mentor.	Health & Phys Ed (HPE)

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Mosa McNeilly	Sister Freedom's Black Arts Education Projects	Grounded in Black diasporic art forms, aesthetic modes and design, these sessions, in-person or by video-conferencing, engage curriculum connections with visual art, social studies, mapping, coding, equity, diversity, history, social justice and wellness.	Arts & Culture
Sean Mauricette	L.I.F.T. - Laying Important Foundations Together	Sean Mauricette raps, beat-boxes and inspires through motivational sessions on leadership, diversity, inclusion, respect, Black History, anti-racism, and the importance of laying a foundation in education.	Equity and Inclusive Schools



**Focussed Conversations with African, Afro-Caribbean and
Black Students, Families and Community**

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement

TITLE: Focussed Conversations with African, Afro-Caribbean, Black Students, Families and Community

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Cite as: Munroe T., Murray K., Munroe G-C., Thompson G-C., Hardware S., Douglin M., Igbu S., Yusuf E., Walker A., & Sylvestre, D. (2022). Focussed Conversations with African, Afro-Caribbean, Black Students, Families and Community

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Introduction

Over a five-month period in 2021, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB)'s Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement engaged with African, Afro-Caribbean, and Black (ACB) students, families, and community members in focus group conversations. The consultations are part of the Centre of Excellence's larger commitment to develop family-school-community partnerships, which focus on a shared responsibility to support Black students and families. This engagement includes "building on community voices as well as past and present efforts through a direct, multi-faceted strategy for meaningful and sustained change"¹ to actively support Black students' development, learning, and wellbeing in TDSB schools.

During the focus group sessions, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement² research team sought to learn more about the experiences of each stakeholder group. This involved gathering information and recommendations on how to improve family and community engagement. This intentional approach is in line with the Centre of Excellence's mandates, which include providing a more coordinated and well-resourced approach leading to systemic transformation, enhanced support for impacted individuals, and a forum to develop solutions that are authentic and relevant for Black³ students, families, and staff.

While the needs of all Black students and families are important, the research team made a concerted effort to include in the stakeholder consultations those who are under-represented and voices that are often absent in conversations about K-12 schooling experiences. These include but are not limited to Black students and families with disabilities, newcomers, and those who represent the LGBTQ2SIA+ community. As our school board works to confront and dismantle anti-Black racism in schools, it is essential to consider the needs of Black students and families and /caregivers who experience intersectional oppression due to their social identities.

Finally, if we have learned anything from the rocky past, it is that effective education policy reform and school transformation that affirm and support Black students' needs cannot ignore the essential partnership of the family and community in their academic and developmental success.

Sincerely,

The Centre of Excellence Research Team

¹ TDSB. (2020, June 17). TDSB Creates New Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement.

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Media/News/ArtMID/2750/ArticleID/1475/TDSB-Creates-New-Centre-of-Excellence-for-Black-Student-Achievement>

² The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement hereafter is called The Centre of Excellence.

³ The authors primarily use the term "Black" to reference each stakeholder group but do utilize the acronym ACB throughout the document.

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Executive Summary

This executive report provides an overview of the key themes and recommendations from consultations conducted by the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement with the African, Afro-Caribbean, and Black (ACB) community. Three stakeholder groups – students, families and or/caregivers, and community members – participated in these consultations. Stakeholders were invited over five months (May-July; October-November 2021) to have focussed conversations. Throughout the focus group sessions, the Centre of Excellence research team consulted with over 250 participants. The research team had support from ACB staff and community advisory groups including the Student Equity Program Advisors, Community Support Workers, and the Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee, all of whom assisted with the overall approach to the consultations and outreach strategy.

Equally important to the planning and engagement process was ensuring that the research team had the historical and contemporary knowledge to accurately interpret and validate the experiences of the stakeholders. Prior to the consultation, the team supported their own learning by researching some of the Board's current and past attempts to improve on the school experiences of Black students and families and or/caregivers. With that in mind, the focus group facilitators had a better understanding of each stakeholder group's needs as they discussed the various ways the Centre of Excellence could support and improve the Board's efforts.

The questions asked of each stakeholder group served a dual purpose. The first was to have conversations about the various ways to implement the mandates identified by the Centre of Excellence. The second involved creating opportunities for: (1) self-identifying Black students to engage in discussions related to issues that impact their wellbeing and learning needs; (2) families of ACB students to discuss issues that impact their leadership and engagement in the school community and, to give us insight into the ways the Centre of Excellence can serve them; and; (3) the Centre of Excellence to engage in discussions with community stakeholders on how to promote meaningful and collaborative school-community engagement.

Locating the Black identity in the consultation

In this report, the term "Black" is used to refer to people of African descent (e.g., Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Indigenous, Afro-Latinx, African) living in Canada. Recognizing the diversity of the Black experience in Canada as well as the more exclusive and competing definitions of what renders a person "Black," this report is focused on the Black population in Canada as a racial and cultural group and community with a shared experience or set of experiences. Participants spoke to the paradoxes and contradictions associated with being Black in Canada, using terms like beauty, joy,

pain, exhaustion, and struggle to describe what it means to be Black. Some described being Black as having a super-power or sense of purpose. Others viewed “being Black” as being knowledgeable about the history of Black struggle and passing that history on to the next generation as a fact of life.

The importance of centring the voices of the ACB stakeholders

Historically speaking, the Ontario system of public education has been challenged by ACB families, students, community, and educators for not being responsive towards the needs of Black students. It is undeniable that anti-Black racism and Eurocentrism negatively impact the academic experiences of Black youths. In many instances, the aspirations of their families are not enough to protect them from the “othering” that they experience in classroom spaces. As Kohli, Pizarro, and Nevárez⁴ argue, “Black students are challenged by the dominance of racist stereotypes, manifested by the constant and inescapable, racist, hegemonic fog in the air of the school (p. 230)”, a helpful metaphor to understand the persistence of anti-Black racism in Black student schooling experiences. Therefore, understanding how the Black identity has been constructed historically and in contemporary education remains a starting point for discussions rooted in actualizing change.

In education, ACB students and families may not be viewed as commanding authorities to bring about change which is necessary to challenge traditional narratives that are based on the normalization of whiteness and Eurocentrism. However, centring ACB communities’ diverse cultures and identities can increase their sense of belonging in the school environment. To disrupt the status quo, Board-wide interventions and mechanisms must be established within the classroom to help educators teach and empower Black students effectively. The need for education leaders to partner with Black communities is also a focal point to reimagine school environments that: (1) centre Black voices; (2) recognize the community and students as assets and (3) nurture those strengths to improve their wellbeing and overall educational success. This understanding also extends to supporting self-identifying Black educators who teach students and who also experience difficulties and barriers in their daily work environment.

Indeed, a collaborative school-family-community-wide approach is critical for systems change. Our public education system has not done a good job of serving all students equitably, especially, Black students who enter schools with their various intersectionalities (i.e., class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity markers). To ensure that our schools genuinely serve all students, our schools and communities must be in dialogue with each other about what

⁴ Kohli, R., Pizarro, M., & Nevárez, A. (2017). The “New Racism” of K–12 schools: Centering critical research on racism. *Review of Research in Education, 41*(1), 182–202.

inclusion means, which barriers prevent inclusion, and how we can remove those barriers. For Black families and their children, their community is, and always has been a protective factor in their lives. Community provides comfort and familiarity and supports their self-determination as they navigate an anti-Black world.

As the Board recognizes the ongoing duty to advocate for the needs of everyone in its school communities, it remains the responsibility of school leaders and staff to address racism, equity and cultural responsiveness in their leadership practice and in the classrooms. This is substantiated fully in the annotated bibliography⁵ created for educators to develop their critical consciousness practitioner inquiries and improve classroom conditions for Black students. By providing a framework and a language for analysis, the themes and articles in the annotated bibliography highlight school-based approaches aimed at centring the importance of belonging; cultivating critical consciousness and agency (development of racial consciousness; opportunities to talk about race and racism); and supporting identity development (racial identity; positive/achievement identity).

Operating in a context that is an anti-racist, decolonial and anti-oppressive framework is fundamental to contest anti-Blackness and provide meaningful opportunities for Black students and families to engage with their school communities. The ability to recognize and analyze systems of inequality and make the commitment to take action to disrupt these systems — can be a gateway to academic motivation and achievement for Black students. Through such instruction and adaptive classroom strategies, educators can demonstrate to Black students how to resist in ways that overcome racism as a barrier to success, which can have positive long-term outcomes for students and their communities.

Any clear understanding and analyses of racialized discourse, pedagogy and practice, and policy process in education “must grapple with cultural disregard for and disgust with blackness” (Dumas, 2016, p. 12)⁶. We at the Center of Excellence agree with Dumas’s (2016) point and believe that being an anti-racist and socially oriented school leader includes being cognizant of how the education system is centred around anti-Blackness (Dancy, Edwards, & Davis, 2018)⁷— an understanding of which can lead to designing and implementing more implicit anti-racist school policies and practices. It is only when these critical discussions occur that we can begin to envision an education system that values the Black identity.

⁵ Prepared by Research and Development January 3, 2019 R02(Anti-Racism Directorate Black Student Excellence Strategy) Project \ Literature Review \ Black Student Excellence Annotated Bibliography (themed- 01.03.2019)

⁶ Dumas, M. J. (2016). Against the dark: Antiblackness in education policy and discourse. *Theory Into Practice*, 55(1), 11–19.

⁷ Dancy II, T. E., Edwards, K. T., & Davis, J. E. (2018). Historically white universities and plantation politics: Anti-blackness and higher education in the Black Lives Matter era. *Urban Education*, 53(2), 176–195.

Summary of Key Themes and Findings

Four overarching themes were used to capture the experiences of the stakeholder groups engaged in the consultations. These were: (1) Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (2) Learning conditions in the classrooms; (3) School and family relationships; and (4) The role of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement; and recommendations for supporting Black students, families and/or caregivers and community members. Within these overarching themes are several subthemes grouped together to support the findings.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Black Families

Stakeholders discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their families. Parents and caregivers described varying positive and negative experiences of COVID-19 on their lives and discussed the barriers of supporting their children or family members with online learning while negotiating their own work-life balance.

- Stakeholders spoke about the social, emotional, and economic burdens they faced. These included experiences of isolation, disruption of their care network, increased mental health issues, and job loss.
- Numerous families described the lack of support from schools (e.g., students with learning needs), technology and Wi-Fi issues, and positive or negative engagement with teachers or administrators.
- Black LGBTQ2SIA+ families discussed their approach to advocacy, addressing homophobia and transphobia, and heightened risks of anxiety and stress because of loss of regular access to affirming organizations and community support.
- Several families discussed the many ways their children were thriving. For example, reference was made to reduction in school discipline, behavioral issues, and surveillance by school staff.
- Stakeholders discussed the benefits of online learning for families. For many, it was an opportunity to address incidents of anti-Black racism, observe virtual classrooms, and listen in on course content. Others described the improvement in their child's or family member's grades and being able to support their learning needs.

Learning Conditions in the Classrooms

Each stakeholders group discussed ongoing challenges, positive and negative experiences they had with teaching staff and administrators, and overall school climate.

- Discussion focused on the intersection of the Black identity and their varying intersectionalities in K–12 education. Families described schools' in/ability to address their concerns if they experienced multiple oppressions simultaneously.
- Stakeholders talked about the need to improve teaching and learning conditions and outcomes for Black students with learning disabilities or those who identify as neurodivergent.
- Stakeholders discussed Black staff representation and the importance of their presence in the classroom to support Black students' well-being.
- Students spoke about their ongoing issues with academic instruction. These included how instruction impacts their identity and sense of belonging.
- Families and community members asked for ongoing equity training for all staff and training on how to promote anti-racist pedagogy and practice.
- Stakeholders spoke about the need to embrace and elevate Black joy in their curriculum and classrooms. This would counter the negative stereotypes and pathologizing of Black people and communities while ensuring that resistance and resourcefulness are integral pieces of the classroom environment.

School and Family Relationships

Parents and caregivers provided insights on factors that motivate or prevent parent /caregiver involvement in their children/family member's school community.

- Stakeholders described the racial politics of cultural capital as experienced by Black families.
- Issues were raised about parent advisory groups and experiences with anti-Black racism and microaggressions.
- Human Rights concerns were discussed by Black LGBTQ2SIA+ parents, caregivers, and families raising Black LGBTQ2SIA+ children. These included the lack of inclusive curricula that centred their identities and sexual orientation, bullying, lack of safe spaces, and lack of support from school administrators and teachers.
- Suggestions to improve parental engagement included both academic and non-academic experiences in the school community.
- Participants discussed the “push out” of Black students from the French programs.
- The effectiveness of teacher training programs and new teachers' unpreparedness to work in classrooms were discussed. Families and community members underscored the negative impacts of inexperienced teachers working with diverse Black student populations, especially those who do not share the same racial identity.

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement's role in supporting each stakeholder group was discussed.

- Recommendations were given on the role of the Centre of Excellence in strengthening school-family partnerships.
- Stakeholders discussed the Centre of Excellence as being a hub for the community and support to bridge the gap between families and schools.
- Families talked about the need to have coordinated resources and services to support Black students and their families.
- Suggestions were given about improving engagement with community organizations to strengthen schools' resources and provide a mechanism to respond to student and family needs directly.
- Parents/caregivers reinforced the need for the Centre of Excellence to take leadership in promoting Black academic excellence and to be a strong advocate and mediator for students and their families.

Recommendations

Students, families, and community members shared recommendations to improve classroom conditions, negotiate school communities and improve partnerships. Many of the suggestions visualized a much broader concept of education that moved beyond "schooling" at TDSB and into areas such as students' wellbeing, equity of access, parent empowerment, and increased partnerships. This coincides with the Centre of Excellence mandates and the initiatives outlined in the Board's multi-year strategic plan that underscore the need to build strong relationships with students, staff and families so they may engage in discussions and learning opportunities on critical issues that impact their schooling experiences⁸. More importantly, developing and supporting a research-based family engagement framework is essential to determine when programs are working and how to improve them. Therefore, this report concludes with a framework of action generated through the suggestions and recommendations from ACB students, families, and community members.

Methodology

Participation in the focus groups saw a strong engagement from all three stakeholder groups. The methodology stage consisted of two elements: 1) Conceptualization and 2) Logistics. The conceptualization of the focus groups followed a process that centres Afrocentric research

⁸ TDSB (2018). *Multi-Year Strategic Plan*. https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/leadership/board_room/Multi-Year_Strategic_Plan.pdf

methodologies. Utilizing Afrocentric methodologies was intended to be used to investigate pertinent research questions legitimately and effectively (that is, truthfully and inclusively), especially those methodologies that possess embedded assumptions about race and culture. Notably, Afrocentric orientations to data, or Afrocentric research methodologies, will push the inquiry into a higher realm where the methodology and the process of knowledge construction cease to take precedence over the well-being of the people being researched⁹.

Conceptualization

Initial planning meetings were held with Centrally Assigned Principal, Karen Murray, System Superintendent, Jacqueline Spence, Manager of Research and Development, David Cameron, and the Centre of Excellence research coordinator, Tanitiã Munroe. Once the purpose and the population for the research had been defined, the list of focus group interview questions was developed to be shared with participants in their invitation letters. These questions were also to be made available and shared by facilitators on a slide deck in the breakout rooms during the online focus group sessions.

Part of the planning was to ensure that the questions being asked during the focus groups served a dual purpose. The first was to have conversations on the various ways to implement the mandates identified by the Centre of Excellence. The second was the following:

- To create opportunities for students to engage in discussions and learning opportunities related to issues that impact their wellbeing and support, improve their learning needs, and amplify their voices.
- To create an opportunity for the families of ACB students to discuss issues that impact their leadership and engagement in the school community and to give us insight on the ways that the Centre of Excellence can serve them.
- To engage in discussions on how to promote meaningful and collaborative school-community engagement with community stakeholders.

Therefore, the final stage of the planning was to have information sessions about the consultations with ACB staff (e.g., Community Support Workers) and advisory groups (e.g., Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee - BSACAC) that support Black students and families and engage with community organizations. This approach informed us of any changes needed in the overall consultation and outreach strategy.

⁹ Reviere, R. (2001). Toward an Afrocentric research methodology. *Journal of Black Studies*, 31(6), 709–728.

Logistics

The research coordinator and research associates sent email reminders and followed up with text messages and phone calls on each day of the focus group sessions. Students, families, and community stakeholders appreciated this approach. Many parents/ caregivers commented on feeling inundated with emails and expressed difficulties in keeping track of important updates or information, so our communications were especially helpful.

Self-identifying Black Staff Representation

It was important that Black students, families and/or caregivers, and community members felt safe enough to share their experiences in the focus group sessions. Therefore, what was most central to their experience was Black staff representation. To that end, the Centre of Excellence understood the need for having Black facilitators that possessed a deep racial and cultural knowledge about themselves and the Black communities' experience with the education system.

All three stakeholder groups had the support of Black Social Work staff during each focus group session. The social workers were placed in a separate breakout room where participants could engage freely with them during and after each session. While participants did not readily use their support, it was important to have prompt access, given that the discussions may have led to students and family members feeling triggered. Several comments were made by participants about the significance of seeing Black social workers present. Many were not aware they existed at the Board, and several families used the opportunity to get connected to these social workers to seek support for themselves and/or their child(ren).

The consultations had the support of the Centrally Assigned Principal and System Superintendent who were also available to address any inquiries from participants and offer clarification about the Centre. The Centre of Excellence staff (i.e., K-12 Learning Coaches and Graduation Coaches) were present to share resources and information about their roles, and programs offered to support Black students. Sessions with French Immersion students had the support of French teachers. It was important that students were able to express themselves and their experience in a language they felt most comfortable.

Debriefing

After each session ended, the research team and social worker had their own debrief. This provided the team with an opportunity to raise concerns about information shared, identify issues that required immediate attention, and get support from each other on experiences that may have been difficult or triggering in the group discussions.

Black Studies' Approach to the Analysis

It was our intention to ensure that participants' voices, perspectives, narratives, and counter-narratives were represented in the interpretations and findings. This approach to the findings allowed us to understand how the collective and individual experiences are tied to the broader systemic issues. What matters is the team having "the cultural knowledge to accurately interpret and validate the experiences" (Tillman, 2002)¹⁰ of the communities we are engaging with.

From a critical race theory methodological perspective (e.g., Black Crit¹¹, QuantCrit¹², Community Cultural Wealth¹³) the relationship between a researcher's worldview and analysis is of extreme importance, especially when they are attempting to investigate culturally specific phenomena (Carroll, 2008)¹⁴. It was important to acknowledge and reconcile our own worldview orientation during the knowledge mobilization process. As researchers, we had a particular understanding of the very nature and sources of "acceptable" knowledge construction and representation of Black communities or people in research and documentation (Dillard, 2000)¹⁵, so we were acutely aware that the language and description utilized in this process had to mirror the stakeholders' authentic voice.

During the entire engagement and consultation process, issues of power were understood to be relational. We understood the tensions inherent in our own interests and power in relation to the students, families, and communities taking part in the consultations. Therefore, to ground ourselves and not allow our own interests to overshadow the interests of those participating in the consultations, we engaged in ongoing self-reflection at each step. Reflection and representation are connected to what Lorde (1984) declared as "learning how to take our differences and make them strengths" (p. 112). The research team understood the need for ongoing reflection to contextualize and problematize our own interpretations about the stories and knowledge being shared. There are lessons grounded in the different ways in which we interpret the things told to us and we have a responsibility as researchers to honour each community member in ways that maintain their integrity.

¹⁰ Tillman, L. C. (2002). Culturally sensitive research approaches: An African-American perspective. *Educational Researcher*, 31(9), 3–12.

¹¹ Dumas, M. J., & ross, kihana miraya. (2016). "Be Real Black for Me": Imagining BlackCrit in education. *Urban Education*, 51(4), 415–442.

¹² Garcia, N., López, N., & Vélez, V. (2018). QuantCrit: Rectifying quantitative methods through critical race theory. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 21(2), 149-157.

¹³ Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69–91.

¹⁴ Carroll, K. K. (2008). Africana Studies and research methodology: Revisiting the centrality of the Afrikan worldview. *The Journal of Pan-African Studies*, 2, 4.

¹⁵ Dillard, C. B. (2000). The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen: Examining an endarkened feminist epistemology in educational research and leadership. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(6), 661–681.

Reading this report

It is crucial to note that this report is heavy and triggering, reflecting the experiences of Black students and families and/or caregivers' history and current engagement with the Toronto District School Board. The work to diagnose the issues and analyze the themes was emotionally taxing, and thus, the ongoing work to rectify the problems and disrupt anti-Black racism will continue to be difficult, heavy, and taxing. Therefore, the report must be read comprehensively to effectively capture the recommendations and actions necessary to support the critical anti-racist work being done across the system and in schools.

As the Centre of Excellence continues to operationalize the nine mandates brought forward by Black community members and education stakeholders, there is an understanding that the work being done is a non-static process and has multiple points of entry and multi-layered forms of investment across the system. It requires a careful strategy, deft balance, constant recalibration and—in some cases—precise execution. It is the hope of the Centre of Excellence team to have engagement with TDSB educators that is reciprocal in nature to facilitate the mutual development and exchange of knowledge to address critical issues identified by the Black students and families we serve. This includes offering supports through system-wide professional learning to improve teaching and learning outcomes of Black students, which ultimately contributes to improving their wellbeing.

Emerging Themes and Findings

The analysis of findings is approached with careful thought and understanding of the social, political, historical, and contextual nuances and realities that continue to shape the lives of members of the Black communities. The terms, description and direct quotes are based on the perceptions and experiences of the ACB students, families, and communities. The themes are being shared based on the stakeholder groups' previous and current experiences with the school community. The document is written in both past and present tense, which is an intentional approach to capture the fluidity in each stakeholder's experience and reference the work that has already begun.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Families

In the consultations with stakeholders, each spoke about the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on schooling, work, and family life. The impact of the pandemic was exacerbated by many other stressors which included supporting children or family members with online learning. There was also significant consensus among Black students, parents, and caregivers about the impact of

COVID-19 and systemic racism on Black families and communities and the implications for K-12 education.

1.1 Parents/Caregivers

For parents and caregivers, balancing the additional role of supporting education at home was complicated by several factors:

- The number of children in the home, their age, and grade level;
- Children with learning needs;
- Limited understanding of the school system or difficulties communicating with staff (particularly for ESL/newcomer parents/families);
- The availability of a computer/laptop for the student(s), the number of people using the internet, Wi-Fi connectivity, and other technical issues;
- For teachers, juggling the dual responsibility of supervising their classes online and their own children at home; and
- Lack of skills and knowledge in various subject areas impeded ability to support their child or family member.

Other participants described the challenge of having to support their child(ren) while working which resulted in extreme fatigue. In some cases, there was an added burden of securing childcare. As one parent explained, “I know many mothers like myself lost their care network for their children. Some of us had to choose between our jobs and caring for our children. We had nobody to look after them.”

Despite the challenges, parents and caregivers of Black children found that online learning offered many benefits, including opportunities to get to know their children’s teachers better, observe lessons and the online classroom environment, improve advocacy skills in support of their children, increase understanding of how the system works, and intercept negative interactions or class lessons that may have caused emotional harm and hindered academic performance.

1.2 Black Students’ Views about Online Learning

“Some [teachers] are helpful, but others provided limited help and wanted to move ahead with what they are teaching.”

“It’s not been easy for me. Classes have been a struggle for me because I am not getting the help I needed from my teachers, and I graduate soon.”

1.3 Mental Health and Wellbeing of Students

Experiencing burnout because of online school-related distress was a major theme. The majority of the high school respondents reported experiencing screen fatigue. Other concerns included feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, and detached from school. Students commented on the heavy workload, assignment due dates, and the expectations to complete assignments that were “stressful” and unmanageable. There was a consensus among students that they were over-tested, and the pace of instruction “[was] too quick.”

“We are in the last quad, right, so the energy level has dropped... I get tired a lot more now...I have been doing everything, like learning a lot and in just a short amount of time.”

Furthermore, students felt isolated and missed in-person instruction because of the lack of peer engagement online. Students expressed feeling uncomfortable sharing concerns with teachers, even if they were struggling. Some students pointed out that unreliable internet access and/or technology created difficult conditions, and they struggled to participate in online learning.

Parents and caregivers of younger children shared similar concerns. These included social and emotional isolation and online fatigue. Some parents/caregivers also raised concerns about the long-term impact of online learning, feeling that it would not prepare young children to move on to the next grade level, high school, or post-secondary education.

Learning Conditions in the Classrooms

Stakeholders discussed how educators can and must be part of efforts to improve classrooms for Black students. In order for educators to make a difference, they must move beyond traditional Eurocentric pedagogical practices to ensure that Black students feel comfortable and safe in classrooms. Participants felt that teachers needed resources to provide students with tools on how to engage in difficult conversations in classrooms. These include having information and links to support Black students’ mental and emotional health. Students and families asked teachers to consider embedding racial literacy in their curriculum practice when discussing issues that impacted their lives.

Participants encouraged teachers and staff to build relationships with Black students. For the majority of students, these relationships were very important. Participants agreed that every student should have a caring adult within their school environment – someone with whom they



can create a mutually respectful and supportive relationship, not only academic support, but emotional support as well. In every case, participants felt that it would make them feel empowered if their teachers took an interest in them. Several students asked teachers to “not give up on students so easily” and “work on finding out the barriers or reasons why Black students may not be able to participate in the same way as others.”

By the same token, parents and caregivers suggested that teachers offer resources, patience, and time, rather than giving up on them. Participants agreed that a sense of belonging at school can support students through a particularly vulnerable time when they are forming their identity, developing psycho-social skills, and trying to navigate the world.

2.1 Centring Joy in the Classroom and Practice

To resist the negativity and racism that students face, participants suggested that teachers reimagine classrooms by centring joy in their pedagogy and practice. For parents and caregivers, classrooms should be a place where Black students take pleasure from learning and “not being a space where students encounter trauma, feel anxious, and/or [are] afraid.” Teachers were asked to connect with Black students to the degree that they can, “make your classroom safe from bullying and sarcasm and toxicity” to the extent where they are able to, and replace those things with books, music, laughter, vulnerability, humility, conversation, and growth.

“Start from a point of joy and then work backwards from the joyful point and acquire why was this person pivotal? Why are we learning this person? You look at their accomplishment and then work backwards. We always find Black History Month starts at slavery, but we’ve got to move beyond that.

“It is a lot of re-education and is a lot of having resources available. It is having teachers that have the knowledge and the information and the courage to have uncomfortable conversations so that we can move forward.”

Participants advised teachers to learn about what joy looks like and how it is expressed among Black students. As one mother added:

“It’s even as small as having the educated understand when the children are gathered, you remember how you were talking about gathering together and they’re eliciting joy and happiness. It’s not rowdy, unruly behavior. They need to start to understand that there’s cultural ways to express happiness, joy. And it’s not always going to be quiet, sometimes it’s going to be... And it’s not an argument. Sometimes when voices get loud,

it's just passion. Like they just need to understand the cultural wants, the things that just make us tick without trying to plug it to children and suppress it. Just these are things that will help the children be better understood and not seen as unruly, undisciplined, just out of order pretty much."

Centring Black joy, for the participants, meant that teachers recognize how important it is for Black students' wellbeing and the need to create moments that they can "tap into activities and practices they enjoy" or "exhale and be okay."

2.2 Affinity Spaces for Black Students

Motivated by the renewed call to discuss anti-Black racism, police violence and deaths of Black people, students felt that a need to go deeper in their understanding of these issues has led them to seek out peers and community for support. Participants shared that they have formed study groups, attended online lectures, and joined social media groups because "many students are now more aware and are drawn together because of anti-Black racism." Participants recommended that all schools should have a safe space where Black students could come together to learn about anti-Black racism, anti-racism, racial equity, and social justice. As one student added, "I am Black young man and having somewhere I can breathe and not look over my shoulder and be among other Black kids is a relief."

Students and families suggested establishing Equity Councils in schools as another avenue to promote affirming spaces. Participants reported that the Equity Councils have had a positive impact on the schooling experience of ACB students. For example, Equity Councils provided a platform for ACB students to share their challenges in school with non-ACB students.

2.3 Teaching Black History During and Beyond the Month of February

Among all the participants, there was a unanimous call for educators to teach Black history year-round, not only in February. Students asked that teachers use the month of February to dig deeper into history and make connections to the past. Participants shared their ongoing disappointment with teachers only teaching about certain historical time periods or events (e.g., slavery), with a few suggesting it was "lazy work" or "teachers disregarding Black students' history and identity." Students suggested that most of their teachers needed to revise their curriculum, so that Black history, which is vital to understanding Canadian history, is better integrated into the curriculum in every class. Students also asked for courses devoted to the Black Canadian experience.

While students discussed the importance of Black students learning about their history, they also believed non-Black students must learn and understand the humanity of Blackness. This includes the long history of systemic racism that remains present and affects their Black peers. To achieve this goal, one student added that Black peoples' histories should be included in all courses and "mandated by the Ministry and TDSB." For the participants, this approach to Black history, along with teacher training, changes in the curriculum, and the inclusion of diverse texts, would "make a lasting impact on the education of future generations."

References were made to the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario's Black Canadian Curriculum which was not being used and which few teachers were aware of. It was recommended that Black history should focus on the successes and achievements of Black people and not be presented only from the perspective of trauma. Participants also discussed the need for all teachers to promote cultural and racial consciousness in the curriculum. They suggested the importance of understanding that all knowledge is valid and can influence how teachers engage with all students, what frameworks they use, and how they interpret the materials they are using to teach.

2.4 Anti-racist Pedagogy and Practice

Parents and caregivers suggested that teachers broaden and deepen their understanding of anti-racist pedagogy and practice —and then actively do the work to tear down those racist beliefs and structures. Participants believed that teachers must start from a place of acknowledging that racist beliefs and structures are pervasive in all aspects of Black students' lives in order to "understand how to support their learning and wellbeing."

Participants called on administrators and staff to question how the curriculum has impacted "students that are often not represented in books and text." For several participants, there is a need for teachers to engage in ongoing self-reflection of their social position. This includes understanding that their own identities are not static, that they possess both privilege and power, and that their socialization and intersecting identities can have an impact on their teaching and engagement with Black children beyond the classroom.

Several parents and caregivers suggested ongoing self-reflection from teachers, which they viewed as an important further step in anti-racism work. This self-reflection required teachers "to have the humility to know that they are a work in progress, both as individuals and as teachers." A participant further stated, "teachers must understand that anti-racist pedagogy is not a ready-made product they can simply apply to their courses, but rather it is a process that

begins with them as individuals.” Others discussed the many practical ways that teachers could apply an anti-racist analysis into their course content, pedagogy, and activities.

2.5 Representation: An Essential Component in the Affirmation Process

Representation in schools and classrooms was discussed as an essential component of affirmation. Participants referred to the importance of many elements of representation including positive images of Black people on school walls and in classrooms, and representation in curricula and educational materials, such as books, films, and podcasts. Representation was particularly important for students in the lower grades. Additionally, participants believed that teaching materials need to normalize Blackness.

“...it’s easy to simply follow along the Eurocentric message. And many teachers don’t even bother to bring in materials, no matter how much they understand that our education system has been founded on historically racist practices, including silencing those from disenfranchised communities.” – Grade 11 student

“It’s not just white students who need to see themselves in the literature or history they study. Black students need to hear those perspectives as well, just as straight and cisgender students need to read LGBTQ+ stories.”- Grade 9 student

Students, parents, and caregivers valued the importance of having representation from racialized staff. All participants expressed the need for schools to be more intentional with their hiring practices, which includes Black administrators, educators, teachers, and guidance counsellors. The main intent is to enable Black students to identify with Black authority figures and to have people who understand them. For example, participants shared stories of incidents that could have been avoided had teachers or administrators had the same racial or cultural background of the students.

“Teachers and school administrators with different backgrounds from their students find it difficult to understand their students’ challenges. Plenty of times when you hear white teachers and Black students getting into it, we know it’s their bias and lack of understanding. Sometimes they read the situation differently. A Black staff will understand. They know how to deal with things.”

Underscoring the importance of Black staff representation, French Immersion parents added:



“One of my reasons for putting them in French immersion because from Grade one, my son has had the Black male French teach directly, which I think was pivotal in his success and self-worth. And half of those teachers were in the formative years, (which) I think was really good. And if others could have that experience, it would really be encouraging.”

“At my kids’ elementary school, it helped having the Black children see educators that look like them, that can relate to them. Being able to talk to the parents about their children with an understanding, it helps with parent engagements.”

Participants noted that a lack of representation may undermine the teacher’s effectiveness in inspiring Black student performance. This concern was discussed when parents and caregivers referenced the absence of educators affirming Black students’ identity. This included understanding the difference in the steps that Black and non-Black teachers would take to help close the gap that included learning about Black students’ cultures. Participants also discussed the challenges of existing stereotypes, recognizing that many non-Black teachers are not taking the initiative to introduce inclusive instructional materials to counter the negative narratives of the Black community.

2.6 Lifelong Learning

The idea of lifelong learning was brought up by French Immersion students who made comments about what skills or attributes a “good educator” should possess to support their wellbeing in classroom spaces. The students indicated that more could be done within the walls of the school to make sure that students continue and want to learn. According to the students, teaching “is not merely content,” as many participants want educators to cultivate an environment where they continue learning after graduating from high school. Some students agreed that many Black students “want to continue learning for our entire lives.” The participants suggested that teachers should not only think about the idea of cultivating an interest in lifelong learning, but how they engage Black students in learning should demonstrate that.

As one student stated: “The importance of building relationships goes beyond the content being delivered to me ...I think teachers should possess the ability to inspire students.” For the students, becoming a lifelong learner is truly invaluable, both personally and for their future career or profession. Instilling this trait in Black students is important for their own sake and for teachers. For many of the participants, it means supporting students to value learning.

2.7 Improving Learning Outcomes of Black Students



Parents, caregivers, and students underscored the need to have access to quality education to achieve the goal of improving their outcomes in the school environment. According to participants, schools should put greater effort into reducing or eliminating the achievement gap for Black students. Participants felt that schools needed to help Black students build their skills and academic achievement. Most of the participants believed that in order for the Board to make substantive changes in closing the achievement gap, schools must create more opportunities for Black students' voices to be amplified and decrease their underrepresentation in certain fields.

It is important to note that several participants shared different experiences about the efforts made by schools to address the achievement gap. Many described interacting with teachers who were more culturally aware and who attempted to support students and make their learning environment welcoming. Students discussed meeting a few teachers who "saw them and saw the worth of Black students" in and outside their classrooms. Other students described teachers who created opportunities for Black students to be supported and helped them with resources.

2.8 Racial Literacy

Participants spoke about the need for all teachers to develop racial literacy skills in order to engage in critical conversations and guide students to do the same in their learning. This would create a domino effect as students would have the necessary language and vocabulary to have classroom discussions that are not harmful to Black students. Parents and caregivers asked that teachers use language and vocabulary in liberating rather than disempowering ways.

"So how are you talking to them? What is being said about our communities must not always be negative. We are more than slavery. We are more than what is said in the media. Teachers must be reframing that dialogue and to do that means it starts with them learning how to use affirming language."

To support a safe classroom environment, participants asserted that teachers needed to do more than stand by when they have witnessed or heard a racist remark. Not replying in the moment was seen to convey tacit agreement. For some parents, understanding racial literacy in schools meant having "healthy comeback lines" to use in the face of racial trauma or anti-Black racism.

"Part of their job is to recognize and react in the moment and not leaving Black students to sit in the classroom feeling upset. You know what I mean? And I don't think any other

cultural group from what I've seen must really go through that as much as Black students do. Teachers need the tools and language to deal with things.”

For several parents and caregivers, a teacher's ability to confront anti-Black racism or microaggressions in the moment means not only expressing their disapproval, but also shifting the responsibility to the perpetrator to explain their actions. In other words, participants asked that both teachers and students learn how to use these racist moments and take action to address them, ensuring that everyone leaves with a greater understanding of how racism impacts Black students.

Overall, to validate Black students and create healthy learning and safe classroom conditions, participants shared the following suggestions for educators: i) be more sensitive and attuned to the needs of Black students; ii) prioritize students' safety and voice; iii) acknowledge the improvement efforts made by Black students; iv) be aware of their unconscious biases; v) do away with racial stereotypes; vi) build positive relationships with Black students; vii) integrate topics related to Black students within the broader curriculum; and viii) make the class a safer environment for students to learn.

School and Family Relationships

3.1 Black Cultural Capital in the School Community

Parents and caregivers called on school staff to understand the different community resources available to support Black student success. These include understanding and valuing how community members are involved in supporting families inside and outside of school. Participants discussed how they often resist the despair and hopelessness brought about by negative encounters with school staff by relying on community support. Instead of continuously viewing their worth from the dominant social group's standpoint, participants described how resourceful the Black community is and suggested that schools should learn how to engage with elders. This would help foster community pride and sense of belonging among Black students. As one participant noted:

“Elders are like living breathing history and should become part of the teaching and learning at schools. I think using other folks too, storytellers and dancers and drummers. Yeah, just know that we are filled with resources, and it does not have to come from one home or one parent alone.”

Participants also discussed the need for schools to tap into the knowledge, talents and skills in the Black community and bring in guest speakers with whom Black students can identify. They also suggested more space be created on student senates and student councils for ACB students.

Participants appealed to teachers and other school staff to refrain from saying Black families do not care about their children's education. Participants described other strategies that families use to supporting Black children in the home and community. These included using the community as a resource to support a family's needs or being involved in cultural activities to affirm their child's Black identity. To illustrate, families discussed getting involved in the arts, and engaging with movies, songs, and books at home and in community to counter their absence in schools. According to participants, this sort of cultural capital that exists in Black communities "help[s] to shape their identity and retain their culture" and is positively associated with positive educational outcomes for Black children. Parents and caregivers understood the direct correlation between parental involvement and academic success. They urged educators to recognize the barriers that may prevent their engagement and acknowledge the work they do in their homes and community settings.

Factors that Support and Prevent Parental or Caregiver Involvement and Engagement in the School Community

The factors of low level of participation and engagement by families in the school community included work commitments and long work hours. Many parents and caregivers who did shift work had difficulties engaging with school activities and highlighted the meeting times as another barrier. Participants discussed the lack of trust, past traumatic experiences in the school system, and negative interactions with school staff. Other factors included parents' limited knowledge about how to get involved in their children's school, what their role would be in the school system, and how to access resources. For several newcomer families, they highlighted lack of knowledge of the school system, cultural and language barriers, and perceptions about "whether their voice would be heard." Other factors noted were the extent to which the school made parents feel welcome. Some parents/caregivers spoke of not feeling comfortable in the school or not being treated in a respectful manner.

"And I think there could be some more intentionality with the principals to encourage parents to participate and knowing that school council isn't the only way to participate. There are other things that you can do. And there's things that you can do that would be of interest to the community."

“I think that a major part is the lack of healing of past trauma from parents and their experiences within the school board. So, lack of trust. The fact that every time there’s more, not all the time, but quite often schools are contacting parents, always with a negative context.”

“There’s a bit of a fear, I think, around that new parent that’s coming in and that involvement. I think we feel more empowered to come forward and say, I want to do this. This is my school too, rather than taking a back seat. I’ve noticed that and I’m hearing that a lot and it’s causing a lot of friction. So, who’s negotiating and navigating the conversation when those frictions come up between parents and the school? And then the principal’s kind of in the middle.”

“But I think there is a need to come up with strategies in education for the educator. Whether it be to combat their biases or to bridge that gap to make parents, Black parents, [Indigenous] parents. Because again, we know of all the trauma that’s been put on the Black and [Indigenous] community through education and the education system, right? And we know, through Black students because I grew up in the TDSB education system, right? So, I know a lot of the traumas that would have been maybe instilled or pushed on me as an individual. That might make me uncomfortable in the space or even engaging with a teacher, right?”

Participants discussed the need for schools to have ongoing communication with parents/caregivers in a positive and respectful way. It was suggested that different methods be used to meet the needs of all parents. These included emails, face-to-face meetings, newsletters, interactive websites, phone calls, videos, and webcasts. These methods would help meet the needs of the diverse families that make up the Black community. Participants asked that support be given to Black families to help break down the barriers that hinder their engagement.

“I’m actively engaged at my daughter’s school meetings, but it was always at the school. Could it be somewhere else? Are there opportunities for parents who do shift work? So, that’s part of the engagement, but I think it also signals (something) to parents. And it’s always, at least in my experience, has always been a few families participating, right. Not all the families but a few families who are involved. How can we create that affirmation for the whole community?”

While Black parents and caregivers problematized their parent involvement as gendered, class-based, raced-based and Eurocentric, it is equally important that educators be aware of the problems that Black LGBTQ2SIA+ families encounter when interacting in schools. Their family composition, gender identity and sexual orientation are other factors that influence parents' or caregivers' experiences in their children's schools. LGBTQ2SIA+ families described their experiences which include: (1) homophobia and transphobia among school staff, (2) religious beliefs of school professionals, (3) experience with intersectional discrimination and anti-Black racism, (4) inability of school staff to address the discrimination LGBTQ2SIA+ students encounter as a human rights issue, (5) anxiety about traditional male and female gender roles, (6) unwillingness of school staff to view gender as non-binary, (7) unfamiliarity with the vernacular used to discuss LGBTQ2SIA+ issues, (8) lack of representation in the curriculum with respect to Black LGBTQ2SIA+ people and communities, and (9) fear of conflict with the dominant heterosexual parents on school councils.

Parent Council

A common theme expressed by participants was the lack of opportunities available for Black parents/caregivers to be involved on the school parent council. The gatekeeping and power exerted by some members revealed participants' experiences with microaggressions, anti-Blackness and bullying when Black parents tried to take on leadership positions. Many indicated the difficulties they had when they were either "the only one on the parent council" or "only a few Black parents" trying to be in these positions which were already taken by white parents who wanted to protect the status quo.

"I think what supports me in being involved in a leadership role is my education experience and my experience in the work field. I'm comfortable with certain soft skills that allow me to present, advocate, be a leader and take on that role. But I get a lot of push back from white mothers who try to shut down my ideas."

"I joined my daughter's parent council, and it was me and another mom and a dad, and whenever we would try to suggest things, you would see the looks on these white parents face. It's like how dare we come and try to change things. Once in a planning meeting, one of the Black parents suggested we change something and a white mother said, "we have certain standards here and we do things this way at this school." We all knew what that 'standard' meant."

One participant further noted that the only positions which appeared to be available were assisting with fundraising and bake sales. Several mothers suggested that was how white mothers and teachers regarded them and their skills and contributions, “to only make bake goods.” A parent and caregiver who had participated in one of these activities in the past said that they willingly assisted but were “jokingly” asked “not to deal with the funds because Black people could not be trusted with money.” Another parent, who shared their own experience with being involved in school fundraising activities over the years, added:

“...we’re the parents and we must be treated with dignity because sometimes we feel like we’re not welcome, no matter what you do or how you try to support your child’s school. Sometimes they want you to go and not come back, and then they will say, ‘These parents are not involved in their child education’...”

According to participants, another factor affecting their involvement in the school community was the attitude of school staff towards Black parents who try to be involved in school activities. A significant number of participants shared their perceptions of problematic relationships with teachers and other staff who they felt made assumptions about their lack of involvement in school activities and expected little of them. They asked that schools recognize that the relationship between teachers’ social background and teachers’ evaluations of family’s involvement in their child(ren)’s schools is problematic as they are often judged based on their “socio-economic status and postal code.”

“They make these assumptions that we don’t want to be involved. Some of us work shifts and do what we can to keep up to-date.”

“Sometimes they would make these underhanded comments, ‘like, oh well, you could try to show up at least once’ and I often shake my head. What’s the difference, I know my mom went through this when I was a kid too.”

Low income and single parents had the greatest difficulties with teachers as Black parents were often evaluated as less capable of taking care of their child(ren). For example, while discussing some of their school experiences, a mother described the cultural cues they felt a teacher used in the classroom.

“I mean, I am a single mom, and I should not be made to feel ashamed of that. I remember talking to my child’s teacher when she was in middle school about a field trip that was coming up and she was like, “Oh I understand if you don’t have the money to do a bit extra, you can probably talk to the office.” I asked her why she believed I couldn’t afford

the “extra” and she leaned in as if she wanted to whisper to tell me how difficult it must be. Like in a condescending way. I have never forgotten that. It has stayed with me all these years.”

“We have to stop making assumptions about Black single families and their involvement. We’ve got to create environments where Black single mothers feel welcome. And I think there could be some more intentionality with the principals to encourage all parents to participate and know that school council isn’t the only way to participate. There are other things that you can do. And there’s things that you can do that would be of interest to the community. Show us you are part of the community.”

In addition, most parents and caregivers were clear in stating that school administrators had the power to change the dialogue and shift how Black families were received in schools. They stated that change starts with principals reminding their staff to shift their language and approach and “do some proactive reaching out,” rather than accepting the stereotypical narrative of Black families’ lack of engagement and involvement.

School Leadership: Experiences with School Administrators

Experiences with school administrators varied for many participants. Parents and caregivers felt that more needed to be done by administrators to make them feel welcomed and have their perspectives valued, encouraged, and heard. Similar to the Centre of Excellence’s mandate that identifies the use of evidence to highlight promising practices (see Appendix A), participants recognized the need for administrators to educate themselves about Black communities.

“What I do know is, it starts from the leadership at the school. I have worked at schools where the language from the principal was that Black kids were low. You would think the principal would ask for help to help these “low” Black students. But he didn’t.”

“If you have a principal being racist towards Black students or their families, what do you think the school culture will be? I am thinking about that and having to put my foot down once or twice when I was talking to my child’s principal. They sometimes don’t even hide how they discriminate. They are very condescending towards us as Black families. Especially if you don’t know the rules of the school system.”

Participants felt that having administrators who demonstrated cultural competence allowed them to be more aware of how to interact with Black families.

“I know this has probably been said a million times, but principals and vice principals that understand the racial and cultural make-up of the students and families they serve are more understanding. They know how to speak to us and not let us feel like we do not belong in schools.”

“As Black trans dad that has encountered so many transphobia, misgendering and anti-Black racism from different teachers, it was good encountering one vice principal who took the time to learn, to understand my identity and how to support me and my child.”

Equally important, participants shared their thoughts and experience with having administrators who “went above and beyond” for the Black student population:

“There are some administrators you know they care, the way they invite you into the schools and sit and talk with you. They make you feel seen and heard. They follow up and check in.”

“My daughter has wonderful admins, they do so much for the Black students at her school. The school climate is very good. I remember going to one of them and telling them what I wanted and what I expected and what I knew I deserved, and the principal listened. And I will tell you I have good support. You could see the admins made their staff accountable for things. So, I felt supported.”

Given the importance and visibility of school leaders, participants also felt that it was important for the Board to consider increasing the representation of Black administrators. This included getting educators the help and support they needed to become principals. As suggested, “educators that are Black or Indigenous or racialized bring unique strengths and when Black families and students see this, it helps to replace the stereotyping and racism.” Participants believed that if schools are focused on serving all students, they should also make it a priority to have a diverse critical mass of principals.

Teacher Education Programs

Participants raised the issue of teachers in training and suggested that more work needs to be done to educate them on anti-Black racism and equity practices and give them the tools and

resources necessary for this work before they are hired. Students from both French and English programs discussed the importance of teacher education programs in training teachers to confront their biases and prejudices towards Black people before they are placed in schools and have authority over Black students. Many participants alluded to the irresponsibility of teacher education programs and according to one student, “it is dangerous to send them into such a position of power as new teacher without most of them ever checking their own privilege, especially white teachers.”

Families discussed their child(ren) encountering new teachers who were unable to control the classroom climate and gave several examples of their inability to discuss social justice issues safely and sensitively with students. They emphasized that teaching does not happen in a vacuum and that new teachers should be trained and educated to understand how systemic oppression operates in education.

Anti-Black Racism

Participants discussed examples of racism including classroom incidents, and engagement with guidance counsellors, with many of them receiving inadequate advice on their academic choices. Black parents and caregivers expressed concerns that Black students are under-represented in academic-level courses and STEM programs. Further, concerns were raised that Black students are not receiving the benefit of mentorships and that older students are not understanding next steps for their learning or their options when they transition out of high schools.

Participants appealed for training for educators on anti-Black racism and the need for staff to acknowledge and work on unlearning their biases. It was suggested that teachers be educated on allyship and the lived experiences of Black students to enable them to teach without doing harm. Parents and caregivers also identified the need for educators to engage in critical and uncomfortable conversations about racism and current events covered by the media and stressed the need for educators to call out racist behaviour in class.

Parents and caregivers described in detail the ways in which they were treated by staff when they tried to intervene on behalf of their child(ren) or family member. Many participants stated that staff often reacted in negative ways when they suggested a different approach to their engagement or teaching style.

“I remember this happening to me twice, both my kids at different schools. With my first child, the teacher was very rude when I asked her not to dismiss my child and to make her feel comfortable learning. My eldest used to complain about the stereotypes this

woman would come with in Black History Month. For my second child, I was told off. Her teacher said, “this was her curriculum, and she tries to relate to everyone in her class” and I was like, who are you relating to? Certainly not the one Black student in your class. I felt so angry and didn’t bother going to the principal. They often support their staff and do nothing about it.”

“I don’t understand why they [teachers] act that way when we ask that they treat our kids the same way. Why do Black parents face so much microaggression? Why are some of these teachers so downright racist against us when we ask for them to see our kids as belonging in their classrooms?”

“I remember having to escalate an issue when my daughter was, I believe in Grade 9 or Grade 10. I had to go to the principal after I was getting nowhere with this rude teacher. I think when you’re a parent that you know your rights and you’re willing to hop over whatever level and you’re willing to go as far as possible to demand changes or demand that an incident is addressed. Teachers don’t like that and sometimes you fear them reacting to your child. They know their power; they know nothing will happen to them. So, they continue being awful and racist.”

Parents and Caregivers of Black Students in French Immersion Programs

Participants discussed the “push out” of Black students from the French as a Second Language programs. Several of them shared their experience with schools that continue to find ways to keep Black families out of French Immersion schools. Anecdotal examples were given of school administrators and teachers demonstrating anti-Blackness or creating conditions that led to families removing their children from schools.

Parents and caregivers also reflected on how deeply problematic the French Immersion school culture was and felt these schools only benefitted “certain families.” Participants suggested that the attitudes and ideology in the French programs created a division along the lines of race, gender and class.

“Girls are more likely to be enrolled than boys. I can count the Black boys in my daughters’ program and my friend’s son’s program. They all know each other because they are a few of them. They get kicked out early you know..very..very early.”

“I am from a French speaking country in Africa and when I came here, I discovered that there were programs like this. I was happy, but I was shocked at how they spoke to me and my

wife. They even tried to tell us they had no space for my children, and we should enroll them in the English programs. My wife wanted to not fight with them but insisted that my kids be placed there.”

“When my [child] entered, there was a lot of Black students that entered. By the time Grade 1 hit, they’re practically all gone because they couldn’t deal with the teacher saying, “Oh, we can’t do this.” “They’re not talking.” “They’re not understanding.” “They’re not catching on.”

Participants also had difficulties getting the support they needed, especially when there were so few Black families at their schools. For parents and caregivers that decided to remove their children from French Immersion programs, they discussed being told that “it was difficult to support their child(ren)” or “schools not being equipped to serve their needs.” Participants felt that this practice was committed under a false pretence and belief that French immersion is too difficult for students with special education needs.

“I realize that my son needed extra support and it felt I didn’t deserve to ask for it. They acted funny towards me and dismissive whenever I asked about the resources or told the teacher about things that worked at home.”

“Before I switched my child, they would always suggest that I take her to an English school to get the support. I would ask why they can’t do it there and they would smile and respond with their made-up excuse. I got tired of it. I got tired of fighting them.”

Though French Immersion and extended programs are developed to give non-Francophone students the ability to study and develop their proficiency in French, many participants found that Black children are robbed of the opportunity of being successful at learning French. Notably, participants suggested that this type of exclusion demonstrates how racism has an impact on enrolment practices and sense of belonging in the French programs. For many that shared their experiences, it confirmed that little has improved in terms of Black student representation and retention, or positive interactions with Black families in French immersion and extended programs.

[Finding Ways to Advocate and Disrupt Racist Schooling Experiences](#)

Though participants discussed the problematic behaviour of school staff, they also discussed the ways in which they disrupted anti-Blackness. Many families shared stories about emailing superintendents and administrators about their concerns or racist incidents. They also talked about getting support from community members and organizations. For example, many parents

and caregivers got help with resources and having a community member being present at meetings with administrators or teachers. Participants discussed the need for all Black families or parents of Black children to educate themselves on board policies and learn how to make the “system work for them.” Participants highlighted the importance of knowing their rights as Black parents and using them as tools for accountability. For one parent who described their approach to advocacy, it meant “having the attention of the school after seeing the lengths I would go for my children or myself to be treated fairly and just telling them being racist is wrong.” Another parent suggested that their concerns were only taken seriously after teaching staff recognized that the parent “would take it all the way to the Human Rights Office or the media.” As the parent stated, “really let those teachers know we can advocate.”

Others asserted that the adjustment in the teachers’ behaviour should not happen when they feel their job and livelihood is threatened. They felt that teachers must learn that equity and inclusion “means treating all students fairly.” It was further pointed out that teachers need to ask themselves why they entered the teaching profession and do ongoing reflection on their own bias against Black students and families. Participants suggested that educators challenge themselves to unlearn racism and seek ways to improve themselves. Even if there are feelings of discomfort in this process, they should “think about how Black children and families are made to feel and discriminated against”, both historically and currently.

Re-building Community Relationships with Schools

Community participants described their skepticism about institutions, particularly educational institutions, such as TDSB, that are creating or implementing initiatives to combat anti-Black racism. As part of the process of re-building trust, clarity, and formal partnerships between communities, schools and the Centre of Excellence, participants asked for the following:

“The purpose of the Centre of Excellence must be clearly defined and communicated to ACB community members.”

“More information must be provided to improve transparency between communities and schools and to prevent the process from being long and difficult. This will help the community with clarity about and accessibility to the Centre.”

“Holding the Centre of Excellence accountable to its mission and commitments to ACB students and families is important.”

Parents and community members suggested that re-building community relationships can be supported through an annual summit hosted by the Centre of Excellence. The summit would include a discussion on what the Centre of Excellence has accomplished throughout the school year, what was done with the research and consultations, and what will be done going forward to ensure that they are driving policy changes within TDSB. More importantly, the ACB community asserted that the policies should be driven by the data produced from conversations with ACB families to provide families with a sense of ownership of the data.

“There has to be deliverables. As time has evolved, the school to prison pipeline has been a large concern for our community. When we have consultations, do something about it! We want to see action, measurables and implementation. We need to improve the relations by following through.”

Families and community participants understood that data collection is “a necessary part of the board’s responsibilities” to influence and inform practice and policies. However, they suggested the data be made available for use by school staff, department leaders, administrators “to have their stories heard and implement[ing] the recommendations given, in all schools, as[a] move to support Black students’ needs.” For several participants, this demonstrates the Board’s efforts in being accountable and transparent.

Stakeholders stated that all the evidence is consistent in regard to family-school-community partnerships having a major influence on their children’s achievement in school and through life. For many, they asked that the importance of the partnerships be understood . As one participant added “when schools, families, and our community folks work together to support learning, our children fair out better, they feel confident, they know they have support from everywhere in the Black community.” Strengthening this partnership and re-building the trust meant the following for stakeholders:

“Schools must be willing to engage families in ways that are linked to improving Black students learning outcomes.”

“When schools build partnerships with us as Black families, and respond to our concerns and honor our contributions, they are more successful in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving our children’s achievement.”

“When Black families and community members share their concerns about schools being accountable to Black students’ wellbeing and overall success, it means schools across TDSB must make take that extra step to have positive changes in policy, practice, and resources.”



The Role of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement; and Recommendations for Supporting Black Students, Families and/or Caregivers and Community Members

It must be noted that several recommendations were made about how the Centre of Excellence could support Black families and students. Each stakeholder group perceived the Centre of Excellence as playing a pivotal role in collaborating with school leadership, educators and policy stakeholders in areas such as:

- 1) Black students' identity development, mentoring; and creating an affinity space for Black families and the community for networking, connecting, and healing;
- 2) classroom conditions: training in cultural responsiveness and implicit bias for teachers and school staff;
- 3) communicating, coordinating, and sharing information and resources;
- 4) building partnerships with community members and organizations;
- 5) leadership and advocacy; and
- 6) further focus group research.

1. The Centre of Excellence's Role in Identity Development, Mentoring, and Providing Affinity Spaces for Connecting, Networking, and Healing

A key recommendation made during the focus group discussions was the need for the Centre of Excellence to support the growth of Black students' identity and development. Suggestions for accomplishing this objective include celebrating their achievements, creating grants specific for Black students, supporting the transition of students to high school, post-secondary education and apprenticeships, offering tutoring and mentorship programs, lunch and after-school programs, an Elders-in-School program, extracurricular activities that engage students outside of school, and hosting cultural events, activities, and programming throughout the year. As one participant said: "This must be done for Black students to have recognition and showing them that they're important." Participants also discussed access to STEM and other specialized curriculum programs for Black students.

Mentoring

Community members discussed the importance of developing and enhancing Black students' networking and mentorship from a young age. This was seen as significant because it provides Black students with opportunities to network with Black professionals who can serve as role models and provide them with tools and information about how to attain professional careers. Community members also identified connecting with Black professionals as central to combatting

the “lack of belief that teachers and guidance counsellors have it [sic] in for Black children/youth.” Participants also suggested creating a database of Black agencies and professionals to give Black students opportunities for placements that, depending on their professional interest, could count towards their volunteer service hours requirement. It was suggested that the support for Black students must be envisioned as a long-term, continuous goal over the entire year. Community participants also recommended that a coordinated peer mentorship program be developed in schools to provide unique mentorship and educational opportunities for Black students. These would include personal, academic, and professional development opportunities that create a fulfilling student experience and can enhance community members' engagement and awareness. Participants added that these are tangible ways that schools can build bridges with the Black community and show an interest in issues affecting Black students.

Suggestions were also made that the Centre of Excellence build connections between students and create opportunities for parents and families to connect and network while also providing “affinity spaces.” Participants also discussed the significance of having the Centre of Excellence located in an actual building where families could go with the intention of finding safety, connection, support, and inspiration.

“We need to make sure that we have a network. It doesn't matter where we are, whether you live in the east, the west, whatever, so that we can come together because we have a tie that binds. We all have children within this umbrella, and we need to be able to connect them with strength. With numbers, there's strength.”

Participants asked that the Centre of Excellence facilitate the creation of spaces for healing for the Black community and provide counselling to deal with issues, such as internalized racism and generational trauma.

They also proposed the implementation of an Ombudsman at the Board to understand parents' experiences with anti-Black racism.

In addition to the recommendations and thoughts shared, participants asked that no one be left out of the conversation within the umbrella term of ACB. Participants stated that while there is a recognition that the term ACB is comprehensive, it also omits self-identifying Black members (e.g., Afro-Latinx, Afro-Indigenous). Therefore, schools must see the need to continuously be intentional in connecting with Black community members, families and organizations that are often not present.



2. The Centre of Excellence’s Role in Supporting Classroom Conditions through Training Teachers and School Staff in Cultural Responsiveness and Implicit Bias

Accountability measures

In order to support student success, participants asserted that the Centre of Excellence must provide teacher training on cultural responsiveness, implicit bias, and how teachers can relate to Black students. They also suggested that the Centre of Excellence provide teaching resources in all subject areas to incorporate diverse Black voices from the Canadian and African diaspora. As part of an accountability measure, it was recommended that schools report back yearly to the Centre of Excellence on the progress they have made to achieve ACB representation and inclusion.

Newcomer Black families

Community members also discussed the barriers and discrimination many newcomer families encounter when seeking assistance or engaging with TDSB schools. It was suggested that school staff should display more awareness and cultural competence and “know not all ACB families speaks the official languages.” Therefore, finding different ways for school staff to communicate and share information with families would increase accessibility and make school environments more welcoming.

3. The Centre of Excellence’s Role in Communicating, Coordinating, Organizing, and Sharing Information, Services, and Resources

Transparency in Communication

Participants stated that parents/caregivers and families should be made aware of the Centre of Excellence’s role, mandate, and plans going forward. As noted by a grandparent, “many of us don’t know what the Centre of Excellence does or is, so the staff needs to make its presence known more broadly, through social media and by sharing information year-round at school assemblies, parent-teacher interviews, and Student Council.” Participants also recommended that information about the Centre of Excellence’s role and mandate be advertised in the broader community. It was further suggested that the Centre of Excellence reach out to Black families through schools and invite them to attend a virtual session in order to inform them about its mandate and to collect contact information from families in a database.

Parents/caregivers also requested that the Centre of Excellence provide information about Board policies and procedures, changes taking place in the school system, and research that has been conducted with Black students.

Participants emphasized the need for timely and accessible communications to ensure that community members receive information in a clear, direct, and easy to understand manner.

In fulfilling its communication role, it was suggested that the Centre of Excellence coordinate, organize and share information on a variety of topics relevant to Black students and their families, including community activities and programs, mentorship and work opportunities, scholarships and grants for Black students, a list of easily accessible tutors, Black-focused resources and organizations, community supports, and TDSB resources.

Hub for Resources

Participants expressed the need for the Centre of Excellence to act as a “hub” where families could receive services and assistance that they need, such as mental health resources, food security, support with settlement/immigration, employment services, child welfare, and create and/or coordinate care services for students whose parents are working multiple jobs to support their families.

“I wonder if there is a way to have resources in one place that you could direct families to, so they can access what they need. In general, we're very private people who don't want to have to tell you that I need help with this or whatever. But if there was just a general information that they could go and go to this website, and they could find it or call this the number or something set up somehow, that they could talk to somebody directly.”

“I do think that it is important for us to have a hub in which that unity can flourish, and I think the Centre has a unique ability to kind of be a hub ...the Centre will be able to synthesize the resources and the services that the community organizations are able to give out.”

Coordination of resources was seen as a very important strategy for aiding parents/caregivers to better advocate for and support their children.

Community members discussed the essential need for the Centre of Excellence to provide information to families on navigating the education system. It was also suggested that the Centre of Excellence provide guidance to parents/caregivers on the types of questions they could ask during parent-teacher interviews.

Curating Resources and Partnerships

Community members shared the importance of conducting a needs assessment of services and resources available internally and externally to TDSB. Such an assessment would be helpful in

identifying the gaps in accessing resources. Community members also suggested that an inventory of resources be developed to direct families in need of support. It was suggested that the Centre of Excellence connect with schools to gather that information. One suggested strategy for the needs assessment is community mapping (identifying the location of organizations) to find out what is available within the community and sharing that information with ACB community members. It was recommended that the Centre of Excellence partner with existing organizations doing impactful work in community mapping. Community participants underscored the need for such information as “families need to be informed because they are unaware that there are services available to them, such as laptops for students, services for students with special needs.”

4. The Centre of Excellence’s Role in Partnering and Collaborating

Participants emphasized that increased collaboration with ACB communities must be centred on building partnerships in order to improve classroom conditions for Black students’ identity development.

Additionally, participants asserted that the Centre of Excellence must collaborate with educators through professional learning to develop their awareness about community resources available to support Black students’ success. This includes understanding and valuing how community members are involved in supporting families in and outside of school. The Centre of Excellence must support schools in understanding and valuing the cultural capital that exists in the Black community. A key success factor of a collaborative school-community engagement is recognizing, seeking, and valuing the varied knowledge of ACB communities that teachers could draw on in classrooms. Participants suggested that these collaborations need to be well-defined and communicated in relation to Black communities. It was added that this intentional collaboration leads to the redistribution of power between schools and ACB communities, where parents/caregivers and other community members are instrumental in the partnerships and decision-making processes that impact their Black children or family members.

Differentiation in Partnerships

Participants further emphasized that community partnerships need to be tailored to smaller agencies, grassroots organizations, community activists and individuals doing work within ACB communities that may not have the same number of resources as larger organizations. In the focus group discussions, several community members emphasized the need to be intentional when developing these relationships and the need for different models of engagement that decenter hierarchical models of partnership rather than the “one-size-fits-all” approach.

Staff in the Centre of Excellence were also encouraged to explore the many opportunities to partner with ACB service organizations.

It was also recommended that the Centre of Excellence partner with Afrocentric organizations to ensure a more comprehensive teaching of African history. Another suggestion was that the Centre of Excellence collaborate with universities on pathway planning.

Participants proposed that the Centre of Excellence establish partnerships with community groups that already have experience with Black organizations.

“I think there needs to be a better level of openness to community organizations... If it is going to be the same ol’, same ol’, where there is a wall, between us, the community and particularly the Black community and the TDSB, we are going to have challenges, but if the philosophy is to be open, then you know, it works both ways.”

5. The Centre of Excellence’s Role in Leadership, Advocacy, and Bridge Building Between ACB Communities and Schools

Parents/caregivers reinforced the need for the Centre of Excellence to take leadership in promoting Black academic excellence and to be a strong advocate and mediator for students and their families.

Community members and organizations identified advocacy as a very central success factor for achieving effective school-community engagement. They highlighted advocacy as critical in redressing the “history of broken promises with TDSB” and improving the quality of relationship between the TDSB and ACB communities.

Participants asserted that the Centre of Excellence cannot be neutral and must engage in action-oriented advocacy to counter institutionalized anti-Black racism and gatekeeping that Black students, families, and communities’ encounter. Proposed proactive actions were highlighted to actively confront the unequal power dynamics and structures between schools and ACB communities. These include assessing policies, programs, curricula and hiring practices to ensure that they are equitable.

Voice and Advocacy

Participants expressed the need for the Centre of Excellence to be a voice for Black families. As one father suggested, “be the voice for us, an advocate for us, because you know the system and can speak on behalf of us and our children, and you can get into places as ACB staff that we

individually may not be able to. So, I think that's really important." As part of its strong advocacy role, it was suggested that the Centre of Excellence staff act as a mediator between schools and families facing discrimination or anti-Black racism in school. As several parents/caregivers added, this could be done by addressing the socio-emotional needs of students, and/or supporting families that "do not understand how the system works or those of us that experience repercussions for speaking out."

Bridge to Re-engagement

In addition to the topics of leadership and advocacy that were discussed, community representatives suggested that the Center of Excellence act as a "bridge" to re-engage families and community organizations with schools. They discussed the need to repair the trust that has been broken between schools and the community over the years: "intentional connections with ACB organizations are needed to repair the relationship." Demonstrating accountability, deliverables, and transparency were suggested as key factors for regaining trust and strengthening partnerships.

"Advocacy is important. The community is constantly advocating for students, and we also need the centre to advocate."

"The trust in doing the best for the student has to be repaired. This trust has been broken that they have the best interest in the student's development. We [Black people] bring a culture that we trust schools, but this trust has been broken because the students cannot succeed in the "normal" pathway, so they create their own."

6. The Centre of Excellence's Role in Undertaking Further Focus Group Research

It was proposed that additional focus group research be undertaken with young children to gain insight into their schooling experiences and to hear the experiences and stories of families.

-End-



Appendix A

Mandates	Community Recommendation
<p>Student</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide support to Black students in TDSB schools to combat racism, navigate complaint processes, identify barriers to success and access appropriate resources (e.g., scholarships, networking, mentoring). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre of Excellence should take leadership in promoting Black academic excellence and be a strong advocate and mediator for students and their families. • As part of its strong advocacy role, the Centre of Excellence staff must act as a mediator between schools and families facing discrimination and anti-Black racism in schools. Staff also need to address the socio-emotional needs of students and support families. • The Centre of Excellence must coordinate, organize, and share information on a variety of topics relevant to Black students and their families, including community activities and programs, mentorship and work opportunities, scholarships and grants for Black students, a list of easily accessible tutors, Black-focused resources and organizations, community supports, and TDSB resources. • The Centre of Excellence must coordinate resources, enabling parents/caregivers to better advocate and support their children. • The Centre of Excellence must support the identity and development of Black students. Specific suggestions include celebrating their achievements, creating grants specific for Black students, supporting the transition of students to high school, post-secondary education and apprenticeships, offering tutoring and mentorship programs, lunch and after-school programs, an Elders-in-School program, extracurricular activities that engage students outside of school, and hosting cultural events, activities, and programming throughout the year. • The Centre of Excellence must build connections between Black students. • The Centre of Excellence must develop and enhance Black students' networking and mentorship starting at a young age. It must provide Black students with opportunities to network with Black professionals who can serve as role models and provide them with



	<p>tools and information for attaining professional careers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre of Excellence must facilitate the development of a coordinated peer mentorship program in schools to provide unique mentorship and educational opportunities for Black students. • Teaching resources should be provided by the Centre of Excellence in all subject areas that incorporate diverse Black voices from the Canadian and African diaspora.
<p>2. Identify, develop, and facilitate culturally responsive and relevant healing practices for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre of Excellence needs to facilitate the creation of healing spaces for the Black community and provide counselling to deal with issues such as internalized racism and generational trauma.
<p>3. Establish effective mechanisms for monitoring improvement in the achievement of Black students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Ombudsman must be assigned to the TDSB to understand parents’ experiences with anti-Black racism. • The Center of Excellence must take proactive actions to actively confront the unequal power dynamics and structures between schools and ACB communities. These actions include the assessment of policies, programs, curricula, and hiring practices to ensure that they are equitable. • There must be an advisory committee created for the Centre of Excellence. • The Centre of Excellence must support Black students’ access to STEM and other specialized curriculum programs as a pathway to post-secondary education and as a means to alleviate barriers in education.
<p>4. Inform changes to policies and procedures so that all students may benefit from the learning and innovative practices developed by the Centre.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role and mandate of the Centre of Excellence and plans going forward must be clearly articulated and communicated to parents/caregivers, families, and the broader community. • The Centre of Excellence must inform parents/caregivers about Board policies and procedures, changes taking place in the school system, and research that has been conducted on Black students. • The Centre of Excellence needs to provide timely and accessible communications to ensure that all



	<p>community members are receiving information in a clear, direct, and easy to understand manner.</p>
<p>Families/Communities</p> <p>5. Support meaningful engagement and advocacy of caregivers for their children in TDSB schools and programs and improve the lines of communication to them about Black student success, system navigation and complaint processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre of Excellence needs to act as a “hub” where families could receive services/assistance needed, such as mental health resources, food security, support with settlement/immigration, employment services, child welfare, and create and/or coordinate care services for students whose parents are working multiple jobs to support their families. • The Centre of Excellence cannot be neutral and must engage in action-oriented advocacy to counter institutionalized anti-Black racism and gatekeeping that Black students, families, and communities’ encounter. • The Centre of Excellence must be “a voice” for Black families. • The Center of Excellence must act as a “bridge” to re-engage families and community organizations with schools to repair the trust and broken relationship between schools and the community. • The Center of Excellence must create opportunities for parents and families to connect and network while also providing “affinity spaces” for them. • The Centre of Excellence must provide information to families on navigating the education system and provide guidance to parents/caregivers on the types of questions they can ask during parent-teacher interviews. • The Centre of Excellence must connect with schools to identify gaps in accessing resources and compile an inventory of services that are available internally and externally to TDSB families. • The Centre of Excellence must create opportunities for students to network and for parents and families to have “affinity spaces”. • The Centre of Excellence must be located in an actual building where families could go with the intention of finding safety, connection, support, and inspiration.
<p>6. Engage in strategic community partnerships related to education within the identified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre of Excellence needs to establish intentional connections with ACB organizations. Demonstrating accountability, deliverables, and



<p>approved annual budget for this purpose.</p>	<p>transparency were suggested as key factors for regaining trust and strengthening partnerships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre of Excellence must develop and foster collaborations with ACB communities that are centred on building partnerships to improve classroom conditions for Black students’ identity development. • The Centre of Excellence must collaborate with educators through professional learning to develop their awareness about community resources available to support Black students’ success. This includes understanding and valuing how community members are involved in supporting families in and outside of schools. • The Centre of Excellence must support schools in understanding and valuing the cultural capital that exists in the Black community. A key success factor of a collaborative school-community engagement is recognizing, seeking, and valuing the varied knowledge of ACB community members that teachers could draw on in classrooms. • The Centre of Excellences needs to create a database of Black agencies and professionals, providing Black students with opportunities for placements which could count towards their volunteer service hours requirement. • The Centre of Excellence needs to develop community partnerships that are tailored to smaller agencies, grassroots organizations, community activists and individuals doing work within ACB communities that may not have the same number of resources as larger organizations. The Centre of Excellence should be intentional in its efforts to develop these relationships, using different models of engagement that decenter hierarchical models of partnership or the “one-size-fits-all” approach. • The Centre of Excellence staff must explore the many opportunities to partner with ACB service organizations. It was recommended that the Centre of Excellence partner with Afrocentric organizations to ensure a more comprehensive teaching of African history.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre of Excellence must partner with organizations doing impactful work in community mapping. • The Centre of Excellence needs to work with universities on pathway planning. • The Centre of Excellence must establish partnerships with community groups that already have experience with Black organizations.
<p>Staff/System</p> <p>7. Use evidence to highlight promising practices and engage in meaningful research on topics relevant to Black students that are then integrated across schools and at the system level within the TDSB;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre of Excellence is called upon to support school staff with evidence-based plans to support promising practice that will improve the learning conditions of Black students. • The Centre of Excellence must engage in the work of providing support to educators and administrators to build their critical consciousness practitioner inquiries. Also implement guidelines for schools to conduct thorough equity audits, family and community engagement plans, teacher diversity initiatives, and professional development on transformative practices and social and emotional learning.
<p>8. Create professional learning in anti-Black racism and collaborate with other staff in facilitating learning in decolonization, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and human rights, while recognizing the similarities and intersections of various forms of oppression.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre of Excellence should provide teacher training in cultural responsiveness and implicit bias, and training on how teachers can relate to Black students. • The Centre of Excellence should also provide training for school staff to address the barriers and discrimination that newcomer families encounter in TDSB schools.
<p>9. Provide annual accountability reports and recommendations to the Board of Trustees and staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To fulfill its measure of accountability, schools must report back yearly to the Centre of Excellence on the progress they have made to achieve ACB representation and inclusion. • More focus group research should be undertaken with young children to gain insight into their schooling experiences and to hear the experiences and stories of families.





Our Mission

To enable all students to reach high levels of achievement and well-being and to acquire the knowledge, skills and values they need to become responsible, contributing members of a democratic and sustainable society.

We Value

- Each and every student's interests, strengths, passions, identities and needs
- A strong public education system
- A partnership of students, staff, family and community
- Shared leadership that builds trust, supports effective practices and enhances high expectations
- The diversity of our students, staff and our community
- The commitment and skills of our staff
- Equity, innovation, accountability and accessibility
- Learning and working spaces that are inclusive, caring, safe, respectful and environmentally sustainable

Our Goals

Transform Student Learning

We will have high expectations for all students and provide positive, supportive learning environments. On a foundation of literacy and math, students will deal with issues such as environmental sustainability, poverty and social justice to develop compassion, empathy and problem solving skills. Students will develop an understanding of technology and the ability to build healthy relationships.

Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being

We will build positive school cultures and workplaces where mental health and well-being is a priority for all staff and students. Teachers will be provided with professional learning opportunities and the tools necessary to effectively support students, schools and communities.

Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students

We will ensure that all schools offer a wide range of programming that reflects the voices, choices, abilities, identities and experiences of students. We will continually review policies, procedures and practices to ensure that they promote equity, inclusion and human rights practices and enhance learning opportunities for all students.

Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs

We will allocate resources, renew schools, improve services and remove barriers and biases to support student achievement and accommodate the different needs of students, staff and the community.

Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

We will strengthen relationships and continue to build partnerships among students, staff, families and communities that support student needs and improve learning and well-being. We will continue to create an environment where every voice is welcomed and has influence.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe (A NISH NA BEE), the Haudenosaunee (HOE DENA SHOW NEE) Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognize the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

Reconnaissance des terres traditionnelles

Nous reconnaissons que nous sommes accueillis sur les terres des Mississaugas des Anichinabés (A NISH NA BAY), de la Confédération Haudenosaunee (HOE DENA SHOW NEE) et du Wendat. Nous voulons également reconnaître la pérennité de la présence des Premières Nations, des Métis et des Inuit."

Funding Information Requirement

At the special meeting held on March 7, 2007, the Board decided that to be in order any trustee motion or staff recommendation that would require the Board to expend funds for a new initiative include the following information: the projected cost of implementing the proposal; the recommended source of the required funds, including any required amendments to the Board's approved budget; an analysis of the financial implications prepared by staff; and a framework to explain the expected benefit and outcome as a result of the expenditure.

[1]Closing of certain committee meetings

(2) A meeting of a committee of a board, including a committee of the whole board, may be closed to the public when the subject-matter under consideration involves,

(a) the security of the property of the board;

(b) the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian;

(c) the acquisition or disposal of a school site;

(d) decisions in respect of negotiations with employees of the board; or

(e) litigation affecting the board. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 207 (2).

(2.1) Closing of meetings re certain investigations – A meeting of a board or a committee of a board, including a committee of the whole board shall be closed to the public when the subject-matter under considerations involves an ongoing investigation under the Ombudsman Act respecting the board