



Recognition of Significant Observances Policy, Phase 2: New Policy - Status Update

To: Governance and Policy Committee

Date: 8 January, 2020

Report No.: 01-20-3800

Strategic Directions

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

Recommendation

It is recommended that the revised Work Plan for the development of the Recognition of Significant Observances Policy, as presented in this report, be approved.

Context

On 22 March 2016, the Board of Trustees approved a motion directing staff to report on the development of a policy on designating heritage months or days of significance and operational procedures to support the policy.

On June 7, 2016, staff presented to the Policy Review Committee (predecessor of the Governance and Policy Committee) a report with the work plan for development of the Recognition of Significant Observances Policy for review and input. During consideration of the report, Trustees expressed a variety of opinions and individual preferences with regard to the development of the new policy. The Committee did not formally identify its preferences through voting and, as a result, clear policy directions were not identified. The report was subsequently received by the Planning and Priorities Committee on June 15, 2016 and the Board of Trustees on June 22, 2016. An overview regarding designations of heritage months and days of significance and current practices at the TDSB is provided in Appendices A, D and E.

On May 23, 2018, the Board of Trustees made a decision that “that through to the end of the 2018 calendar year, a moratorium be placed on Trustee motions calling for the naming of heritage months, until the policy on the naming of heritage months is fully developed within the

framework laid out by the Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee and approved by the Board” (see Appendix B).

As part of the policy development process, staff conducted an environmental scan seeking relevant policies and procedures from other school boards and public organizations which could inform and support the development of the TDSB policy on the recognition of significant observances. However, the scan produced limited results.

Staff have updated the Policy Development Work Plan (Appendix C) and identified several key themes of the future policy, as outlined on pages 2- 3 of Appendix C, for the Committee’s consideration. The themes below are reminiscent of earlier conversations that took place at the Policy Review Committee:

1. **Equity:** Ensure that the new Policy adhere to the principles of equity as per the Equity Policy (P037).
2. **Continuation:** Consider whether to continue the recognition and proclamation of Heritage Months and/or Days of Significance.
3. **Centralized vs. De-centralized Approach:** Consider whether recognitions and celebrations should be system-wide and directed centrally or allow for local discretion at the learning centre or school level.
4. **Budget:** Consider ways to resource and fund Heritage Month and Days of Significance designations.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Subject to Committee’s directions, an information session will be organized for all Trustees on the development of the Recognition of Significant Observances Policy. Subsequently, staff will prepare provisions for the Policy, including alternative provisions related to the key policy themes, and will provide to the Governance and Policy Committee for consideration prior to initiating public consultations. The development of the Policy will be implemented in accordance with the revised Work Plan.

Resource Implications

Not applicable.

Communications Considerations

Following approval by the Board of Trustees, the newly developed Policy will be communicated to the system, posted on the Board’s public website, and communicated to the Board’s community advisory committees, the Student Senate, and unions/professional associations.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

- Equity Policy (P037)

Appendices

- Appendix A – Overview: TDSB Heritage Months and Days of Significance
- Appendix B – Moratorium on Naming of Heritage Months
- Appendix C – Policy Development Work Plan – Revised
- Appendix D – List of TDSB Heritage Months
- Appendix E – TDSB Days of Significance Calendar

From

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