

ESS Report for DEC Ends Policy #4

12 April 2023

Ensure all members of the school and district community are welcomed, respected, accepted, and supported.

Goal 4.1: Develop a strategic plan to promote diversity and antiracism and to address heterosexism and discrimination by creating affirming cultures.

The strategic plan is composed of the following strategies.

Section 1: Advisory Committees

Strategy 1.1: Consult with the ASD-S Antiracism Advisory Committee to identify strategies to increase racial, ethnic, and cultural equity in school communities and to ensure the voices of students who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Colour are heard at the district level.

Strategy 1.2: Consult with the ASD-S LGBTQ+ Inclusion Advisory Committee to identify strategies to increase LGBTQ+ Inclusion and to ensure the voices of students with LGBTQ+ identities are heard at the district level.

The Antiracism Advisory Committee met on March 15 with a second meeting scheduled for May 11). The committee includes district staff, school staff, and community members. Students will be joining the committee for the May meeting.

Members of the committee include:

- Sarah Braydon, Early Learning Centre Advisor
- Amy Marshall, Literacy Coordinator
- Emily Somers, Teacher, St Stephen High School
- Louisa Seales, Teacher, Barnhill Memorial School
- Laura Taylor, EAL & First Nations Coordinator
- Therese Trofimencoff, Antiracism & Equity Coach
- Brenda Diaz, Antiracism Program Coordinator, PRUDE
- Matthew Martin, Executive Director, Black Lives Matter NB
- Dr Timothy Christie, Regional Director of Ethics, Horizon

The committee is chaired by Peter T. Smith, Director of Education Support Services. A major recommendation of this committee is the development of policy regarding antiracism, including guidelines for teachers and administrators to respond to incidents of racism in our schools.

The LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee will meet on May 12th. The committee includes district staff, school staff, community members, and students. The committee will be chaired by Jessica Bellis, School Counselling Lead.

Section 2: Training for Curriculum Coaches

Strategy 1.3: Provide training to curriculum coaches in antiracism as a secondary specialty to increase cultural competency as reflected in antiracist instructional strategies and resource choices as well increased racial, ethnic, and cultural inclusion.

In order to embed antiracism practices into our teaching practices, six curriculum coaches will be completing three days of training with Education Support Services on antiracist classroom practices. This will allow district curriculum staff to incorporate antiracist coaching into a variety of subject areas, including literacy, numeracy, French, technology, and English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Section 3: Newcomers & English as an Additional Language

Strategy 1.4 Support newcomers by creating welcoming environments, providing culturally responsive teaching, and ensuring equity of instruction.

Strategy 1.6 Support teacher capacity in embedding First Nations content across the curriculum through the sharing of educational resources and authentic experiences that celebrate and prioritize local First Nations (Wabanaki) cultures, histories, and knowledges.

THIS WILL COME FROM LAURA

Section 4: Early Childhood

Strategy 1.5 Build capacity in early childhood educators by bringing awareness to anti-racism/anti-bias education through communities of practice and by providing resources that support all forms of diversity.

THIS WILL COME FROM LISSA

Section 5: Additional Antiracism and Equity Initiatives

1. Therese Trofimencoff has continued in her second year as the province's first antiracism and equity coach. Her work includes all grade levels. She has run workshops with all principals, as well as beginning teachers, early childhood educators, and guidance staff. She has worked directly with school staffs, professional learning communities (PLCs), and individual teachers as well as curriculum coaches. Additionally, she has been co-teaching lessons on antiracism with classroom teachers, writing articles and recording podcasts for teachers and other staff to access, and working with community groups such as PRUDE and the Saint John Newcomers Centre. A recent example of Therese's work was appearing as a guest speak alongside former New Brunswick Systemic Racism Commission Dr Manju Varma for PRUDE's first antiracism forum.
2. ASD-S ran the province's first high school anti-racism summit in December. Guest speakers including Dr Timothy Christie, Regional Director of Medical Ethics for Horizon, Matthew Martin, Executive Director of Black Lives Matter, and Renee, Education Assistant at Bayside Middle School. Students discussed their experiences with racism in the school system and suggested strategies to overcome racism. Every school left with plans for student-led initiatives to address racism in their school communities. Examples of these initiatives include inviting guest speakers to schools to talk about racism and inclusion (Campobello Island Consolidated School), presentations to all high school students about diversity (Grand Manan Community School), hosting a Black History Month event (Saint John High School), creating a "Culture Club" for racial and ethnic minority students to learn more about the local community (St Malachy's), highlighting diverse cultures in the school such as East Asian (Kennebecasis Valley High School), and creating a student club to lead ongoing activities (Rothesay High School).
3. High schools were able to have a teacher virtually join the Educator's Anti-Racism Conference held at York University in February. Therese Trofimencoff attended in person.
4. It should be noted that ASD-S was mentioned several times in the Systemic Racism Commissioner's Final Report in December. This included expanding the number of Antiracism & Equity Coaches (Recommendation 28) and ASD-S best practices (Recommendation 33).
5. ASD-S ran the annual Middle School GSA Day in October. This event is of a similar format to the Antiracism summit, with speakers and planning time and support for school based initiatives. Examples of school-based initiatives include materials such as t-shirts, flags, and pins to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion (Barnhill Memorial School, Forest Hills School), holding a mini-GSA conference (Quispamsis Middle School, Harry Miller Middle School, and Rothesay Park School), and creating an LGBTQ+ inclusion mural (Sir James Dunn Academy).

Section 6: Definitions & Explanations

Affirming Environments: “A welcoming and affirming environment feels safe. It is a space where people find themselves represented and reflected, and where they understand that all people are treated with dignity and respect.”¹

Racism is when one racial group is valued, intentionally or unintentionally, over another racial group. **Antiracism** is an active, intentional, and direct effort to identify and change systemic racism.² Antiracism requires organizations to look at their own culture, policies, and practices to identify and reduce systemic racial biases.³

Systemic Racism refers to policies and practices that exist in an organization that result in and support a continued unfair advantage to some people and unfair treatment of others based on race.⁴ Systemic racism may not be intentional or even visible to those within the system.

Diversity includes race, colour, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status, real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, social condition, and political belief and must be respected as part of inclusive public education.⁵

Heterosexism refers to systemic bias in favour of heterosexuality. It may include the presumption that people are heterosexual, valuing heterosexuality above other sexual orientations, or assuming heterosexuality is the only normal sexual orientation.

LGBTQ+ is the inclusive term we use to refer to individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and other sexual orientations or gender identities. It is important to remember there are variations on this term.⁶

Gender Identity is an individual’s sense of having a particular gender. It may be male, female, both, neither, or something else entirely. It may or may not correspond to one’s biological sex or sex assigned at birth.⁷

Sexual Orientation is a person’s identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are sexually attracted. This may include physical, emotional, or romantic attraction.⁸

Words from Beverly Daniel Tatum to clarify the concept of **systemic racism**:

I sometimes visualize the ongoing cycle of racism as a moving walkway at the airport. Active racist behavior is equivalent to walking fast on the conveyor belt. The person engaged in

¹ Adapted from the New York State Department of Education.

² Adapted from Kendi (2019) *How to Be an Antiracist*.

³ Adapted from the National Juvenile Justice Network

⁴ Adapted from Cambridge Dictionary

⁵ Policy 322

⁶ NB LGBTQ Inclusive Education Resource

⁷ Adapted from the OED.

⁸ Ibid.

*active racist behavior has identified with the ideology of White supremacy and is moving with it. Passive racist behavior is equivalent to standing still on the walkway. No overt effort is being made, but the conveyor belt moves the bystanders along to the same destination as those who are actively walking. Some of the bystanders may feel the motion of the conveyor belt, see the active racists ahead of them, and choose to turn around, unwilling to go in the same destination as the White supremacists. But unless they are walking actively in the opposite direction at a speed faster than the conveyor belt—unless they are actively antiracist—they will find themselves carried along with the others.*⁹

Words from Beverly Daniel Tatum to clarify the importance of representation in **affirming environments**:

Imagine we're in a meeting and somebody is going to take a group photo. And at the end, we're each going to get a copy of that photo. What's the first thing you're going to do when you get your copy of the photo? You're going to look for yourself, of course. Our learning environments are like that, too. Students enter these environments and they look for themselves. And some students can find themselves easily—they can see themselves in the reading material, they can see themselves in the person standing at the front of the classroom, they can see themselves in the history they're learning. But there will be some students who rarely, if ever, see themselves.

And to take the analogy a little bit further: Once you find yourself in the photo, the next thing you're going to do is consider how you look, right? Are your eyes open? Is your tie straight? In the same way, every student wants to see themselves not just in the picture, but in the picture looking good. So we have to think about who sees themselves in the curriculum and materials we use in the classroom—and how. Who sees themselves on the walls in the school? Who sees themselves in the discussions we're having in class? And if the only time Black kids see themselves is when we're talking about slavery or the ways Blacks were mistreated—during the Jim Crow era, for example—that's a case where, sure, they're in the picture, but they're not looking good. So it's a matter of providing different perspectives. Even if we are teaching about slavery, are we talking about slave rebellions? Are we talking about resistance? Are we talking about the agency of enslaved people in that narrative?¹⁰

⁹ Daniel Tatum (2017) *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*

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