

Equity & Inclusion Report for DEC 13 March 2024

Section One: Goals

The goals of ASD-S include the following:

- Strengthen our inclusive system to be anti-racist, affirming, and equitable;
- Honor diversity and welcome all students.

Section Two: Definitions

Inclusive education: the pairing of philosophy and pedagogical practices that allows each student to feel respected, confident and safe so he or she can participate with peers in the common learning environment and learn and develop to his or her full potential. It is based on a system of values and beliefs centered on the best interest of the student, which promotes social cohesion, belonging, active participation in learning, a complete school experience, and positive interactions with peers and others in the school community. (EECD 322)

Antiracism is an active, intentional, and direct effort to identify and change systemic racism.

- Racism is when one racial group is valued, intentionally or unintentionally, over another racial group.
- *The opposite of “racist” isn’t “not racist.” It is “antiracist.”* --Ibrim X. Kendi¹
- Antiracism requires organizations to look at their own culture, policies, and practices to identify and reduce systemic racial biases.

Affirming: “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 respect and dignity.”²

- An affirming culture proactively and publicly promotes a culture of diversity.

Equity: The term “equity” refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances.³

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. (EECD 322)

¹ Kendi, I.X. (2019) *How to Be an Antiracist*

² New York State Department of Education

³ National Association of Colleges and Employers

Section Three: ASD-S Equity Anchor Events

ASD-S maintains three equity “anchor events” which bring together invested parties from schools and community to learn together and to revisit the principles that underly that specific equity goal. These anchor events are the High School Antiracism Summit, the Middle School GSA Day, and the Youth Mental Health Forum. From each of these events, students are empowered to create student-led initiatives at their own schools to address the issues they see as most important in the manner they think will be most effective. Though student-initiated, these activities are overseen by a teacher advisor. These events are organized by Jennifer Grant, School Counselling Coordinator, and her team.

High School Antiracism Summit

The first High School Antiracism Summit was held in ASD-S in fall 2022 and is now an annual event. The goal is to learn about antiracism and related topics and plan initiatives for antiracism activities at their schools.

This year’s event was held on November 14th, 2023, at the Meenan’s Cove Beach House in Quispamsis. All high schools were invited to send a teacher and a group of students. Guest speakers were Matthew Martin, Executive Director of Black Lives Matter NB and a member of the ASD-S DEC, and Emily Somers, a teacher at St Stephen High School.

Teachers who attended the Antiracism Summit on November 14th were invited to join a book study led by Therese Trofimencoff, Antiracism Lead, and attend a virtual antiracism conference on November 30th hosted by the Harmony Movement, an Ontario non-profit organization that works to create inclusive schools.

Schools received financial support for student-led initiatives for antiracism initiatives. A complete list of these initiatives is attached to the report.

A second student antiracism event is planned for May to build off the momentum of the projects from the fall. This will involve a sharing and celebration of the school-based initiatives this year, a guest speaker, and planning for next year. There will also be a day for the teacher advisors to share their experiences, best practices, and work on plans for next year.

The event was organized by Jen Grant, School Counselling Coordinator, and her team.

Comments from students on what they learned:

- “Any action towards anti-racism is better than no action.”
- “That to be anti-racist you need to speak up and get really involved.”
- “That we can stand up and speak out against racism.”
- “The opposite of racist is anti-racist, not not racist. Not being racist simply isn't enough.”

- “I know that before, but today I learned that again, we should talk for people who cannot talk for themselves.”
- “Today I've learned that the different ways to address racism that we can use at school and teach other students to do.”

Middle School GSA (Gender-Sexuality Alliance) Day

ASD-S started the Middle School GSA Day in 2017 on the premise that more active LGBTQ+ inclusion needed to start in middle school, not high school as we had traditionally done. The high schools also have access to the Pride in Education Conference, so we made our focus the middle schools.

This year’s event was held on October 3rd, 2023, at the Meenan’s Cove Beach House in Quispamsis. All middle schools were invited to send a teacher and a group of students. The goal is to help students learn how to make their schools more affirming and supportive of LGBTQ+ youth.

The guest speakers were: Mark Vickers, Child & Youth Team psychologist, on healthy relationships; Maria Darling, Chroma NB, on community services; and Logan Martin, Saint John High School student, on the role of youth advocacy.

Schools received financial support for student-led initiatives for LGBTQ+ inclusion. A complete list of these initiatives is attached to the report.

Organized by Jen Grant, School Counselling Coordinator, and her team.

Comments from students on what they learned:

- “That there are others out there. There aren't a lot of kids in our GSA and it's nice to know we aren't alone.”
- “Everyone deserves support and kindness.”
- “A good understanding about my identity and possibly others' identities.”
- “That I am not alone and there's always someone to ask for help.”

Youth Mental Health Forum

ASD-S started the Mental Health Youth Forum in 2017 as opportunity for high school students across the district to come together and learn about mental health, share their experiences and concerns, and brainstorm actions they can take within their schools to address the problems they see.

This year’s forum was October 17th, at Meenan’s Cove Beach House in Quispamsis. All high schools were invited to send a teacher and a group of students. The goal is to learn about mental health and plan initiatives to support mental health in their schools.

The guest speaker was Patrick Gordon, a Saint John High School graduate, an Afghanistan veteran, Invictus Games athlete, and founder of Operation Feed Saint John.

Schools received financial support for student-led initiatives to address mental health concerns in their schools. A complete list of these initiatives is attached to the report.

The day was organized by Jennifer Grant, School Counselling Coordinator.

Comments from students on what they learned:

- “I can show more of my authentic self and try and find groups that respect that.”
- “Find people who are like my authentic self. And make them feel welcome so we can both belong.”
- “Let your inner critic melt away and focus on being you.”
- “Attract, don't chase. Be yourself and you'll find who and where you belong.”
- “Be resilient and true to yourself.”
- “Of course, all the resources. But most importantly, my own new visions and my bravery to truly speak up and make a change.”
- “That it's okay to talk about mental health and feelings. There are so many ways to destress and resources to help teens.”

Section Four: Advisory Committees

To ensure ASD-S leadership hears the voices of students and community members on homophobia/transphobia and racism and to allow ASD-S to develop the best interventions to address these problems, ASD-S has two advisory committees that meet twice annually.

ASD-S Antiracism Advisory Committee

District Members: Jennifer Grant, ASD-S School Counselling Coordinator & Chair, Melissa Savoie, Director of Schools for the Saint John Education Centre, Amy Marshall, ASD-S Literacy Coordinator, Caleigh Dunfield, ASD-S EDI Lead, Jay Nickerson, ASD-S EDI Lead

School Members: Mary Ashton, Saint John High School Counsellor, Elaine Cameron, Sussex Regional High School Counsellor, Sacha Iwata, Kennebecasis Valley High School Teacher, Louisa Seales, Barnhill Memorial School Teacher

Community Members: Dr Tim Christie, Regional Director of Ethics, Horizon Health, Matthew Martin, Executive Director, Black Lives Matter NB

Student Members: Katembo Amuri (SJHS), David Ojo-Abegunde (SJHS), Jaden Wolfe (SJHS), Abbi Alexander (SRHS), Hannah Claybourne (SRHS), Sam Frits (SRHS), Dieko Ofurune (SRHS)

This committee met on November 29th, 2023, and will meet again on May 29th, 2024.

Important points from the November meeting include:

- Dr. Christie challenges us to look at the “root symptoms” of systemic racism. The victims are not the problem, so how can they fix it or know what much be included to make positive change? If suspension rates for black students are higher, for example, it is not the fault of the black students. There must be mandatory anti-racism training for all employees.
- Self-reporting may not always accurately represent where the issues actually are. ASD-S staff must challenge ourselves to think as carefully as we can to identify the genuine issues and barriers.

ASD-S LGBTQ+/SOGI⁴ Advisory Committee

District Members: Jennifer Grant, ASD-S School Counselling Coordinator & Chair, Jay Nickerson, ASD-S EDI Lead, & Kariann Wellington, ASD-S Behaviour Intervention Mentor

School Members: Christina Barrington, Saint John High School principal, Tiffany Sabin, Beaconsfield Middle School vice principal, Kate Johnson, Belleisle Elementary School & Macdonald Consolidated School counsellor, Clara Philibert, Fundy Middle and High School teacher, & Caroline Price, Kennebecasis Valley High School counsellor

Community Members: Jonathan Cashwell, TD Bank, & Emily Rodas, Sophia Recovery Centre Program Director

This committee met on November 7th, 2023, and will meet again on May 27th, 2024.

An important point from the November meeting was about the need to address microaggressions. The committee also had questions about revisions to EECD 713.

Section Five: Daily Work

Jennifer Grant, School Counselling Coordinator, leads a team of three lead teachers whose daily work is building capacity in schools to address racism, sexism, and homophobia.

Therese Trofimencoff, Antiracism & Equity Lead. Ms Trofimencoff was previously a math teacher at Harbour View High School and has been in this role for three years. Her work was cited in the provincial *Systemic Racism Commissioner Final Report* in 2022 as an example for other district and she was a speaker on antiracism in schools at the 2023 Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) conference in Victoria, BC.

⁴ We are shifting from “LGBTQ+ Inclusion” to “SOGI”, which stands for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. As the Government of British Columbia states: “Everyone has a sexual orientation and gender identity. It's an inclusive term that applies to everyone, whether they identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, heterosexual, or cisgender.”

Caleigh Dunfield, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI) Lead. In addition to being a teacher, Ms Dunfield is a Canadian Certified Counsellor and Licensed Counselling Therapist. Prior to joining our team this year, she was a counsellor on the St George Child & Youth Team.

Jay Nickerson, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI) Lead. Prior to joining our team this year, Mr Nickerson was a teacher at Simonds High School, and has years of experience teaching abroad.

The daily work for these three staff includes:

- Supporting 8 schools with the ASD-S and EECD Capacity for Courage⁵ Grants
- 32 school requests for service since September 2023.
 - K-5 15 Schools
 - 6-8 11 Schools
 - 9-12 6 Schools
- These requests include:
 - Staff presentations on SOGI
 - Staff presentations around antiracism
 - Consultation with GSAs around school climate and discrimination
 - Teacher coaching
 - PL for staff on antisemitism and islamophobia
 - Classroom presentations on empathy, SOGI and antiracism
 - Lessons around microaggressions
 - Book Study *5 Things You Can Do Right Now*
 - Digital Citizenship
 - Working on 4th R - Healthy Relationships
 - Supporting gender creative youth
- Additionally, the EDI leads consult with school administrators when problems arise concerning racism, sexism, or homophobia/transphobia.

Section Six: High School Systemic Racism Survey

In 2022, 4004 and high school students completed the ASD-S High School Systemic Racism Survey. This was the first survey of its kind in New Brunswick and was designed to provide ASD-S leadership with a snapshot of the experiences of our high school students and to give us a baseline by which we can measure our progress with antiracism initiatives. Principals were given the results for their schools and encourage to add antiracism and equity goals to their school improvement plans or other antiracism initiatives. District staff have been available to support schools with these goals and other antiracism initiatives. The survey will be conducted again this year and we will be able to measure any improvement that is report and investigate

⁵ Capacity for Courage supports “innovative cultural inclusion projects” and is sponsored by EECD & PETL.

more closely areas in which improvement is not measured. The survey will be conducted again in 2026.

Section Seven: SOGI Educators Network

EECD 713 6.2.1 states that: *All schools will have a designated member of the school environment to act as an advocate for students who identify as LGBTQI2S+ and their families states that all schools.* In ASD-S, this staff member is referred to as the SOGI Champion.

In October 2023, ASD-S has created a SOGI Educator Network for these staff members to connect them with each other, encourage peer support, allow them to consult with one another on problem-solving, and to share the successes in their schools.

These educators have met twice and will meet three more times this year.

Twenty-five teachers attended the most recent meeting in January.

Respectfully submitted:

Peter T. Smith, CD, MA, MEd, LCT, CCC
Director of Education Support Services

Projects from schools:

Middle Level GSA Day:

Grand Manan Community School	Arts and craft supplies for GSA to enjoy while meeting, also to create supportive art to display in the meeting room and school.
Campobello Island Consolidated School	Bussing to attend the conference & purchasing of flags and pins for students and staff.
Sir James Dunn Academy	GSA Pizza party, movie day, GSA meetings at Honeybeans (coffee shop) and funds for collaborating with another Charlotte County GSA.
St. Stephen Middle School	Host another Middle School GSA conference with some of our surrounding schools' groups & more signage with proper lamination for the school.
Deer Island Community School	Create a comfy cozy corner to make our GSA space welcoming and exciting for students. Our goal is to make students want to use this space. The money would go towards posters, pictures, comfortable (school approved) furniture, and bulletin board supplies.
Barnhill Memorial School	Implement a designated bulletin board for GSA with plexiglass case and purchase of pride key chains and stickers.
Beaconsfield Middle School	Paint a rainbow sidewalk outside school's main entrance. Remaining funds to purchase craft supplies to produce pride items to sell.
Milledgeville North School	Button making parts as well as T-Shirts to create personal designs to distribute in the group and school.
Prince Charles School	Purchase materials to decorate a bulletin board which will be used to educate others in the school about the GSA and the LGQBQT community. In addition to purchasing materials (flags etc.) to decorate our GSA space along with pins for GSA members and craft/bracelet making supplies to create items to be shared in the school.
Princess Elizabeth School	Picnic table for middle school- made by school & painted by GSA, hot chocolate and snowshoeing event after school for GSA, after school Soda & Paint event, movie event, purchase of supplies to make items to sell for example, bracelet making supplies.
Forest Hills School	We are currently writing a proposal to our admin to create a gender-neutral change room. Back Up Plans: Converting a currently unused bathroom in our lower level to a second gender neutral bathroom so it is closer and more accessible. 2. Guest speaker on queer topics to our middle school assembly.

Rothesay Park School	Paint murals around the school with GSA friendly messages. Flags for the classroom, so students see that they are welcome and safe in this space. GSA day with guest speakers. Bracelet making kit.
Quispamsis Middle School	Incentives to attend meetings, as well as increasing the visibility and support of diversity in our school.
Harry Miller Middle School	Purchase GSA flags for all classrooms. The GSA members want to create a safe lunch space for all students who are alone in the school (including crafts, posters, board games stickers, etc.)
MacDonald Consolidated School	Special Guest (Chroma), Rainbow merch for special prizes for meetings, Visit Chroma with some of our GSA students
Belleisle Regional High School	Supplies for rainbow walkway at school entrance. Gender Neutral Sign for the bathroom in Guidance (numerous ones online). Safe Space Signs for Classrooms. Rainbow themed foods to sell to fundraise for GSA events. Flags around the building.
Sussex Middle School	Purchasing much needed craft supplies to make posters and bracelets etc. during meetings.
Hampton Middle School	Paint front steps in rainbow colours. Touch up picnic tables that were painted (pride flag, trans flag etc.) Additional funds for flags and stickers to be used in classrooms.
Bayside Middle School	In conjunction with Culture Club – will host a Respect & Diversity family night in the spring with information booths, games, prizes and food.
River Valley Middle School	Purchase a button maker for keychains and buttons for the school. Would like to make pronoun buttons to sell. Would like to host a GSA fun night with other GSAs in area.

Mental Health Youth Forum:

Grand Manan Community School	Continuing to make the office a student-friendly space. The work has begun and has positive feedback. Planning a mental health afternoon for the school. Order fidgets & stickers and magic bags.
St. Stephen High School	A student is working on the LINK app for the province. At an assembly we are going to do an un-veiling of the app in front of the whole school and explain what the LINK program is. We will use the funds to purchase LINK Swag.
Saint John High School	Intended to use funds for Suicide Awareness Week, including bringing Alex Quinn in as a guest speaker.
Simonds High School	Student appreciation where every staff member gets a list of students to say hello to and gift a lifesaver candy "if you ever need help" pun. Inclusive stickers for allies.
Harbour View High School	Guest speaker Alex Quinn. Mental Health Bingo & Prizes. Positive Mural/Mental Health Mural with artist support.
Rothsay High School	To create a space outside for our students to enjoy and use throughout the nice weather. We would like to purchase outdoor hammocks and sunshade sails for our courtyard. This way we will have spaces to relax and shade to be able to focus on work.
Kennebecasis Valley High School	1) Brining in a guest speaker from CHROMA to speak to the entire school about how to be a good ally. 2) Designing a document for students about how to access help and where who you can go to, to help you make the first step.
Sussex Regional High School	The school is going to be running a group based on the program "Seeking Safety for Adolescents".
Hampton High School	Year 3 Mental Health Mondays initiative – purchase new mics, light rings, SD Cards, create posters with student created logo and resources highlighted in videos and posts.
Compass Education Centre	Kindness/wellness/raise school culture and belonging week. Students will lead a variety of activities.

Antiracism Summit:

St. Stephen High School	Cultural Inclusivity Club plans to use the funds to purchase awareness materials (posters, banners, flags...) for our bulletin board and for high traffic areas of the school. Any remaining funds will be spent on anti-racism/diversity-based books for English classrooms.
Sir James Dunn Academy	We are hoping to get more literary resources that promote racial diversity. Begin a cultural club started in Sem. 2 to have people of many cultures have a place to go to learn and celebrate the amazing diversity that the school continues to develop.
Saint John High School	Events connected to our two culture clubs (Asian Heritage Club and Black Lives Matter). Black History Month (a student march, prizes for trivia, international culture night, panel of speakers); and Asian Heritage Month (cultural assembly).
Simonds High School	<u>Inform</u> - Create and display a variety of informative posters/displays focused on anti-racism messages and methods. <u>Engage</u> - Provide student friendly / engaging avenues for the reporting of racist incidents or concerns. Arrange for guest speakers. <u>Celebrate</u> - A multicultural celebration event / Newcomer Student award ceremony.
Harbourview High School	We have two goals for this school year. One is to educate the student body about microaggressions and their long-term impact. As well, we are looking to expand upon our ability to celebrate and recognize other cultures and backgrounds that are present in our school.
Rothesay High School	Continue to add diverse reading material to the RHS library and RES reading material for grade 10 classes to share with their RES buddies.
Kennebecasis Valley High School	An on-going "report harassment" campaign. The club maintains 2 bulletin boards in the school. Anti-Racism Awareness Day (Wear Black, Kahoot competition, Anti-Racism pins.) We promote various cultural holidays (such as Dia de los meurtres). A Multi-Cultural Week for April.
Sussex Regional High School	A multicultural celebration. An outdoor BBQ style event with booths, food, and music. Invite the Sussex Multicultural association and other community partners. It will be entirely student run and will be open to our entire student population.
Compass Education Centre	Part 1: We plan to purchase novels and materials for the English classes. Part 2: Teach the Anti-Racism message through sharing and kindness

	Purchase some age-appropriate material to have students go and gift to some schools around use (Bayview, Bayside, Prince Charles, etc.) as we spread the message of anti-racism through kindness.
Hampton High School	We are connecting with Alheri Bingi, an African artist and owner of Art by Dangana who is looking to partner with schools to promote diversity. We will be working together with Alheri to create an art installation for our updated lobby that will display. The funding will be used for supplies and an honorarium for Alheri.
Belleisle Regional High School	Norman Hector to present to school.