



## **Combating Hate and Promoting Understanding: Update**

**To:** Planning and Priorities Committee

**Date:** 22 June, 2022

**Report No.:** 06-22-4365

### **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

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Combating Hate and Promoting Understanding: Update report be received.

### **Context**

At the December 8, 2021 Board meeting, former Integrity Commissioner (IC) Suzanne Craig presented her Complaint Investigation Report and recommendations in response to two Board Member Code of Conduct complaints. In her report, she identified a number of issues and concerns. Under Business Arising, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution (see Appendix "A" for the full motion) directing the Director to:

1. Develop an action plan to address the serious issues/concerns raised in the Integrity Commissioner's report and provide an interim report on actions to the Board. The action plan should include appropriate and possibly differentiated training for Trustees, centrally-assigned educators and all school-based education staff. Community partners and the Board's Heritage Committees should be consulted to help inform the development of this action plan.
2. Ensure that reports on the data from the Racism, Bias and Hate portal be reported three times per year to the Board, including the Annual Human Rights Report.

The resolution also directed the Chair to write a letter requesting guidance, support, and resources from the Provincial Equity Secretariat, including funding and support for professional learning. The letter was prepared and sent by the Chair’s Office on December 21, 2021 (see Appendix “B”).

This report outlines the action plan referenced in the Board motion and provides an update on the other elements of the motion.

**Action Plan and Associated Timeline**

TDSB staff have, over the last few months, considered and adopted a number of strategies to address concerns raised by the IC in her report.

The following sets out the action plan with respect to the key areas of concern, and their associated timelines. Additional actions are planned for the 2022/23 school year.

| <b>Action</b>   | <b>Progress Update</b>   |
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| <p><b>Work with the new Integrity Commissioner to clarify policies and practices on the handling of human rights complaints against Trustees.</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In March 2022, staff from the Human Rights Office (HRO), Legal Services, and Governance and Board Services met with the new Integrity Commissioner (IC) team from ADR Chambers and discussed the issues identified by the former IC in the Complaint Investigation Report.</li> <li>● ADR Chambers provided a cost estimate of approximately \$6000 to conduct a review of the Board Member Code of Conduct (the “Code of Conduct”) and make recommendations, including those related to the handling of human rights complaints against Trustees</li> <li>● Staff have recommended that the entire Board Member Code of Conduct be reviewed, including provisions relating to Human Rights Code-related complaints</li> <li>● In the meantime, the new IC has indicated that because they have the expertise to handle human rights-related</li> </ul> |

| Action  | Progress Update   |
|---|---|
|   | <p>complaints against Trustees, they will handle such complaints at the outset</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HRO will work with and consider the IC’s recommendations on the handling of human rights related complaints</li> </ul> <p>The Ontario Human Rights Commission presented its <a href="#">submission</a> to the Ministry of Education’s consultation on “<a href="#">Strengthening Accountability for School Board Trustees</a>” in November 2021. The results of the consultation have yet to be shared with school boards. We will monitor for any developments in this area.</p>   |
| <p><b>Develop and/or undertake training/professional learning for HRO, Senior Team, Trustees, educators and school-based staff members on antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of hate and racism.</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HRO staff participate in ongoing professional learning related to all elements of their work; staff have reviewed the IC’s Report and provided feedback related to it; select staff have participated in professional learning related to antisemitism and the entire team will have completed this learning with outside consultants before September 2022.</li> <li>● Staff that lead the Board’s Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression team have engaged seconded staff from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and the National Council of Canadian Muslims to develop resources related to antisemitism and islamophobia.</li> <li>● The team has created and begun to deliver learning material related to antisemitism, islamophobia, and anti-Palestinian racism. The learning plans include appropriate training for Trustees, centrally-assigned educators, and school-based education staff.</li> </ul> |

| Action | Progress Update  |
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|        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To support the work of educators in TDSB and beyond, the Islamic Heritage Month Committee has created the ‘Islamic Heritage Month Guidebook for Educators’. The Jewish Heritage Month Committee has been deeply involved in the creation of resources and other learning opportunities to extend learning related to antisemitism and Holocaust education into all TDSB classrooms. Both of these Committees continue to be pivotal in the ongoing work of the Board. These materials are also being incorporated into the learning plans noted above.</li> <li>● Senior Team professional learning on antisemitism (led by Bernie Farber and Len Rudner) (January 2022 and ongoing)</li> <li>● Senior Team professional learning featuring panel discussion centering the multiplicities of Muslim identities and experiences in education (February 2022 and ongoing)</li> <li>● Initial critical path for addressing anti-Palestinian racism created by Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression team; includes professional learning for Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression team, development of curriculum resources. This work will be updated in Fall 2022 with plans for the 2022-2023 school year</li> <li>● Professional Learning Courses - Understanding Judaism and Jewish Cultures Courses (starting March 28 – March 30, 2022)</li> <li>● Professional Learning Courses - Understanding Islam and Muslim Cultures Courses (starting March 28 – March 30, 2022)</li> </ul> |

| Action | Progress Update  |
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|        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● TDSB partnered with Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre (FSWC) to deliver educational programs that focus on education about the Holocaust, human rights and other related topics to schools (March 2022)</li> <li>● Liberation75 Holocaust Education Opportunities for Staff (starting April 2022)</li> <li>● TDSB partnered with the Ontario Principals' Council to offer the Understanding Muslim Students in Our Schools self-directed learning course to 20 TDSB Administrators (April 20 and continues weekly until June 8).</li> <li>● Trustee learning session entitled "Islamophobia Disrupted: Exploring Tools for Practice" with Aasiyah Khan, Manager of Education Programs at the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) (May 2022)</li> <li>● Addressing Antisemitism: Past and Present. A webinar led by Bernie Farber and Len Rudner for TDSB Principals, Vice-Principals and Managers (May 2022)</li> <li>● Honouring the Multiplicities of Muslim Identities and Experiences in Education, with Panelists: for-TDSB Principals, Vice-Principals and Managers (June 2022)</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Resources:</b></p> <p>The Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression team has updated its <a href="#">external webpage</a> to include a section entitled "Learning in Action". Please visit this link to see how equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression is being embedded in the curriculum throughout the TDSB.</p> |

| Action   | Progress Update  |
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|  | <p>Their <a href="#">internal site</a> has also been updated with new resources to combat hate and racism, curated in collaboration with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre, Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement, Human Rights Office, Mental Health and Personal Support Team and Seconded Educators from CIJA and NCCM.</p>                                      |
| <p><b>Provide reports on data from the Racism, Bias and Hate portal three times per year to the Board.</b></p> | <p>The HRO will provide two reports yearly in addition to its annual report on the data from the Racism, Bias, and Hate portal. There will also be two annual updates on the Combating Hate and Racism Student Strategy. Completed. This schedule will allow for data to be organized and presented in a timely manner and at intervals which allows for critical data analysis.</p> |

**Resource Implications**

Funding of approximately \$6000 to support the IC’s review of the Code of Conduct will be required.

Ongoing funding to enable the Equity, Anti-Racism, and Anti-Oppression Team and the Human Rights Office to continue their programming and services pending budget approval.

**Communications Considerations**

Staff will work with the Communications department to develop a communications plan in relation to the actions undertaken to support the areas above.

**Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)**

- P075, Board Member Code of Conduct
- P031, Human Rights

## Appendices

- Appendix A: Combatting Hate and Promoting Understanding Board Motion
- Appendix B: December 20, 2021 Letter from Chair Alexander Brown to the Provincial Equity Secretariat re Combatting Hate and Promoting Understanding

## From

Colleen Russell-Rawlins, Director of Education at [Colleen.Russell-Rawlins@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Colleen.Russell-Rawlins@tdsb.on.ca)

Jim Spyropoulos, Executive Superintendent, Human Rights and Indigenous Education  
at [Jim.Spyropoulos@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Jim.Spyropoulos@tdsb.on.ca)

[Minutes of December 8, 2021 Board Meeting – Board Resolution](#)**16. Business Arising: Combating Hate and Promoting Understanding**

Trustee Chernos Lin, seconded by Trustee Mammoliti, moved the following as business arising from the Integrity Commissioner Code Complaint Investigation Report:

Whereas, the Toronto District School Board is committed to creating, maintaining and promoting a school system that is free from discrimination and harassment, where our community – students, staff, families and community partners – feel welcome, and are included and respected; and

Whereas, the mission of the Board's Human Rights Office is to enable, support, and inspire the creation and preservation of a proactive, inclusive, and transformational culture of human rights at TDSB in which all members of the TDSB community can equitably flourish with dignity and respect, as well as achieve equitable outcomes in TDSB learning and working environments free from discrimination and harassment; and

Whereas, the Board is committed to supporting educators in responding to historical and current acts of oppression and injustice as they arise; and

Whereas, just as we are committed to ensuring our students are provided with the tools they need to become critical thinkers, able to engage in a complex, pluralistic society with empathy, compassion, creativity and thoughtfulness, we are committed to ensuring the same for trustees, who, by their public role, must be leaders in this regard; and

Whereas, this Board has dedicated resources and strategies to support 2SLGBTQ+ students and staff, to address anti-Black racism, and to address anti-Asian racism, recent incidents, along with the Integrity Commissioner's report, suggest that the TDSB has significant learning to do surrounding understanding antisemitism and Islamophobia; and

Whereas, every incident of hate is now tracked and monitored through the Racism, Bias and Hate Portal (RBH), an online system which enables incident reporting on racism and hate incidents involving or impacting students in schools; and

Whereas, as outlined in a November 2021 communication to TDSB staff, the Director has begun work on a three-point plan, including the creation of an internal staff team that includes external secondments of experts, to tackle learning and professional development on these issues, this motion would seek to build on this work and ensure the TDSB is best placed to bring this to fruition and ensure the public is aware of the work being undertaken;



Therefore, be it resolved:

(a) That the Director:

i. develop an action plan to address the serious issues/concerns raised in the Integrity Commissioner's report, Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Investigation Naming Trustee Alexandra Lulka, and provide an interim report on actions to the Board in March 2022;

ii. consult with community partners and the Board's Heritage Committees to help inform the development of the action plan at part (i);

iii. that the plan at part (i) include appropriate training for Trustees, centrally-assigned educators and all school-based education staff; iv. that, where appropriate, the plan at part (i) allow for differentiation of training according to role.

(b) That the Chair write a letter requesting guidance, support and resources from the Provincial Equity Secretariat, including funding and support for professional learning, to ensure that Toronto District School Board staff is best able to develop the skill-set needed to support the TDSB system and meet the needs of the students, families and communities served;

(c) That reports on the data from the Racism, Bias and Hate portal be reported three times per year to the Board, including the Annual Human Rights Report. The motion was carried.

[December 20, 2021 Letter from Chair Alexander Brown to the Provincial Equity Secretariat re Combating Hate and Promoting Understanding](#)

December 20, 2021

Deputy Minister, Patrick Case  
Education Equity Secretariat

Dear Deputy Minister Case,

On behalf of the Toronto District School Board, I am writing to ask for guidance, resources, and funding to support professional learning for our staff to identify, address and eliminate incidents of hate and racism to maintain a school system that is free from discrimination and harassment.

Currently, the Board has dedicated resources and strategies to support 2SLGBTQ+ students and staff along with addressing anti-Black and anti-Asian racism. However, we recognize that this is not enough. The recent Integrity Commissioner's report suggests that the TDSB has significant learning to do to build an understanding of antisemitism and Islamophobia.

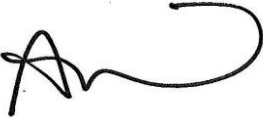
Our Director of Education, Colleen Russell-Rawlins, has put in motion a three-point plan, including the creation of an internal staff team that includes external secondments, to deepen learning in these two areas. To ensure effective development and implementation, we are seeking funding and resources from you to help bring this to fruition.

The TDSB's Human Rights Office has been working tirelessly to support and inspire the creation and preservation of a proactive, inclusive, and transformational culture of human rights. The mission to achieve equitable outcomes in TDSB learning and working environments that are free from discrimination and harassment is a continuous effort put forth by staff, students, and families. However, incidents of racism and discrimination are still prevalent in our school system. Every incident of hate is now tracked and monitored through the Racism, Bias, and Hate Portal (RBH), an online system, managed by our Human Rights Office, which enables incident reporting on racism and hate incidents involving or impacting students in schools.

The Board is committed to supporting educators in responding to historical and present-day acts of oppression and injustice as they arise. We continue to engage in the provision of initiatives and opportunities to equip our students with the tools they need to be inclusive and respectful members of society. As a Board, we are committed to ensuring the same for Trustees.

For the reasons mentioned above, we are asking that you provide funding support. As always, I am happy to continue this conversation at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'A' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke that ends in a small hook.

**Alexander Brown**  
Chair, Toronto District School Board

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