



## Combating Hate and Racism – Student Learning Strategy

**To:** Special Planning and Priorities Committee

**Date:** 2 March, 2022

**Report No.:** 03-22-4268

### Strategic Directions

- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Transform Student Learning
- 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 the Combating Hate and Racism – A Student Strategy Report be approved.

### Context

Over the past twenty years, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has a long-standing commitment to promoting equity. More recently, concerted efforts have been made to address racism and hate and to **work to find new ways to identify and eliminate the barriers to an inclusive and just educational system.**

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's Hate Crimes Community Working Group defines hate activity as:

*expressions of bias, prejudice and bigotry that are carried out by individuals, groups, organizations and states, directed against stigmatized and marginalized groups in*

*communities, and intended to affirm and secure existing structures of domination and subordination.*

*Hate involves abusive or threatening speech, writing, physicality and/or use of symbols that expresses hatred against a particular group, especially based on indigeneity, race, religion, disability, gender expression, or sexual orientation.*

Since the start of the pandemic, within Canada and globally there has been an alarming growth in incidents of hate and racism. In 2021, Statistics Canada released a report outlining how since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic reported hate crimes had increased by 37% (Moreau, 2021). Furthermore, online hate has no international boundaries. An article in The Guardian newspaper (2021) cited a 225% increase in online hate speech incidents in the UK after the first year of the pandemic (Milmo).

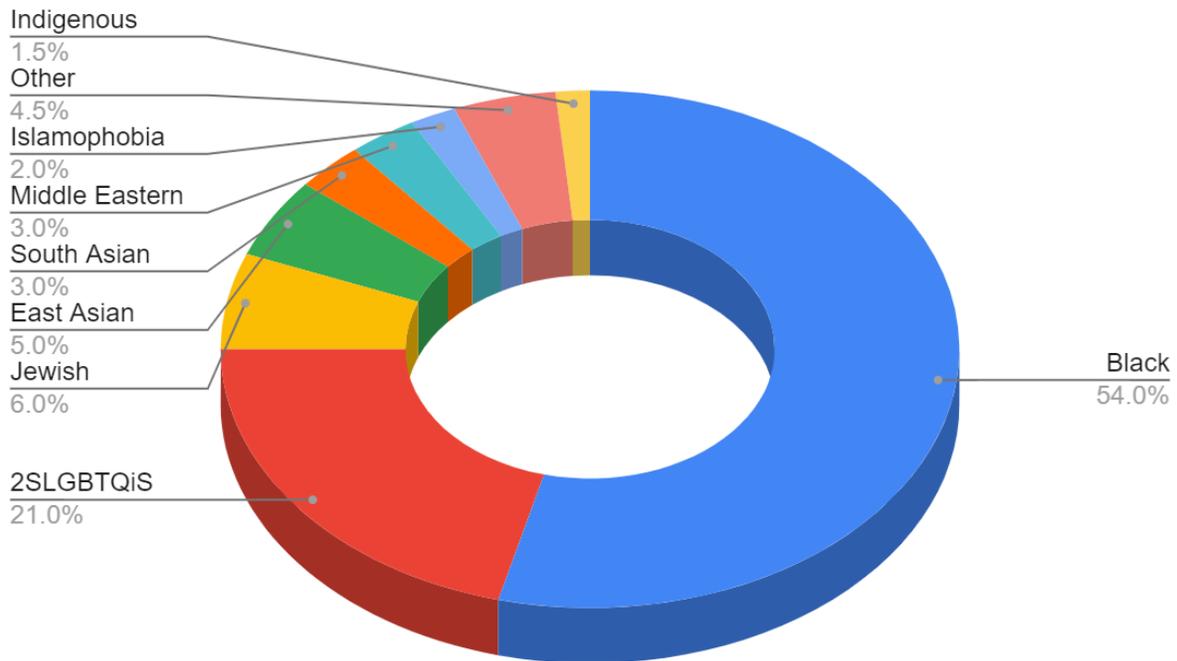
## **DATA SHOWING RECENT STATISTICS**

The Toronto District School Board is one of the few district school boards collecting and reporting incidents of hate, racism and bias to the community. This data is collected from the Racism, Bias and Hate (RBH) reporting portal. The data collected must inform our actions as individuals, leaders, school/department staff, communities and result in systemic change in the TDSB.

### **TDSB Reported Racism, Bias, and Hate Portal Data Sept 1, 2021 to Dec 31, 2021**

The TDSB data from the Racism, Bias and Hate (RBH) reporting portal ranging from **Sept 1, 2021 to Dec 31, 2021** which is the most recent data set from the TDSB Human Rights Office shows the following:

**TDSB Reported Racism, Bias, and Hate Portal Data Sept 1, 2021 to Dec 31, 2021  
continued**



The data show acts of racism, hate and bias are predominately targeted against Black (54%) students and staff. The chart also shows concerning rates of racism, hate and bias against 2SLGBTQis (21%) followed by Jewish (6%), East Asian (5%), South Asian (3%), Middle Eastern (2%) and Muslim (2%) identifying students and staff. This data is consistent with the trends in the TDSB’s Annual Human Rights Report (2020). Adjustments are being made to the RBH portal to ensure there is clarity in reporting by identity. Further analysis of the data and more recent data will follow in the upcoming Human Rights Annual Report (2021). We acknowledge that as a system this data only paints a partial picture as there are still incidents of hate occurring that go unreported.

Students who identify as Black in the TDSB face the greatest incidents of racism, hate and bias as shown in the data from the RBH portal (54%). The research of James & Turner (2017) describes “the historic and systemic nature of anti-Black racism embedded in Canadian society and institutions – including Ontario’s education system.” Acts of anti-Black racism negatively impact student achievement, well-being and general sense of belonging as reflected in TDSB achievement, census and other perceptual data.

Prejudice and implicit bias are learned beginning at a young age. Most of the incidents of hate, bias and racism, reported in the TDSB are carried out by students, and thus it is incumbent on

the TDSB to focus greater attention on educating students to understand the current and historical roots of hatred, racism and intolerance. It is also important for students to understand our shared expectation that they contribute to maintain a safe and respectful school environment free of racism and hate for staff and students alike.

## **COMBATTING HATE AND RACISM – STUDENT LEARNING STRATEGY**

The proposed student learning strategy is focused on student education and engagement in preventing and responding to hate and racism as a direct intervention which responds to the troubling data presented in this report.



### Classroom Instruction

Hate and racism are learned and can be unlearned through instruction directly connected to the Expectations in the Ontario Curriculum. Frameworks such as TDSB's Supporting Educators and Students in Learning and Addressing Racism and Hate (2022) offer critical questions to guide and develop the conditions required in classrooms to begin these conversations. In addition, community educators such as *Facing History and Ourselves* offer examples of approaches to structuring this content and lessons which address topics such as identity, prejudice, racism, history, legacy, connections to current events and taking action. While learning about racism and hate it is important to ensure an understanding of why we must create more equitable learning environments. It is critical to ensure that students have an opportunity to share their

identities and learn about others' identities in positive and affirming ways that are not defined by hate and racism. This work in classrooms must begin with affirmation and goes beyond pain and struggle. TDSB will identify expectations across subjects and courses where students' lived experiences and identities should be integrated into the teaching of the Ontario Curriculum. This includes, but is not limited to, teaching about colonization, genocide, transatlantic enslavement of African Peoples, Holocaust, and internment of Asian Canadians. In this approach, classrooms become learning environments where students learn collectively about historical as well as current day experiences of hate and racism so that they can recognize and develop the skills to combat these various forms when they occur in their lives. Every student must feel seen, heard, respected, and understood by both their peers and educators. They also need to develop the skills to tackle, report and respond to hate and racism.

TDSB offers courses to help affirm students intersecting identities as well as better understand racism, hate, intolerance and oppression. These courses include:

Genocide: Grade 11 Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity course (CHG 381)

Black Studies Courses: Politics in Action (CPC301); Equity & Social Justice: From Theory to Practice (HSM4M1); Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism (IDC4U); to name a few.

Courses with an Indigenous Focus and Perspectives: There will be consultation with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre staff and Elders with regards to offering Indigenous focused courses to more students.

A review of the current courses offered is being undertaken to determine which other courses should be added to the secondary course offerings to support learning about historical and contemporary perspectives to combat racism and hate. As well a continued effort to advocate for courses like these to become compulsory.

Expectations:

- Courses will be offered in 50% of secondary schools in Semester 1, 2022

### Cyber Safety & Digital Citizenship

The COVID pandemic has increased the number of hours most students have spent online academically, socially, and for entertainment. According to the Government of Canada "too many people and communities in Canada are harmed and victimized by hate speech, which is often amplified and spread online<sup>1</sup>." Exposure to hate is one of the current risks to students when they engage online. In a digital world, students must be taught to think critically and to analyze multiple, often conflicting perspectives as they navigate online, consume and produce content online. The Ontario Curriculum for Language Grades 1 to 8 (2006) did not contemplate

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<sup>1</sup> [www.canada.ca/en/department-justice/news/2021/06/government-of-canada-takes-action-to-protect-canadians-against-hate-speech-and-hate-crimes.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/department-justice/news/2021/06/government-of-canada-takes-action-to-protect-canadians-against-hate-speech-and-hate-crimes.html)

expanded access and engagement in online gaming and social media among younger students when the expectations were written in the Media Literacy Strand of Language in 2006. The Health and Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 1 to 8 (2019), has expectations which will be useful in addressing issues of cyber safety, bullying and the propagation of hate and racism online.

Expectation:

- Teaching of online safety and digital citizenship in the context of raising awareness about hate and racism takes place, connected to the curriculum, once resources are developed and/or curated.

### Tools for Response – Taking Action

Both students and staff require tools and strategies to respond to racism, hate, bullying, and other injustices in a manner that reduces impact on those targeted and reflects a sincere and active commitment to ensuring a culture of respect for human rights in the school. The skills needed to identify an act of hate and discrimination and intervene with or on behalf of someone being attacked can be learned so that students are better able to identify when and how to intervene when they encounter these situations in their daily life. Healthy school communities exist when everyone is committed to challenging racism and discrimination in all its forms rather than being a bystander or waiting for others to act.

Expectation:

- Student leadership teams will participate in training to identify acts of hate and discrimination and learn strategies to intervene in the first year of this strategy supported by Learning Centres and centrally assigned staff.

### Student Leadership

The TDSB has identified and promoted student voice and engagement in their learning. Here too, student leadership holds tremendous potential to create safer, more inclusive and respectful learning and working environments in schools by raising awareness among their peers, planning student events, creating resources and influencing learning in the school. Schools and Learning Networks will invest in the development of student leaders who will inform the development of classroom learning and student engagement activities designed to respect diversity and promote equity and justice.

Expectation:

- Learning Network Superintendents and Learning Centre Coaches will work with school leaders to develop student leaders in each school.

### Educational Partnerships

Student learning occurs in many ways both inside and outside of the classroom and school. Since the start of the COVID Pandemic, students have participated in virtual learning experiences facilitated by educational partners. Approved presentations will contribute to important topics from a community perspective and centres the lived experiences of individuals on issues of identity, discrimination and histories. Resources from other levels of government, such as The City of Toronto, will be also be utilized where appropriate. External presentations must be grounded in classroom teaching on the topics addressed to ensure that students have multiple opportunities to develop a complex understanding of the issues and topics raised.

Expectation:

- External presentations and learning opportunities be integrated proactively into school assemblies and classroom learning.

### Caregiver Engagement and Learning

Children are greatly influenced beginning at a young age by the values and attitudes of their closest caregivers. It has been established that parent/guardian engagement in a child's education has positive impacts on their learning and well-being. Their engagement in combatting hate, racism and promoting respect for human rights is a necessary component of eliminating it from our schools. Staff will collaborate with caregivers to offer learning opportunities for caregivers, and where possible, students and their families. The content for the learning will focus on the areas represented in the data presented from the Racism, Bias and Hate portal.

Expectation:

- Caregiver/Family learning sessions will begin in April 2022.

## **CONCLUSION**

The primary goal of a strategy which focuses on investing in students' learning about hate and racism is to quickly improve student-to-student interactions and school climates. However, every member of a school community has responsibility for promoting and protecting each other's human rights. It is incumbent upon the senior team, principals and vice-principals and school

staff to proactively and consistently take action to create the conditions in classrooms, and in the school environment, where all identities are affirmed and respected and the human rights of each individual (student, staff, parent, community member) is promoted. In fact, as staff it is our legal, moral and professional responsibility to do so.

This strategy will continue to be complemented by opportunities for professional learning for staff in developing critical consciousness, and the requisite knowledge of colonization, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Asian racism, anti-Black racism, Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and all other forms of discrimination.

Sadly, the elimination of racism and hate must be an ongoing priority and consistent focus because of its roots in white supremacy and a history of colonization. Currently, raising discussions about eliminating hate, racism and oppression are often met with resistance. These responses are likely to continue therefore staff and the board must recognize the complexity of pursuing equity and eliminating racism and hate and the pressures associated with competing interests, and maintaining aspects of the status quo.

This Student Strategy for Combatting Hate and Racism will not address the racism and oppression that have contributed to historical and current disproportionalities and disparities evident in TDSB’s student achievement data (e.g., Indigenous, Black, Latinx students). Different strategies will be required to address the systemic manifestations of racism and discrimination impacting staff and students. It is likely that this change process will continue to be complex, prompt reflection on power and privilege and necessary to eliminate racism and hate between and among individuals, groups and systemically.

Collectively our moral purpose is clear and our resolve unwavering. Our mandate and message to the TDSB community must be that hate and racism in any form has no place in schools and workplace. This strategy allows us to take an important step forward towards this goal.

**Action Plan and Associated Timeline**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Ongoing Professional Learning in Indigenous Education and Truth and Reconciliation	Fall 2022 – ongoing

<p>Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement</p> <p><b>Educators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing Anti-Black Racism: Facilitating, Interrupting, Disrupting (three-part series)</li> <li>• Black Student Success and Excellence Foundational Series (four-part series)</li> </ul> <p><b>Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Identity Loss and Formation: In Conversation with Lawrence Hill</a> (four-part series)</li> <li>• Saturday Black Study Courses- Politics in Action CPC 301 &amp; Social Justice from Theory to Practice (HSM 4M1)</li> </ul>	<p>February 2022 - ongoing</p>
<p>Professional Learning on Antisemitism with Senior Team (Bernie Farber &amp; Len Rudner) with plans for further offerings in March/April</p>	<p>January 2022 – Ongoing</p>
<p>Discussion with Parents of Black Children</p>	<p>February 2022</p>
<p>Panel Discussion Centring the Multiplicities of Muslim Identities and Experiences in Education with Senior Team with plans for further offerings in March/April</p>	<p>February 2022 – Ongoing</p>
<p>The Urban Indigenous Education Centre to continue to develop curriculum resources on Anti-Indigenous Racism</p>	<p>February 2022 – Ongoing</p>
<p>Curriculum resource <a href="#">Addressing Hate and Racism in Schools</a> on internal Equity, Anti-Racism &amp; Anti-Oppression website and external Building Critical Consciousness website.</p>	<p>February 2022 – Ongoing</p>
<p>Learning Network/Learning Centre Writing Teams established &amp; Training begins</p>	<p>March 1 – March 12, 2022</p>
<p>Launch a Student ThoughtExchange on Racism, Hate and Bias</p>	<p>March 21, 2022</p>

Professional Learning Courses - Anti-Asian Racism	Courses Begin March 28 – March 30, 2022
Professional Learning Courses - Understanding Judaism and Jewish Cultures	Courses Begin March 28 – March 30, 2022
Professional Learning Courses - Understanding Islam and Muslim Cultures	Courses Begin March 28 – March 30, 2022
Request to Present to the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee	March or April 2022
Provide Supports for Secondary Schools Offering the Genocide Course, Black Studies Courses, Indigenous English Courses in Schools (e.g., professional learning, resources)	March 28 – June 2022
Liberation75 Holocaust Education Opportunities for Staff	April 2022
EnVision Conference for elementary and secondary 2SLGBTQIS students and their allies	March 29 and March 30, 2022
Resource for Building Critical Consciousness and Extending Student Learning – Palestinian Identities	June - Ongoing
Caregiver/Family learning sessions are being organized through the TDSB Parent and Community Engagement Office	April 2022 - Ongoing

## Resource Implications

A funding proposal will be included in the 2022-2023 Budget including increased staffing and funding for resources where needed.

## Communications Considerations

There is a multi-phase process in place to create a public page which documents the progress towards TDSB's efforts in local schools and at the system level towards combatting racism and hate in all its forms and other equity initiatives within the TDSB.

## Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

P037 Equity, P031 Human Rights, PR515 Workplace Harassment Prevention and Human Rights, PR728 Reporting and Responding to Racism and Hate Incidents

## Appendices

Appendix A – TPS Hate Statistics (2020)

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## From

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

APPENDIX A

**Toronto Police Services Reported Hate Crimes 2020**

The below data sets represent victim groups with more than 5 reported incidents. Due to COVID and delays in data reporting, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) data reflects their latest release of data which is only from 2020.

