



MEMORANDUM

TO: Advisory Committee on Equity **Memo No. 22-012**

From: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board
Janice McCoy, Superintendent of Human Resources

Date: 27 January 2022

RE: **Equitable Recruitment, Hiring and Promotion - Update**

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update to the Advisory Committee on Equity on the implementation of the District's Equitable Recruitment Hiring and Promotion Policy ([P.147.HR](#)).

As part of its commitment to equity and human rights, and as explicitly set out in the policy itself, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) believes it is critical to have a well-prepared, diverse, and qualified workforce with the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to ensure students reach their full potential. To achieve this, the District is committed to the development and implementation of fair, consistent, transparent, and equitable practices and procedures for recruitment, hiring, and promotion for all positions.

The Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap also includes the following goal:

To increase representation of Indigenous, Black and minoritized individuals including 2SLGBTQ+ and those living with a disability, in: governance and leadership; staff recruitment, selection and promotion; and student voice.

Background

In April 2021, the Board approved Policy P.146.HR Equitable Recruitment, Hiring and Promotion Policy. The development of the policy followed the repeal of Regulation 274/12 - Hiring Practices in the fall of 2020, and the issuance of Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 165 - School Board Teacher Hiring Practices by the Ministry of Education in February 2021. The PPM required all Ontario school boards to develop policies related to teacher hiring that aligned with the PPM requirements. The OCDSB's approved policy goes beyond the requirements of the PPM and was developed to apply to recruitment, hiring and promotion practices pertaining to all positions in the District.

Following approval of the policy, Human Resources staff developed draft procedures and reviewed current processes to ensure they align with the requirements set out in the policy, for implementation during the spring staff process. It should be noted that the District was unable to move forward with changes to the hiring processes that had been in place under Regulation 274 with regard to elementary teachers and elementary occasional teachers until late fall 2021, following conclusion of local bargaining based on a complaint that was filed and ultimately upheld by the union representing these employees, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO).

The work that has and will continue to take place can be summarized through the following areas of focus: human resource processes and practices, organizational capacity building, and data collection and management.

Human Resource Processes and Practices

As indicated above, following approval of the policy in April 2021, Human Resources developed procedures, reviewed and revised current processes and checklists, intended to promote and support equitable recruitment and selection. The procedures cover all aspects of the recruitment and selection process, including:

- Job postings that clarify job requirements;
- Outreach strategies;
- Screening and short-listing based on posted requirements;
- Standardized assessments;
- Selection committee composition; and
- Documentation and retention.

The draft procedures were shared with principals and managers for their use beginning in late spring 2021. Human Resources monitors the processes and provides advice, guidance and oversight, to the extent possible, to ensure compliance.

In addition to the above, Human Resources staff has committed to the following areas:

- Opportunities for regular collaboration with members of the Indigenous Education, Equity and Human Rights team;
- As job descriptions are reviewed/developed, applying an equity and human rights lens, for example, to highlight responsibilities and accountabilities associated with equity and human rights, reflect cultural and equity competencies required for the role, avoid arbitrary requirements, and use unbiased and inclusive language;
- Inclusion of lived experiences of candidates;
- Developing and sharing sample questions related to equity as part of interview question banks;
- Expanding outreach efforts to attract a broader pool of candidates;
- Program to support and develop aspiring Indigenous and Black leaders;
- Occasional teacher job fair/recruitment for Indigenous and Black educators; and
- Review and revision of senior staff and principal / vice-principals selection policies and procedures to align with current practices and the equitable recruitment, hiring and promotion policy.

As a critical next step, the District will be undertaking an Employment Systems Review (ESR), which includes a review of its formal and informal employment processes and practices to identify and address any barriers, and ensure processes and practices are equitable and fair. An ESR is contemplated by both the policy and the Roadmap. It is anticipated that an external consultant will be selected and engaged through a collaborative process between Human Resources and the Indigenous Education, Equity and Human Rights Division, to undertake this work prior to the end of the school year, with the objective of having the review completed by fall 2022. The findings and recommendations from the ESR will inform additional work required to ensure hiring processes are fair and equitable, and perceived as such by internal and external applicants.

The policy also refers to the use of special programs, which are permitted under s. 14 of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, which states that it is not discrimination to put in place a program if it is designed to or satisfies one of the following requirements:

- Relieve hardship or economic disadvantage,
- Help groups who experience disadvantage achieve, or try to achieve, equal opportunity or,
- Help to eliminate discrimination.

The District has used section 14, and section 28 (special employment provision) of the Code, when recruiting for specific positions, based on the nature and purpose of the role. Examples include the Indigenous and Black graduation coach program, the Indigenous education team, and leads for Indigenous and Afrocentric summer school programs. Human Resources will continue to provide guidance and advice with regard to the use of special programs, as part of recruitment and hiring for particular schools, departments or positions, in collaboration with the Indigenous Education, Equity and Human Rights Division, Research, Evaluation & Analytics Division (READ) and individual departments, schools and hiring managers. This also includes providing information and increasing awareness about special programs, and when and how they can be used to support the District's priority to build a representative workforce.

The District's hiring processes are also influenced by collective agreement provisions. For example, several collective agreements include provisions which require that applicants be considered in order of priority based on their current employment status as a regular, term or casual/occasional employee. Where there is a conflict between the policy or processes and the provisions of the agreement, the agreement will prevail. Where there are collective agreement provisions identified either by staff or through the ESR which create potential barriers, they will be identified for discussion and negotiation with our union partners through the collective bargaining process.

Organizational Capacity Building

Developing organizational capacity among all current employees continues to be a key focus of the District's equity and human rights work. This is reflected in the OCDSB Indigenous, Human Rights and Equity Roadmap, which aims to ensure that all OCDSB employees participate in training and professional learning opportunities that are

appropriate to their role. Specific training is provided to employees who are involved in hiring processes, and there are plans to expand and build on this training, making it mandatory for all hiring managers.

- All current employees were required to complete training modules on diversity fundamentals and unconscious bias.
- All new employees are required to complete the same training as part of their onboarding to the District; and
- Specific training has been provided to OCDSB employees who are engaged in hiring and promotion processes. For example, assessors involved in the principals/vice-principal selection process are required to participate in training on unconscious bias in the hiring process in advance of the process.

In addition to the above, there are plans to provide foundational cultural competency and other relevant training to Human Resources and other departments as well as the mandatory training to employees involved in hiring decisions.

Data Collection and Management

The policy specifically requires the collection of voluntary demographic or identity based data from employees to help inform and evaluate progress in achieving the goals articulated in the policy. Below are the efforts that have taken place to date with respect to the collection of demographic data, as well as plans moving forward.

a) Equity and Engagement Survey

In the spring of 2021, the District administered its first voluntary Equity and Engagement Staff Survey, to collect both demographic and engagement information from all employees. The survey was open for a month to all employees and was preceded by extensive communications and consultation with relevant stakeholders. The survey asked employees to self identify across a number of different organizational and personal areas, including bargaining unit, length of service, primary work setting, Indigeneity, race, ethnicity, creed, sexual orientation, gender, living with a disability and language. In addition, it asked employees to provide feedback on their experience in a number of areas including trust in leadership, connection to the strategic plan, sense of belonging, access to resources, collaboration and health and safety. It also asked staff about their experiences with discrimination and harassment, both generally and in the hiring process. A summary of the findings were presented to the Board on 23 November 2021 (reference Report 21-094).

Almost 4,000 employees responded to the survey, representing only about one third of the District's total staff, which presents some challenges in terms of providing an accurate demographic profile of the workforce. The response rate varied across employee groups, with higher rates seen among principals and vice-principals (65%), union exempt staff (46%), secondary teachers (46%) and elementary teachers (40%). Demographic data can be disaggregated for these employee groups and used as part of a workforce analysis to provide some indication of the representation rates for these

employee groups, with noted limitations, which can serve as a baseline for monitoring future progress.

Of particular note and concern, among the 4,000 employees who responded to the survey,

- 29% reported having experienced racism, stereotyping, harassment and discrimination in the workplace; and
- 11% reported having experienced racism, stereotyping and discrimination in the hiring and promotion practices.

When asked to select the underlying reasons, the most common response in both cases was 'other' than one of the protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code. Age, sex and race were the most common protected grounds cited as underlying reasons. This feedback reinforces the importance of and need for the policy and accompanying procedures, including accountability mechanisms to monitor and report compliance and progress.

b) Ongoing Data Collection and Management

Human Resources is currently working, in consultation with READ, to develop a plan for the collection of data at different points through the selection process. The primary areas for data collection that are being investigated include collecting data at different points through application, hiring and promotion processes to help inform, evaluate and monitor recruitment and talent management processes. The District is including the opportunity to collect voluntary identity based data as part of the current principal / vice-principal selection process, for the purpose of informing and evaluating recruitment strategies and selection processes and leadership development programs.

Reports will be shared with the Director's Executive Council, and with the Board and relevant advisory committees, as we move forward.

As indicated above, the approval of the Equitable Recruitment, Hiring and Promotion Policy represented an important milestone in the District's work to establish a highly qualified, diverse and representative workforce. An important aspect of this work is ensuring transparency and accountability, through regular reporting to the Board and the advisory committees who support and advise the Board.

Staff will be available at the 27 January 2022 meeting to answer questions.