



2024-2028 OCDSB's Indigenous, Human Rights & Equity Roadmap Reimagining Structures and Systems to Eliminate Barriers to Well-Being and Success

The Power of I AM

During the 2023 System Leaders Day and the OCDSB's 2023 Family Conference, Randell Adjei, Poet Laureate of Ontario, emphasized the importance of the words we speak to ourselves and others, especially those following "I AM." The OCDSB, like most educational institutions, plays a pivotal role in shaping the identities of students, staff, and families by influencing their self-perceptions and beliefs. In recent feedback sessions with students, staff, families, and community partners, participants expressed how they want to be seen, heard, and valued when they share their "I AM" statements. Here are some of their desired identities and aspirations:

I AM

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| I am | I am here | I am peace, peaceful |
| I am aware | I am heard | I am optimistic |
| I am adventurous | I am healthy, happy | I am proud of all that I am |
| I am awesome | I am helpful | I am a quiet introvert |
| I can learn in different ways | I am humble | I am questioning |
| I am authentically me | I am living in harmony within myself, with nature | I am on a quest within |
| I am brilliant | | I am respectful |
| I am bold | I am inspired | I am resilient |
| I am brave | I am inspiring | I am response-able |
| I am beautiful | I am intentional | |
| I am ready to bloom | I am intuitive | I am smart |
| | I am insightful | I am strong |
| I am curious | I am imaginative | I am significant |
| I am courageous | | I am successful |
| I am creative | I am joyful | I am seeking, seeing, seen |
| I am confident | I am just | |
| I am compassionate and caring | I am justified | I am trust |
| | | I am trusting |
| I am a dreamer | I am kind | I am triumphant |
| I am a difference-maker | I am knowledgeable | |
| I am dedicated | I am knowing | I am unique |
| I am determined | I am known | I am understanding |
| I am deserving | | I am unbounded |
| I am the dream of my ancestors, my family | I am life | I am unstoppable |
| | I am love | I am unapologetically me |
| | I am light | |
| I am engaged in all life, including my learning | I am laughter | I am a visionary |
| I am excited, enthusiastic | I am limitless possibilities, limitless potential | I am victorious |
| I am empowered | | I am valuable |
| I am excellence personified | I am magnificent | I am my vision fulfilled |
| | I am a masterpiece | |
| I am friendly | I am a miracle | I am worthy |
| I am fun and fabulous | | I am wise |
| I am focused | I am natural | I am willing |
| I am freedom, free, freely flowing | I am nourishing | I am a wonder |
| I am the future, your future | I am nourished | I am wonderful |
| | I am nice | I am whole and complete |
| | | I am my wonder wall come to life |
| I am grateful | | |
| I am generous | I am open | I am a yes to learning |
| I am giving | I am optimistic | I am a yes to living life fully |
| I am the gift | I am oneness | I am a yes to the yearning to be authentically me |
| | I am the one | I am |
| | I am your opportunity to grow | I am |
| | | I am |
| | I am purpose-filled | I am |
| | I am purposeful | I am |
| | I am patient | I am |
| | I am passionate | |
| | I am powerful | |

"When I discover who I am, I'll be free."— Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man

"Current systems of education were not designed to meet the challenges we now face. They were developed to meet the needs of a former age. Reform is not enough: they need to be transformed." – Sir Ken Robinson

Accelerated change driven by technology, economic shifts, and evolving social dynamics presents organizations with both opportunities and challenges to rethink, reimagine, and reshape learning and workplace cultures. As the largest school board in eastern Ontario, the OCDSB aims "to build a learning community that provides students with equitable opportunities to reach their potential and develop into respectful, creative, and knowledgeable community members who contribute to society." Educational equity, embedded in our three pillars—learning, well-being, and social responsibility—is crucial for identifying and addressing systemic barriers to access, opportunities, and outcomes.

To prepare for this transformation, the OCDSB engaged with students, families, and staff to identify six critical needs for cultivating educational equity:

- Demonstrate accountability
- Acknowledge and recognize the importance of identity
- Build staff awareness and capacity
- Increase representation
- Enhance programming and support for students
- Foster engagement and connectedness

One student emphasized the importance of these conversations by saying, ***"When you know our stories, you know the needs and the barriers that can stop us from learning."***

To address these needs, the District's core values of equity, inclusivity, and accessibility empower system leaders and educators to create a caring and inclusive culture. This ensures every person is valued, diversity is respected, and inequitable systems are effectively dismantled. To this end, these needs guided the development of the OCDSB's 2020-23 Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights Roadmap. This Roadmap, based on over 30 years of research and experience, aimed to create a discrimination-free, accessible, equitable, and inclusive environment by:

- Centering voices and lived experiences
- Fulfilling the District's commitment to addressing systemic barriers
- Transforming and dismantling oppressive policies and practices

With over 85% of the Roadmap priorities completed, significant strides have been made in transforming systems that impact student, family, and staff well-being and success. Completed priorities include:

- Creation of the Office of Human Rights and Equity Advisor
- Creation of the Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Oppression Department
- Creation of Human Rights and Equitable Hiring Policies
- Establishment of the Student Achievement Through Equity (SATE) Inquiry
- Establishment of the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Office
- Establishment of identity-based student support services (e.g., Black Graduation Coaches, Jewish Equity Coach, social workers for Indigenous, Black, and 2SLGBTQ+ students, and a Guidance Counsellor for 2SLGBTQ+ students)
- Delivery of multiple professional development sessions on Human Rights, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, mental health, and trauma-informed equity
- Disaggregation of data from the 2019 Valuing Voices Student Survey, highlighting disproportionalities for Indigenous, Black, Middle Eastern, 2SLGBTQ+, students, and multilingual learners

Building on these foundations, the OCDSB's 2024-28 Roadmap will further explore and address systemic structures that negatively impact our community. Key findings include:

- Overrepresentation of marginalized groups in lower-level courses with lower achievement outcomes.
- Underrepresentation of marginalized groups among those considered 'on track' to graduate.
- Higher suspension rates for students from marginalized backgrounds
- A lower sense of belonging was reported by students identified as gender diverse, 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous or racialized
- 11% of staff reported experiencing racism, stereotyping discrimination during the hiring process
- 29% of staff reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace

Global Patterns & Trends Driving Change

During the 2020-23 Roadmap period, several significant global events occurred that inform the direction of the 2024-28 Roadmap. These volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) developments include:

- The ongoing effects of COVID-19
- The heightened awareness of racial injustice following the murder of George Floyd
- Ongoing international conflicts
- Demographic shifts, migration, and refugee challenges
- Climate change and environmental disasters such as floods and forest fires
- Significant legislative changes
- Rising costs of living and food insecurity
- Increasing inequalities and the escalation of hate crimes, including anti-Indigenous, anti-Asian, anti-Black racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and transphobia

A quote from a student during recent feedback sessions highlights the impact of these issues: ***"I am not out in my school. Queer people are being pushed back into the closet."***

Depending on their individual and intersecting identities, many students, families, and staff have lived in a VUCA world for many years, both within and outside their school experience. COVID-19 unveiled the limitations of systems and structures designed for a

different era, which no longer meet the needs of today's diverse society. This has resulted in more pronounced disproportionalities and disproportionalities.

As a learning organization, the OCDSB community can learn from each other and transform volatility into a collective vision, unpredictability into understanding, complexity into clarity, and ambiguity into agility. The 2024-28 Roadmap invites us to reimagine the OCDSB's systems and structures to address institutionalized practices and behaviours that negatively impact students, families, and staff. This Roadmap serves as a transformative work plan that aligns with the principles and priorities outlined in the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and the Mental Health Plan.

2024-28 Roadmap and Compass Directions for Change

The primary objective of the 2024-28 Roadmap and its compass is to track and measure shifts in narratives, access, opportunities, and outcomes more effectively. To achieve this, the 2024-28 Roadmap will maintain its six focus areas while prioritizing the voices and lived experiences of all students underserved by the OCDSB. The following enhancements have been made:

- **Data-Informed Context:** Use data collected from the 2020-23 Roadmap to provide a comprehensive context for change.
- **Alignment with Core Values:** Ensure the context for change aligns with the principles and values of the compass and the Roadmap priorities, aiming to transform practices and achieve shifts in narratives, access, opportunities, and outcomes.
- **Defined Indicators of Success:** Align key indicators and measures of success with the content and transformational practices to ensure progress is effectively tracked.

Moreover, there will be a stronger emphasis on supporting teams to be more flexible and agile in their deliverables. This includes responding to VUCA occurrences, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and adjusting plans based on new insights or changing relevance. This adaptability is essential as we develop systems to track and monitor critical incidents, informing how and when we can reimagine the structures and systems that anchor our work within the OCDSB.

Securing Accountability

Goal: To centre Indigenous and human rights, anti-oppression and equity in OCDSB's governance and leadership structures, policies, and practices and in all decision-making.

Narrative Context:

Feedback and data analysis of internal and external research sources through a human rights, equity and systems thinking lens included some suggestions to show movement and impact from the "Securing Accountability" Roadmap markers:

- **Feedback Session Suggestions:**
 - Periodic tracking, measuring, and communicating equity concerns identified and addressed in schools and departments; and updates on the progress and impact of human rights and equity-centered practices on learning and workplace systems and structures
 - Leveraging ERGs linguistic and cultural competencies to support senior staff in unpacking the complexities of today's global, national and local landscape; and interpreting and communicating policies, procedures and practices. As one participant noted; "Senior staff need to meet with ERGs and listen. Policies and procedures are written and implemented by people without lived experience... diverse voices need to be increased at the senior management table."
- Program Pathways and Achievement Outcomes (2021): The report highlights a need to focus on intersectionality, such as race and gender, not just single identities. Aligning data sets for intersectional analysis is recommended.
- OHREA Annual Public Report:
 - Ensure Safe School policies respect students' human rights and clarify legal considerations regarding searches.
 - equitable annual resource allocation among schools (including the school's discretionary budget)
 - Balance administrators' preferences for school placement with the skills needed to address unique school requirements, and ensure equitable resource allocation based on school needs assessments.

Compass Direction:

Decision-making and systems thinking through an Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights Lens.

Roadmap Markers to enhance access, opportunities and outcomes:

- Develop and implement an Indigenous, Human Rights, and Equity Decision Making Framework to enhance the equity mindset of leaders and educators.
- Support system leaders to model inclusive and transformational leadership set annual equity goals, allocate resources equitably, and use mitigating factors in data interpretation.
- Assist educators in creating culturally responsive learning environments using the teaching, assessment, and classroom management framework.
- Expand opportunities for Indigenous perspectives in decision-making through collaboration with the Indigenous Education Learning Team and the Indigenous Education Council.
- Implement tools to track and measure Indigenous, human rights, and equity concerns and evaluate Roadmap priorities.
- Publish an annual report on Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights progress, strategies, and trends, with data on Indigenous, Black, and Minoritized students.

Key Indicators:

- Number of structures, policies and practices developed or revised to centre human rights and equity
- Number of accountability mechanisms introduced and operating to collect, analyze and report on professional development, performance and service delivery from a human rights and equity perspective
- Number of system leaders and educators who were engaged in the development of the IEHR Decision Making Framework (the Framework), trained to use the Framework and applied the Framework in their daily work
- Number of trends and patterns tracked with comparable data across years for Indigenous, Black and minoritized students (includes 2SLGBTQ+ and students with disabilities)

The Importance of Identity

Goal: To identify and disrupt systemic and structural barriers to address disproportionate access, opportunities, and outcomes for students and staff who identify as Indigenous, Black and minoritized.

Narrative Context:

Qualitative and quantitative research indicates that social location and position based on identity can negatively impact one's sense of belonging and engagement in school or work. Understanding various lived experiences is therefore important to create welcoming and safe learning and workplace cultures that cultivate positive outcomes.

- [School Climate Survey \(2022\)](#) on engagement, environment, safety, and well-being showed
 - Less favourable responses among gender identity (students identifying in a way other than male or female); 2SLGBTQ+ (students identifying as a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community); Indigenous Identity (students self-identifying as Indigenous); Race (students identifying as Black or Indigenous); and disability (students reporting having a disability (ies) ([Appendix B, 6](#)))
 - Students who identified as a gender other than male or female, Indigenous, Black, students 2SLGBTQ+, and students who identified as having a disability were significantly more likely to experience bullying, sexual harassment, and stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination
- [OHREA Annual Public Report](#) indicated:
 - The need for annual student awareness campaigns providing human rights education and response guidelines for staff and students on bias, discrimination, and hate-related incidents was noted in the report and in the employee feedback sessions. The awareness campaigns would also increase understanding, consistency and appropriateness of responses, and support schools and supervisors when they navigate human rights concerns
 - The need to address critical considerations in disciplining students. The 2021-22 suspension report shows that 80% of suspensions were discretionary, and in the 2022-23 report the proportion of discretionary suspensions increased to 84%. It was noted in the OHREA report (page 18) that "impacts of systemic racism, systemic discrimination, and bias are evident in disciplinary processes." The disproportionalities revealed in the recent OCDSB suspension reports are indicative of systemic discrimination.
- **Feedback Session Suggestions**
 - ***"I think differently,*** was shared by a student to suggest that educators develop an awareness of how differences can impact learning and the specific supports needed for student well-being and success.
 - Workshops that would educate the school community about their identity group. One student shared, "We believe that more activities such as workshops are pretty successful at spreading awareness about topics such as equality, inclusive vocabulary, and other such topics... it would be better to have some more."
 - ***"Staff [need to take] the time to learn and listen to students' personal stories and what has shaped them as a person"*** (*Quotes from the Student Feedback Sessions*)

Compass Direction:

Affirmations and alliances across individual and intersecting identifies to build trusting learning and working relationships

Roadmap Markers to increase access, opportunities and outcomes:

- De-implement discretionary suspensions and implement restorative practices to address student behaviour and reduce disciplinary incidents
- Develop a tracking system to capture and generate disaggregate reports of suspensions each semester and yearly to allow for earlier and ongoing system-level interventions
- Increase the number of Indigenous cultural spaces into all District geographical areas and identify, develop, and implement accompanying protocols and guidelines setting classroom conditions
- Establish OCAP reciprocal data sharing agreement with Indigenous community partners

Key Indicators:

- Increased sense of belonging for Indigenous, Black and minoritized students as measured by attendance, progress reports, report cards, credit accumulation, Valuing Voices Surveys, School Climate Surveys, and other sources of information
- Decreased disproportionate representation of Indigenous, Black and minoritized students (includes 2SLGBTQ+ and students with disabilities) in graduation rates, programs, and pathways as informed by report card data, credit accumulation, Xello, and other information sources
- Decreased over-representation of Indigenous, Black and minoritized students in suspension, exclusion and police engagement as measured by suspension and other data
- Increased number of Indigenous cultural spaces in elementary and secondary schools across the district

Building Staff Awareness and Capacity

Goal: To increase the capacity of staff to understand and apply anti-racist and equitable practices that decrease disproportionalities in access, opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous, Black and minoritized students and staff

Narrative Context:

An equity mindset in education calls for practices that intentionally cultivate a learning and workplace environment where students and staff have equal access to learning and career opportunities; feel valued and supported...; experience parity in achieving positive outcomes; and share responsibility for the equitable engagement and treatment of all the learning community” (modified quote). Current findings indicate that more culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP) capacity building needs to occur with educators. There is a need to actively listen to students and staff and use their lived experiences to inform teaching practices and working relationships.

Feedback session suggestions:

- Students would like to see more staff doing what one teacher who took “.. time to learn and listen to [their] personal stories and what has shaped them as a person”; that educators could “respond to cultural things more effectively and appropriately”; that students could “learn more about their personal lineage and history”; and that “English classes [could] use media from cultures that accurately represent student body”.
- employees suggested PD schedules within the working day, release time to obtain training, tracking of OCDSB and external PD learning and application of learning.

[Update on Student Achievement and Program Pathways \(May 2023\)](#)

- Evidence of the urgency of this training is apparent: “For the subset of students for whom Valuing Voices data is available, trends in achievement outcomes were similar to those observed in 2019-2020. Compared to the general population, achievement rates across academic level English, Math, and Science were lower for students who self-identified as First Nations or Métis; racially as Black or Indigenous; and students who self-reported having a learning or a mental disability” (Appendix A, 11).

[2022-2023 Student Learning Update Part 1: Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills](#)

- Reports students with special education needs (excluding gifted) and Indigenous students have lower rates of success across EQAO assessments compared to OCDSB students. As well, students residing in lower-income neighbourhoods were less likely to be successful across EQAO assessments compared to all OCDSB students. The EQAO results show that additional support is needed for multilingual learners (MLLs) in elementary with particular attention at the grade 3 level
- Report card outcomes for reading, writing, and math also indicate that students who identify as Indigenous, Black, MLLs, gender diverse, students with special education needs (excluding gifted), students residing in low-income neighborhoods, and students reporting certain disabilities continue to be underserved (6)

Compass Direction:

Agility to unlearn, learn and relearn, apply and embody CRRP, Inclusive design, decolonized, anti-racist, equity and inclusive lens to create a fearless learning and workplace culture

Roadmap Markers to enhance access, opportunities and outcomes

- Redesign the training system for staff and student leaders to identify and address discriminatory conduct and hate-related incidents
- Reimagine the principal mentoring process with principals and vice principals to support leading in a VUCA world
- Incorporate foundational training in human rights, equity and Indigenous education in intern and mentorship programs to build competencies and confidence to identify and address systemic barriers and practices.
- Develop and implement a District Tracking System for all professional learning for all employees to develop and demonstrate equitable and inclusive education competencies
- Redesign Indigenous, and Equity Lead roles to provide and track collaborative spaces to consistently support educators within schools on a daily basis

Key Indicators:

- Number of professional learning series developed and launched, with accompanying resources and support, on Indigenous knowledge, anti-racism, anti-oppression and human rights
- Percentage of staff who have completed a professional learning series on Indigenous knowledge, anti-racism, anti-oppression and human rights
- Number of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in schools and departments to develop an Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights mindset

Increasing Representation

Goal: To increase the 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.

Narrative Context:

Efforts to recruit and retain diverse staff require an intentional, effective and responsive process that improves accountability and reporting to ensure transparency.

Feedback Session Suggestions:

- one student recommended "reserving more spots for diverse teachers".
- Parent Involvement Committee representatives reinforced the necessity for more diverse staff representing the racialized community.
- staff recommended tracking where equity-deserving group members are dropping off during the recruitment process so we can see where Muslim educators, for example, who have been with the District for 10 or 15 years are missing getting positions

[2010 Workforce Census](#)

- Strategic recommendations from the 2010 Workforce Census include collecting comparable student demographic data to ensure the OCDSB adequately represents the student population it currently serves; developing systems and content to ensure principals, vice principals and other leaders are well-trained to recruit, assess and support diverse staff and students; and working with relevant community groups to advise and mentor foreign-trained teachers who are seeking certification (6).

In [Valuing Staff Voices \(2021\)](#),

- 29% of respondents from the workforce population (permanent, occasional, casual) reported having experienced racism, stereotyping, harassment and discrimination in the workplace (4).
- 11% reported having experienced racism, stereotyping and discrimination in the hiring and promotion practices.

Compass Directions:

Implementing Equity and Inclusive Hiring Policy to build a representative workforce

Roadmap Markers to enhance access, opportunities and outcomes

- Develop Succession Plan to recruit and advance Indigenous, Black, racialized and minoritized staff in schools and departments
- Expand training for system leaders to recruit, assess, support, and retain diverse staff through an Indigenous, Equity and Human rights lens
- Determine and remedy drop-off points within the recruitment process for internal and external Indigenous, Black, and minority applicants
- Generate disaggregated summary reports on equitable hiring results following spring and fall recruitment periods detailing the number and percentage and shifts in hires, promotions, leaves, resignations and retirements disaggregated by Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQ+ and staff with disabilities in comparison to 2010 Workforce Census and 2021 Employee Engagement Survey baseline data.
- Conduct an Employee Systems Review to ensure policies and procedures are being administered through a Human Rights and equity lens
- Create an Employee Resource Group (ERG) working group to provide feedback to senior management on policies, procedures and practices

Key Indicators:

- Number of policies and practices implemented to increase the number of Indigenous, Black and minoritized staff hired, retained and promoted
- Increased number of Indigenous, Black and minoritized staff, hired, retained and promoted
- Increased representative roles, networks and councils established and institutionalized to represent Indigenous, Black and minoritized students, staff, and communities

Programming and Supports for Students:

Goal: To increase the representation of Indigenous, Black and minoritized students in the curriculum, courses, programs and pathways

Narrative Context:

[2022-2023 Student Learning Update Part 1: Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills](#)

- Report card outcomes indicate Indigenous, Black, MLL, gender diverse, students residing in low-income neighborhoods, and students reporting certain disabilities continue to be underserved

EQAO results reveal additional support is needed for MLLs at the elementary level (with particular attention at the grade 3 level), students with special education needs (excluding gifted), Indigenous students, and students in low-income neighbourhoods [2022-2023 Student Learning Update Part 2: Preparation of Students for Future Success](#)

- More than half of elementary students continue to be enrolled in Early French Immersion.
- Most identified groups of students continue to be disproportionately overrepresented in the English program compared to the French Immersion program.
- 2022 Student School Climate Survey reported that as grades increased from 7-12, there was lower confidence expressed that school was preparing them for post-secondary education by students who identify as Indigenous, Black, Southeast Asian, Latino/Latina/Latinx, gender diverse, and having a disability

[2024 OCDSB Elementary Program Review](#)

- The 2019 Valuing Voices survey data shows disproportionalities in the English program most notably for students who identify as Indigenous, Black, Middle Eastern, and students having a disability (18).
- Report card marks show that students enrolled in French Immersion were more likely to meet the standard (level 3 or 4) in grades 1-8 in all three subjects (Math, Language, and French) as compared to their peers in English with Core French.

[OHREA Annual Public Report](#)

- Recommends standardizing French immersion programs to reduce inequities between schools and students and disrupt de facto streaming (25)
- Highlights human rights, inclusion, and the right to full participation concerns with two District practices :
 - the practice of supporting the majority of students with special needs in specialized program classes (SPCs) which, due to accommodation limitations affecting class location, are more likely to require transportation away from community school
 - the practice of congregating students who are developing English proficiency (ELD) in classes and at schools outside of their community school (16, 17)
- OHREA recommends a review of both practices that could result in students going to their community school; fewer transitions; less travel time to and from school; better use of resources and facilities; better support of student learning and well-being; full integration of students into regular classrooms in their community school; and programming that facilitates staffing, professional learning, and other structures supportive of staff and student wellbeing ([2024 OCDSB Elementary Program Review](#), 20, [OHREA Annual Public Report](#)).

Compass Direction:

Deep learning and high expectations in a supportive environment to increase well-being and success

Roadmap Markers to enhance access, opportunities and outcomes

- Expand identity-specific courses (e.g., Indigenous language credit course, Inuktitut Core Languages program, land-based courses, Black Studies course, Rainbow Bridges Program, gender-inclusive physical education courses, etc.)
- Redesign social studies, history, geography, English and math courses to include Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQ+, and other minoritized group histories, contemporary contributions, and perspectives
- Expand Indigenous, Black and Arab-speaking Graduation Coaches, Student Success Coordinators, and /or identity-specific learning support teachers/ student success teachers to support well-being and academic success with a focus on English/ social sciences, math, and science at select schools including Adult High School
- Explore inclusive and integrated program delivery options in schools to reduce inequities for students with special and ELD needs by considering indirect support (feedback sessions with coaches); in-class support co-teaching with a specialized teacher; in-class support facilitation with a specialized teacher providing direct services to individual students or small groups of students; resource support; and modes of learning (e-learning, hybrid, remote, etc)
- Strengthen community partnerships within schools that enhance culturally relevant and responsive mentorship and well-being programs.
- Annual summary report of actionable next steps from Indigenous and Black Graduation Coaches

Key Indicators:

- Increased number of courses developed or redesigned to include and represent Indigenous, Black and minoritized histories and perspectives in content and delivery as reported by Programming and Learning and other information sources
- Increased sense of belonging for Indigenous, Black and minoritized students as measured by attendance, progress reports, report cards, credit accumulation, Valuing Voices Survey, School Climate Surveys, and other sources of information
- Decreased disproportionalities in learning outcomes, graduation rates, programs, and pathways of Indigenous, Black, and minoritized students (includes 2SLGBTQ+ and students with disabilities) as informed by report card data, EQAO, credit accumulation, Xello, Aspen, the Annual Learning Update and other information sources
- Expand educator capacity to highlight and value Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in classrooms throughout the OCDSB
- Number of identity-specific courses and redesign of existing courses through an equity lens
- Shifts generated by increased availability of identity-specific support for Indigenous, Black, and 2SLGBTQ+ students, students with disabilities (graduation coaches, student support coordinators, guidance counselors, learning support teachers, student success teachers)

Engagement and Connectedness

Goal: To build and strengthen collaborative relationships with Indigenous, Black and minoritized students, parents and staff to create a community of belonging, promote excellence and inform actions to eliminate disproportionalities in service delivery

Narrative Context:

The relationship between students, families and school are critically important to support the well-being and success of students.

[Update on Student Learning: Student Engagement and Well-being](#) reports that based on the demographic data for multilingual learners, students with special education needs, students reporting self-identified gender or gender not disclosed, students who identify as Indigenous, and students residing in low-income neighbourhoods:

- 54% of OCDSB elementary students were absent for 10% or more days, (provincial rate 47%);
- 40% of OCDSB secondary students were absent for 10% or more classes (provincial rate of 47%" (3).
- Largest disproportionalities: students who identify as transgender, non-binary and gender diverse, and students who identify as Indigenous, students with special education needs and students residing in lower-income neighbourhoods.

[School Climate Survey 2022](#)

- Less favourable responses were received regarding engagement, environment, safety, and well-being among gender identity (students identifying in a way other than male or female); 2SLGBTQ+ (students identifying as a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community); Indigenous Identity (students self-identifying as Indigenous); Race (Students identifying as Black or Indigenous); and disability (students reporting having a disability (ies) ([Appendix B](#), 6).

2019 Valuing Voices Survey's demographic data:

- TBC

Feedback session suggestions:

- Expand student groups, sharing circles and forums as they are vital supports that increase engagement and connectedness
- Provide more intensive mental health interventions and supports to address the requirement for consent for middle schools, the location of services, and the timing and length of support.
- Explore a more proactive model at the elementary level could help to mitigate well-being issues at the high school level
- Redesign the OCDSB webpage to strengthen communication with families in terms of clarity of language, translation options, easy navigation, reduction of lag time between information and events, and prioritized links that are aligned to student and family concerns.

Compass Direction:

Trusting relationships to foster a community of belonging

"Relationships are the cornerstone of culturally responsive teaching". Zaretta Hammond

Maybe we could get a group of kids together who identify with the group and have a student council... I want to feel accepted and supported by staff and other students... Our school has a Rainbow Club that has helped a lot in the past" (OCDSB Student during Feedback Sessions).

Roadmap Markers to enhance access, opportunities and outcomes

- Muslim Youth Forum created to strengthen student voice, agency and leadership opportunities
- Student Equity Advisory Committee established
- Annual student-led Re-Imagine OCDSB Conference with and for students, staff, and families to demonstrate use of Indigenous knowledge, equity and human rights principles and practices to strengthen engagement and connectedness to increase a sense of belonging.
- Pilot an on-site mental health provider who delivers service with a culturally responsive lens, including linguistic and cultural competencies, within select schools to enhance access to support student well-being, attendance and engagement
- Measure use and impact of OCDSB communications channels to serve the full diversity of students, staff and families through an Indigenous, equity and human rights lens.

Key Indicators:

- Increased number of partnerships established and maintained with Indigenous, Black and minoritized communities (including 2SLGBTQ+, Immigrant serving agencies and organizations serving persons with disabilities)
- Increased number of youth forums established and maintained with Indigenous, Black and minoritized youth
- Increased percentage of Indigenous, Black and minoritized students reporting a sense of belonging
- Track shifts in attendance, engagement and sense of belonging by Indigenous, Black, 2SLBTQ+, students with disabilities and Multilingual Learners

"To change is to think greater than how we feel. To change is to act greater than the familiar feelings of the memorized self. If you want a new outcome, you will have to break the habit of being yourself, and reinvent a new self." Dr. Joe Dispenza