COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC) **4 February 2019**
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Identity Based Data Collection

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PURPOSE:

1. To provide an overview of the plan for the collection and reporting of identity-based data.

CONTEXT:

2. The OCDSB has a strong commitment to improving equity of access and opportunity for all students. In 2011, the OCDSB undertook a comprehensive student survey and our community has expressed strong interest in formalizing a process for the ongoing collection of identity based data as a tool to better understand and eliminate systemic barriers. Recent changes to provincial legislation and the introduction of the Ministry of Education Equity Action Plan have provided a framework for school districts to move forward with this work. The OCDSB is one of a small number of school districts working with the Education Equity Secretariat to plan for identity-based data collection. The OCDSB submitted a proposal in 2018 and received funding for this project.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

<u>Legislative and Policy Framework</u>

3. In 2017, the Province enacted the Anti-Racism Act. The Act seeks to eliminate systemic racism and advance racial equity supports. The Act specifically acknowledges four groups that are most adversely impacted by racism, including Indigenous, Black, Jewish communities, and communities that are adversely impacted by Islamophobia. The Act applies to all provincially-funded institutions and was accompanied by 'Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism', which establishes standards for the collection of identity-based data by public sector institutions in Ontario. Appendix A provides a summary overview of the Data Standards.

In May 2018, the Ministry of Education released the Ontario Education Equity Action Plan, which outlines the provincial framework for identifying and eliminating discriminatory practices and systemic barriers and bias from Ontario schools and classrooms. The Equity Action Plan has four main areas:

- School and Classroom Practices
- Leadership, Governance and Human Resource Practices
- Data Collection, Integration and Reporting
- Organizational Culture Change

Work is planned or underway in all of these areas, but the focus of this report is on the collection, integration and reporting of data.

Planning for Data Collection – Qualitative and Quantitative

4. The vital role that equity and inclusion play in improving student achievement and well-being, reducing achievement gaps and increasing public confidence in public education is clear. To make progress, we must understand who our students are and what their school experience has been. This requires the collection of both perceptual and demographic data. While the Data Standards focus on four groups (Indigenous, Black, Jewish and Islamic), the OCDSB has taken a more inclusive approach and also believes that the collection of identity-based data must also allow us to address issues and challenges of the lived experiences of other communities including LGBTQQ+, South East Asian, socio-economically disadvantaged, and disabled (AODA) and newcomers.

Grant Proposal and Funding

5. The OCDSB has received funding through the Education Equity Secretariat to build capacity in preparation for the collection, analysis and use of identity-based data. The grant proposal identified the need to undertake some readiness work on our technology infrastructure, as well as a series of focus groups with students, staff and community members to better understand their lived experiences and their perspective on how the collection of identity-based data might help to identify strategies to overcome barriers. Unfortunately, funding was not approved for the much needed infrastructure work, but was approved to cover some of the staffing costs associated with planning and undertaking focus groups.

Focus Groups

6. The project funding proposal includes the launch of focus groups designed to learn more about the lived experiences and issues that are of most concern to communities or groups that may experience systemic bias and barriers. Focus group sessions can help to inform our understanding of the realities experienced by social identity groups in our communities. The design and structure of focus groups will be varied and responsive, and will include input from our community partners.

   The Advisory Committee on Equity plays an important role in offering input and insight into how the District approaches this work. In addition, staff will be working with the Indigenous Education Advisory Council to assist in understanding community needs, building relationship and the sense of trust necessary to undertake this important work.

Reporting our Findings

7. An important part of our work will be acknowledging what we heard. This includes acknowledging the participation and support of groups and individuals as well as reporting out on our findings and the impact on our work going forward. The format and nature of reporting will be an area of discussion with our partner agencies, our facilitators and our focus group participants. At this time, we anticipate that the reporting out would occur prior to the end of September 2019.

Collection of Identity-Based Data

8. In the fall of 2019, the District will undertake the collection of voluntary demographic and perceptual data. Once collected, this data will allow for the analysis of trends and patterns in representation of various aspects of school life: learning experience, engagement experience, achievement experience, and social experience.

   The District currently reports on a range of student data, such as program enrolment, graduation rates, special education supports, suspensions and expulsions. Identity-based data will enhance the District's capacity to understand areas of strength and need for particular student populations.

   The specific analyses and uses of the data will need to be identified prior to the data collection process. In addition, the Data Standards include provisions for calculating racial disparities and disproportionalities indices. This is an area that requires further study and a more detailed understanding of the Data Standards and how we approach this work.

   At this time, it is anticipated that reporting using identity-based data will become available for the 2020 Annual Student Achievement Report.

   Major project timelines are summarized as follows:

Build Staff Capacity	September 2018 – June 2019	• Equity and bias training for senior team and other leaders; • Develop training strategy based on learning needs by role; • Review and analysis of provincial data standards; • Consideration of how identity-based data could inform other reporting and analysis; • Develop new resources and tools; • Ensure appropriate privacy framework and impact assessment in place; • Prepare for the questions that the system will ask and be asked.
Communication & Relationship Building	January – April 2019	• Provide community information about the ideas, build trust and maximize participation; • Communicate information about the data standards; • Communicate the importance and benefits of

		expanding student data to include identity-based data; • Clarify the alignment of this project with principles, guidelines and identity categories; • Work with community partners including community leaders, local organizations,youth leaders, and the community at large to build trust in the process and data collection; • Extensive outreach into different communities including discussions, information collected will be used to guide the design of our next steps; • Communicate with transparency to build confidence in the collection of data.
Stakeholder Focus Groups and Feedback	April –June 2019	• Sampling plan based on the population profile of the identified groups in our schools, organize, and host focus group sessions at schools and other community locations; • Collect input about lived experiences; • Acknowledging and capturing the diversity within our student population; • Discussion sessions aimed at identifying the issues and questions of relevance with youth; • Acknowledge and express appreciation to participants; • Develop summary of session feedback; • Report out on findings and use the collected information to guide the research design.
Survey Development and Implementation	May – November 2019	• Establish data collection protocols and code of conduct; • Ensure survey content alignment with data standards and captures important issues and relevant questions to the diverse student population; • Identify intended uses of the data; • Complete Privacy Impact Assessment; • Develop survey instrument appropriate to age; • Field test survey instrument; • Conduct Survey in November 2019.
Reporting, Analysis and Future Uses	December 2019-June 2021	Stages of reporting • Summary of data as census information – May 2020; • Incorporation of data into ASAR – November 2020; • Enhancement of existing reporting and development of new reports November 2020 – onward.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

9. In May 2018, the District received $103,000 in one-time funding through a Transfer Payment Agreement to support the work related to the focus groups. The funding request was for $146,000, but the final approval did not include the cost of a 1.0 FTE in Business and Learning Technologies for a 6 month term to undertake the data infrastructure work which was included in the application.

   At this time, the District has not received any targeted funding to support the actual collection of identity-based data. It is unclear whether special purpose grant programs will be available. The District is in the process of acquiring some additional software which could help with the data collection. However, there will be additional costs with regard to data collection, analysis, communications and professional development. These will be identified as a proposal in the 2019-2020 budget.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

10. Collecting personal information about race and ethnicity is very sensitive work. It is essential that all employees, consultants, involved in the collection and use of the data have a fulsome understanding of the importance, value and sensitivity of the work and the purpose of collection and use. Communication will be respectful, culturally sensitive, transparent and done in an accessible way that ensures individual privacy and confidentiality.

    Our collaboration with community partner agencies will be critical to creating a sense of community support for the focus groups which is essential to participation and building trust with the community. In the selection of facilitators, significant consideration will be given to consistency in approach and integrity to the purpose of the focus groups.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

11. Equity is a priority of the District and this initiative is a critical step in our commitment to identify and remove barriers and ensure equity of access and opportunity for all students. Our commitment to equity and the data collection work happens at the system level, but the impact on our work will be to positively impact the student experience in the classroom and at school.

GUIDING QUESTION:

- How are we going to measure and track the organization's culture shift toward an equitable and inclusive learning environment?

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Appendix A: Identity Based Data Standards