

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)

13 October 2020

Report No. 20-053

Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap, 2020-2023

Key Contact: Dorothy Baker, Superintendent of Instruction, 613-596-8211 ext. 8886.

PURPOSE:

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the foundation for the introduction of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap 2020-2023 (Appendix A) which sets direction in identifying and addressing systemic barriers that impact equitable access, opportunity and outcomes for underserved students and staff. The Roadmap operationalizes many of the priorities identified in the OCDSB Strategic Plan, 2019-2023 and outlines the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities at all levels of the organization in serving students, parents, staff and community.

CONTEXT:

2. Under the previous OCDSB Strategic Plan, 2015-2019, the District embarked upon work that saw growth in internal capacity building in equity and inclusion in a number of areas including Indigenous Education, Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), the development of the OCDSB Gender Identity, Gender Expression Guide, non-binary washrooms in schools, and the amplification of student voice through various student events and forums. Enhanced methodologies were adopted to differentiate the allocation of resources to improve equity of opportunity for underserved students through the updated Resource Allocation Index based on Socioeconomics (RAISE).

As a District, it is time for us to move beyond simply celebrating diversity and inclusion and to take concrete action to address disparity and disproportionality in access, opportunity and outcomes for Indigenous, Black and minoritized (a term which includes racialized, religious, 2SLGBTQ+ and people with a disability) students and staff.

We acknowledge that oppression and discrimination still exist within

our systems, structures, policies and practices. It shows up specifically as racism and more specifically anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism; faithism including Islamophobia, antisemitism, and anti-Sikhism; ableism; sexism, transphobia and homophobia. Despite the gains that have been made, there remains a lot of work to be done.

The OCDSB is committed to human rights, equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression. The Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap provides direction to continue the work in full alignment with the goals of the OCDSB Strategic Plan, 2019-2023, centering equity in decision-making about prioritization of resource allocation and support. We are committed to challenging our assumptions, perspectives and biases; and to reshaping the instruction, access learning opportunities, outcomes, and environments we provide for students in partnership with those whom we serve.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. I. Background

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission put forth 94 Calls to Action for Canadians to repair the relationship with Indigenous peoples. Calls 62 and 63 in particular set out the ways in which the education sector can ensure we are working towards reconciliation.

In 2018, the OCDSB committed to support the UN International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024 in recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected.

In 2020, with the launch of the Identity Based Data Collection Project - Valuing Voices: Identity Matters, it is possible to specifically identify systemic barriers that we know exist and address disproportionate access, opportunity and outcomes for Indigenous, Black and minoritized students.

As the Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap has evolved, it has been shared and discussed with community partners, at the Indigenous Education Advisory Council, Advisory Committee on Equity and the Special Education Advisory Committee. It is important to recognize, acknowledge and thank all those who have participated and provided input to the process.

ii. Baseline Study: Identity Based Data Project

In 2018-2019, the OCDSB invited students, families and community partners from Indigenous and equity-seeking communities to share their educational stories and experiences within the OCDSB, to listen, and to gain greater insight into some of the barriers and biases that exist within the system. Through these focus group conversations, five broad themes emerged highlighting key areas that the participants identified as impacting on equitable access, opportunity, and outcomes:

- Importance of Identity;
- Staff Awareness;
- Representation;
- Programming for Students, and
- Connectedness.

These five themes, along with a section on Securing Accountability: Governance and Leadership, form the foundation of the Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap.

iii. Valuing Voices - Identity Matters! Student Survey

The feedback from the focus groups, and input from the newly established Community Equity Partners group, also helped to inform the development of a survey instrument to collect identity-based data, culminating in the launch in November, 2019 of the Valuing Voices - Identity Matters! Student Survey. In June 2020, the initial report that told the story of identity in the OCDSB was released publicly. Work is currently underway linking survey data to student outcomes (i.e., suspensions, credit accumulation, achievement, and streaming into program pathways) which will provide us with the opportunity to disaggregate, assess, analyse, use and understand the context of data intended to illuminate the evidence of systemic barriers in the district. Reports are being planned for public release in November, December, March, and June. Ongoing dialogue with community partners throughout the year will be critical to this process in order to provide further context to what the data is showing.

iv. The Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap

Placing Indigenous education, equity and human rights at the centre of strategic planning for education, safeguards the ability of every student to realize their right to access equal educational opportunities and outcomes and every staff member to work in an environment free from harassment and discrimination. The Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap 2020-2023 outlines specific goals, actions, and milestones to address systemic barriers for students and staff and to hold the District accountable for progress.

v. Goals and Milestones

The Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap outlines the OCDSB's actions, goals and milestones which are crafted and organized around the five themes identified from the Valuing Voices: Identity Matters! focus groups and are designed to demonstrate improvements in the following areas:

- Importance of Identity;
- Building Staff Awareness and Capacity;
- Representation;
- Programming and Support for Students, and
- Engagement and Connectedness.

The additional section, “Securing Accountability”, sets out specific actions, reports, and communication structures by which to measure progress in the areas of governance and leadership with transparency.

The commitment to students, families, staff and communities who identify as Indigenous, is specifically highlighted with focused goals and actions in recognition of the unique relationship and responsibility to First Peoples of this land, and the OCDSB’s commitment to reconciliation and to honouring the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.

The OCDSB’s commitment to addressing racism, and in particular anti-Black racism, is specifically highlighted to reflect the District’s 2018 adoption of the UN International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024 and to address the overwhelming urgency for action evidenced by disparities and disproportionalities in access, opportunity and outcomes for children and youth of African descent.

It is important to note that these goals and actions are rooted in research and ongoing participation, input and feedback from students, parents, community and advisory committees/councils. They have been developed and solidified based on the voices we have heard.

vi. Implementation and Reporting

Specific milestones are outlined in the Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap which set the expectations for implementation. The role of trustees will be key in policy review, aligning of resources, and decision making in governance matters in support of implementation. Monitoring of progress will be through cyclical quantitative and qualitative measurement structures aligned with the reporting structure of the Strategic Plan, which monitors progress at school and district levels. Specifically, the District will establish an Annual Equity Accountability Report (to be included in the Annual Director’s Report and presented for discussion at Committee of the Whole) that will establish accountability measures and responsibilities for school and district leadership and reports on progress towards goals identified in the Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap, disaggregated by grade, Indigeneity, race, language, disability, sex, gender, and socio-economic status.

Changes in the identified areas of the Roadmap will signal success/shifts in reducing disparities and disproportionality for Indigenous, Black and minoritized students and staff in access, opportunities and outcomes.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

4. In Spring of 2020, the District received Ministry funding to establish a Human Rights and Equity Advisor (HREA). The role of the HREA is:
 - i. To build and maintain a culture of human rights within OCDSB; and
 - ii. Support the resolution of human rights complaints.

The cost of additional work identified within the Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap will be managed through departmental budgets.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

5. Consultation plan and timelines:

Activity	Timeline	Complete
Gather data from various research reports, relevant legislation, community reports, advisory committee reports and minutes, consultation with Equity Partners Group and Focus Groups for Identity Based Data collection	Fall 2019/Winter 2020	✓
Collect input from senior team Strategic Action Plan Action accountabilities	Jan - Aug 2020	✓
Draft Letter of Transmittal and Road Map document to DEC	June 7 2020	✓
Work with Communications to develop graphic representation and mockup of Road Map Document	June/July 2020	✓
Conduct virtual Advisory Committee discussions (ACE, IEAC, SEAC) OCISO✓, Equity Partners Group (community health centres, CHEO, OPH etc.); students leadership groups	June-September 2020	✓
Develop Communications Plan with Comms/Board Services	July/Sept 2020	✓
Revisions based on community feedback	August/September 2020	✓

Draft Final to DEC	September 22 2020	✓
Final to COW	October 13 2020	✓
Presentation to Principals and Vice-Principals	October, 2020	
Launch to the District and community	October 2020	

STRATEGIC LINKS:

6. The Strategic Plan culture statements capture and articulate the values of the organization. Its equity and human rights commitments are embedded in these statements specifically as it relates to building a culture of caring and social responsibility: we will advance equity and a sense of belonging to promote a safe and caring community; and we will strengthen our community through ethical leadership, equitable practice, and responsible stewardship. Further, the Strategic Plan includes the student focused goals to remove barriers to equity of access, opportunity and outcomes in advancing a culture of social responsibility and to champion high expectations for all students in all programs as part of building a culture of innovation. The Roadmap has been constructed to align to the Strategic Plan on a project and program level and to provide evidence of progress in realizing organizational outcomes.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

7. In what ways can the Board support the implementation of the Roadmap toward effecting a positive shift in structures, policies, procedures, practices and culture as measured by progress in addressing disproportionate access, opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous, Black and minoritized students and staff?

What supports will trustees need to implement in their practice to further the goals of the Roadmap?

SUBMITTED FOR DISCUSSION

Dorothy Baker
Superintendent of Instruction

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

Appendix A-Equity and Human Rights Roadmap 2020-2023