



AGENDA

Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

7 p.m. – Open Session

Please note that all public sessions of Board Meetings are live-streamed and recordings are posted on the Peel District School Board website.

Members of the public can attend the public session of Board Meetings by watching the live-stream.

For additional details, including the live-stream link, visit www.peelschools.org/trustees.

AGENDA

Open Session

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

1. Call to Order
 2. Motion to Convene in Closed Session
 3. National Anthem and Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands – 7 p.m.
 4. Approval of Agenda
 5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
 6. Celebrating Board Activities
 - 6.1. Board Activities
 - (a) Recognition of Service of the 2022-2023 Student Trustees:
Avneet Athwal
Evelyn Lee
 - 6.2. School/Student/Staff Successes
 7. Staff Recognition
 - 7.1. Retirements
 8. Board Chair's Announcements
 9. Director's Report
 10. Report from Student Trustees
 11. Reports from Trustees Appointed to External Organizations
 12. Consent Agenda
 13. Approval of Minutes from Previous Board and Special Board Meetings
 - 13.1. Minutes – Board Meeting, May 24, 2023
 14. Committee Minutes for Receipt and Motions for Consideration
 - 14.1. Minutes – Governance and Policy Committee – May 17, 2023
- Board Meeting Agenda - Open Session

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

AGENDA

- 14.2. (a) Minutes – Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee – June 1, 2023
- (b) Motions – Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee – June 1, 2023

15. Staff Reports/Reports

15.1. Ministry Directives

- a) Directive 14 - Comprehensive Four-Year Equity Strategy and Action Plan -
presented by Camille Logan
- b) Directive 17 – Reform of the Guidance Program/System – Update #5 –
presented by Paul da Silva

15.2. Employment Systems Review – *presented by Jaspal Gill*

15.3. 2021-2022 Integrity Commissioners' Annual Report to the Peel District School Board – *presented by Parker Sim LLP*

15.4. Board and Committee Meeting Schedule 2023-2024 – *presented by Kathryn Lockyer*

15.5. Establishment of a Board and Committee Agenda Review Committee – *presented by Kathryn Lockyer*

15.6. Recommended Candidate for Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Vacant Member Seat – *presentation by Paul da Silva*

16. Communications

17. Trustee Motions for Consideration

18. Trustee Notices of Motion

19. Adoption of the Closed Session Report

20. Adjournment

Celebrating Board Activities



6.1 Board Activities

(a) Recognition of Service of the 2022-2023
Student Trustees:

Avneet Athwal

Evelyn Lee

7.1

Board Meeting, June 14, 2023

Retirements

Strategic Alignment:

Plan for Student Success – Safe, positive, healthy climate/well-being

Report Type:

For Information

Prepared by: Masuma Khangura, Executive Officer, Human Resources, Partnerships and Equity

Jaspal Gill, Associate Director, Operations and Equity of Access

Submitted by: Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Objective:

To recognize retiring Peel District School Board staff.

Background:

Each month, staff who are or have recently retired are recognized.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Retirements List

RETIREMENTS

BARNES, Karyn
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

BETHUNE, Joanne
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

BONATO, Maria
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

CAMERON, Carmen
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

CAPODILUPO, Alessandra
Consultant
Effective: June 30, 2023

CAUZ, Roxane
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

CHAU, Cam
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

CHUNG, Margaret
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

CLARKE, Kathleen
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

RETIREMENTS

DHATT, Kelly
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

DRAKE, Peter
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

FONZO, Rocco
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

FRASER, Alina
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

GAGNE, Wayne
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

HALL, Debra
Sr Partner Employee & Labour Relations
Effective: June 30, 2023

HISHCHAK, Lana
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

HUXLEY, Sharron
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

LAURENCIK, Kathy
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

RETIREMENTS

LICZNER, Joseph
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

LONGLEY, Glenda
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

MACDONALD, Susan
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

MERCANTE, Ivana
Office Manager
Effective: August 31, 2023

MILLER, Janet
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

NOCERA, Teresa
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

NOORO, Helen
School Attendant
Effective: June 30, 2023

PAIS, Leila
Office Assistant
Effective: July 31, 2023

PALUCHOWSKI, Natalia
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

RETIREMENTS

PAYNE, Rick
Custodian
Effective: May 01, 2023

PAZZANO, Evy
Office Manager
Effective: August 28, 2023

PEDERSEN, Tim
Principal
Effective: June 30, 2023

RAINALDI, Antonietta
School Attendant
Effective: June 30, 2023

RAMA, Bonifacio
Head Custodian
Effective: July 31, 2023

RICCI, Mike
Vice-Principal
Effective: August 25, 2023

ROESLER, Liz
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

ROGERS, Janet
Vice-Principal
Effective: June 30, 2023

SEDGEWICK, John
Classroom Teacher
Effective: September 04, 2023

RETIREMENTS

SHIKONGO, Mary
Custodian
Effective: June 30, 2023

SOKOLYK, Deborah
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

STURGEON, Linda
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

SUGUNAN, Jay
Principal
Effective: June 30, 2023

SZELTNER, Moira
Office Assistant
Effective: September 30, 2023

UNDERWOOD, Edith
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

WEGRZYN, Elzbieta
Custodian
Effective: September 11, 2023

WITT, Janet
Classroom Teacher
Effective: June 30, 2023

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of a Board Meeting of the Peel District School Board, held on Wednesday, May 24, 2023 at 18:30 hours. The hybrid meeting was held in the Board Room, the H. J. A. Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga, Ontario, and by electronic means, under Ontario Regulation 463/97.

Members present:

David Green, Board Chair	Jeffrey Clark
LeeAnn Cole, Board Vice-Chair (electronic)	Will Davies
Lucas Alves	Satpaul Singh Johal
Karla Bailey	Brad MacDonald
Susan Benjamin	Kathy McDonald
Stan Cameron (electronic)	Jill Promoli

Student Trustees:

Evelyn Lee, Student Trustee South (electronic)

Administration:

Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education
Harjit Aujla, Acting Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity, Leadership, Innovation and Safe Schools
Paul da Silva, Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity, Special Education, Social Emotional Learning and Well Being
Jaspal Gill, Associate Director, Operations and Equity of Access
Camille Logan, Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity, Curriculum and Instruction, Student and Community Engagement
Tania Alatishe-Charles, Controller, Finance Support Services
Alvin Au, Acting Superintendent of Education
Yonnette Dey, Superintendent of Elementary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment and Community Engagement
Wendy Dobson, Acting Controller, Corporate Support Services
Jasmine Dunn, Acting Executive Lead, Human Rights
Donna Ford, Superintendent of Education
Soni Gill, Superintendent of Education
Tiffany Gooch, Executive Lead, Public Engagement and Communications
Antoine Haroun, Chief Information Officer, Learning Technology Support Services
Lisa Hart, Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement and Community Relations
Rasulan Hoppie, Superintendent of Secondary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Masuma Khangura, Executive Officer, Human Resources, Partnerships and Equity
Kathryn Lockyer, General Counsel and Governance Officer
Luke Mahoney, Superintendent of Education
Ozma Masood, Superintendent of Education
Jennifer Newby, Superintendent, Special Education and Social Emotional Learning and Well-Being

Administration: (Continued)

Neerja Punjabi, Superintendent of Education
Claudine Scuccato, Superintendent of Education
Bernadette Smith, Superintendent, Innovation and Research
Thomas Tsung, Controller, Facilities and Environmental Support Services
Sabrina Valleau, Governance Coordinator
Kervin White, Superintendent of Education
Randy Wright, Controller, Planning and Accommodation Support Services
Mary Zammit, Superintendent of Education

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Call to Order

Chair David Green called the meeting to order at 18:33 hours.

2. Closed Session

Resolution No. 23-101, moved by Jill Promoli
seconded by Lucas Alves

Resolved, that the Board move into Closed Session (18:33 hours).

..... carried

The meeting recessed at 18:58 hours and recovered at 19:10 hours.

3. National Anthem and Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

A video of the singing of the National Anthem and reciting of the Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands was shown.

4. Approval of Agenda

Resolution No. 23-102 moved by Lucas Alves
seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the agenda be approved.

..... carried

5. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

6. Celebrating Board Activities

Chair Green noted that the Board will celebrate Pride Month in June, and will recognize and celebrate Crossing Guard Appreciation Day on June 8, 2023, and National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21, 2023.

Resolution No. 23-103 moved by Jeffrey Clark
seconded by Will Davies

Resolved, that the following items be received

- (a) Crossing Guard Appreciation Day – June 8
- (b) National Indigenous Peoples Day – June 21
- (c) Pride Month – June.

..... carried

7. Staff Recognition: Retirements

Chair Green expressed appreciation to retiring staff for their years of service and commitment to the Peel DSB and thanked them for their work.

Resolution No. 23-104 moved by Satpaul Singh Johal
seconded by Jill Promoli

Resolved, that the following retirements be received:

Margaret Acton	Chris Gibb	Albena Robev
Nick Apata	Claudia Gomez Vargas	Lisa Sawicki
Chris Arthurs	Melanie Graham Flynn	Michele Smith
Maryann Baran	Jess Grewal	Lori Spencer
Daniel Bascombe	Maralee Hughes	Blanka Srnica
Sian Bowen-Cole	Karen Johnston	Kirby Thoden
Martha Brunet	Marc Julien	Lisa Toris
Douglas Carter	Bozena Kasprzyszak	Ian Walker
Heidi Chadder	Paul Kemerer	Tracy Walker
Donna Colquhoun	Shehla Khalid	Michael Whyte
Wayne Couch	Giuliana Lambe	Daniel Younan
Sandra Crawford	Ngairé Lumia	Silvia Zannella
Leanne Davidson	Irene MacCarone	Irina Zhukov
Sheri Davis	Karen MacKenzie	Robert Brown
Anna De Gasperis	Brad MacMillan	Thomas Calabria
Joanna De Luca	Christine Majeau	Lori Isherwood
Cherie Dear	Debbie McCleary	Christopher Johnston
Novelette Dell	Heather McKee	Connie Lawley
Shane Devereux	Leslie Moir	Marilyn Mason
Mary Di Paola	Sylvia Moll	Kate McLaren
Lisa Duzzie-Browne	Andrea Myrie-Nurse	Cindy Ryan
Kim Eckel	Elena Ozzorluoglu	Jeff Schust

7. Staff Recognition: Retirements (Continued)

Gregory Elston
Deborah Falcao-Linton
Elizabeth Ganong

Nancy Pang
Elza Panjeta
Scott Richards

Karen Watts
Sonia White

..... carried

8. Board Chair's Announcements

Chair Green reminded trustees that the Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association will be held on July 8, 2023. He encouraged trustees to attend and take advantage of opportunities to expand their learning and networks.

Resolution No. 23-105 moved by Karla Bailey
seconded by Lucas Alves

Resolved, that the oral report re Board Chair's Announcements, be received.

..... carried

9. Minutes of Board Meeting, April 26, 2023

Resolution No. 23-106 moved by Lucas Alves
seconded by Kathy McDonald

Resolved, that the Minutes of the Board Meeting, held April 26, 2023, be approved.

..... carried

10. Minutes of Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, March 28, 2023

Resolution No. 23-107 moved by Jeffrey Clark
seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, held March 28, 2023, be received.

..... carried

11. Minutes of Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, April 25, 2023

Resolution No. 23-108 moved by Susan Benjamin
seconded by Jeffrey Clark

Resolved, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, held April 25, 2023, be received.

..... carried

12. Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Meeting, May 3, 2023

Resolution No. 23-109 moved by Brad MacDonald
seconded by Stan Cameron

Resolved, that the Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee meeting, held May 3, 2023, be received.

..... carried

13. Motions for Consideration: Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Meeting, May 3, 2023

Resolution No. 23-110 moved by Brad MacDonald
seconded by Susan Benjamin

Resolved, that the Centre for African, Afro-Caribbean, and Black Student Success be named as The Centre of Black Excellence. (Appendix I, as attached to the Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee meeting.)

.....

Trustee Kathy McDonald submitted an an amendment to Motion 23-107, as follows:

Whereas, in February 2021, members of Black communities requested a Black Centre of Excellence be established at the Peel District School Board;

And Whereas, after the passing of parent and community advocate Kola Iluyomade, the request was made to name the Centre after him;

And Whereas, the the community believed that the former Supervisor Bruce Rodrigues agreed in principle to naming the Centre after Kola Iluyomade;

And Whereas, the Director of Education publicly committed to naming the Centre after Kola Iluyomade on June 17th 2022 at the Peel DSB commemoration event

And Whereas, staff and senior administrators at the Board have been using the name Kola Iluyomade Centre of Excellence in all communications, documentation, and meeting settings with community members as part of their practice;

And Whereas, community members have taken the former Supervisor, the Director of Education, and staff and senior administrators at their word in good faith, for the last two years in understanding that the Centre would, without a doubt, include the name Kola Iluyomade;

Therefore be it resolved, that Policy 27, Naming of Schools, be amended and an exception be made to the Naming and Renaming of Schools Policy to allow for the Centre to be named after an individual;

13. Motions for Consideration: Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Meeting, May 3, 2023 (Continued)

And Further, that the Centre of Black Excellence be officially named the Kola Iluyomade Centre of Black Excellence in honour of his efforts to confront and dismantle anti-black racism within the Peel DSB, and as a testament to the Board's commitment to work with, listen to, and honor the time, effort, and community initiated process of naming and selecting a Centre, as well as to honor the agreements that were made with, and received in good faith by parents, advocates, staff and students representing Black communities.

.....

Chair Green ruled the motion to amend out of order as the intent of the amendment is contrary to the main motion.

Moved by Kathy McDonald, that Motion 23-107 be deferred to the June 2023 Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee meeting where the community will have an opportunity to delegate.

There was no seconder for the motion to defer.

The mover of the motion to defer expressed the opinion that not naming the Centre after Kola Iluyomade will have a negative impact on the community, and requested trustees not to support the main motion. She spoke of commitments made by staff, and the family's and community's understanding about the naming of the Centre. She requested a recorded vote.

Resolution No. 23-110:

Yeas	Nays	Abstentions
Trustees Green, Cole, Alves, Bailey, Benjamin, Cameron, Davies, Johal, MacDonald, Promoli	Trustees McDonald	Trustee Clark
	 carried (10-1-1)

Due to disruption by some members of the public, the meeting recessed at 19:46 hours, and reconvened at 20:00 hours.

Resolution No. 23-111 moved by Lucas Alves
seconded by Susan Benjamin

Resolved, that the meeting recess and reconvene in the Brampton Room to continue to deal with matters on the agenda. (20:00 hours)

..... carried

The meeting reconvened in the Brampton Room at 20:05 hours.

14. Minutes of the Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee Meeting, May 8, 2023

Resolution No. 23-112 moved by Will Davies
seconded by Jill Promoli

Resolved, that the Minutes of the Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee meeting, held May 8, 2023, be received.

..... carried

Arising from the minutes, the following motion was put on the floor.

Resolution No. 23-113 moved by Lucas Alves
seconded by Stan Cameron

Whereas, Library Learning Commons (LLC) in schools support the curriculum and academic goals of the school using resources that are current, engaging, responsive, inclusive, anti-racist, identity-affirming, relevant and appropriate to the age and developmental level of students;

And Whereas, pursuant to Ministry Directive 18:

The Board shall, through its Equity Office, established pursuant to Direction 10, undertake a comprehensive diversity audit of schools – including naming, mascots, libraries, and classrooms. This should include evaluating books, media, and other resources currently being used in schools for teaching and learning English, History and Social Sciences to ensure that they are inclusive and culturally responsive, relevant, and reflective of the student bodies and voices, and broader school communities.

And Whereas, the curation cycle of the LLC includes the deselection and audit of all the books to ensure the collection remains current and reflective of the communities within Peel District School Board (PDSB);

And Whereas, the first step of the deselection and audit of the books follows the principles of MUSTIE – which includes consideration of whether the book and or its content is misleading, ugly, superseded, trivial, irrelevant, or available elsewhere;

And Whereas, the second step of the deselection and audit of the books follows the principles of an anti-racism and inclusion audit to ensure that the resources, especially text and images, do not perpetuate negative stereotypes and promote deficit thinking;

And Whereas, the third step of the curation cycle is to complete a representation audit of the collection to identify voices, identities and perspectives that are over-represented and those who are missing;

And Whereas, books and resources that are disposed of during the curation cycle must be disposed of responsibly and in accordance with the Regional Municipality of Peel's recycling guidelines to minimize any contribution to landfill and to maximize the recycling of the books and resources;

14. Minutes of the Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee, May 8, 2023
(Continued)

And Whereas, the last step of the curation cycle is to seed the LLC and purchase new books and resources that are high quality and represent and affirm diverse identities. This includes requirements for budgetary allocation specific to replacement and purchase of new resources for the LLC;

And Whereas, it is the professional responsibility of teacher librarians, PDSB Library Support Services and Administrators to attend training, follow all procedures and guidelines and manage the curation cycle on a regular basis and in a consistent and careful manner;

Therefore be it resolved, that in addition to the existing guidelines and procedures in place, to mitigate a large number of books being disposed of at a single time, teacher librarians, PDSB Library Support Services and Administrators phase the work of the curation cycle such that there is a gradual removal of books following the principles of MUSTIE and the audit. Any books that are physically unsafe (moldy) or damaged are to be removed forthwith and properly disposed of in accordance with Health and Safety protocols and the Regional Municipality of Peel recycling guidelines;

And Further, that any books that fall into the MUSTIE principles may be removed from the LLC and properly disposed of in accordance with the Regional Municipality of Peel recycling guidelines;

And Further, that going forward from the date of approval of this motion, books that are to be disposed of based on principles/guidelines other than moldy or damaged and/or any of the MUSTIE principles, shall be recorded as being disposed of and the reason for the disposal prior to disposal. Such other reasons to moldy, damaged or MUSTIE principles will include those books that are disposed of under the audit phase of the curation cycle;

And Further, that the record of books disposed of under the audit phase of the curation cycle shall be created at each school and each school's record shall be added to a collective record that is centrally maintained at the Peel District School Board Central Board Office.

And Further, that books to be disposed of under the audit phase of the curation cycle shall not be disposed of until the title and the reason for the disposal has been recorded. If necessary, books that fall into this category shall be removed from the shelf and stored until the titles and reasons for disposal has been recorded;

And Further, the cost of storage and any costs of appropriate disposal shall not be paid by the individual schools and shall not be paid from any funds allocated to the replacement or procuring of resources and books for the LLC;

And Further, that the record of the books being disposed of shall be available to all staff, Trustees, and the public.

.....

14. Minutes of the Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee, May 8, 2023
(Continued)

During the discussion that followed, the mover of the motion clarified that he had received emails from staff and the public expressing concern about the culling of books. He indicated that if books fall under the MUSTIE category, they should be removed, and that costs to store books identified for disposal during the audit phase should not be borne by the school. He stated that the need for the catalogue of weeded books aligns with Directive 18 and 10 to ensure equitable implementation of policy that books deemed anti-racist and anti-oppressive are weeded from all schools. Comments from trustees included: school library books are the public tax payers' assets; staff can contact third parties specializing in recycling or shredding of books. A trustee stated that the motion is operational in nature and will micro-manage the work of staff.

Resolution No. 23-113:

Yeas

Nays

Abstentions

Trustees Green, Cole,
Alves, Bailey, Benjamin,
Cameron, Clark, Davies,
Johal, MacDonald, Promoli

Trustees McDonald

..... carried
(11-1-0)

Chair Green advised that the actions approved by the Board through this motion involve a significant amount of staff time, and an implementation deadline is not recommended.

15. Motions for Consideration: Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee, May 8, 2023

At a meeting of the Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee, held May 8, 2023, the following recommendation is brought for Board approval:

Resolution No. 23-114

moved by Lucas Alves
seconded by Satpaul Singh Johal

Resolved that the following recommendation arising from the Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee meeting, held May 8, 2023, be approved:

1. Delegation by Betty de Groot and John MacRae, on behalf of ecoCaledon, re Weeding of Books from School Libraries

Delegation by Betty de Groot and John MacRae, on behalf of ecoCaledon, re Weeding of Books from School Libraries be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

..... carried

17. Directive 10 – Equity Office Performance Indicators

Associate Director Logan noted that the Framework will serve as the foundation for the performance indicators for the Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations, and she outlined the appraisal process.

Resolution No. 23-116 moved by Susan Benjamin
seconded by Jeffrey Clark

Resolved, that the report re Directive 10 – Equity Office Performance Indicators, be received and be submitted to the Ministry of Education.

..... carried

18. Directive 18 – Comprehensive Diversity Equity Audit Tools Report

Associate Director Logan stated that above-noted report provides the final update on Directive 18, and the implementation of the audit tools developed to meet the mandates and deliverables of the directive. Referring to background information contained in the report, she explained that the comprehensive Equity Audit Tools reflect the Board’s commitment to uproot systemic discrimination, which is evidenced in various aspects of the learning environment including school names, mascots, images on the walls, learning resources, and materials. The diversity audit was organized into three areas of focus: auditing of school learning environments; auditing of school naming and mascots; auditing of school libraries. The scope of the audits and the reporting cycle will ensure that there is periodic auditing of schools to ensure that PDSB schools are free from discrimination. Camille Logan briefly reviewed information contained in the report on preliminary results, impact, and next steps for the audit tools developed for each area of focus.

Resolution No. 23-117 moved by Kathy McDonald
seconded by Will Davies

Resolved, that the final update report on Directive 18, be received.

..... carried

19. Directive 20 – Communications Plan – Your Path, Your Choice – Final Report

Executive Lead of Public Engagement and Communications, Tiffany Gooch, reviewed the report which is the final update on the development of a communications plan for the Peel DSB in accordance with Directive 20. She noted that the plan will help to better inform the diverse community, including parents and students, about pathway options, including secondary school programs, locally developed programs, English as a Second Language, regional learning choices programs, and special education. Tiffany Gooch reported on the key objectives of the communications plan for Your Path, Your Choice, which are to increase the number of students, and families of students in Grades 5-12 who are informed and empowered to make decisions on program placement and course selection.

**19. Directive 20 – Communications Plan – Your Path, Your Choice – Final Report
(Continued)**

Objectives also include making students and families aware that they are the final decision-makers, and ensuring all educators understand that students and families are the final decision-makers. She stated that many of the tactics used in this plan have been applied beyond Your Path, Your Choice, understanding that not all audiences are on social media, and endeavouring to ensure information is equitably available. Tiffany Gooch provided data from the tactics/tools implemented through website, media, social media and community engagement. In response to a trustee’s question regarding opposing trends for some programs, as evidenced by the data, Tiffany Gooch explained that the communications plan was initially applied to the regional learning choices programs, and staff utilized significant media outreach, which was not employed for some other programs. She commented that the data will inform ongoing and future communications plans for other areas, and staff will explore other forms of media.

Resolution No. 23-118 moved by Lucas Alves
seconded by Jeffrey Clark

Resolved, that the final report re Directive 20 – Communications Plan – Your Path, Your Choice, be received.

..... carried

20. Communications:

- 1. Ministry Approval Letter re 2023-2024 Regular School Calendar Submissions**
- 2. Ministry Approval Letter re 2023-2024 Modified School Calendar Submissions**

Paul da Silva, Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity, Special Education, Social Emotional Learning and Well-Being, reported that the Peel DSB school calendars have been officially approved by the Ministry of Education and are posted on the Board’s website.

Resolution No. 23-119 moved by Stan Cameron
seconded by LeeAnn Cole

Resolved:

1. That, the Ministry Approval Letter re 2023-2024 Regular School Calendar Submissions, be received;
2. That, the Ministry Approval Letter re 2023-2024 Modified School Calendar Submissions, be received.

..... carried

21. Appointment of Trustees to the OPSBA Board of Directors – June 2023-June 2024

General Counsel and Governance Officer, Kathryn Lockyer, conducted the election to appoint trustees to the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Board of Directors.

Trustee MacDonald nominated Trustee Davies as Director, and Trustee Johal seconded the nomination.

Trustee Benjamin nominated Trustee Green as Director, and Trustee Alves seconded the nomination.

Resolution No. 23-120 moved by Lucas Alves
seconded by Jill Promoli

Resolved, that the nominations for the appointment of Peel DSB trustees to the OPSBA Board of Directors, be closed.

..... carried

Trustees Davies and Green will represent Peel DSB on the OPSBA Board of Directors for the term June 2023-June 2024.

Trustee Promoli nominated Trustee Bailey as Alternate, and Trustee Johal seconded the nomination.

Trustee Davies nominated Trustee Benjamin as Alternate, and Trustee Alves seconded the nomination.

Trustees Bailey and Benjamin will serve as alternates to trustees appointed to represent Peel DSB on the OPSBA Board of Directors for the term June 2023-June 2024.

22. Further Business

1. Chair Green's Remarks

Chair Green stated that, while the Director of Education, is the only Board employee who reports to trustees, the occurrences at today's Board Meeting arising from the naming of the Centre of Black Excellence were the result of gaps between what was committed and the authority to make the commitments. He noted that approving the name of a school is the authority of the Board of Trustees. Expressing disappointment on behalf of the trustees, he remarked that staff and trustees need to work together to ensure staff, students, and the community are served fairly. He reported that he has received calls for and against the name of the school, and advised that this Board of Trustees had not made any promise or commitment regarding the name. He expressed the hope that matters are appropriately reported to the Senior Leadership and to Board Members, to ensure that progress and relationship-building continues.

23. Adoption of the Closed Session Report

Resolution No. 23-121 moved by Lucas Alves
seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the report of the Closed Sessions re: Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting, March 9, 2023; Minutes of the Board Meeting, March 29, 2023; Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee meeting, April 4, 2023; Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee meeting, May 3, 2023; Principal/Vice-Principal Appointments; Senior Team Appointments, and Executive Framework, be received.

..... carried

24. Adjournment

Resolution No. 23-122 moved by Jill Promoli
seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the meeting adjourn (21:20 hours).

..... Chair Secretary

RESOLUTIONS APPROVED IN CLOSED SESSION, MAY 24, 2023

Members present:

David Green, Board Chair	Jeffrey Clark
LeeAnn Cole, Board Vice-Chair (electronic)	Will Davies
Lucas Alves	Satpaul Singh Johal
Karla Bailey	Brad MacDonald
Susan Benjamin	Kathy McDonald
Stan Cameron (electronic)	Jill Promoli

1. Approval of Agenda

That, the agenda, as amended, be approved.

2. Minutes of the Audit Committee (Closed Session) Meeting, March 9, 2023

That, the Minutes of the Audit Committee (Closed Session) meeting, held March 9, 2023, be received.

3. Minutes of the Board Meeting (Closed Session), March 29, 2023

That, the Minutes of the Board Meeting (Closed Session), held March 29, 2023, be approved.

4. Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee (Closed Session) Meeting, April 4, 2023

That, the Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee (Closed Session) meeting, held April 4, 2023, be received.

5. Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee (Closed Session) Meeting, May 3, 2023

That, the Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee (Closed Session) meeting, held May 3, 2023, be received.

6. Principal/Vice-Principal Appointments

That, the following elementary principal assignments (transfer), effective September 1, 2023, be received:

Claudio Moschella, Principal, Dixie Public School, to Principal, Balmoral Drive Senior Public School

6. Principal/Vice-Principal Appointments (Continued)

David Young, Principal, McClure Public School, to Principal, The Valleys Senior Public School

Nicholas Berardi, Principal, Tomken Road Middle School, to Principal, Kingswood Drive Public School

Michael Poole, Principal, William G. Davis Senior Public School, to Principal, McKinnon Public School

Gurmeet Gill, Principal, Fernforest Public School, to Principal, Shaw Public School

Paula da Silva, Principal, Setter's Green Public School, to Principal, Alloa Public School

Mariana Vranjic, Principal, Hewson Public School, to Principal, Lougheed Middle School

Mary Mikhail, Principal, McKinnon Public School, to Principal, Settler's Green Public School

Roberto Di Prospero, Principal, Silver Creek Public School, to Principal, Tomken Road Middle School

Michele Nelson Cummings, Principal, Brian W. Fleming Public School, to Principal, Silver Creek Public School

James Neely, Principal, Westervelts Corners Public School, to Principal, James Potter Public School

Mateja Drinovac, Principal, Homelands Senior Public School, to Principal, Janet I. McDougald Public School

Cheryl Dell, Principal, James Grieve Public School, to Principal, James Bolton Public School

Robin Perri, Principal, Macville Public School, to Principal, Hewson Public School

Christopher Casey, Principal, Forest Glen Public School, to Principal, Copeland Public School

Kristina Mathews, Principal, James Bolton Public School, to Principal, James Grieve Public School

Jennifer Lording, Principal, Balmoral Drive Senior Public School, to Principal, Dorset Drive Public School

Robert Gardner, Principal, Palgrave Public School, to Principal, Macville Public School

6. Principal/Vice-Principal Appointments (Continued)

Saira Salman, Coordinating Principal, Special Education, Social Emotional Learning and Well-Being, to Principal, Palgrave Public School

Bilkiss Auckbaraullee, Principal, Dorset Drive Public School, to Principal, Clarkson Public School

Vinita Mongia, Principal, Clarkson Public School, to Principal, Queen Elizabeth Senior Public School

Sunita Sharma, Principal, Allan A. Martin Senior Public School, to Principal, Brian W. Fleming Public School

Ciera Murphy, Principal, Silverthorn Public School, to Principal, Allan A. Martin Senior Public School

That, the following elementary principal appointments (promotion), effective September 1, 2023, be received:

Kurt Uriarte, Vice-Principal, Erin Mills Middle School, to Principal, Middlebury Public School

Farrah Abdulla, Vice-Principal, Floater, to Principal, Beatty Fleming Senior Public School

Andrew Morton, Acting Principal, Aylesbury Public School, to Principal, Aylesbury Public School

Shelley Dennis, Acting Principal, Forest Glen Public School, to Principal, Forest Glen Public School

Michael Miller, Acting Principal, Britannia Public School, to Principal, Britannia Public School

Cassandra Fray, Acting Principal, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Public School, to Principal, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Public School

Nichole Cornacchia, Acting Principal, Cherrytree Public School, to Principal, Cherrytree Public School

Rupinder Mann, Acting Principal, Springdale Public School, to Principal, Springdale Public School

Wendy Messier, Acting Principal, Edenbrook Hill Public School, to Principal, Edenbrook Hill Public School

Shannon Beach, Vice-Principal, McClure Public School, to Principal, McClure Public School

6. Principal/Vice-Principal Appointments (Continued)

Amanda Carrol, Acting Principal, Homelands Senior Public School, to Principal, Homelands Senior Public School

Iona Newman-Jobity, Acting Principal, Thorn Lodge Public School, to Principal, Thorn Lodge Public School

Lisa Behrend, Acting Principal, Cashmere Avenue Public School, to Principal, Cashmere Avenue Public School

Andre Green, Vice-Principal, Greenbriar Middle School, to Principal, William G. Davis Senior Public School

Samantha Williams, Vice-Principal, Carberry Public School, to Principal, Fernforest Public School

Marielle Metz, Vice-Principal, Aloma Crescent Public School, and Birchbank Public School to Principal, Westervelts Corners Public School

Elliott Thompson, Vice-Principal, Peel Elementary Virtual School, to Principal, McHugh Public School

Deborah Cote, Acting Principal, Erin Centre Middle School, to Principal, Maple Wood Public School

Gita Gaur, Vice-Principal, Ridgewood Public School, to Principal, Castlemore Public School

That, the following elementary vice-principal assignments (transfer), effective September 1, 2023, be received:

Simone Wallace, Vice-Principal, Sawmill Valley Public School and Hillcrest Middle School, to Vice-Principal, Whitehorn Public School

Jasmine Mann, Vice-Principal, Morton Way Public School, to Vice-Principal, Balmoral Drive Senior Public School Public School

Anjali Tshering, Vice-Principal, Stanley Mills Public School, and Mount Royal Public School to Vice-Principal, Springdale Public School

Jason Frenza, Vice-Principal, Lisgar Middle School, to Vice-Principal, Shelter Bay Public School and Kindree Public School

Susan Winters, Vice-Principal, Corsair Public School, to Vice-Principal, Osprey Woods Public School and McKinnon Public School

Janet Ochran, Vice-Principal, Shaw Public School, to Vice-Principal, Shaw Public School and Eagle Plains Public School

6. Principal/Vice-Principal Appointments (Continued)

Amy Smith, Vice-Principal, Whitehorn Public School, to Vice-Principal, Allan A. Martin Senior Public School

Erin Dearie, Vice-Principal, McBride Avenue Public School, to Vice-Principal, McBride Avenue Public School and The Woodlands Middle School

Mary Margo Reid, Vice-Principal, Castlemore Public School, to Vice-Principal, Greenbriar Middle School

Emily Geber, Vice-Principal, Thornwood Public School, to Vice-Principal, Elm Drive Public School

Lori Ford, Vice-Principal, Hickory Wood Public School and Beatty-Fleming Senior Public School, to Vice-Principal, Claireville Public School

Veena Navgiri, Vice-Principal, Balmoral Drive Senior Public School, to Vice-Principal, Aylesbury Public School and Tribune Drive Public School

Pamela Rybka, Vice-Principal, Allan Drive Middle School and Ellwood Memorial Public School, to Vice-Principal, James Bolton Public School and Ellwood Memorial Public School

Sara Wolburg, Vice-Principal, Dorset Drive Public School and Eastbourne Drive Public School, to Vice-Principal, Dorset Drive Public School

Lisa Montheith, Vice-Principal, Chris Hadfield Public School, to Vice-Principal, Fairlawn Public School

Kaylene Brar, Vice-Principal, Middlebury Public School, to Vice-Principal, Roberta Bondar Public School

Sam Mathew, Vice-Principal, Kindree Public School and McKinnon Public School, to Vice-Principal, Garthwood Park Public School and Sawmill Valley Public School

Debbie White, Vice-Principal, At Large, to Vice-Principal, Ridgewood Public School

Nina Janowski, Vice-Principal, Aylesbury Public School and Tribune Drive Public School, to Vice-Principal, Aylesbury Public School

Andrew (James) Samatas, Vice-Principal, Floater, to Vice-Principal, Credit Valley Public School

Jennifer Stevenson, Vice-Principal, Eagle Plains Public School, to Vice-Principal, Morton Way Public School

Letitia Coutu, Vice-Principal, Conestoga Public School and Springbrook Public School, to Vice-Principal, Beatty-Fleming Senior Public School and Conestoga Public School

6. Principal/Vice-Principal Appointments (Continued)

Asma Haque, Vice-Principal, Treeline Public School, to Vice-Principal, Malala Yousafzai Public School

Tanya Archer, Vice-Principal, The Valleys Senior Public School, to Vice-Principal, Corsair Public School

Michelle Dickinson, Vice-Principal, Tomken Road Middle School, to Vice-Principal, Tomken Road Middle School and Clifton Public School

Brandon Pachan, Vice-Principal, Floater, to Vice-Principal, Caledon Central Public School and SouthFields Village Public School

Tracy Bardell, Vice-Principal, Allan A. Martin Senior Public School, to Vice-Principal, Levi Creek Public School and Ray Underhill Public School

Melissa Hietikko, Vice-Principal, Levi Creek Public School, to Vice-Principal, Vista Heights Public School

Lindsay Taylor, Vice-Principal, Caledon Central Public School, to Vice-Principal, Allan Drive Middle School and Macville Public School

Kristen Bynoe, Vice-Principal, Hewson Public School, to Vice-Principal, Sunny View Middle School

Jasleen Mann, Vice-Principal, Osprey Woods Public School and Shelter Bay Public School, to Vice-Principal, Castlemore Public School and Countryside Village Public School

Andrea Brown, Vice-Principal, McCrimmon Middle School, to Vice-Principal, Tomken Road Middle School

Aaron Gray, Vice-Principal, Floater, to Vice-Principal, Agnes Taylor Public School and Hanover Public School

Lisa Okazawa, Vice-Principal, Parkway Public School and Ray Lawson Public School, to Vice-Principal, Hickory Wood Public School and Ray Lawson Public School

Fadekemi Adegbite, Vice-Principal, Agnes Taylor Public School and Sir Winston Churchill Public School, to Vice-Principal, Sir Winston Churchill Public School

Nicole Cook-Madgett, Vice-Principal, Elm Drive Public School and Queen Elizabeth Senior Public School, to Vice-Principal, Briarwood Public School

Brian Rasmusson, Vice-Principal, Copeland Public School, to Vice-Principal, Floater

Daryl Sidial, Vice-Principal, Aylesbury Public School, to Vice-Principal, Floater

6. Principal/Vice-Principal Appointments (Continued)

Afroza Uddin, Vice-Principal, Sunny View Middle School, to Vice-Principal, The Valleys Senior Public School

That, the following elementary vice-principal appointments (promotion), effective September 1, 2023, be received:

Ian Clarke, Acting Vice-Principal, Williams Parkway Senior Public School, to Vice-Principal, Williams Parkway Senior Public School

Isaac Hines, Acting Vice-Principal, Homelands Senior Public School and Tecumseh Public School, to Vice-Principal, Homelands Senior Public School and Tecumseh Public School

Nicole Marchant, Acting Vice-Principal, Clark Boulevard Public School, to Vice-Principal, Clark Boulevard Public School

Nicole Hunter-Jones, Acting Vice-Principal, Ruth Thompson Middle School, to Vice-Principal, Ruth Thompson Middle School

Stacey Carney, Acting Vice-Principal, Credit Valley Public School, to Vice-Principal, Erin Mills Public School

Nicole Reynolds, Coordinating Leader, Indigenous Education, to Coordinating Vice-Principal, Indigenous Education

That, the following secondary principal assignments (transfer), effective September 1, 2023, be received:

Marcia McCurdy-Fagan, Principal, Castlebrooke Secondary School, to Principal, Cawthra Park Secondary School

Rajwant Gill, Principal, Stephen Lewis Secondary School, to Principal, Castlebrooke Secondary School

Tyler McLeod, Principal, Cawthra Park Secondary School, to Principal, Stephen Lewis Secondary School

That, the following secondary vice-principal assignments (transfer), effective September 1, 2023, be received:

Michelle Covi Haswell, Vice-Principal, Streetsville Secondary School, to Vice-Principal, Lorne Park Secondary School

Saajida Sheri, Vice-Principal, Lorne Park Secondary School, to Vice-Principal, Judith Nyman Secondary School

6. Principal/Vice-Principal Appointments (Continued)

Kirk Dawson, Vice-Principal, Castlebrooke Secondary School, to Vice-Principal, Brampton Centennial Secondary School

Tajinder Bhotoia, Vice-Principal, Judith Nyman Secondary School, to Vice-Principal, Harold Brathwaite Secondary School

Dalton Morgan, Vice-Principal, Bramalea Secondary School and Central Peel Secondary School, to Vice-Principal, North Park Secondary School.

Danielle Noon, Vice-Principal, Brampton Centennial Secondary School, to Vice-Principal, Mayfield Secondary School.

Christopher Lane, Vice-Principal, North Park Secondary School, to Vice-Principal, Port Credit Secondary School.

Skye Bowen, Vice-Principal, Jean Augustine Secondary School, to Vice-Principal, Chinguacousy Secondary School.

Heather Howald, Vice-Principal, Port Credit Secondary School, to Vice-Principal, Streetsville Secondary School.

Shanae Valor, Vice-Principal, Chinguacousy Secondary School, to Vice-Principal, Turner Fenton Secondary School.

7. Senior Team Appointments

That, the following superintendent assignments (transfer/appointment), effective September 1, 2023, be received:

Lara Chebaro, Superintendent of Education, Mississauga Field Office, to Superintendent - Math Lead - 1 Year Appointment

Pradeep Shethur-Rajah from Coordinating Principal (Acting), Safe and Caring Schools, to Superintendent - Math Lead - 1 Year Appointment (Acting)

8. Executive Compensation Framework

That, the report re Executive Compensation Framework, be received.

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Governance and Policy Committee of the Peel District School Board, held on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, at 17:30 hours. The hybrid meeting was held in the Brampton Room, the H. J. A. Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga, Ontario, and by electronic means, under Ontario Regulation 463/97.

Members present:

Brad MacDonald, Chair
Lucas Alves, Vice-Chair (electronic)
Karla Bailey
Susan Benjamin
David Green, Board Chair (electronic)
Kathy McDonald

Also present:

Will Davies
Jill Promoli

Member absent (apologies received):

Jeffrey Clark

Administration:

Kathryn Lockyer, General Counsel and Governance Officer (Executive Member)
Donna Ford, Superintendent of Education
Lisa Hart, Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement and
Community Relations
Camille Logan, Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity, Curriculum and
Instruction, Student and Community Engagement
Sabrina Valteau, Governance Coordinator

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Call to Order

Chair MacDonald called the meeting to order.

2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

The Land Acknowledgement was read.

3. Approval of Agenda

GC-30 Moved by Susan Benjamin
Seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the agenda be approved.

..... carried

4. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

5. Minutes of the Governance and Policy Committee Meeting, April 12, 2023

A trustee commented on the importance of capturing the full discussions at the meeting, especially under Naming and Renaming of Schools, for the public reading the minutes. General Counsel and Governance Officer, Kathryn Lockyer clarified that the minutes are a record of action items but do not capture the dialogue and are not a transcript of the proceedings. The meeting recordings are posted on the Board’s website for the public to access.

GC-31 Moved by Kathy McDonald
 Seconded by Lucas Alves

Resolved, that the Minutes of the Governance and Policy Committee Meeting, held April 12, 2023, be approved.

..... carried

6. Identity-Based Data Collection Policy

Policy Analyst, LaShawn Murray, recalled that the draft Identity-Based Data Collection Policy was presented to the Governance and Policy Committee in April 2023 and is now being presented for recommendation to the Board for approval. Reviewing the report, she highlighted: the purpose of the policy is to establish guiding principles governing collection, analysis, and use of identity-based data to identify gaps, address disproportionalities, monitor PDSB initiatives and assist with practices, policies, interventions, and programs; internal and community consultations on the draft policy have been completed; the Policy applies to all circumstances of collection and use of identity-based data. Revisions to the draft Identity-Based Policy outlined in the report included expanding the scope of the policy to include collection of data of parents/guardians. The collection of data and analysis framework is grounded in anti-racism, anti-oppression, and human rights. LaShawn Murray thanked Board staff and communities for their contributions.

Responses to questions of clarification from trustees included: retention periods for data collected is outlined in the Records Retention Bylaw; parent consent is obtained to collect data for a specific purpose; information is collected under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA); parents can opt out of requests for personal information; the school census is a legislative requirement and communication was sent home to parents. A response will be brought back from Research and Accountability department as to why requests for census data collection from younger students is sent home and older students’ information is collected in the classroom.

6. Identity-Based Data Collection Policy (Continued)

GC-32 Moved by Karla Bailey
Seconded by Lucas Alves

Resolved, that the Governance and Policy Committee recommends to the Board:

That, the Identity-Based Data Collection Policy, attached as Appendix A, be recommended for approval by the Board of Trustees (APPENDIX I, Item 7.1 of the agenda).

..... carried

7. Community Engagement Policy

Lisa Hart, Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement and Community Relations, stated that the Community Engagement Policy provides the framework, values, and principles for engagement with the community, and it supports the work of advancing equity, human rights, and anti-racism across the board. Referring to the Ministry Directives, Lisa Hart described the work of the Outreach Officer and the purposes of community engagement which includes, increasing confidence in Peel DSB's public education system, providing clarity, and understanding of policies and procedures, building relationships and trust, removal of barriers to improve outcomes for students, and ensuring accountability. Referring to the background information in the report regarding effective communications with local communities, a trustee stated that building of trust with community, as proposed in this policy was not carried out in the recent process of naming of schools and special function areas. Kathryn Lockyer explained that the Community Engagement Policy is an overarching policy, providing guidance to other policies and other purposes of engaging with the community. She added that the Naming of Schools Policy had already been approved and will be guided by this policy in future.

Responding to trustees' questions, the administration clarified that all students and stakeholders are included in community engagement and stated that there was follow up on engagements which were cancelled due to inclement weather. Responding to a trustee's concerns, Kathryn Lockyer clarified that: policies, procedures, and guidelines will be developed to remove ambiguity; opportunities will be provided for consultation depending on time and resources available; consultation and reports to the Board will help monitor biases and disproportionate influence; accountability will be seen through reports brought to the Board. A suggestion was made that staff consider using 'vulnerable' instead of 'marginalized' communities in future. A brief discussion ensued on systemic marginalization.

GC-33 Moved by Lucas Alves
Seconded by Susan Benjamin

Resolved, that the Governance and Policy Committee recommends to the Board:

That, the Community Engagement Policy, attached as Appendix 1, be recommended for approval by the Board of Trustees (APPENDIX II, Item 7.2 of the agenda).

..... carried

8. Months of Recognition/Days of Significance

Superintendent Lisa Hart presented the report regarding the Months of Recognition and Days of Significance calendar. She noted that some predetermined religious and cultural observances and days of significance have been identified in consultation with faith leaders and community members, with markings for staff to avoid conflict when scheduling board events. Lisa Hart stated that a request may be submitted to add an event for the upcoming year. The calendar is posted on the board’s public website.

Responses to comments and questions from trustees included: that the large number of red dot days make it difficult for staff to schedule board business; some days and months are cultural celebrations and political views should be avoided; when days of significance are celebrated, information and resources are provided to schools a week in advance; the request to disseminate information on social media will be reviewed over summer; Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day will be added to next year’s calendar.

GC-34 Moved by Karla Bailey
 Seconded by Lucas Alves

Resolved,

- (i) That, the report re Months of Recognition/Days of Significance be received.
- (ii) That, staff bring back a report to the next meeting, on the number of red dots and open red dots indicating Months of Recognition/Days of Significance in the calendar.

..... carried

.....

Superintendent Hart noted that any revisions to the calendar can only be implemented for the 2024-2025 school year, as the Board and Committee Schedule for 2023-2024 will be confirmed at the June 2023 Board meeting.

.....

9. Student Trustees Policy - Update

General Counsel and Governance Officer, Kathryn Lockyer, reviewed the report, providing background information. She stated that the Policy has been amended to include one self-identified indigenous student trustee, thereby bringing the total number of student trustees to three. Responding to a query, Kathryn Lockyer clarified that the ballot process will be outlined in the Operating Procedure.

9. Student Trustees Policy – Update (Continued)

GC-35 Moved by David Green
Seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the Governance and Policy Committee recommends to the Board:

That, the amended Student Trustees Policy, attached as Appendix A, be recommended for approval by the Board of Trustees (APPENDIX III, Item 7.4 of the agenda).

..... carried

10. Active and Sustainable School Transportation Charter – Referred Motion from Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee

Kathryn Lockyer, General Counsel and Governance Officer, reviewed the process for delegations. She recalled that at the March 2023 Curriculum Equity and Student Well-Being Committee meeting a delegation proposed that Peel DSB adopt the Active and Sustainable School Transportation Charter and a recommendation was made to refer the matter to the Governance and Policy Committee to bring back a report on the feasibility of adopting the Charter.

GC-36 Moved by Kathy McDonald
Seconded by Susan Benjamin

Resolved, that staff bring back a report to the Governance and Policy Committee on the feasibility of adopting the Active and Sustainable School Transportation Charter. (APPENDIX IV, Item 7.5 of the agenda).

.....

Discussion on the motion ensued. In response to a question of clarification, the mover of the motion noted that the delegation has requested the Board to adopt the Charter. Highlighting the benefits of an active lifestyle, she commented that staff will review the Charter, consider the implications to respond to the Charter requirements, and provide information on costing, risks, and feasibility of adoption. In regard to whether adopting the Charter is within the purview of the Board, Chair MacDonald explained that staff feedback will indicate whether or not adopting the Charter is within the Board’s mandate of education, can include financial and staffing considerations, and may provide recommendations for trustees to consider. A trustee spoke of the need to consult with school administrators and the community in this matter. Kathryn Lockyer confirmed that a report will be brought to a future meeting.

.....

GC-36 carried

11. Secondary Final Evaluations 2022-2023 - Referral from March 8, 2023, Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee

It was generally agreed that this item be deferred to the Governance and Policy Committee meeting scheduled for June 7, 2023.

GC-37 Moved by Lucas Alves
 Seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the report re Secondary Final Evaluations 2022-2023 - Referral from March 8, 2023, Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee, be deferred to the June 7, 2023 Governance and Policy Committee meeting.

..... carried

12. Memo re Turnitin and AI Generated Content

The memo was reviewed. The administration responded to trustees' questions regarding: Turnitin is one of many tools used to check for plagiarism; Feedback Studio has an additional cost and its use is being reviewed in terms of scope and cost; Peel DSB has not yet considered use of Chat GPT;

A trustee inquired about the status of a previous request regarding use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy for staff, to be discussed by the Governance and Policy Committee. He clarified that the policy for students will be discussed by the Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee.

GC-38 Moved by Lucas Alves
 Seconded by Kathy McDonald

Resolved, that the Memo regarding Turnitin and AI Generated Content, be received.

..... carried

GC-39 Moved by Lucas Alves
 Seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that staff bring back a report on the status of the Policy for staff use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

..... carried

May 17, 2023
Governance and Policy Committee:lf

13. Adjournment

GC-40 Moved by Kathy McDonald
 Seconded by Susan Benjamin

Resolved, that the meeting adjourn (19:15 hours).

..... carried

..... Chair

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee of the Peel District School Board. The hybrid meeting was held in the Brampton Room, the H. J. A. Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga, Ontario on Thursday, June 1, 2023, at 17:00 hours.

Members present:

Stan Cameron, Chair
Satpaul Singh Johal, Vice-Chair (electronic)
Karla Bailey(electronic)
LeeAnn Cole (electronic)
Will Davies (electronic)
David Green (ex-officio) (electronic)
Brad MacDonald (electronic)
Jill Promoli (electronic)

Also present:

Lucas Alves (electronic)
Susan Benjamin (electronic)

Administration:

Jaspal Gill, Associate Director, Operations and Equity of Access (Executive Member)
Tania Alatishe-Charles, Controller, Finance Support Services
Yonnette Dey, Superintendent – Elementary, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment and
Community Engagement
Wendy Dobson, Acting Controller, Corporate Support Services
Kathryn Lockyer, General Counsel and Governance Officer
Camille Logan, Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity, Curriculum and
Instruction, Student and Community Engagement
Thomas Tsung, Controller, Facilities and Environmental Support Services
Randy Wright, Controller, Planning and Accommodation Support Services

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Call to Order

Chair Stan Cameron called the meeting to order at 17:02 hours.

2. Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee (Closed Session)

PB-36 moved by Brad MacDonald
seconded by Satpaul Singh Johal

Resolved, that the Committee move into the Closed Session (17:02 hours).

The meeting recessed at 17:09 hours and reconvened into Open Session at 17:31 hours.

3. Rise and Report from Closed Session

PB-37 moved by Satpaul Singh Johal
seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the report of the Closed Session re Combined Capital Project Status Report, and Procurement Activity Report for April 2023, be received.

..... carried

4. Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

The video on the Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands was viewed.

5. Approval of Agenda

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Item 8.4 Written Delegation by Cacy Cousins re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence
- Item 8.5 Written Delegation by Donald Harris re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence
- Item 8.6 Written Delegation by Beats Dance Crew re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence
- Item 8.7 Delegation by Claudia McKoy, Black Caucus Alliance, re Centre of Black Excellence – Steering Committee

During the meeting, the agenda was reordered to facilitate the delegation of Alton Brooks, regarding Naming of the Centre of Black Excellence.

PB-38 moved by Brad MacDonald
seconded by Jill Promoli

Resolved, that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

..... carried
2/3rds' majority

6. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

7. Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Meeting, May 3, 2023

PB-39 moved by Jill Promoli
seconded by Satpaul Singh Johal

Resolved, that the Minutes of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Meeting, held May 3, 2023, be approved.

..... carried

8. Notes of Budget Development Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023

PB-40 moved by Will Davies
seconded by Brad MacDonald

Resolved, that the notes from the Budget Development Committee Meeting, held May 4, 2023, be received.

..... carried

9. Delegation by Valerie Williams, Advocacy Peel, re Motion and Policy Vote

Valerie Williams noted that she was delegating in place of Paula Hylton, who was unable to attend the meeting. She expressed disappointment that the Centre of Black Excellence was not officially named after Kola Iluyomade, and commented on the impact of the Board's decision on some members of the community. She spoke of Kola Iluyomade's support and advocacy of marginalized students. Referring to the Board's mission, Valerie Williams expressed the opinion that the vote on the naming of the Centre was not hopeful. She requested an exception be made to Board policy, and that the Centre be named after Kola Iluyomade. In response to a trustee's question, Valerie Williams confirmed that she assumed new trustees are not aware of the background on this issue.

PB-41 moved by Satpaul Singh Johal
seconded by Will Davies

Resolved, that the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee recommends to the Board:

That, the delegation by Valerie Williams, Advocacy Peel, re Motion and Policy Vote, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

..... carried

10. Delegation by Idris Orughu, The Alliance, re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence

In his delegation, Idris Orughu stated that the Peel DSB was placed under supervision due to anti-black racism, poor governance, and human rights matters. He expressed his beliefs regarding: the returning and new trustees; lack of support for the deferral of the naming of the Centre of Black Excellence; recusal of trustees from voting on the naming of the Centre; implications of Directive 18; timing of approval of Policy 27, Naming of Schools, Special Function Areas, and Facilities; community engagement in naming the Centre. Idris Orughu asked as to how many schools are named after Black individuals, and how many school names have been changed in accordance with Directive 18. He remarked that the group have protested in the past and will continue with their protests.

PB-42 moved by Will Davies
seconded by Jill Promoli

Resolved, that the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee recommends to the Board:

That, the delegation by Idris Orughu, The Alliance, re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

..... carried

11. Reading of Written Delegations

Kathryn Lockyer, General Counsel and Governance Officer read the written delegations at Items 12, 13, and 14 of these Minutes. She noted that the submissions she will read are the opinions of the delegates. Any views or opinions represented in the submissions are personal to the delegates and belong to them. She advised that reading the submissions is not an endorsement by the Peel DSB. All statements made in the submissions are those of the delegates alone and they are being read to accommodate them. The submissions are the sole responsibility of the delegates, were written by them, and are their own personal opinions.

12. Written Delegation by Cacy Cousins re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence

In his written delegation, Cacy Cousins, a pastor and parent of two Peel DSB students, stated that he has been listening and watching social media regarding the naming of the Centre of Black Excellence. He spoke about discussions held with his children, some of their classmates, and his congregation, and their objection to naming the Centre after any individual. They expressed satisfaction with the name, Centre of Black Excellence, and he suggested that the Board listen to the voices of the children. Cacy Cousins thanked the Board for recognizing that Black children need to see themselves reflected in a space where they spend most of their teenage years. He requested that the Board consider his community's voice in strongly reaffirming their opposition to naming the Centre after any person or persons.

12. Written Delegation by Cacy Cousins re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence (Continued)

PB-43 moved by Satpaul Singh Johal
seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee recommends to the Board:

That, the written delegation by Cacy Cousins re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

..... carried

13. Written Delegation by Donald Harris re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence

In his written delegation, Donald Harris, a Black parent of a Peel DSB student, expressed deep dissatisfaction and concern about the unprofessional behaviour exhibited by some members of the public at the May 24, 2023 Board Meeting. He remarked on the negative example set by these members of the public, and the messages sent to students by their behaviour in disrupting the Board Meeting. The delegation expressed support for the name of Centre of Black Excellence, and thanked Trustees Green and Bailey for representing his community.

PB-44 moved by Will Davies
seconded by Brad MacDonald

Resolved, that the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee recommends to the Board:

That, the written delegation by Donald Harris re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

..... carried

14. Written Delegation by Beats Dance Crew re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence

In their written delegation, the Beats Dance Crew, comprising 21 Grades 10-12 Peel DSB students, 16 of whom identify as Black, reported that they had seen social media videos of adults being disrespectful of trustees and staff at the Board Meeting. They indicated that each year, students are reminded of the school's code of conduct, and they asked about consequences to these adults for their behaviour. They spoke about mental health issues facing students, and the need for role models who consider students first. Expressing support for the name, Centre of Black Excellence, the students stated that they, and many of their friends, support the name approved by the Board.

14. Written Delegation by Beats Dance Crew re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence (Continued)

PB-45 moved by Satpaul Singh Johal
seconded by Brad MacDonald

Resolved, that the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee recommends to the Board:

That, the written delegation by Beats Dance Crew re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

..... carried

15. Delegation by Claudia McKoy, Black Caucus Alliance, re Centre of Black Excellence – Steering Committee

Claudia McKoy, Executive Director of Black Caucus Alliance, presented information on the Black Caucus Alliance, a not-for-profit organization that aims to promote and drive equity through collaboration and community design. Highlighting the members of the organization and their community profiles, she noted that the organization had its beginnings as an advisory group to the Mayor of Mississauga on matters of equity for the Black community. The approach has always been to access insights and gain community and stakeholder engagement and change. Claudia McKoy outlined the guiding principles, and reported that the recommendations of the organization covering governance, inclusion strategies, and programming, are contained in the report to the City of Mississauga. She requested the Board to consider including the Black Caucus Alliance on the Steering Committee of the Centre of Black Excellence, to ensure that Black students have the highest level of programming and all necessary skills to make them competitive.

PB-46 moved by Brad MacDonald
seconded by Jill Promoli

Resolved, that the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee recommends to the Board:

That, the delegation by Claudia McKoy, Black Caucus Alliance, re Centre of Black Excellence – Steering Committee, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

..... carried

16. Education Development Charge (EDC) By-law Renewal 2024

Reviewing the report, Suzanne Blakeman, Manager of Planning and Enrolment, noted that Education Development Charges (EDCs) are a revenue source for qualifying school boards to purchase and develop land for new schools, or for the expansion of existing schools. EDCs are meant as a funding mechanism for boards that are experiencing growth-related accommodation needs. To renew EDC by-laws, school boards must follow certain processes and guidelines required by provincial legislation, including the review of policies, and the development of a Background Study. The Background Study outlines the rationale for site needs, and determines the education development charge. Suzanne Blakeman explained that the passage of an EDC By-law gives school boards the authority to impose and collect EDCs for the purpose of acquiring and developing school sites. She indicated that each By-law has a maximum term of 5 years, and Peel DSB's EDC By-law will expire on July 1, 2024. Planning staff are beginning the process of renewing the By-law for the next term, and will present a draft EDC By-law for review and approval in late May 2024.

PB-47 moved by Karla Bailey
seconded by Will Davies

Resolved, that the report re Education Development Charge (EDC) By-law Renewal 2024, be received.

..... carried

17. Recirculation of Surplus Properties – Former Lakeview Park and Alton Public Schools

Suzanne Blakeman noted that properties declared surplus to need by the Board are to be sold under Ontario Regulation 444/98, which states that, if after three and a half years, the surplus property has not been disposed of, the process has to be restarted. She indicated that the purpose of today's report is to advise that, in the next week or so, Planning staff will be recirculating letters of offer to public bodies for the former Lakeview Park and Alton Public Schools. The Committee will be provided with status updates as required. Noting the circumstances of the Alton School property, Chair Cameron requested that he be advised of any update to enable him to advise his community. In response to a trustee's question regarding substantial residential development in the Lakeview Park school neighbourhood, Suzanne Blakeman explained that the Lakeview Park site is approximately three acres, and will be insufficient to accommodate the number of students expected from that area.

PB-48 moved by Satpaul Singh Johal
seconded by Brad MacDonald

Resolved, that the report re Recirculation of Surplus Properties – Former Lakeview Park and Alton Public Schools, be received.

..... carried

18. Application Status Update

Nick Gooding, Intermediate Planning Officer, noted that the report provide a list of development applications reviewed by Planning staff from the months of March and April of 2023. He stated that the anticipated number of students that will be generated have either been included in previous projections and sufficient school accommodation is in place, or they will be accommodated by new schools approved in the Annual Planning Document.

PB-49 moved by Jill Promoli
seconded by Will Davies

Resolved, that the Application Status Update Report, be received.

..... carried

19. Procurement Activity Report

PB-50 moved by Brad MacDonald
seconded by Karla Bailey

Resolved, that the Procurement Activity Report for April 2023, be received.

..... carried

20. Vandalism Activity Report

PB-51 moved by Satpaul Singh Johal
seconded by Will Davies

Resolved that, the Vandalism Activity Report for March 2023, be received.

..... carried

21. Delegation by Alton Brooks re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence

Delegating the Committee, Alton Brooks requested that the Naming of Schools Policy be grandfathered to allow the Centre of Black Excellence to be named after Kola Iluyomade. He remarked that this will be a mindful way to recognize and honour the work of Kola Iluyomade. Commenting that a name conveys a story of the past and expectations for the future, Alton Brooks stated that the name would be a reminder of resilience and of overcoming resistance, and remarked that naming the Centre after Kola Iluyomade will be a positive way to commence on this new opportunity to help eliminate racism.

21. Delegation by Alton Brooks, re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence (Continued)

PB-52 moved by Karla Bailey
seconded by Will Davies

Resolved, that the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee recommends to the Board:

That, the delegation by Alton Brooks re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

..... carried

22. Adjournment

PB-53 moved by Will Davies
seconded by Brad MacDonald

Resolved, that the meeting adjourn (18:44 hours).

..... carried

..... Chair

MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION: PHYSICAL PLANNING, FINANCE AND BUILDING COMMITTEE

Arising from a meeting of the Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee, held June 1, 2023, the following recommendations are for Board approval:

1. Delegation by Valerie Williams, Advocacy Peel, re Motion and Policy Vote

That, the delegation by Valerie Williams, Advocacy Peel, re Motion and Policy Vote, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

2. Delegation by Idris Orughu, The Alliance, re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence

That, the delegation by Idris Orughu, The Alliance, re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

3. Written Delegation by Cacy Cousins re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence

That, the written delegation by Cacy Cousins re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

4. Written Delegation by Donald Harris re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence

That, the written delegation by Donald Harris re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

5. Written Delegation by Beats Dance Crew re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence

That, the written delegation by Beats Dance Crew re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

6. Delegation by Claudia McKoy, Black Caucus Alliance, re Centre of Black Excellence – Steering Committee

That, the delegation by Claudia McKoy, Black Caucus Alliance, re Centre of Black Excellence – Steering Committee, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION: PHYSICAL PLANNING, FINANCE AND BUILDING COMMITTEE

7. Delegation by Alton Brooks, re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence

That, the delegation by Alton Brooks re Naming of Centre of Black Excellence, be referred to the Director of Education for a response.

Submitted by:

Jaspal Gill
Associate Director, Operations and Equity of Access

15.1(a)

Board Meeting, June 14, 2023

Directive 14 - Comprehensive Four-Year Equity Strategy and Action Plan

Strategic Alignment:

Directive 14: Comprehensive Four-year Equity Strategy and Action Plan

Directive 9: Equity Accountability Report Card: Amplifying the Voices of African, Afro-Caribbean, and Black Students

Directive 16: Anti-Racism Policy

Directive 24: Employment Systems Review

Directive 26: Fairness and Equity in Employment Strategy
Equity and Inclusion Policy 54

Report Type:

Recommendation

<i>Prepared by:</i>	Lisa Hart, Superintendent Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations Camille Logan, Associate Director, School Improvement & Equity, Curriculum & Instruction, Student & Community Engagement
<i>Submitted by:</i>	Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Recommendation:

That the Four-year Comprehensive Equity Strategy and Action Plan, attached as Appendix 1 and 2, be approved.

Highlights:

- The Four-year Comprehensive Equity Strategy (Equity Strategy) establishes a roadmap for PDSB to close gaps in achievement and well-being experienced by students who have been historically and currently underserved.
- The action plan identifies the specific actions to be taken by each department, consistent with the overall strategy.
- The strategy and action plan meet the requirements of Ministry Directive 14 and Ministry Directive 10.

Background:

The Peel District School Board continues to be dedicated to the mandates of the 27 Ministry Directives released in March of 2020 identifying disturbing trends of systemic discrimination throughout the school board. This commitment is exemplified in the ongoing efforts and actions designed to transform the board through anti-racism and anti-oppressive approaches to leadership, teaching and learning with a specific focus on Indigenous education and sovereignty along with anti-Black racism as required by the Ministry Directives.

The Ministry Review via Directive 14 required that the Peel District School Board address these systemic impediments through the development of a Comprehensive Four-year Equity Strategy and action plan.

Directive 14 of the Ministry's 2020 Directives for PDSB requires that the Peel District School Board addresses systemic impediments to the learning success and well-being of Black, Indigenous and racialized students through a comprehensive four-year strategy and action plan. It states:

- The Board shall establish a comprehensive four-year strategy and action plan to address and eliminate statistically significant disproportionalities in enrolment, achievement, and outcomes of Black students, other racialized students, and Indigenous students in applied, academic, locally developed, Special Education, and Regional Choice pathways and programs.
- The Board's plan shall:
 - include specific objectives tied to actions, measurable outcomes, and timelines for meeting those objectives;
 - include actions and measurable outcomes to reduce the effects of implicit bias on the disproportionate outcomes of PDSB's Black students, to encourage Black students to establish goals and achieve academically;

-
- identify an employee or employees who would have responsibility for working to achieve the objectives laid out in the plan;
 - include provisions for engaging with parents; and
 - include provisions for public reporting on progress towards achieving outcomes in the strategy.
- The Board shall require accountability for the action plan to address explicitly in the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan, the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA), the Equity Action Plan, and in the performance appraisals of principals, supervisory officers, Associate Directors, and the Director of Education. This strategy and action plan should be a key component of the Annual Equity Accountability Report Card.

Directive 10 of the Ministry's 2020 Directives for PDSB states the following:

The Board shall require the Equity Office to develop the Action Plan in collaboration with the Board's Human Rights Commissioner, and ensure that the Plan:

- I. sets specific objectives to reduce and eliminate inequities within the PDSB and those objectives be tied to actions and measurable outcomes;
- II. includes the use of student and workplace census data to inform decisions related to policies, protocols, programming and other student centered initiatives; and
- III. is made publicly available to the Board community by June of each year.

Comprehensive Equity Four-Year Strategy Purpose and Design

The purpose of the Comprehensive Equity Four Year Strategy (Equity Strategy) is to provide a high-level statement of intent that provides a framework for action with regard to the overarching goal in PDSB of eradicating systemic discrimination in schools and workplaces. This will ensure that there is a strategic approach to addressing disproportionate outcomes experienced by racialized students, in particular Black and Indigenous as identified in the Ministry Review, 2020 of the PDSB. The Equity Strategy demonstrates PDSB's commitment to providing equity of opportunities for all students and staff by dismantling systemic discrimination necessary to affirm student identities, ensure culturally responsive and relevant pedagogical approaches necessary for equitable and inclusive learning and working environments.

The Strategy is designed to capture the progress and impact of PDSB actions aligned to the Ministry of Education's Board Improvement and Equity Plan (BIEP). The BIEP provides a standardized tool for school boards to identify local actions that will lead to improved achievement, equity, wellbeing, experiences and outcomes for students.

According to the Ministry, *"This BIEP is a demographic data-driven tool designed to capture the experiences and outcomes of Indigenous students, Black and other racialized groups of students, students with disabilities and/or special education needs (non-gifted), 2SLGBTQ+ students, and students from low-income households."*

Once finalized the Multi-Year Strategic Plan will help to guide the work of the Equity Strategy and will be integrated into the specific actions and indicators as part of the four-year timeline.

The specific actions identified will be grounded in the principles of anti-racism, anti-oppression, and inclusion of decolonizing practices. All schools must have a School Improvement and Equity Plan (SIEP), that is designed to ensure focused efforts on the part of school leaders and staff to ensure equitable outcomes for students historically underserved. SIEPs support schools to engage in corrective actions to address disproportionate outcomes, by identifying and removing barriers necessary for the development of inclusive schools and classrooms.

Given that the BIEP is a demographic data-driven tool the Comprehensive Four-year Equity Strategy will include accountability measures to assess progress in the areas as follows:

- Improved Achievement – Math, Literacy, and Conditions for Learning
- Human Rights - Building Capacity Through Leadership
- Pathways and Transitions
- Mental Health, Well Being, and Engagement
- Learning Recovery and Renewal

Baseline data presented in the Equity Accountability Report Cards (Directive 9) that supports the board with looking at trends over time such as the reports that focused on particular identity groups for instance; Amplifying Voices of African, Afro-Caribbean and Black Students, Understanding the Gaps in Special Education and Exploring the Gaps by Faith/spirituality. These reports and access to particular data sets will provide the board with resources and tools to measure certain improvements in particular student outcomes.

Evidence

Findings/Key Considerations:

The Four-year Equity Strategy and Action Plan will ensure that our commitment to equity, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and anti-colonialism is woven throughout all the work that we do. It is a high-level articulation of the PDSB's work to develop staff capacity, challenge and change structures and practices that create barriers to success and raise the achievement and well-being of students who are underserved and underperforming.

Each department has developed a Departmental Action Plan. The actions will refine based on the current progress, collaboration, and feedback from stakeholders and community.

Schools will support the implementation of this strategy through the School Improvement and Equity Plan and School Equity Action Plan.

Impact Analysis

Equity & Human Rights Review:

The PDSB Comprehensive Four-Year Equity Strategy will guide the specific work of the board on both the business and academic sides of the organization, as we engage in a system-wide

process for improved outcomes and experiences for historically and currently underserved students and staff.

The PDSB Comprehensive Four-Year Equity Strategy includes diverse data-gathering approaches (e.g. Equity Audits, street data, stakeholder consultation, student and staff identity-based data) to better identify and remove systemic barriers. The specific actions of the Equity Strategy will ensure that necessary approaches and strategies required to ensure that equity, anti-racism, anti-oppression and decolonizing practices are foundational to all aspects of the work happening across the system in PDSB. The implementation of the Equity Strategy will also demonstrate our commitment to the ongoing implementation of the 27 Ministry Directives and the necessary transformation required to ensure equity of outcomes for students and staff.

PDSB Comprehensive Four Year Equity Strategy and Action Plan will serve as important mechanisms for the PDSB to remain accountable to Black students and their families through the commitments to anti-racism (anti-Black racism), anti-oppression, and anti-colonialism by monitoring and tracking changes that ensure the ongoing interrogation of the structures, practices, procedures, and policies that have adversely affected the flourishing of Black students as documented by the Equity Accountability Report card (Directive 9).

Board or Ministry Policy Alignment:

Ministry Review of Peel Equity
Inclusive Education Policy 54
Human Rights Policy 51

Resource/Financial Implications:

The adoption of the Equity Strategy and Action Plan does not directly incur any financial implications. The work is embedded into the ongoing work of each department.

Community Impact:

Public reporting on the implementation of the Comprehensive Four-year Equity Strategy will help the community understand how PDSB is making a difference for students in classrooms and at the school and system level. It will foster confidence in PDSB and the implementation of the Ministry Directives by allowing community stakeholders to track the actions taken and implemented as well as the outcomes of those actions.

Both internal and external stakeholders will feel informed and included in the system transformation process.

Next Steps

Action Required:

Communicate the Equity Strategy and Action Plan as the guiding documents for the Board's equity work that will be subject to ongoing updates. (September 2023)

Submit a progress report to the Board of Trustees. (May 2024)

Review and update the Equity Strategy and Action Plan, including provisions for board, staff, and community input. (October/November 2024)

Submit a progress report to the Board of Trustees. (May 2025)

Review and update the Equity Strategy and Action Plan, including provisions for board, staff, and community input. (October 2025)

Submit a progress report to the Board of Trustees. (May 2026)

Review and update the Equity Strategy and Action Plan, including provisions for board, staff, and community input. (October 2026)

Submit a progress report to the Board of Trustees. (May 2027)

Assess outcomes from the Equity Strategy and Action Plan. Develop a new strategy and related Action Plan. (October 2027)

Communications:

The Equity Department will collaborate with the Communications Department to establish a communications plan. The communications plan will provide an approach to cascade the various elements of the strategy to the various stakeholders throughout the board.

Success Measures:

This Directive requires that performance goals, measures, and indicators are included in the Equity Strategy. These elements will function as accountability metrics to ensure implementation of the Equity Strategy and the development of the Equity Action Plan.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – PDSB Equity Strategy 2023-2027

Appendix 2 – PDSB Equity Action Plan 2023-2027

PDSB EQUITY STRATEGY

2023-2027



Land Acknowledgement



We acknowledge that Peel District School Board is situated on the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, home to the diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

The land upon which we work, live and sustain ourselves is the ancestral and treaty lands of the Miichizaagiiig Anishinaabek, also known today as the Mississaugas of the Credit, the rightful caretakers and title holders of this land.

We also recognize the rich pre-contact history and relationships which include the Anishinaabek and the Onkwehonwe. Since European Contact, this land continues to be home to Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. As responsible community members, we value the diversity, dignity and worth of all people.

Colonialism displaced and dispossessed Indigenous peoples of their ancestral lands and continues to deny their basic human rights, dignities and freedoms. We are committed to learning true history to reconcile, make reparations and fulfill our treaty obligations to the Original Peoples and our collective responsibilities to the land, water, animals, and each other for future generations.

Letter from the Director

The Four-Year Equity Strategy has been created as a roadmap to clearly outline our commitment, objectives, and key actions to address systemic racism and inequities in the Peel District School Board (PDSB, the Board) and in the education system in response to Directive 10 and Directive 14 in the Ministry Review of the Peel District School Board. The strategy is aimed at creating and maintaining an environment of inclusion to ensure equitable outcomes for all Peel students, with a focus on eliminating the barriers and addressing the disproportionalities and disparities faced by Black and Indigenous students, who have been historically, and are currently, underserved.

The Four-Year Equity Strategy outlines our collective actions aimed at ensuring that all members of our Peel community are treated with respect and dignity through the creation of identity-affirming learning environments that are culturally responsive to our diverse learners. These actions will form the basis of sustainable and transformative change and foster anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and anti-colonial learning and working spaces across the PDSB.

For systemic equity to be realized, **everyone** must take an active role in being part of the solution. It is essential that each one of us is engaging in anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices acknowledging and addressing the harms of the past, and condemning acts of discrimination and racism. As a school board, we recognize the urgency of moving forward to cultivate learning environments that are free of discrimination and inclusive to all stakeholders. To fulfill this expectation, we are dedicated to holding ourselves accountable to



the various measures outlined in the strategy. These measures are designed to ensure that the conditions created in our schools and workplaces allow students and staff to thrive and meet their full potential.

The strategy is rooted in our work to dismantle systemic inequities and discrimination, to eliminate anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, and to create anti-racist environments for all PDSB students, staff, and families. The Four-Year Equity Strategy will be aligned across all schools and workplaces in the PDSB, providing clear actions across central departments for transformational change across the Board.

I am proud to be on this journey with staff to embed equity into all that we do at the PDSB to transform the experiences of all our students and families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rashmi Swarup".

Rashmi Swarup
Director of Education

Introduction

At the PDSB, all our 155,000 students deserve a meaningful education where their learning and well-being are at the centre of every decision we make.

Unfortunately, there have been disproportionalities in outcomes, resulting in Black, Indigenous, racialized, and other historically underserved students not being afforded the same opportunities and supports as their peers. The PDSB is committed to closing the gaps in achievement and well-being—creating a learning environment where every student can succeed, feel confident, and have hope for the future—by ensuring that students have equitable access to programs and resources as well as increased opportunities that lead to enhanced learning outcomes.

The *Ministry Review of the Peel District School Board* identified that systemic barriers impede the achievement and well-being of Black, Indigenous, racialized, and other historically underserved students. Ministry Directive 14 requires that the PDSB address these systemic impediments through a comprehensive Four-Year Equity Strategy and Action Plan.

This strategy will serve as a roadmap to closing these gaps by focusing our efforts on the students who have been historically underserved. The strategy will also ensure that every educator, business staff, administrator, and senior leader receives support in their ongoing learning about the impact that power, privilege, and implicit bias have on students and their ability to succeed. These changes will not only support those who have been historically underserved but will also raise the bar for all students.

The Equity Strategy can be used to inform the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan to ensure that our commitment to equity, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and anti-colonialism is woven throughout all that we do. It is a high-level articulation of the PDSB's work to develop staff capacity, challenge and change structures and practices that create barriers to success, and raise the achievement and well-being of students who are underserved and/or underperforming. Based on this strategy, each department will develop a Departmental Action Plan. Schools will support the implementation of this strategy through the School Improvement and Equity Plan and School Equity Action Plan.

While all schools and departments will play a role in the implementation of the strategy, the Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations, in coordination with the Associate Director, Curriculum and Instruction, School and Community Engagement, will be responsible for overseeing and monitoring the achievement of the objectives laid out in the Equity Strategy and for reporting to the public on these achievements and where adjustments to the strategy are needed.



Student Achievement



Goal

Create culturally affirming learning environments, remove barriers, and set high expectations to support all students to reach their full potential.



Objectives

- Ensure all students have the skills, knowledge, critical consciousness, and confidence they need to succeed in the future as they transition from elementary school to secondary school to their postsecondary pathways.
- Provide effective instruction, assessment, and curricular materials that are culturally responsive, follow principles of equity and inclusive education, and reflect students' intersecting identities, lived experiences, cultures, and histories.
- Improve the achievement and well-being of students who have been historically, and are currently, underserved and have thus underperformed.
- Address underrepresentation in gifted programs and Regional Learning Choices programs.
- Support students to graduate and pursue pathways of their choosing.
- Implement changes to early reading, curriculum and instruction, screening, and reading interventions in order to build educator capacity to fulfill our obligations to meet students' right to read.

Measuring Progress



Improved Math Achievement

% of historically underserved students who meet or exceed the provincial standard on Grades 3, 6, and 9 EQAO math

% of historically underserved students who meet or exceed the provincial standard in math report card assessments in Grades 3, 6, and 9

Measuring Progress



Improved Literacy Achievement

% of historically underserved students who meet or exceed the provincial standard in Grades 3 and 6 EQAO reading and writing

% of historically underserved students who meet or exceed the provincial standard in reading and writing report card assessments in Grades 3 and 6

% of first-time-eligible, fully participating, historically underserved students who are successful on the OSSLT



Improved Conditions for Learning

% of historically underserved students in Grades 4–12 who report they see themselves reflected and affirmed in their learning



Support the Implementation of Destreaming

% of historically underserved students achieving the provincial standard in Grade 9 destreamed math

% of historically underserved students enrolled in University (U), College (C), University/College (M), and Workplace (E) courses in Grades 11 and 12

% of historically underserved students in Grades 9 and 10 participating in locally developed compulsory credit courses has not increased



Improved Graduation Rates

% of historically underserved students graduating with an Ontario Secondary School Diploma within 5 years of starting Grade 9



Improved Student Readiness for Future Success

% of historically underserved students participating in job skills programs (including Co-op, Specialist High Skills Majors, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, and Dual Credits)

% of students in Grades 7–12 who annually update their Individual Pathways Plan (IPP)

% of historically underserved students entering a university program, college program, apprenticeship training program, or other post-secondary institution after secondary school

% of historically underserved students enrolled in STEM-related courses in Grades 11 and 12



Family, Community, and Staff Engagement



Goal

Strengthen family, community, and staff engagement and remove barriers to engagement for those who have been historically marginalized and underserved.

Objectives

- Foster open and transparent engagement of families, communities, and staff from the diverse PDSB school community in the development of policies and programs as well as in supporting student success.
- Develop and sustain partnerships that reflect the members of historically marginalized and underserved communities to gather their perspectives in order to inform decision making and the development of inclusive learning and working environments.
- Provide information and supports to parents on how to navigate the school system.
- Strengthen the relationship with families, between home and school.
- Communicate with parents/families and communities in ways that are accessible.

Measuring Progress



Improved Student, Parent, and Community Engagement

Student attendance rate for students who are historically underserved

of central Board organized community events and/or activities

of partnerships with community organizations at the Board level



Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights



Goal

Identify and remove systemic discrimination and eliminate disparities in educational experiences and outcomes by building awareness and understanding of human rights, anti-racism, anti-oppression, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, and the ongoing impact of colonialism.

Objectives

- Develop and sustain student and staff awareness and understanding of human rights and anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and anti-colonial practice to intentionally foster a culture of human rights.
- Build the capacity of school and system leaders to use data for anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and anti-colonial decision making to redress disparities in staff and student outcomes.
- Increase awareness of anti-racism and human rights policies and confidence in the Human Rights Office.
- Build capacity of both students and staff to respond effectively and immediately to acts of discrimination, racism, hate, and oppression.
- Hire a diverse workforce that is reflective of and responsive to the needs of the diverse school community, particularly the members of historically marginalized and underserved groups.
- Develop hiring selection criteria appropriate to each role that includes competencies in anti-racism, anti-oppression, equity, and human rights.
- Strengthen accountability for equity and human rights in vice principal, principal, and supervisory officer performance appraisals.
- Enhance educator capacity and knowledge related to Indigenous education, Indigenous histories, and Indigenous ways of knowing to improve outcomes and experiences for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Measuring Progress



Build Human Rights and Equity Capacity Through Leadership

% of supervisory officers, principals, and vice principals whose performance appraisal plans include one or more goals to eliminate disparities revealed by both student and workplace demographic data collection

% of trustees who participate in human rights and equity professional development



Address Human Rights Complaints and Hate-Based Incidents

of human rights complaints raised (by protected ground, type of violation, and complainant) and % resolved (informally and formally)

of reported hate-based incidents by protected ground



Increased understanding of the application of Progressive Discipline Practices to foster inclusion and well-being for students

of suspensions and expulsions for historically underserved students in Grades 4-12

% of school staff who have undertaken professional development specific to equity and human rights to support fair student discipline practices



Student & Staff Mental Health and Well-being



Goal

Create positive, healthy, and identity-affirming learning and working environments where all students and staff feel safe, supported, and accepted.

Objectives

- Build system capacity in mental health and well-being to affirm student identities, based on student voice and agency.
- Cultivate a culture of care for students and staff in which they are treated with respect and empathy and provided with the accommodation needed to be successful.
- Increase access to student mental health and well-being resources that are culturally responsive.
- Provide tools and resources to schools to help identify and remove discriminatory actions and representations that create harm and foster unwelcoming learning environments.
- Strengthen human resources policies, processes, and practices that foster inclusive workplaces; address inappropriate behaviours when they occur; and support the hiring and advancement of employees from the equity-seeking groups.
- Support affinity networks of students and staff from historically and/or currently underserved groups to enable them to gather, share experiences, and provide support to one another.
- Reduce incidents of sexual violence and continue to increase understanding of consent among all stakeholders.
- Foster learning and working environments that are free of discrimination and harassment and in which issues are immediately addressed when they do occur.

Measuring Progress



Improved Student Mental Health and Well-being

% of students in Grades 4–12 who feel their school is a safe and inclusive environment

% of historically underserved students in Grades 4–12 who feel their school is a safe and inclusive environment

% of staff and educators receiving professional learning in student mental health literacy and the Board’s protocols regarding student mental health (including, but not limited to, suicide prevention, intervention, and post-intervention protocols and pathways to mental health care within and external to the Board)

Accountability Framework

COMPONENT	REPORTING FREQUENCY	MECHANISM
Public Reporting	 Annually	Written annual reports on the implementation of the strategy and outcomes
Director’s Action Plan	 Annually	Written update to the Board of Trustees
Evaluation	 2027	Impact evaluation to assess outcomes and the impact of the implementation of the strategy

PDSB Equity Action Plan 2023-2027

This document is fluid and will be adjusted responsively based on the current progress, collaboration, and feedback from stakeholders and community.

Academic

Student Achievement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
2023-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop partnerships with colleges, universities and private organizations to support post-secondary pathway opportunities for Indigenous, Black and racialized students • Pilot Black student mentorship program • Continue to build partnership with community to bring the Indigenous Knowledges in Math initiative to schools • Continue to develop understanding of Afrocentric knowledges through Oware COY Network in Collaboration with the Math team • Support system transformation at the classroom level in developing a collective understanding of critical frameworks grounded in culturally relevant and responsive teaching (CRRP) • Develop a network of Equity Leads at the staff and student levels (with release time) for knowledge mobilization around practical tools and 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations

Student Achievement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<p>instructional strategies and approaches for dismantling racism and oppression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build educator capacity by providing ongoing professional learning of anti-racist, anti-oppression and anti-colonial principles to improve outcomes for students 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create processes to support successful student transitions upon their return to home school from Fresh Start • Co-construct questions and spaces for understanding impact of student behaviour and plan for change based on Dr. Maisha Winn's five pedagogical stances (race matters, history matters, justice matters, language matters and futures matter) • Offer professional learning opportunities and resources for educators to proactively cultivate anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and anti-colonial classroom communities with co-created working and learning agreements 	Safe and Caring Schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the Professional Library Learning Commons (The CoLab): Coordinating Principal leads weekly professional learning to build understanding of Teacher Librarians to apply anti-oppressive strategies • Establish clear expectations and standards for inclusive teaching practices, and provide support and resources for teachers and staff who work through the EML Knowing and Doing guides • Provide professional learning opportunities for educators to develop and implement effective instructional and assessment strategies that are culturally responsive and relevant and grounded in the Universal Design 	Innovation & Research

Student Achievement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<p>for Learning framework and Empowering Modern Learning beliefs and elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote equity and counteract oppression by broadening opportunities for Leading Education Innovation Projects (LEIP) that are rooted in the unique contexts and needs of schools and communities, while fostering collaborations with diverse community organizations, including business, industry, and educational partners 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide instruction regarding child development and processing areas to educators in fully self-contained special education placements • Re-launch of Student Review Process • Provide professional learning related to data collection and interpretation, including how to use data to set and monitor goals, assess the effectiveness of remediation and intervention strategies/programs, and adjust as needed. Use this information to support more explicit description of instructional strategies for Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals. Reduce the generalization of IEPs. • Continue to provide professional learning related to trauma-informed and trauma-responsive education • Support student and school/system needs through multidisciplinary collaborative support model, including reimagining how central supports are deployed in an equitable and intentional way • Refine PSSP processes, including assessments, report writing, debriefing, and providing programming recommendations 	<p>Special Education and Social-Emotional Learning</p>

Student Achievement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide all Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers professional learning on early reading instruction Develop Culturally Relevant and Responsive Practices (CRRP) and Demonstration Classrooms Develop Literacy Action Plan grounded in CRRP, anti-racism and anti-oppressive principles designed to ensure effective literacy instruction K-12 for improved achievement outcomes to address disparities Enhance Engage Math Action Plan to be further grounded in CRRP, anti-racism and anti-oppressive principles designed to ensure effective numeracy instruction K-12 for improved achievement outcomes to address disparities Build educator knowledge of CRRP assessment and evaluation Address under representation of Black students in gifted programs and regional learning choice programs Create micro-learning environments in the library learning commons and across schools that address students' learning variability, promoting transitions and pathways Implement coaching model that targets de-streaming, literacy and numeracy engagement K-10 Provide professional learning on de-streaming for all Grade 9 and 10 teachers who are teaching a core course 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary

Student Achievement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with greater support when transitioning to secondary and post-secondary as well as supports for adult learners' transition to the employment • Provide literacy and numeracy support for all students in Grades 7-12 through Counting On You and Peel Virtual Tutor 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a partnership plan that highlights collaboration with private and public sectors to offer pathway opportunities to address underrepresentation across a variety of employment fields (informed by industry needs) • Work in partnership with Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Department to support school leadership teams to implement new curriculum course development and offerings (i.e., the Black Literatures in English Course) • Continue to develop, co-ordinate and facilitate professional learning offerings with an embedded focus on Anti-Oppressive Practice to deepen capacity of aspiring leaders and newly appointed principals and vice-principals • Support racialized leaders through various mentorship opportunities 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships
2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Expand Oware COY network to FOS and host tournaments locally • Establish guidance and post-secondary pathways marketplace 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations

Student Achievement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build educator capacity through small group workshops around affirming student identity; provide practical tools and resources • Continue to build educator capacity through Professional Learning around the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples • Support schools in the implementation and use of reflective tools for critical examination of oppressive policies, practices and processes (e.g., T.A.S.K.S framework) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Deepen competencies of staff to address students' Social Emotional Learning (SEL) needs by building their capacity to deliver individualized programming in an identity affirming and culturally responsive way 	Safe and Caring Schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Provide professional learning regarding IEP development and the provision of intervention for literacy and numeracy to special education class teachers • Collaborate with Safe and Caring Schools and Curriculum to address students' SEL needs by centering student voice in creating identity-affirming, welcoming and inclusive programming and environments • Collaborate with Curriculum and Research and Innovation to ensure EML and UDL frameworks include considerations for students with disabilities, especially those students who have been historically segregated from mainstream classrooms 	Special Education and Social-Emotional Learning

Student Achievement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Monitor student achievement data and gather feedback from students and families to ensure that teaching and learning is grounded in Growing Success and Empowering Modern Learning beliefs and elements • Develop professional learning opportunities to support educators in deepening their capacity of the implementation of EML elements and coaching of students to build agency and ownership of learning processes and spaces 	Innovation & Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Continue to expand beyond Grade 3 the building capacity of Junior and Intermediate teachers on effective reading instruction • Implement Literacy Action Plan grounded in CRRP, anti-racism and anti-oppressive principles designed to ensure effective literacy instruction K-12 for improved achievement outcomes to address disparities • Implement enhanced Engage Math Action Plan to be grounded in CRRP, anti-racism and anti-oppressive principles designed to ensure effective numeracy instruction K-12 for improved achievement outcomes to address disparities • Implement recommendations from ELL Audit • Align NTIP PL with all department goals • Partner with Equity, I&R, Spec Ed to ensure streamlining of interdepartmental collaboration on professional learning 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary

Student Achievement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with SESEL to identify mental health strategies to support ESL/ELD students • Partner with schools to develop STEAM program, such as Agents 4 Social Change • Extend PL opportunities into the summer • Revise RLCP structure and offerings 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Explore ongoing partnerships and where possible, expand access opportunities to continuing and adult education students • Ensure a variety of professional learning offerings that embed equity principles in all sessions • Explore various metrics to gather data/ feedback to understand impact for student achievement and explore new ways of measuring success 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships
2025-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Expand Oware COY network to FOS and host Oware tournament at the board • Convene guidance and post-secondary pathways marketplace • Continue to build educator capacity by providing ongoing professional learning to improve student outcomes 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations

Student Achievement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Learning Programs in partnership with Indigenous Community Partners to allow Indigenous students the opportunity to learn in a culturally specific environment 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Develop a consultation plan to capture student voice and focus groups to better understand their experiences 	Safe and Caring Schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Provide professional learning that supports more explicit description of instructional strategies for individual IEP goals Provide professional learning regarding IEP development and the provision of intervention for literacy and numeracy to regular class teachers Provide further professional learning regarding Safety Plans and PBIPs, including data collection and interpretation 	Special Education and Social-Emotional Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Monitor student achievement through credit accumulation and achievement data from multiple sources 	Innovation & Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Implement Literacy Action Plan grounded in CRRP, anti-racism and anti-oppressive principles designed to ensure effective literacy instruction K-12 for improved achievement outcomes to address disparities Implement enhanced Engage Math Action Plan to be grounded in CRRP, anti-racism and anti-oppressive principles designed to ensure effective 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary

Student Achievement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<p>numeracy instruction K-12 for improved achievement outcomes to address disparities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine, revision goals based on community (parents/caregivers) feedback 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Expand partnerships to provide more students access, particularly from equity-deserving groups. • Continue to seek school collaborations to provide opportunities that remove barriers and increase access for Black, Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized student populations 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships
2026-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Convene guidance and post-secondary pathways marketplace • Continue to build educator capacity by providing ongoing professional learning 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Continue to consult with educators and students to capture information about their experiences to inform next steps 	Safe and Caring Schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' action • Continued collaboration with Safe and Caring Schools and Curriculum to address students' SEL needs by centering student voice in creating identity-affirming welcoming and inclusive programming and environments 	Special Education and Social-Emotional Learning

Student Achievement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Continue monitoring of student achievement through credit accumulation and achievement data from multiple sources 	Innovation & Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Continue with Literacy Action Plan • Continue with enhanced Engage Math Action Plan • Create new goals based on street, map, and satellite data (EQAO, graduation rates, RLCP, etc.) • Expand Administrator Network • Mentoring New Instructional Coordinators • Refine an effective coaching model for resource teachers 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Leverage school partnerships to develop professional opportunities for students during and beyond secondary school (i.e., paid internships and employment opportunities) • Reflect on Impact Reports pertaining to outcomes of student success in school partnership programs and services to guide next level of planning 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships

Family, community, and staff engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
2023-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold Family Nights for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Families • Host a series of events for parents and community to become better informed of their children’s pathways • Create Community Engagement procedures and framework to create trusting and transparent relationships across communities 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the PIC for the purpose to broaden consent parent partnership and consent awareness • Provide workshops for staff and students at schools; provide parent workshops 	Safe and Caring Schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage family/caregiver participation in SRM/IPRC processes and develop support materials for parents/caregivers to support their fulsome understanding and participation in special education and SEL initiatives and processes • Collaborate with Innovation and Research to ensure transparency in the SEA technology and equipment processes and increase access, training, and effectiveness of use through home-school alignment • Community engagement events including those related to identity-specific mental health needs and services • Continue to engage community/faith leaders, staff, and caregivers in mental health advisory groups (students also have an advisory group) 	Special Education and Social-Emotional Learning

Family, community, and staff engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to partner with regional and community organizations to ensure alignment and pathways to care (mental health and addictions, identity-specific supports, Peel Public Health, etc.) Work with HR/Abilities to align strategies for student mental health and wellbeing supports with staff mental health and wellbeing supports 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deliver Pathways events with post-secondary community representation Work collaboratively with EVS guidance team to develop and implement transitional supports for incoming Grade 9 students Work with partners at Sheridan College and Unice to create tangible outcomes to ensure meaningful partnerships 	Innovation & Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Learning for Educators informed by EQAO Data results Offering Tiered supports for continued literacy development Design and develop professional learning that supports and strengthens family and community partnerships particularly with Black, Indigenous and families historically marginalized to support learning at home Build educator capacity to strengthen home-school partnerships to elevate numeracy and literacy rich environments reflective of the diversity of communities Build Educator knowledge of assessment and evaluation strategies that incorporate multiple ways of knowing that are reflective of the communities we serve and allow students' intersecting identities to be incorporated into curriculum delivery 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary

Family, community, and staff engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore diverse ways to share information with students, families and schools that provide details about various program opportunities. • Partner with colleges and universities to increase access to higher education for Black, Indigenous, and other racialized and marginalized students by offering college, university courses and micro-credentials/ badging. 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships
2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Support Schools in establishing Parent Affinity Spaces (e.g., Black Parent Associations) • Collaborate with Superintendents to provide Family Opportunities at the Centre for Indigenous Excellence • Launch Community Resource Information Fairs • Re-establish Community Tables • Liaise with community partners and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to support and inform work in schools and support staff professional learning • Launch Community Townhall meetings • Develop a community mental health toolkit in collaboration with Special Education and Social-Emotional Learning 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions 	Safe and Caring Schools

Family, community, and staff engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen partnerships and connections with parent and community to support progressive discipline • Increase system awareness and public education of family violence; and strengthen Peel's pathways to safety 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Build family/caregiver understanding of processes associated with special education supports, including accommodations, modifications, IEPs, professional services reports (psych, SLP) • Continue to provide resources and professional learning for staff to better serve students and families/caregivers in the areas of mental health literacy and promotion • Collaborate with Safe and Caring Schools to advance initiatives centered on the prevention of substance misuse, bullying, human sex-trafficking, and sexual violence • Collaborate with Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations to develop a community mental health toolkit • Continue to provide clinical support (e.g., mental health professionals) to events that may trigger personal upset, including policy consultations, townhall meetings, and others 	Special Education and Social-Emotional Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Develop a range of resources and tools to support families in understanding and navigating the school system, including translation services, parent handbooks and online resources 	Innovation & Research

Family, community, and staff engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct outreach and engagement activities to build relationships with families of international students, such as cultural events, parent-teacher conferences, and home visits 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on Year 1 actions Continue to Design and develop professional learning that supports the strengthens family and community partnerships particularly with Black, Indigenous and families historically marginalized to support learning at home Continue to Build educator capacity to strengthen home-school partnerships to elevate numeracy and literacy rich environments reflective of the diversity of communities Continue to expand beyond grade 3 – building capacity of Junior/Intermediate on reading instruction Demonstration classrooms to build capacity for teaching learning (focus on NTIP teachers) Engage parent partnerships in RLCP to ensure equity of access and CRRP programming 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on Year 1 actions Collaborate cross departmentally and with school teams to expand the number of students who will benefit from strategic partnership programs and services 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships

Family, community, and staff engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
2025-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Launch Community Mental Health and Wellness Summit Provide community opportunities to contribute to Board and School Improvement and Equity Planning 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Continue to strengthen Safe & Accepting Schools to create a culture of bullying prevention and intervention strategies into classroom practice/whole school capacity building through community building 	Safe and Caring Schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Collaborate with Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations to launch the Mental Health and Wellness Summit 	Special Education and Social-Emotional Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on Year 1 and Year 2 actions Develop and implement a comprehensive program for parent and family engagement, including specific outreach efforts to engage families of international students Recruit and train mentors, including older students and staff members, to provide guidance and support for international students 	Innovation & Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Informed action plan: use data from community roundtable, PIC to drive our work Design and develop professional learning that supports the strengthens family and community partnerships particularly with Black, Indigenous and families historically marginalized to support learning at home 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary

Family, community, and staff engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build educator capacity to strengthen home-school partnerships to elevate numeracy and literacy rich environments reflective of the diversity of communities • Engage in Professional learning feedback through resource teachers • Continue to ground the work in equity and human rights to better serve the PDSB Community • Continue to engage parent partnerships in RLCP to ensure equity of access and CRRP programming 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous year's actions • Provide consistent communication with families premised on trust, openness, respect and recognition of the unique expression of individual identities (Equity Policy) • Offer varied opportunities for collaboration and consultation with community partners • Support the Board of Trustees in communicating with the PDSB community and families in their Wards to cohesively reflect the commitment of the PDSB to continuous dismantling of barriers to the achievement and wellbeing of students 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships
2026-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Host a Pathways Community Summit for parents and community • Host a series of events for parents and community to become better informed of their children's pathways 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations

Family, community, and staff engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Continue to deepen school, community collaboration/partnerships in student discipline 	Safe and Caring Schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years/ actions Collaborate with Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations to engage families/caregivers in understanding pathways for students, and build capacity of school teams to collaborate with families/caregivers as equal partners in decision-making Continue to refine support documents for parents/caregivers so they are empowered to advocate for students in all special education related meetings and conversations Continue to build on PSSP skills and practices around communication with families/caregivers about academic, social-emotional, and community supports for students 	Special Education and Social-Emotional Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous year's action plan Conduct ongoing assessment and monitoring of student outcomes and needs Conduct outreach and engagement activities to continue to further strengthen relationships with families of international students. 	Innovation & Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous year's action plan Assess professional learning to ensure it strengthens family and community partnerships particularly with Black, Indigenous and families historically marginalized to support learning at home 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary

Family, community, and staff engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build accountability measures for educator capacity to strengthen home-school partnerships to elevate numeracy and literacy • Seek to use data from community (e.g. Roundtable) to guide and teaching and learning to enhance culturally relevant and responsive classrooms • Continue to ground our work around developing culturally relevant and responsive classrooms in equity and human rights to better serve the PDSB Community • Continue to engage parent partnerships in RLCP to ensure equity of access and CRRP programming 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous year's action • Continue to provide consistent communication with families premised on trust, openness, respect and recognition of the unique expression of individual identities (Equity Policy) • Continue to offer varied opportunities for collaboration and consultation with community partners 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
2023-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish annual anti-racism campaign to amplify and highlight best practices in schools in dismantling racism and oppression • Resource Teachers to work in collaboration with SIEP committees on SIEP goals and to support with school equity audits • Launch the Affirming Muslim Identities and Dismantling Islamophobia Strategy • Hold the first Muslim Student Leadership Conference • Develop Prayer Accommodation guidelines • Guidelines for Meeting Dietary Requirements of Muslim Students • Support Educators in developing a fulsome understanding of critical consciousness • Cultivate a culture of care for students and staff through facilitation of student affinity groups • Support Staff in developing an understanding of Indigenous Sovereignty and Self-Determination guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples • Develop procedures, guidelines, and protocols regarding days and weeks of significance and heritage months in collaboration with the Communications Department • Support capacity building of student affinity and allyship spaces (BSA, GSA, MSA, etc.) 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support all staff with ensuring intersectional 2SLGBTQIA+ identities are represented, affirmed, and supported • Offer student identity-based conferences and opportunities to network, connect and share in learning (BSA, GSA, MSA, etc.) • Continue to build relationships with First Nation, Métis and Inuit Community Partners to re-establish an Indigenous Education Council that centres Community Voice 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support school teams to facilitate learning with school staffs and guide plans (using reflective questions, resources for learning, possible actions, model plans) for foundational structures and process in schools • Identify & train a robust Safe and Accepting School (SAS) team that will integrate local school data into the BEIP and SIEP in all schools • Build the capacity of admin and SAS teams to operationalize from an anti-racist, anti-oppressive stance a whole-school approach that utilizes a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences to address harmful student behaviour and to promote and foster positive behaviours • Create and operationalize a framework to support neurodiverse learners in student discipline • Mitigate classroom removal of students by developing CRRP competency of classroom teachers 	Safe and Caring Schools

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide anti-ableism and intersectionality education to the senior team and system leaders • Collaborate with Safe and Caring Schools to support neurodiverse and disabled students in the student discipline process, focusing on promoting prosocial and adaptive behaviours, developing social communication skills, and understanding nonverbal cues as well as developing self-protective factors such as boundary-setting and consent • Collaborate with Research and Innovation to develop and provide professional learning on data literacy • Build student and staff understanding of how systems of oppression work together to create compounding impacts on students and families (e.g., racism, classism, ableism), and raise critical consciousness to disrupt these harmful practices • Develop a Be Well staff resource site (to mirror the student Be Well SharePoint site) to promote stigma reduction for mental health and wellness 	Special Education and Social Emotional Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Empowering Modern Learning Booklet with accompanying professional learning to build a collective understanding in the implementation of the EML Knowing and Doing Guides • Develop Data Literacy Modules for School Improvement and Equity Planning (SIEP) • Deliver the Annual Equity Accountability Report Card 	Innovation & Research

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an audit of ESL/ELD programing • Implement Right to Read, including rethinking reading instruction, addressing inequities, building educator capacity, and ensuring school teams have the necessary resources and tools they need • Provide professional learning opportunities to ground strategies • Develop critical consciousness across the department amongst staff 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a PDSB Mentor Coaching program focusing on anti-oppressive practices to ensure that all mentoring programs are inclusive and provide equitable opportunities for newly appointed principals and vice-principals Support networks of school and system leaders who represent Black, Indigenous, and other racialized and marginalized communities • Work with the central department teams to design the anti-racism, anti-oppression, and anti-colonial guiding principles for professional learning to promote continuous learning and development among staff 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a student-based website with information on human rights and complaint processes • Conducting student voice surveys biennially • Hold family human rights virtual sessions • Deliver system-wide staff human rights training • Consult with students on a student focused HRO process 	Human Rights

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and update the Discriminatory Statement Reporting Form for staff, to better reflect Code grounds, address process and workflow issues that arose and refine the tool to better assist with the collection and interpretation of data Introduce case study learning sessions for PDSB staff Develop training on Code grounds for annual human rights learning Finalize revisions to the religious accommodation procedure in line with the procedure process Finalize revisions for the gender accommodation procedure in line with the procedure process 	
2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on Year 1 actions Build capacity of teachers to implement Land-Based initiatives Resource Teachers to work in collaboration with SIEP committees on SIEP goals and to support with school equity audits Equity Team to provide tool kits and guides to support school leaders to move beyond theory into action Convene Equity Summit for students Working with networks to ensure greater collaboration among affinity groups to build solidarity around anti-oppressive practices 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with First Nation, Métis and Inuit community through the Indigenous Education Council to ensure community voice is at the forefront of the decisions in Indigenous Education 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Develop a framework to measure (collect data and analyze) the prioritization of restorative justice in schools • Operationalize a framework to support neurodiverse learners in student discipline 	Safe and Caring Schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Provide anti-ableism and intersectionality education to school administrators • Create a new Student Independence Form (SIF) referral process that includes all students who have safety and personal care needs. Consider refining SIF process to include students with SEL needs. • Collaborate with Peel CAS on the rewriting of the SESS 5 document; Reporting a Child in Need of Protection • Continue to develop and refine the multidisciplinary collaborative support model to reduce or eliminate exclusions, promote meaningful inclusion of all students, and reduce disproportionalities in outcomes • Build student and staff understanding of how systems of oppression work together to create compounding impacts on students and 	Special Education and Social Emotional Learning

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	families (e.g., racism, classism, ableism), and raise critical consciousness to disrupt these harmful practices	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Begin developing school-level disaggregated reporting tools 	Innovation & Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Continue to implement Right to Read, including rethinking reading instruction, addressing inequities, building educator capacity, and ensuring school teams have the necessary resources and tools they need • Roll out Indigenous-focused revisions to social studies (Grades 1-3) • Roll out new curriculum on Holocaust education in social studies (Grade 6) • Design the model for literacy and numeracy networks, and allocate funding • Use the ARP-OP as a guide in decision making for affected groups 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on Year 1 actions • Continue to increase transparency through resource development for succession planning and transitions into leadership roles/positions. • Deepen implementation and awareness of the Peel Equity Leadership Competencies across Academic (Promotion Process) and Business staff (Learning Series). 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect cross-departmentally to discuss facilitation and content development from an AOP perspective. Continue to audit professional development opportunities for the purpose of equity and AOP 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement Year 1 actions Develop student workshops on human rights for student participation facilitated by the Human Rights Office Develop “Ask the Human Rights Office” Implement student supports, guidelines, etc., for student-based complaints Create additional student supports and learning on human rights Develop human rights symposium for Human Rights Day Provide system training for the religious accommodation procedure Provide system training for gender accommodation procedure to ensure system, schools and classrooms are complying with human rights-based principles and obligations Work with human resources or other relevant departments to introduce mandatory human rights training for new Board hires Develop manager-based support video specifically related to management led investigations. This will be mandatory for all employees moving into a managerial role 	Human Rights Office

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
2025-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Continue to support schools in actioning the principles of anti-racism and anti-oppression; continue to support the use of Critical Frameworks (e.g., UDL, HRL Frameworks) to affirm student identity and support student achievement and success Work with First Nation, Métis and Inuit community to establish a policy for Indigenous Education that is rooted in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Continue to mitigate classroom removal of students by developing CRRP competency of classroom teachers 	Safe and Caring Schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Providing Anti-Ableism and intersectionality education to classroom educators (teachers, Educational Assistants, DECEs) Pilot the new SIF process in one SESEL Coordinating Principal's schools and review in comparison to the other 2 CP's schools Refine the multidisciplinary collaborative support model to ensure meaningful inclusion of all students Build student and staff understanding of how systems of oppression work together to create compounding impacts on students and families (e.g., racism, classism, ableism), and raise critical consciousness to disrupt these harmful practices 	Special Education and Social Emotional Learning

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Review school-level disaggregated and action initiatives to support the success and well-being of Black, Indigenous and other marginalized students 	Innovation & Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Continue to implement Right to Read, including rethinking reading instruction, addressing inequities, building educator capacity, and ensuring school teams have the necessary resources and tools they need • Seek and use data from Community Roundtable, PIC to guide and drive our work around developing culturally relevant and responsive classrooms • Engaging in professional learning feedback through resource teachers • Work with Equity department to gain feedback from students via BSA, for example • Working I&R to identify trends and data (research-based tools) 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Collect and analyze data from Black, Indigenous, other racialized and marginalized school and system leaders to determine professional learning needs with a focus on specific skill development and opportunities, to measure impact and outcomes and to inform next steps and decision making. 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with employee resource groups (ERGs) to inform planning pertaining to program and professional development opportunities. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement previous years' actions Conduct student voice survey Develop opportunities for students to connect with the Human Rights Office on a scheduled basis through the development of "office hour" style consultations Redevelop HRO intranet to include a HRO learning page that archives and highlights all HRO learning Hire an additional Human Rights Officer and/or Senior Human Rights Investigator to support in response to complaint forms Provide system training on competing rights supported by the development of guidance documents for staff and managers Conduct an environmental scan of board policies and practices to conclude what, if, any other documentation needs to be revised to reflect OHRC Review how UNDRIP and Indigenous Rights can be more thoroughly quoted and included in Policy 51 	Human Rights Office
2026-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Operationalize a Policy for Indigenous Education through providing ongoing Professional Learning to Staff 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to include the Indigenous Education Council (IEC) and the Indigenous Student Trustee in the decisions around Indigenous Education across the board 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Continue to support restorative justice in schools 	Safe and Caring Schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Implement the new SIF process in one SESEL Coordinating Principal's schools and review in comparison to the other 2 CPs schools Build student and staff understanding of how systems of oppression work together to create compounding impacts on students and families (e.g., racism, classism, ableism), and raise critical consciousness to disrupt these harmful practices (in collaboration with Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations Department) 	Special Education and Social Emotional Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on previous years' actions Continue building on the knowledge and expertise that exists in schools by creating opportunities (through networks, teams, etc.) to draw on the perspectives and experiences of educators to inform the work around shifting educator practice and developing culturally relevant and responsive classrooms Mentoring New IC Refine an effective coaching model for resource teachers 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions • Continue to work with affinity groups to inform future recruitment/promotion efforts • Continue to collect and analyze data from Black, Indigenous, other racialized and marginalized school and system leaders to determine professional learning needs with a focus on specific skill development and opportunities, to measure impact and outcomes and to inform next steps and decision making 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement previous years' actions • Prepare a comparative report following the completion of three student voice cycles to establish areas of improvement or need within the System for future work with recommendations. Present report to the Board • Partner with departments that work with student advocacy or advisory committee to bridge student voice into the HRO through consultations and feedback sessions • Development of different pathways for all members of the PDSB community to receive information and address Human Rights related concerns • Connect with equity, how human rights can be fully integrated and represented as a section on SIEP 	Human Rights Office

Student and staff mental health, well-being and engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
2023-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Centre for Indigenous Excellence and Land-based Learning • Partner with Black mental health clinicians to provide professional learning for families • Convene annual Black Student Alliance Conference • Continue to support and establish various Student Affinity and Alliance Spaces (BSA, GSA, SSA, MSA, ISA) • Support schools in affirming student identity by ensuring students see themselves reflected in curriculum • Support Educators in an examination of their social location; foster positive relationships that support student well-being • Create resources to support educators with affirming Muslim identities through the professional learning grounded in Affirming Muslim Identities and Dismantling Islamophobia Strategy 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop materials to build awareness and understanding of consent with key stakeholder groups • Continue to support development of student-led groups 	Safe and Caring Schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch the Mental Health Strategy 2023-2026 and Year 1 action plan • Collaborate with Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations to build system capacity to understand the role of oppressive and discriminatory practices on mental health and wellbeing and work to disrupt these practices 	Special Education and Social Emotional Learning

Student and staff mental health, well-being and engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through professional learning opportunities, continue to develop generalist and specialist capacity of registered mental health professionals to serve the needs of students and families (including trauma-focused work, counselling modalities, providing mental health supports for neurodiverse and intellectually disabled students, providing mental health supports for newcomers, etc.) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern Learning Resource Teachers (MLRT) will co-plan and co-teach in learning spaces to build capacity of CRRP and UDL which improves student well-being, mental health, and engagement. Offer an EML Student Conference focusing on developing critical consciousness to empower students to identify, disrupt, and dismantle oppressive practices in their learning space 	Innovation & Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify demonstration classrooms to deepen educator practice Make available mentor texts grounded in CRRP to build a shared understanding of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogical approaches Continue to collaborate with SESEL, Equity and EML on the design and facilitation of PL Integrate UDL concepts into existing professional learning Through Health and Physical Education portfolio build a culture of movement in all classes and subjects Through in-school discussions, revisit the importance of DPA, the responsibilities of the whole school, and support for all staff 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary

Student and staff mental health, well-being and engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Global Recommendations released to reduce sedentary time at school, incorporate physical breaks to reduce sedentary time at school that extends beyond the requirements of DPA 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Working Agreements to set collaborative norms of engagement for all meetings and professional learning sessions Share existing information about mental health and well-being services and resources from SESEL Department (where appropriate) Ensure that diversity is a key consideration in the construction of professional learning facilitator teams 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships
2024-2025		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement Year 1 actions Support schools in ensuring classrooms are inclusive spaces that honour intersectional identities 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement Year 1 actions Create a culture of consent by embedding consent culture within all aspects of school climate, curriculum, clubs, groups, and community to reduce sexual violence Establish student-led groups in middle school to begin to normalize consent Continue to support development of student-led groups Train and develop student leaders in developing and implementing safe schools strategies 	Safe and Caring Schools

Student and staff mental health, well-being and engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to interrogate how PDSB schools interact with agencies such as CAS and police from an anti-racist anti-oppressive stance Train and develop student leaders in developing and implementing safe schools strategies 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate Year 1 mental health strategy action plan and develop/implement year 2 action plan Continue to collate and promote resources that will support the inclusion of mental health literacy and promotion in all curricular areas Continue to develop and support Contact and EA/BEA networks with learning opportunities to address needs identified by staff in the field Continue to develop generalist and specialist abilities of registered mental health professionals to provide effective supports for students and families Continue to develop relationships and partnerships with community agencies to augment services provided by PSSP through the CARC process 	Special Education and Social Emotional Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D2L Student leadership and capacity building group- high school students build capacity in K-8 schools Modern Learning Resource Teachers (MLRT) will co-plan and co-teach in learning spaces to build capacity of CRRP and UDL which improves student well-being, mental health, and engagement 	Innovation & Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement Year 1 actions Developing a partnership with LCSP to build mentoring capacity of instructional coaches 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary

Student and staff mental health, well-being and engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use outdoor education facilities to host Indigenous education programming and provide space for affinity groups • Reiterate and establish new connections to Well-Being and Mental Health 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement Year 1 actions • Use of affinity space and pre-planned supports to promote a positive and healthy learning environment that honours the diverse intersectional identities of participants • Build awareness of and respect for different learning styles, abilities and cultural differences that may impact workplace learning among presenter teams • Engage with employee resource groups (ERG's) to inform planning pertaining to program and professional development opportunities 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships
2025-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement previous years' actions • Hire an Indigenous Social Worker and/or Elder • Support schools in monitoring progress, with an emphasis on transparency and collaboration with community 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement previous years' actions • Create a culture of consent by embedding consent culture within all aspects of school climate, curriculum, clubs, groups, and community to reduce sexual violence 	Safe and Caring Schools

Student and staff mental health, well-being and engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a mechanism for feedback for staff, students, families, and communities on Consent Culture plan • Continue to strengthen Safe & Accepting Schools to create a culture of bullying prevention and intervention strategies into classroom practice/whole school capacity building through community building 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review structures and practices to ensure equity of access and capture systemic improvements within the Special Education Plan • Evaluate Year 2 mental health strategy action plan and develop/implement year 3 action plan • Develop new mental health and addictions 3-year strategy priorities (2026-2029) • Continue to develop system capacity to integrate mental health and wellbeing learning into all areas of the curriculum • Collaborate with Safe and Caring Schools and Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations to support the development of student affinity groups and others, including student groups related to mental health promotion (e.g., Yes4MH, Jack.org) • Continue to develop skills and capacity of registered mental health professionals to provide responsive mental health supports to students and families/caregivers 	Special Education and Social Emotional Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on previous years' actions 	Innovation & Research

Student and staff mental health, well-being and engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern Learning Resource Teachers (MLRT) will co-plan and co-teach in learning spaces to build capacity of CRRP and UDL which improves student well-being, mental health, and engagement 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement previous years' actions Work with Equity department, Resource Teachers, Innovation and Research, and others to gain feedback and identify additional actions 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement previous years' actions Collect and analyze data gathered by Black, Indigenous, and other racialized and marginalized school and system leaders to determine professional learning with a focus on specific skill development and opportunities, to measure impact and outcomes and to inform next steps and decision making Continue to engage with Employee Resource Groups to inform planning pertaining to program and professional development opportunities 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships
2026-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement previous years' actions Continue to develop opportunities for students to connect with Indigenous Social Worker and/or Elder Establish Black Student Alliances in all schools 	Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement previous years' actions Create a culture of consent by embedding consent culture within all aspects of school climate, curriculum, clubs, groups, and community to reduce sexual violence 	Safe and Caring Schools

Student and staff mental health, well-being and engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to strengthen Safe & Accepting Schools to create a culture of bullying prevention and intervention strategies into classroom practice/whole school capacity building through community building 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement previous years' actions Launch new 3-year mental health strategy and new year 1 action plan Continue to support the implementation of mental health literacy and promotion in all areas of the curriculum Collaborate with Safe and Caring Schools to support whole-school community building efforts and to support the development of SIEP goals 	Special Education and Social Emotional Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement previous years' actions Modern Learning Resource Teachers (MLRT) will co-plan and co-teach in learning spaces to build capacity of CRRP and UDL which improves student well-being, mental health, and engagement 	Innovation & Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement previous years' actions Refine an effective coaching model for resource teachers Create new actions based on Ministry funding, new Strategic Plan, as well as new and emerging realities in education Create new goals based on street, map, and satellite data (surveys through Research Department) Expand school-wide responsibility and network Create new actions based on Ministry funding, new Strategic Plan, as well as new and emerging realities in education 	Curriculum: Elementary / Secondary

Student and staff mental health, well-being and engagement		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement previous years' actions • Curate and document best practices to be shared with presenter teams that will support facilitator moves that are culturally responsive and address learning differences among workshop participants. • Continue to integrate and apply identity affirming resources for all department professional learning • Engage Union Partners, Associations and ERGs (PAACE) to better understand the well-being challenges encountered by staff and to further our collective efforts to address them 	Leadership, Capacity Building & School Partnerships

Operational Support Services

Equity, inclusion, and human rights		
Year	Actions	Department(s)
2023-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional learning for each department in anti-racist, anti-oppressive and anti-colonial principles to support their work • Revise procurement policy to incorporate social procurement that will align with equity-based principles • Engage with diverse community organizations to promote awareness and understanding of community partnership opportunities and facility rental options • Incorporate the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) in decision making process for facility renewal projects • Implement staff check-ins for ongoing mental health supports • Develop a community consultation framework for PDSB facilitators for policy and procedure development consultations to ensure that consultations are conducted in a culturally responsive and trauma-informed manner • Implementation of the Policy Management Program – scheduled policy development and review • Develop a student-based website with information on human rights and the complaint process • Conduct virtual sessions on human rights for families 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise and update the Discriminatory Statement Reporting Form for staff to better reflect Code-protected grounds, address process and workflow issues, and better assist with the collection and interpretation of the data • Develop workplan to implement recommendations from the Employment Systems Review • New recruiting software deployed with greater capabilities to ensure hiring consistency • Revise Planning and Accommodation Operating Procedures to align projects, actions and activities with anti-racist, anti-oppressive and anti-colonial principles. 	
<p>2024-2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement Year 1 actions • Examine and evaluate the transportation needs of schools/communities and programs that are underserved to devise efficient and economical solutions • Develop a roster of legal firms and consultants that demonstrate a commitment to equity, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and human rights • Develop Fairness and Equity in Hiring Strategy • Include SVI in the prioritization and recommendation of a) all new major capital projects including new school, additions, childcare centers, sports facilities and other shared or joint-use projects; b) all new school boundaries; c) all enrolment caps and re-direction of students; d) school re-organizations. • Implement, maintain, develop and configure systems that support a diverse community of students and families through processes of registration, report cards and safe arrival 	

<p>2025-2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement previous years' actions • Evaluate implementation of the Policy Management Program to ensure consistent application of policies and procedures 	
<p>2026-2027</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement previous years' actions • Review the Disconnect from Work Policy and Procedures 	

Glossary

Acronym	Definition
AOP	Anti-Oppressive Practices
ARP-OP	Anti-Racism Policy Operating Procedure
BEA	Behavioural Education Assistant
BIEP	Board Improvement and Equity Plan
BSA	Black Students Association
CARC	Collaborative Agreement Review Committee
CAS	Children's Aid Society
COY	Counting on You
CP	Coordinating Principal
CRRP	Culturally Relevant and Responsive Practices
DECE	Designated Early Childhood Educator
DPA	Daily Physical Activity
EA	Educational Assistant
ELL	English Language Learner/Learning
EML	Empowering Modern Learners
EQAO	Education Quality and Accountability Office
ERG	Employee Resource Groups
ESL/ELD	English as a Second Language/ English Language Development
EVS	Peel Elementary Virtual School
FOS	Family of Schools
GSA	Gender-Sexuality Alliance
HR	Human Resources
HRL	Historically Responsive Literacy Framework
HRO	Human Rights Office
I & R	Innovation and Research
IC	Instructional Coordinator
IEP	Individualized Education Plan

IPRC	Identification, Placement, and Review Committees
ISA	Indigenous Student Alliance
LCSP	Leadership Capacity Building & School Partnerships
LEIP	Leading Education Innovation Projects
LLC	Library Learning Commons
MLRT	Modern Learning Resource Teacher
MSA	Muslim Students Association
NTIP	New Teacher Induction Plan
OHRC	Ontario Human Rights Code
PAACE	Peel Association for African Canadian Educators
PBIP	Personal Behaviour Intervention Plan
PDSB	Peel District School Board
PIC	Parent Involvement Committee
PL	Professional Learning
PSSP	Professional Student Services Personnel
RLCP	Regional Learning Choices Programs
SAS	Safe and Accepting Schools
SEA	Special Equipment Allocation
SEL	Social-Emotional Learning
SESEL	Special Education and Social Emotional Learning Department
SESS	Special Education Support Services
SIEP	School Improvement and Equity Plan
SIF	Student Independence Form
SLP	Speech-Language Pathology
SRM	Student Review Meetings
SSA	Sikh Students Association
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics
SVI	Social Vulnerability Index
T.A.S.K.S. Framework	T rouble our Thinking, Beliefs, and World Views; A sk Critical Questions; S eek to Understand; K nowledge Mobilization; S hift Mindsets to Shift Practice

UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

15.1(b)

Board Meeting, June 14, 2023

Directive 17 – Reform of the Guidance Program/System – Update #5

Strategic Alignment:

Directive 19: De-Streaming Pilot

Directive 20: Communications Plan for Secondary Schools Pathways

Report Type:

Update

Prepared by: Paul Da Silva, Associate Director, School Improvement and Equity
Rasulan Hoppie, Superintendent, Secondary Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Submitted by: Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Update:

To provide an update on the progress of the reformation of the guidance program/system.

Highlights:

- Positive impact of the Black Excellence, Guidance Resource Teacher position.
- Development of the communication to families informing them of scholarship and bursary opportunities that are posted on the public facing portion of the board site.
- Lower enrollment impacts number of Black guidance counsellors in secondary schools
- Ongoing Professional Learning needed to support new and experienced guidance counsellors in their role.

Background:

Directive 17

The Board shall develop and implement a plan, with reasonable goals and timelines, to reform its guidance system to address the needs and expectations of all students and their families, and to remedy the inadequacies and gaps in supports and guidance for historically and currently underserved demographic groups, with particular focus on Black students.

The Directive 17 Report, presented at the October 19, 2022, Board Meeting, provided a timeline of events in relation to the reform of the guidance program within Peel District School Board. This update provides the details associated with the progress that has been made to date in relation to those events.

Evidence

Findings/Key Considerations:

Black Excellence: Centrally Assigned Guidance Instructional Resource Teacher

The focus of the Black Excellence: Centrally Assigned Guidance Instructional Resource Teacher, was to work as a member of an interdisciplinary and cross-panel team to support the implementation of Peel's School Improvement and Equity Plan as reflected in the board's priorities of Equity and Inclusion, Engage Math and Empowering Modern Learners Addendum 2020. Over the course of this academic year, the Resource Teacher worked in collaboration with the Instructional Coordinator of Guidance and Career Education, the Resource Teacher for Transitions 7-10, Graduation Coaches and other centrally assigned and school-based staff to support African, Black and Afro-Caribbean student success. The role included providing leadership in support of implementing changes and programs in Guidance education and services. The Black Excellence Guidance Resource Teacher also successfully provided guidance services and pathway planning for Black students and families at the school and system level. They also provided leadership and professional learning to guidance counselors in

middle and secondary schools to build staff capacity. This positive work will continue and be built upon as it is part of a 3 year focus/plan to address the issues raised in the Ministry Review.

Communication of Scholarship and Bursary Opportunities

The central Guidance team worked successfully with the Communications team to develop and communicate scholarship and bursary opportunities that are posted on the public facing portion of the board site. Families have also been made aware of these scholarship and bursary opportunities through the myBlueprint course selection and planning tool and Board sponsored BSA presentations. This ongoing work was also communicated through Graduation Coaches at various schools. Specifically, as evidenced and reported to the Board on May 24, 2023 during the Board Meeting, as part of Directive 20, there was increased awareness of parent/guardian and student awareness and understanding of secondary school program placement and the course selection decision process using the Board's website, media, social media impressions and community engagement. These efforts and best practices will continue as they have been proven to address the information gap experienced by Black students and families as raised in the Ministry Review.

Staffing of Black Guidance Counsellors

The ongoing monitoring of the number of Black counselors assigned to the Guidance role in the secondary panel is being conducted through a Superintendent staffing survey. The results of these surveys are provided below. Additionally, another survey will be sent to the Superintendents to capture the elementary staffing re-organization process, ensuring continued monitoring of the number of counselors in Peel who identify as Black.

It is important to note that the overall decrease in the total number of Black guidance counselors does not reflect a change in direction by all principals in line with the Board's desired direction. In many cases across secondary schools, the decrease is primarily due to a reduction in the number of guidance sections assigned to secondary schools, resulting from lower enrollment therefore, fewer counselors overall.

Despite these challenges, it is crucial to acknowledge that the issues faced by Black students, as highlighted in the Ministry Review, still persist. Therefore, it is imperative to continue encouraging deliberate staffing efforts to address these ongoing concerns.

	Secondary # of Black educators in the guidance role	Elementary # of Black educators in the guidance role
March 2021 (pre-staffing process)	12	6
September 2021	20	13
June 2022	37.6	21.3
May 2023	25.5*	TBD

* Guidance sections dropped across the Board due to low enrollment

Ongoing Professional Learning

Intentional professional learning to address the concerns raised through the Ministry Review began in Spring 2021. Since then, the professional learning has been offered each year to all new and experienced guidance counsellors. The feedback gathered has been overwhelming positive with guidance counsellors being appreciative of the information and strategies for engagement for both students and families.

Impact Analysis

Equity & Human Rights Review:

As has been previously reported, the plan to reform the Guidance program looks to mitigate the disproportionate degrees to which students from historically and currently underserved demographic and identity groups are counselled into various pathway programs. The reform of the Guidance system provides equity of opportunity and adequate Guidance support to all students, with a particular focus on Black, African, and Afro-Caribbean students, and an opportunity to gather feedback from families to review and revise the Guidance program reformation.

Board or Ministry Policy Alignment:

Directive 17 specifically addresses the need for Guidance Reform and intersects with other directives that are responsible for changes that are part of the overall systemic transformation:

Directive 14 (Addressing Disproportionalities)

A third-party review of the Regional Learning Choice Programs has been completed and its recommendations are being reviewed, with the specific aim of addressing and eliminating statistically significant disproportionalities in enrolment, achievement, and outcomes of Black, African, Afro-Caribbean, Indigenous and other racialized students. Additionally, changes to locally developed and, Special Education programs have also been initiated to begin to address and eliminate statistically significant disproportionalities in enrolment and achievement of the same aforementioned student populations. Guidance counsellors have been informed of the changes and as part of their professional learning have been given direction and are therefore responsible to and accountable for informing families and providing these specific student populations of these opportunities accordingly.

Directive 19 (De-streaming Pilot Project):

The Board has designed and implemented a secondary school destreaming pilot project for Grades 9 and 10. The Ministerial directive precedes and exceeds the Ministry's direction on destreaming to all provincial jurisdictions and, as can be seen from the Directive 19 report submitted in June 2022, PDSB's efforts to address and eliminate statistically significant disproportionalities in enrolment, achievement and outcomes of Black, African, Afro-Caribbean, Indigenous and other racialized students, is well on its way to achieving its goal.

Directive 20 (Communication):

As part of the communications plan to better inform the diverse PDSB community, including all parents and students, that secondary school program placement

and course selection decisions are ultimately to be made by students and parents, steps were taken to establish new avenues of communication directly with students/families and guidance counsellors.

Resource/Financial Implications:

The additional cost to the board for the Guidance Reform has been in the form of adding the 3-year Black Excellence, Guidance Resource Teacher position.

Risk Assessment:

Although this is the final report as part of the Directive 17 ministry report, failure to successfully implement the strategies outlined in this update and previous reports will result in our failure to remedy the inadequacies and gaps in supports and guidance for historically and currently underserved demographic groups, particularly Black students.

Community Impact:

There is direct impact on Black students, their families and the community as a whole through the Guidance Reform process. Ongoing communication to the Peel community has taken place through Board meetings and the submission of Directive 17 reports. Specific sections of these reports have also been brought forward to the Black community in Peel through The Alliance. Through Trustee and community questions and feedback, the board has been held accountable and continues to remain accountable to the students and families they serve.

Next Steps

Action Required:

- Continue to monitor the impact of the Black Excellence, Guidance Resource Teacher position.
- Continue to enhance and refine communication to families informing them of scholarship and bursary opportunities that are posted on the public facing portion of the board site.
- Continue to establish and monitor the development of school-based Black Student Associations (BSA) and Black Parent Associations (BPA) across the system.
- Continue to adhere to the timeline and associated actions as outlined in the October 19, 2022, Directive 17 Board report.

Success Measures:

Some key performance indicators for the Guidance Reform will be the number of Black Guidance counsellors in school-based positions captured through the Superintendents of Education survey.

15.2

Board Meeting, June 14, 2023

Directive 24 - Employment Systems Review

Strategic Alignment:

Accountability
Service Delivery and Enhancement
Leadership and Capacity Building

Report Type:

For Information

Overview

Objective:

To submit a final consultant's report on the completion of the Employment System review in accordance with Directive 24, to include the review of the Journey Ahead and collection of data through a workforce staff census.

Prepared by: *Jaspal Gill, Associate Director, Operations and Equity of Access*
Masuma Khangura, Executive Officer, Human Resources Partnerships and Equity

Submitted by: *Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education*

Context:

The Board shall retain an independent expert to conduct a comprehensive employment Systems review (ESR), including a review of the implementation of the recommendations of the 2013 Turner Consulting Group Research Report on “Hiring and Promotion at the Peel District School Board. The consultant additionally conducted a workforce census. The census is a count of employees in an organization, used to understand the diversity of the workforce. The information collected through this *Count Me In Workforce Census* is critical to the Peel District School Board's (PDSB) efforts to promote diversity and inclusion for all staff in the organization, and ultimately, to better serve an increasingly diverse student population. Additionally, this census will also help to fulfill Directive 24 (Employment System Reviews) and Directive 26 (Fairness in Equity and Employment Strategy) issued by the Ministry of Education following the Ministry Review.

An Employment Systems Review (ESR) consists of an assessment of the structures/policies/procedures associated with employment and promotion within an organization, a consideration of how these elements are supportive of some identified groups compared to other groups, an analysis of barriers to groups, and recommendations for remediating barriers along with metrics to assess the success of the employer moving forward.

Consultants Review and Progress

An ESR committee was established in May 2020, and a workplan was developed to bring the work to completion. The attached reports regarding the ESR, Journey Ahead and the Workforce Census have concluded and reports are attached for review and receipt. We thank Turner Consulting groups for their efforts in completing the review. Additionally, we express our sincere regrets for comments that have come across as undermining the principles of research and reporting writing by the Turner Consulting group.

Referenced in the Census report, the collection of disaggregated race and identity-based data is also both urgent and necessary to dismantle anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism and all forms of discrimination and racism, as well as broader issues of systemic discrimination within the PDSB as reported in the Ministry Review.

Additionally, in light of the Ministry Review and with the strategic direction of the Board, we have continued in our efforts to prioritize the hiring of Black and Indigenous staff. The Board has undertaken several initiatives to increase staff diversity, specifically for Black and Indigenous identifying applicants. Focused recruitment initiatives began in 2019. This involved broad communication through internal and external communications in the community, advertising that the Board was actively encouraging Black and Indigenous candidates to apply for positions within the Board. Self-identification data for applicants was collected and used in the selection and screening process. The hiring efforts in the successive focused recruitment sessions, offered the Board a diverse candidate pool for the central hiring process.

The data from the last two years of Central Pool hiring demonstrate that with the focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the screening and selection of candidates, Black and Indigenous candidates had higher opportunities to be successful through the screening process (72% vs 35%) and more likely to be successful in the interview process (84% vs 60%) than non-Black and Indigenous candidates. The process has yielded initial success with positive outcomes for Black and Indigenous identifying applicants. Through the differentiated process, all (100%) of the candidates successful through the screening process and who identified as Black

or Indigenous were offered an interview, and if successful through the interview, were given priority for permanent positions. As a result, 168 Black and Indigenous teachers were offered permanent teaching positions within the Board. Additionally, since the focused recruitment initiatives began in 2019, 221 casual OTs/DECEs/EAs who identify as Black or Indigenous have been offered a position with the Board. We were limited in our attempts to hire staff proportionate to the jobs available during the central hiring process.

We also have a shared belief that it is important to have a workforce that reflects the full diversity of the students and communities we serve. Pursuant to PPM 165 – Teacher Hiring Practices and PDSB Policy 90 – Hiring Practices, the Board will be developing an operating procedure regarding hiring, that is fair and equitable, anti-racist and anti-oppressive, transparent and actively accountable. The development of this operating procedure will incorporate the findings of the Employment Systems Review and will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders.

The reports attached provide intersecting findings and recommendations that will be reviewed and a project plan developed to implement the recommendations in addition to the development of the Fairness and Equity in Employment Strategy.

The Workforce Census will support the Board's goals to:

- Assess if the diversity of the workforce is representative of the diversity of the communities served and the student population
- Inform initiatives to remove barriers to employment and advancement within the organization
- Inform an intentional and targeted recruitment and promotion strategy to ensure the workforce better represents the student population and the labour market in the Greater Toronto Area
- Create programs, priorities and resources to help foster an even more inclusive, respectful and supportive environment for all employees.
-

The key findings of the ESR report will be reviewed and a work plan is being developed to implement the recommendations. The findings are characterized under four key priority areas:

- Strengthen the employment equity infrastructure
- Diversify the workforce at all levels
- Create a more inclusive and welcoming work environment
- Create more equitable policies and practices

Next Steps:

1. Human Resources will review the report and formulate a project plan for the implementation of the recommendations in the ESR.
2. The recommendations from the reports above will assist with the framing of the PDSB's Equity and Fairness in Employment Strategy.

Appendices

Appendix 1-ESR Report

Appendix 2-Workforce Census

Appendix 3-Journey Ahead Report 2013

Appendix 1

PDSB

Employment Systems Review



March 2023

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Executive Summary

In 2020, the Minister of Education released the reviewer’s report on the Peel District School Board (PDSB, the Board). This report documented observations and made recommendations with respect to systemic racism in the areas of human resources practices, board leadership, and governance at the PDSB. Based on the report and recommendations, the Minister of Education issued 27 binding Directives to the Board. This Employment Systems Review (ESR) was conducted in response to Ministry Directive 24, which states the following:

The Board shall retain an independent expert to conduct a comprehensive employment systems review (ESR), including a review of the implementation of the recommendations of the 2013 Turner Consulting Group Research Report on “Hiring and Promotion at the Peel District School Board.”

Turner Consulting Group was contracted by the PDSB to conduct this ESR.

Methodology for the Employment Systems Review

This report is the product of the consulting team’s review and analysis of the Board’s employment policies and practices as well as employee perceptions and experiences. The aim of the ESR was to identify and make recommendations for the elimination of systemic, cultural, and attitudinal barriers to a diverse workforce, equitable employment policies and practices, and an inclusive workplace.

While the consulting team was open to exploring any issue of equity that arose in the course of conducting this review, the research inquiry was focused on issues affecting the groups that have been identified as experiencing persistent and systemic discrimination in the labour market, namely Indigenous peoples, racialized people, persons with disabilities, women, and those who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ (referred to as “Indigenous peoples and the equity-seeking groups” in this report).¹ While the report focuses on these groups, it is important to note that the removal of barriers to the hiring, advancement, and full inclusion of these groups also benefits all employees and offers advantages to the organization as a whole through improved productivity, effectiveness, and responsiveness to the community served.

¹ See *Equality in Employment: A Royal Commission Report* by Judge Rosalie Abella. Released in 1984, this landmark report recommended enactment of employment equity as a government intervention to address the magnitude of systemic discrimination faced by Indigenous peoples, racialized people, persons with disabilities, and women.

The ESR blends the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data collected through the following methods:

- Review of employment policies, written procedures, and related documents
- Review of 28 files for competitions conducted between 2020 and 2021 to assess how policies are implemented and to identify informal practices
- 27 focus groups in which 234 employees participated
- An online Workplace Equity and Inclusion Survey, distributed to all employees via email, in which 1,286 employees participated
- One-on-one interviews with senior leaders and union representatives
- Focus groups with Human Resources staff.

In total, about 1,500 employees participated in these consultations, representing about 8% of the Board's approximately 20,000 permanent employees. This level of participation gave us sufficient data to identify workplace issues and make recommendations for change. However, it did not allow us to identify all issues in all work locations of such a large and geographically dispersed organization.

While we have conducted a thorough review of the PDSB's employment systems for both academic and business employees, this review does not purport to be a comprehensive assessment of all the practices used by the hundreds of school administrators and managers responsible for hiring and managing employees throughout the Board's hundreds of worksites. Instead, this ESR provides a high-level perspective on the policies, practices, and organizational culture of the Board and their impact on employees.

Key Priority Areas

In response to the issues and gaps identified through this review, recommendations are made throughout the report in four key priority areas.

Priority 1: Strengthen the employment equity infrastructure

Despite having a Manager of Workplace Equity for the past 10 years, the PDSB does not have the employment equity infrastructure and maturity that one would expect. Specifically, the consultants did not find evidence of a strong policy framework, an Employment Equity Strategy, equity embedded within human resources practices, a solid understanding of workplace equity among employees, and so on. While *The Journey Ahead Research Report* was released in 2013, and was intended to be the starting point for the Board's workplace equity journey, it appears that the Board's focus was on implementing the actions from the report rather than changing the organization's hiring and promotion policies and practices. While some changes have been made to the Board's hiring practices, Human Resources staff shared with us that they have not yet been given the training and support that they want and need to be able to embed equity into their work.

The result is that a decade after *The Journey Ahead* report, the PDSB remains at the beginning stages of a workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion program that is characterized by a reactive rather than proactive approach and a sole focus on diversity, with little attention being paid to equity and inclusion.

Because the Board does not have a more mature workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion program, its present focus is in response to the Ministry Directives, which focused on addressing racism, specifically anti-Black racism. This has left members of other equity-seeking groups concerned because they continue to experience harassment and discrimination that is not being addressed. The approach that has been taken has also generated and deepened resistance to this work rather than supporting an understanding and commitment to employment equity.

These circumstances also require that the Board's Workplace Equity Program be moved out of the Human Resources Department so that the program has the independence to undertake its work and ensure the implementation of the recommendations from this report.

Priority 2: Diversify the workforce at all levels

Throughout the consultations, employees shared their concern that hiring and advancement at the PDSB continues to be relationship-based rather than skill-based. They shared that while Regulation 274 was intended to change this practice, it nevertheless continued. This means that not only is the Board not hiring the best candidates, but relationship-based hiring continues to limit the diversity of the organization. In addition, employees shared their concern that relationships impact more than just hiring; they also impact advancement opportunities as well as employees' working environments.

While efforts have been undertaken to prioritize the hiring of Indigenous and Black teachers and to incorporate an assessment of lived experience into the hiring process, little attempt has been made to create equitable hiring practices that remove barriers for all groups. A focus on lived experience does not support the hiring of staff from all backgrounds who have a demonstrated commitment to anti-racism/anti-oppression. The results of the recently completed Staff Census identified large gaps in representation that will require significant efforts to address in the coming years.

Given the issues identified with the Board's hiring practices, recommendations have been made to strengthen the hiring and promotion processes. In addition, in order to advance efforts to diversify the workforce, those involved in the hiring process must be supported to recognize and mitigate their unconscious biases and understand the value that diversity brings to the workplace and to students. They must also be provided with the tools, resources, and policies to ensure that hiring is not based on who you know, but what you know.

Priority 3: Create a more inclusive and welcoming work environment

Indigenous employees and those from other identity groups report that PDSB workplaces are not always safe and welcoming environments. In particular, Indigenous and racialized employees spoke about facing daily experiences of inappropriate behaviours, interpersonal oppression, and microaggressions, which are ignored by leaders in the organization. In addition, those from other identity groups shared that the focus on racism, without an equal focus on other forms of oppression has enabled these other forms of oppression to flourish.

Employees also shared that some of their colleagues are openly hostile to the Board's equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts, which we saw evidence of during the consultation process for this ESR.

Given these findings, recommendations are made to support the PDSB in creating a more welcoming and inclusive work environment where staff have a better understanding of equity and are comfortable with and supportive of colleagues and students from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities.

These efforts need to be championed and modelled by the Board's senior leaders and supported by mandatory training.

Priority 4: Create more equitable policies and practices

The review of employment policies and the hiring process identified several areas that need to be addressed to strengthen policies and practices as well as to ensure compliance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. This will support the PDSB to create equitable employment policies and processes that support the hiring, advancement, and full inclusion of a qualified and diverse workforce.

Reports from employees regarding the provision of accommodation to employees with disabilities and their issues with requesting and receiving accommodation indicate that a full review is warranted to ensure that the Board is meeting its duty to accommodate, short of undue hardship, under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Addressing these issues is particularly important as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Like employees in other professions, teachers have been experiencing burnout and leaving the profession over the past few years. The result is that Ontario has moved from having an oversupply of teachers to an undersupply, with boards across the province struggling to recruit and retain not only permanent contract teachers but also occasional teachers and others for critical school-based positions.

Given these challenges, the Board needs to foster psychologically safe and welcoming workplaces that do not worsen mental and physical health issues. In addition, the Board needs to focus on providing employees with the needed accommodation that keeps them at work rather than forcing employees to take

a medical leave of absence. Bringing about this change requires a change in the Board's approach to Human Resources management and a change in the Board's attitude toward employees—something employees identified as foundational to many of the Board's workplace issues. Employees shared that they are seen as disposable and easily replaceable and that their requests for accommodations are seen as attempts to avoid work.

As the pandemic continues, the role of the Human Resources Department has increased in importance. While many school boards have focused on the impact of the pandemic on students, the PDSB must ensure that it also pays attention to the impact of the pandemic on employees if it is to ensure that it has sufficient and capable staff to support the learning and well-being of students.

Part A: Introduction

1. PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

In 2020, the Minister of Education released the reviewer’s report on the Peel District School Board (PDSB, the Board). This report documented observations and made recommendations with respect to systemic racism in the areas of human resource practices, board leadership, and governance at the PDSB. Based on the report and recommendations, the Minister of Education issued 27 binding Directives to the Board. This Employment Systems Review (ESR) was conducted in response to Ministry Directive 24, which states the following:

The Board shall retain an independent expert to conduct a comprehensive employment systems review (ESR), including a review of the implementation of the recommendations of the 2013 Turner Consulting Group Research Report on “Hiring and Promotion at the Peel District School Board.”

This report summarizes the methodology, findings, and recommendations from the ESR. The recommendations of the ESR will inform the development of the Employment Equity Plan, which will assist the PDSB in achieving a truly equitable, diverse, and inclusive organization.

The review of the implementation of *The Journey Ahead Research Report* is summarized in a separate report.

2. OVERVIEW OF AN EMPLOYMENT SYSTEMS REVIEW

2.1 The purpose of an Employment Systems Review

An ESR is a comprehensive review of written and unwritten, formal and informal employment policies, practices, and procedures that identifies and makes recommendations for the removal of systemic/institutional, cultural, and attitudinal barriers to equitable policies and practices, a diverse workforce, and an inclusive work environment. An ESR provides an organization with information on what is working well and what requires improvement so that it can build on its strengths and remove the identified barriers.

2.2 What are barriers?

Barriers are formal or informal policies, practices, and procedures that operate either by themselves or together to restrict or exclude groups of employees from entry into,

advancement in, and full participation within an organization. Although any employee can face barriers in the organization for a variety of reasons, certain groups (i.e., women, racialized people, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities) have faced persistent and systemic barriers to gaining employment commensurate with their education, skills, and experience, as well as advancement and full inclusion in the workplace.² As such, these groups have been identified as the focus of the federal *Employment Equity Act*. In addition, the PDSB has also included those who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ as part of this ESR because of evidence that this group also faces discrimination in the labour market and harassment on the job.³ Recognizing that Indigenous peoples are not just another equity-seeking group, we refer to these five groups as “Indigenous peoples and the equity-seeking groups” throughout this report.

While the focus is on these five groups, issues that affect other groups—newcomers, those from non-Christian faith systems, and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds—will be noted where issues have been identified. Furthermore, while the focus is on Indigenous peoples and the equity-seeking groups, it is important to note that the removal of employment barriers benefits all employees and offers advantages to the organization through improved productivity, effectiveness, responsiveness to the community served, and outcomes for all students.

Barriers fall into three categories: systemic/institutional, cultural, and attitudinal. These barriers are interrelated and reinforce each other.

Systemic/institutional barriers

Systemic barriers are embedded in the policies and practices of an organization. They arise from the use of criteria that are not job related or are not required for the safe and efficient operation of the organization. Systemic barriers might have evolved from historical practices (i.e., the way the organization has always done things) that possibly exclude Indigenous peoples and members of the equity-seeking groups or place them at a disadvantage in the workforce. On the surface, the policies and practices may appear to be neutral or even reasonable. They may also result from unconscious biases on the part of decision makers. They may, however, have a negative impact on members of certain groups.

² See *Equality in Employment: A Royal Commission Report* by Judge Rosalie Abella. Released in 1984, this landmark report recommended enactment of employment equity as a government intervention to address the magnitude of systemic discrimination faced by Indigenous peoples, racialized people, persons with disabilities, and women.

³ See for example:

The Canadian Press. (2014, September 1). *Transgender unemployment is a result of discrimination, advocate says*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/transgender-unemployment-is-a-result-of-discrimination-advocate-says-1.2752459>

Serebrin, J. (2018, May 15). Survey reveals Canada still has a ways to go on workplace discrimination. *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/the-future-of-work/survey-reveals-canada-still-has-a-ways-to-go-on-workplace-discrimination/article27006279>

Examples of systemic barriers that Indigenous peoples and the equity-seeking groups face in the labour market include:

- Staffing through personal networks, which could prevent individuals outside these networks from hearing about, applying for, and demonstrating their competency for certain jobs, and
- Informal mentoring and networking that support the advancement of some groups and disadvantage Indigenous employees and employees from the equity-seeking groups.

Cultural barriers

Barriers can also be created by an organizational culture that isolates and alienates Indigenous peoples and members of the equity-seeking groups, sometimes unknowingly, and one in which stereotypes and preconceived notions about these groups persist and inform decision making. The impact can reinforce the underrepresentation of these groups in the organization, thereby reinforcing the pre-existing biases about these groups.

Cultural barriers can also be systemic in that they may be embedded in the informal practices of the organization. In addition, cultural barriers can influence and be influenced by the individual attitudes of employees and leaders within the organization.

Examples of cultural barriers that Indigenous peoples and the equity-seeking groups face in the labour market include:

- A work environment that excludes or undermines the success of Indigenous peoples and members of the equity-seeking groups in various ways, such as isolating them, withholding critical information, or creating an unwelcoming work environment, and
- Assumptions that permeate the organization about what certain groups of people can and cannot do and which occupations they are suited for.

Attitudinal barriers

Attitudinal barriers result from the attitudes and behaviours of individuals. They can arise from unconscious biases, inaccurate assumptions and stereotypes, as well as an individual's actual intent to be discriminatory.

Examples of attitudinal barriers that Indigenous peoples and the equity-seeking groups face in the labour market include:

- Not hiring a young person for a job because the manager thinks they may get pregnant and go on maternity leave shortly after being hired⁴

⁴ See for example: Press Association. (2014, August 12). 40% of managers avoid hiring younger women to get around maternity leave. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2014/aug/12/managers-avoid-hiring-younger-women-maternity-leave>

- Removing resumes or applications from individuals with “ethnic” or Indigenous-sounding names because of stereotypes about these groups,⁵ and
- Not hiring a candidate with a disability because of discomfort interacting with persons with disabilities or assumptions that accommodation may be too costly.⁶

Cultural and attitudinal barriers are not found in the written policies or procedures of the organization, and in fact may not be consistent with the organization’s stated policies.

These barriers may be additionally affected by organizational barriers that impact the organization’s ability to implement employment equity, create competing priorities, and limit the effectiveness of the organization’s employment equity efforts. This includes factors such as the shortage of occasional teachers, the ability to appropriately fund employment equity efforts, and an increase in people leaving the teaching profession.

2.3 The benefits of an Employment Systems Review

The argument for workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion has gone beyond the moral argument that it is “the right thing to do.” There is a growing body of literature that makes a compelling business case for ensuring and supporting the creation of a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment. The literature identifies several benefits, including:

Increased student success and well-being.⁷ A diverse workforce helps the PDSB understand and respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse student population in three areas:

⁵ See for example: Oreopoulos, P., & Dechief, D. (2012, February). *Why do some employers prefer to interview Matthew, but not Samir? New evidence from Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver*. Canadian Labour Market and Skills Researcher Network. Working Paper No. 95. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2018047

⁶ See for example: Kaye, H., Jones, E., & Jans, L. (2010). Why employers don’t hire people with disabilities: Research findings and policy implications. *Disability and Health Journal*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2009.08.086>

⁷ See for example:

Cherng, H. S., & Halpin, P. F. (2016). The importance of minority teachers: Student perceptions of minority versus white teachers. *Educational Researcher*, 45(7), 407–420. <https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0013189X16671718>

Gershenson, S., Hart, C. M. D., Lindsay, C. A., & Papageorge, N. W. (2017, March). *The long-run impact of same-race teachers*. IZA Institute of Labor Economics. <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/10630/the-long-run-impacts-of-same-race-teachers>

Stuart Wells, A., Fox, L., & Cordova-Cobo, D. (2016, February 9). *How racially diverse schools and classrooms can benefit all students*. The Century Foundation. <https://tcf.org/content/report/how-racially-diverse-schools-and-classrooms-can-benefit-all-students>

- At the *strategy level*, where strategic decisions about policies are made
- At the *design level*, where decisions about human resources practices, curriculum, and instructional practice are made, and
- At the *service level*, which is the point of contact between the PDSB and students, their parents, and the community.

In addition, research shows that student success and outcomes such as well-being, test scores, attendance, and suspension rates are improved when students see themselves reflected in their school materials and their school environments and as school boards develop more inclusive and responsive policies, programs, and practices.

Strengthened confidence in public education. Board employees that reflect, understand, and respond to the needs of students, their parents, and the community also help to improve public confidence in publicly funded education. As noted in *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*, an equitable and inclusive education system is fundamental to achieving high levels of student achievement, reducing gaps in student achievement, and increasing public confidence in publicly funded education.⁸

Furthermore, an equitable and inclusive education system is recognized internationally as critical to delivering a high-quality education for all learners.⁹

Strengthened employee relations and confidence in the PDSB as an employer of choice. Organizations that implement formal nondiscriminatory and inclusive human resources policies and practices, increased transparency, and consistent human resources practices also strengthen employees' confidence that they are being treated in a fair and equitable manner. These practices, along with a welcoming and inclusive work environment, help to improve employee morale and loyalty and reduce complaints, grievances, and turnover.

Improved image of the PDSB as an employer of choice. Employers that are known to have a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion are more likely to be positively regarded by the public in general and by prospective employees in particular. This positive corporate image then increases the organization's ability to attract and retain high-calibre employees from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities.

⁸ Ministry of Education. (2022, June 15). *Greater equity means greater student success*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/greater-equity-means-greater-student-success>

⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2008). *Inclusive education: The way of the future* [Reference document]. UNESCO International Conference on Education, 48th session, Geneva, Switzerland. https://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Policy_Dialogue/48th_ICE/CONFINTED_48-3_English.pdf

Improved employee job satisfaction and productivity.¹⁰ Employers that create and support a work environment in which all employees feel valued and safe from harassment and that treat their employees fairly and with respect are typically rewarded with increased morale, better performance, and higher productivity.

Increased creativity and innovation.¹¹ Organizations that encourage and support workplace inclusion are better able to attract and retain top talent from diverse backgrounds, communities, and identities. This increases the diversity of perspectives, approaches, knowledge, and skills within the organization, which can then boost the organization's creativity, innovation, and overall success.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 ESR Reference Committee

The ESR Reference Committee set the direction for the ESR, guided the consultants' work, and provided input into the interpretation of the data collected. The Committee also provided input on:

- The methodology for the ESR
- The consultation strategy (e.g., the number of focus groups, the consultation questions, etc.)
- The communications materials, and
- The final report.

The ESR Reference Committee played an advisory role and provided input on the direction and focus of the ESR. The Reference Committee also reviewed and approved the final report. The ESR Reference Committee was composed of:

- Representatives from the 8 Employee Resource Groups
- Representatives from the 14 unions and associations

¹⁰ Stazyk, E. C., Davis, R. S., & Liang, J. (2012). *Examining the links between workforce diversity, organizational goal clarity, and job satisfaction* [Paper presentation]. 2012 Annual Meeting and Exhibition of the American Political Science Association, New Orleans, LA, USA. <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/individuals/pdf/DiversityClarityandSatisfaction.pdf>

¹¹ See for example:

McKinsey & Company. (2015). *Women in the workplace*. <https://womenintheworkplace.com>

Reynolds, A., & Lewis, D. (2017, March 30). Teams solve problems faster when they're more cognitively diverse. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2017/03/teams-solve-problems-faster-when-theyre-more-cognitively-diverse>

Rigger, D. (2018, March 12). *How a diverse workforce can be your competitive advantage*. Human Resource Director Australia. www.hcamag.com/opinion/how-a-diverse-workforce-can-be-your-competitive-advantage-247585.aspx

- Superintendent of Indigenous Education, Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression
- Associate Director
- Superintendent of Human Resources
- 2 Assistant Directors Human Resources
- Workplace Equity Manager.

3.2 ESR Steering Committee

A smaller ESR Steering Committee was formed to work more closely with the consultants to guide their work. The ESR Steering Committee was comprised of:

- Representatives from the 8 Employee Resource Groups
- 2 staff from the Director's Office
- 2 workplace equity staff
- 2 Human Resources staff
- 1 community member.

3.3 Employment Systems Review framework

In conducting this ESR, the consultants relied on the Canadian Human Rights Commission's "Framework for Compliance with the Employment Equity Act," as this document outlines the legal framework and assessment factors related to an ESR as well as the general approach to be taken by employers.¹² The framework identifies how important it is to review each employment policy, practice, and system as well as the corporate culture and work environment in order to determine whether they present a barrier to prospective and existing Indigenous employees and employees from the equity-seeking groups.

The review includes an assessment of each policy or practice in terms of the following criteria:

- **Legal compliance**—To ensure compliance with equity-related legislation such as the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*
- **Consistency**—To ensure that policies and accompanying procedures are applied in a consistent manner throughout the organization

¹² Canadian Human Rights Commission. (2002). *Employment Systems Review: Guide to the audit process*. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2007/chrc-ccdp/HR4-3-2002E.pdf

- **Job relatedness**—To ensure that each policy or practice clearly demonstrates a bona fide occupational requirement, is objective, and constitutes a business necessity
- **Validity**—To determine whether each policy or practice objectively predicts successful job performance
- **Adverse impact**—To assess whether each policy or practice has a disproportionately negative effect on Indigenous employees and employees from the equity-seeking groups
- **Accommodation**—To assess whether there are policies and procedures in place to identify and remove barriers in the workplace that keep qualified employees from participating in all aspects of employment and provide the accommodation needed by employees, and
- **Inclusive**—To assess whether policies and practices are inclusive toward all employees, including those who identify as Indigenous or as members of the equity-seeking groups.

This ESR also explored whether the organization lacks policies or practices that would support the creation of more equitable hiring and promotion practices, greater workforce diversity that is reflective of the community served, and a more inclusive organizational culture.

3.4 The employment systems reviewed

The following employment systems were reviewed through this process:

- **Recruitment, hiring, and selection**, including outreach recruitment, job applications, notification and provision of accommodation during the hiring process, fair and consistent application of selection criteria, interview process, and interview questions
- **Development and promotion**, including access to career development, access to informal mentoring and networking, and the vice principal and principal promotion process
- **Accommodation and workplace accessibility**, including accommodation for persons with disabilities, religious accommodation, and work/life balance, and
- **Organizational culture and work environment**, including equity policies and programs, workplace harassment, discrimination and violence prevention policies and programs, as well as individual attitudes toward equity and diversity.

3.5 Data collection methods

Document review

Human resources policies, written procedures, and other related documents were reviewed to identify potential barriers in employment policies, as well as barriers created by how managers, school administrators, and Human Resources staff implement these policies.

The list of the policies and documents reviewed is included in Appendix A.

Competition file review

Competition files are intended to be a record of the hiring and selection process. In total, 28 files for competitions held between 2020 and 2021 were randomly selected and reviewed to determine whether staffing policies and practices are being applied in a fair and consistent manner. These included competitions for permanent teachers, long-term occasional teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, as well as nonteaching positions.

Typically, a file is kept for each competition and includes information such as:

- Job description and job ad
- Selection criteria
- Interview questions and candidate responses
- Reference check information
- Names of interview panel members and reports
- Interview schedule
- Rating and ranking materials, and
- Sufficient information to explain the assessment of each applicant, including screening, rating, and ranking steps.

Consultations with employees

An essential component of an ESR is consultation with employees. Employees' perceptions of what happens in the organization and their experiences in the workplace are a critical source of information. Their observations act as a window into whether employment systems are fair, or perceived to be fair, and identify how organizational practices might differ from organizational policies. Consultations were conducted using various methods and offered all employees multiple opportunities to provide input into this ESR.

In total, about 1,500 employees participated in these consultations, representing about 8% of the Board's approximately 20,000 permanent employees. This level of participation gave us sufficient data to identify workplace issues and make recommendations for change. However, it did not allow us to identify all issues in all work locations of such a large and geographically dispersed organization.

Consultations were held with employees through focus groups and an online survey. In addition, senior leaders, Human Resources staff, equity staff, and bargaining unit representatives provided input through one-on-one interviews.

Workplace Equity and Inclusion Survey: The link to the online survey was distributed to all employees by email. The survey was open from March 21 to May 2, 2022. Emails were sent to all employees to invite them to share their perspectives through the confidential online survey.

In total, 1,286 employees completed the survey by the cut-off date.

Unions: In addition, emails were sent to all 15 unions, federations, and associations inviting them to participate in one-on-one telephone interviews to share their perspectives on issues of equity. Eleven accepted the invitation to participate in an interview.

Senior leaders: Twelve senior leaders also participated in one-on-one interviews to further explore workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion issues and to identify the key challenges the organization will face in implementing the recommendations from this review.

Human Resources staff: Small group discussions were also held with Human Resources staff; 12 Human Resources staff participated.

Focus groups: A total of 234 people registered to participate in 27 focus groups that were held between April 19 and May 11, 2022. Each virtual focus group allowed up to 10 participants. Focus groups were set up by identity group, with separate focus groups arranged for those who identify as Indigenous, racialized, Black, living with a disability, 2SLGBTQ+, women who do not belong to another group, and men who do not belong to another group.

Separate focus groups were also held for academic staff, business staff, as well as managers and school administrators.

Emails were distributed to employees asking them to register directly with the consultant to participate in the focus groups.

The discussions covered various aspects of employment practices and the working environment, what impact they might have on employees, barriers created by organizational culture and individual attitudes, and strategies to remove these barriers.

Information from the focus groups is summarized in this report. To maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of the employees who participated in the focus groups, no names or identifying information are included.

4. LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

While we have conducted a thorough review of the PDSB's employment systems for both academic and business staff, this review does not purport to be a comprehensive review of all the employment practices used by the hundreds of school administrators and managers responsible for hiring and supervising staff throughout the Board's hundreds of workplaces.

The consultants also did not review the hiring methods and management practices employed by each manager and supervisor in the PDSB or the work environment of each of the hundreds of workplaces throughout the Board. Rather, the findings refer to the system as a whole and use employees' comments as indicators of issues that need to be addressed at the corporate level.

Part B: The Context

5. THE DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

A number of demographic and social trends are impacting the diversity of both the province and the PDSB school community. These trends are also shaping the issues of workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion that organizations are challenged to address and the urgency of addressing these issues.

The PDSB serves a growing and increasingly diverse population of over 1.4 million residents. As a public school board in Ontario, the PDSB must be responsive to its increasingly diverse school communities. As a public institution, the Board also has the moral and legal obligation to ensure that its hiring practices are nondiscriminatory, that it fosters harassment- and discrimination-free workplaces, and that its workplaces are representative of the rich diversity of Peel Region.

This section briefly explores the changing diversity of Peel Region that the Board must be aware of if it is to become a truly equitable, diverse, and inclusive organization.

5.1 Increased immigrant population

In order to maintain population and labour market growth, the country's immigration targets have continued to increase over the past decades with current plans to welcome over 500,000 new permanent residents in 2025.¹³ This reliance on immigration for population and labour market growth means that Canada as a whole and Peel Region in particular will become increasingly racially, ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and religiously diverse.

In the 1960s, Canada's immigration policy shifted toward being more open to immigration from around the world. This change came after the country's previous policy restricting immigration to people primarily from Europe came under increased scrutiny and was deemed to be morally, economically, and politically unsustainable. The introduction of the point-based immigration system allowed increased migration of newcomers from diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. Since the 1980s, the majority of new immigrants to Canada have come from countries outside of Europe.

The recently released 2021 Census of Canada data shows that 52% of Peel Region's

¹³ Government of Canada. (2022). *An immigration plan to grow the economy*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/11/an-immigration-plan-to-grow-the-economy.html>

population was born outside of Canada. In addition:¹⁴

- 104,125 (or 7% of the population) immigrants residing in Peel Region arrived between 2016 and 2021
- The top 10 countries of origin for recent immigrants to Peel Region between 2016 and 2021 were India, Pakistan, Philippines, Syria, China, Nigeria, Iraq, Jamaica, United States, and Egypt. By far the largest number of newcomers have arrived from India.

5.2 Growing racialized population

Fuelled largely by immigration, Ontario's racialized population is growing at a faster rate than the provincial population and makes up an increasing proportion of the provincial population.

As Table 1 shows, between 2006 and 2021, the racialized population in Ontario grew by 34% (from 2,745,200 to 4,817,360), while the population of the province grew by only 11% (from 12,851,821 to 14,223,942). As a result, the racialized population increased from 21% of the population in 2006 to 34% of the provincial population in 2021.

Table 1. Rate of Population Growth, Racialized and Total Population (2006 to 2021).					
Year	Racialized Population			Total Population	
	#	% of Population	Rate of Growth Since 2006	#	Rate of Growth Since 2006
ONTARIO					
2006	2,745,200	21%	—	12,851,821	—
2021	4,817,360	34%	75%	14,223,942	11%
PEEL REGION					
2006	576,665	58%	—	988,958	—
2021	990,345	69%	72%	1,439,075	46%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2006, 2021.

The racialized population in Peel Region has also increased at a faster rate than the general population. As Table 1 shows, between 2006 and 2021 the racialized population in Peel Region grew by 72% (from 576,665 to 990,345), while the overall population of Peel Region grew by 46% (from 988,958 to 1,439,075). As such, the racialized population in Peel Region increased from 58% of the population in 2006 to 69% of the population in 2021.

Statistics Canada projects that the racialized population will continue to grow at a faster rate than the general population. As a result, racialized people will represent a larger proportion of the population in the coming years. While the growth of the

¹⁴ Statistics Canada. (2023). *Census profile, 2021 Census of Population*. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=peel%20&DGUIDlist=2021A00033521&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

racialized population will be fuelled largely by immigration, a growing proportion of racialized people are Canadian-born. As of the 2021 Census, about 31% of racialized people were born in Canada.¹⁵

5.3 Growing Indigenous population

The 2021 Census enumerated 406,585 Indigenous peoples in Ontario, representing 2.9% of the provincial population. This is the largest number of Indigenous peoples in any province or territory, representing 22% of the total Indigenous population in Canada.

Table 2. Rate of Population Growth, Indigenous and Total Population (2006 to 2021).					
Year	Indigenous Population			Total Population	
	#	% of Population	Rate of Growth Since 2006	#	Rate of Growth Since 2006
ONTARIO					
2006	242,490	1.9%	—	12,851,821	—
2021	406,590	2.9%	68%	14,223,942	11%
PEEL REGION					
2006	5,500	0.6%	—	988,958	—
2021	7,430	0.5%	35%	1,439,075	46%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2006, 2021.

As Table 2 shows, the Indigenous population in Ontario grew by 68% between 2006 and 2021 (from 242,490 to 406,590). During that same period, the population of the province grew by 11%.

The data shows that while the Indigenous population in Peel Region grew by 35% between 2006 and 2021, it grew at a slower rate than the overall population (46%). In 2021, Indigenous peoples represented 0.5% of the population of Peel Region.

Historically, Indigenous peoples in Canada have faced many barriers that are specific to their communities. Canada has acknowledged the injustices of the residential school system and Sixties Scoop and has committed to addressing the structural and systemic racism that Indigenous peoples continue to experience. In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, the Government of Ontario has committed \$250 million over 3 years for programs and actions focused on reconciliation.¹⁶ This includes mandatory Indigenous content in the teacher education programs offered by Ontario's faculties of education on subjects such as residential schools, the legacy of colonialism, and the rights and responsibilities of all Ontarians as treaty people.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada. (2022, November 23). *Racialized groups*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/12-581-x/2022001/sec3-eng.htm>

¹⁶ Government of Ontario. (2020). *The journey together: Ontario's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/journey-together-ontarios-commitment-reconciliation-indigenous-peoples>

5.4 Growing population of persons with disabilities

The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability found that about one in five (22%) of the Canadian population aged 15 and over had one or more disabilities. The survey also found:

- Women are more likely to have a disability than men (24% versus 20% respectively)
- Disabilities related to pain (15%), flexibility (10%), mobility (10%) and mental health (7%) were the most common disability types
- Among those aged 25 to 64 years, persons with disabilities were less likely to be employed (59%) than those without disabilities (80%); as the level of severity increased, the likelihood of being employed decreased.

The analysis of the data suggests that one factor contributing to the increase in the number of persons with physical disabilities is aging. Because the prevalence of most types of disabilities increases with age (particularly physical disabilities), an aging population will result in a higher overall disability rate. As such, we can expect to see disability rates increase as the Baby Boom generation grows older. This trend means that more employees will require accommodation from their employers to remain productive in their jobs.

Furthermore, the prevalence of mental illness in Canada has also been increasing. One study estimates that in any given year, 1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental health or addiction issue.¹⁷ While the stigma associated with mental illness has been diminishing over the years, significant stigma remains. Canadians are more reluctant to tell friends or co-workers that they have a family member with a mental illness (just 50%) than they are sharing a diagnosis of cancer (72%).¹⁸

Persons with disabilities have long experienced patterns of exclusion from all aspects of society, including education, housing, transportation, and employment. Although some people may have a physical disability, this challenge may not necessarily interfere with their ability to do a particular job or to deliver top-quality performance in that job. It does mean that certain kinds of accommodation may need to be provided to enable persons with disabilities to function to the best of their ability in the workplace. As persons with disabilities continue to become more fully integrated into society and educational institutions, more will also be entering the labour market. As such, more employers will need to consider accommodation beginning at the hiring stage and throughout the employee's work life.

¹⁷ Smetanin, P., Stiff, D., Briante, C., et al. (2011). *The life and economic impact of major mental illnesses in Canada: 2011 to 2041*. RiskAnalytica, on behalf of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/MHCC_Report_Base_Case_FINAL_ENG_0_0.pdf

¹⁸ Canadian Medical Association. (2008). *8th Annual National Report Card on Health Care*. https://www.cma.ca/multimedia/CMA/Content/Images/Inside_cma/Annual_Meeting/2008/GC_Bulletin/National_Report_Card_EN.pdf

Although the Ontario *Human Rights Code* provides for equal rights and opportunities and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability (and other protected grounds), systemic barriers in organizations persist. These barriers prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in many areas of life, including education and employment. As a result, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) was enacted to achieve accessibility for all Ontarians with disabilities on or before January 1, 2025, through the development, implementation, and enforcement of accessibility standards in key areas.

5.5 Increased social acceptance of, and openness among, people who identify as 2SLGBTQ+

In 2005, same-sex marriage was legalized in Canada. In 2012, gender identity and gender expression were added as protected grounds to the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. These legal protections and greater social inclusion have resulted in more adults being open about their sexual orientation and gender identity, while children and youth are being increasingly open about their sexual orientation and gender identity at younger ages.¹⁹

In 2021, Statistics Canada included for the first time a question on gender and the precision of “at birth” on the sex question, allowing all cisgender, transgender, and non-binary individuals to report their gender.²⁰ The findings indicate that of Canadians aged 15 and over, 0.3% identified as transgender or non-binary.

Questions about sexual orientation are not yet included on the Canadian Census. One estimate of the size of the 2SLGBTQ+ population comes from the 2014 Canadian Community Health Survey, the first Statistics Canada survey to include a question on sexual orientation. In total, as of 2014, 3% of Canadians aged 18 to 59 self-identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual—1.7% self-identified as gay or lesbian and 1.3% as bisexual.²¹

With increased legal protections and greater social acceptance of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in Canadian society, there is a greater openness in the workplace. However, not all workplaces are as accepting of 2SLGBTQ+ employees, which sometimes results in discrimination and marginalization in the workplace. Some people who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ report having to remain “in the closet” to maintain positive relationships with their managers and colleagues, protect their jobs, and protect their opportunities for advancement.

¹⁹ CBC News. (2016, October 25). *Transgender kids coming out younger, experts say after judges ordered 4-year-old to dress like a boy*. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/trans-coming-out-earlier-1.3820013>

²⁰ Statistics Canada. (2022, April 27). *Canada is the first country to provide census data on transgender and non-binary people*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220427/dq220427b-eng.htm>

²¹ Statistics Canada. (2015). *Canadian Community Health Survey, 2014*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/150617/dq150617b-eng.htm>

6. THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

6.1 The organization

The PDSB operates within a particular context that is important to understand and consider when drawing conclusions and considering action to address the issues identified in this review.

The PDSB employs approximately 20,000 employees that directly or indirectly support the education of over 155,000 students in 259 schools.²² PDSB schools are located in urban, suburban, and rural communities, and serve students of all abilities representing diverse racial, ethnic, and religious groups as well as diverse sexual and gender identities.

The majority of PDSB employees are represented by a union, federation, or association. There are 15 bargaining units, federations, and associations that represent academic and business employees. Each collective agreement sets out hiring procedures for that particular group of employees.

6.2 Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan

In September 2017, the Ministry of Education launched *Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan*²³ to comprehensively address systemic barriers in Ontario's education system. The action plan, which is being implemented by the Education Equity Secretariat in partnership with school boards and education partners, addresses inequities in four areas: school and classroom practices; leadership, governance, and human resources practices; data collection, integration, and reporting; and organizational culture change.

6.3 Staff census

In 2022, the PDSB conducted a voluntary, anonymous, and confidential employee census to understand the makeup of its workforce, inform decision making, and foster workplace inclusion and equity. Key findings from the census include the following:

- 77% of employees identified as female and 18% as male
- 6% of respondents identified as 2SLGBTQ+
- 1.5% identified as Indigenous
- 36% identified as racialized
- 8% of respondents identified as living with a disability, with the top three disabilities being physical disability or health condition, mental health disability, or learning disability.

²² Peel District School Board. (n.d.). *About Us*. <https://www.peelschools.org/about-us>

²³ Ministry of Education. (2017). *Ontario's education equity action plan*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-education-equity-action-plan>

Part C: Findings & Recommendations

This section summarizes the findings from the following aspects of the review:

- Review of policies, practices, and documents
- Review of staffing files, and
- Consultations with employees.

In each section, we provide:

- A summary of the findings and any conclusions drawn, and
- Recommendations to remove the identified barriers and address the identified issues.

7. POLICY AND PROCEDURE REVIEW

This section summarizes the review of the PDSB's human resources policies, procedures, and other relevant documents. We include a summary of each document, identify areas of strength, and then identify any issues and areas of concern.

Recommendations are made to strengthen the policy or procedure so that it complies with equity-related legislation, meets the organization's duty of care as an employer, and supports workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion. At the end of this section, any gaps in the PDSB's policy framework are identified and recommendations made to fill these gaps.

A list of documents reviewed is included in Appendix A.

7.1 Guiding documents

Whistleblower Policy

This policy communicates the expectation that all employees and volunteers uphold the public trust and demonstrate integrity in all of their dealings on behalf of the Board.

This policy is fairly comprehensive in that it:

- Encourages the reporting of suspicions of wrongdoing
- Specifies that when wrongdoing is confirmed by an investigation, appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken, up to and including termination of employment and/or contract

- Provides a definition of wrongdoing as including but not limited to fraud, misappropriation of funds and assets, irregular or improper accounting, conflicts of interest, time theft, and unprofessional conduct
- Allows for reporting to one's supervisor or a third-party whistleblower reporting service
- States the obligation of the Director of Education to investigate any and all incidents of suspected or alleged acts of wrongdoing
- Protects the identity of the whistleblower unless the issue requires investigation by law enforcement
- Outlines the process for reporting and investigating wrongdoing
- Offers protection from reprisal for reporting wrongdoing in good faith, and
- Identifies interference with an investigation and counselling to interfere with an investigation as a violation of the policy.

While this is a very comprehensive policy, it could be strengthened by requiring that an annual summary of reported incidents be prepared to enable the PDSB to identify any trends and systemic issues that may need to be addressed proactively.

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the Whistleblower Policy be revised to require an annual summary of complaints, investigations, and findings to be presented to the Director of Education to enable the identification of any trends and systemic issues that may need to be addressed proactively by the PDSB.

Code of Conduct Policy

The Code of Conduct Policy is designed to advance the goal of preserving public trust and confidence and to guide employees' behaviours to be professional, efficient, and impartial while carrying out Board-assigned duties and responsibilities.

The implementation of this policy is not supported by operating procedures. The policy fails to specify how breaches of the Code of Conduct Policy are to be reported and investigated.

The policy could also be strengthened by providing for the collection and analysis of data to understand the types of breaches that have been reported. This would inform additional education that may be needed as well as any systemic issues that ought to be addressed proactively.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended that the Code of Conduct Policy be revised to require that an annual summary be produced and shared with the Director of Education on reported Code of Conduct violations, investigations, and findings to identify any trends and systemic issues that may need to be addressed.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended that the Code of Conduct Policy be supported by operating procedures that specify how breaches are to be reported and investigated. The policy should also address who will determine what constitutes a conflict of interest and responsibilities not only to address this situation, but also to ensure that no future conflicts of interest arise. Normally these types of decisions are made at a senior management level and can be quite complex, requiring proper assessment and interpretation and potentially legal advice.

Conflict of Interest Policy

This policy is designed to support the PDSB's duty to safeguard the public interest and trust in public education. It states the responsibilities of employees and volunteers to avoid or resolve situations that may otherwise place them in ethically questionable situations, with the goal of fairly resolving conflicts of interest.

The policy defines conflict of interest as any situation in which an individual has a personal or financial interest that may affect their judgement and/or performance of their duties, cause them to act in a way that is not in the best interest of the Board, or negatively affect the reputation of the Board.

This policy also:

- Identifies conflicts of interest as including hiring or staff allocation, responsibility for students to whom staff are related, involvement in businesses or other outside activity or interest, use of PDSB equipment or resources, and purchasing
- Specifies the duty to disclose any actual, possible, or perceived conflict of interest
- Specifies that any disclosure will be treated confidentially
- Protects those reporting from reprisal, and
- Identifies the consequences of breaches of the policy, up to and including termination of employment.

While the policy identifies conflicts of interest as including hiring or staff allocation, it fails to specify that employees are not to influence hiring decisions that involve family members or close personal friends.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the Conflict of Interest Policy specify that employees and volunteers are not to participate in or influence hiring decisions that involve family members or close personal friends, and that doing so would be a conflict of interest.

Conflict of Interest Operating Procedure

This operating procedure supports the implementation of the policy and addresses:

- Guiding principles
- Process for reporting conflicts of interest
- Confidentiality
- Consequences for failure to disclose a conflict
- Freedom from reprisal or threat of reprisal
- Hiring, recruitment, and allocation of staffing practices
- Placement of relatives and direct supervision
- Placement of staff related to students
- Limitations on outside employment
- Promotion and/or sale of goods and services, including teaching materials
- Gifts and financial payments
- Use of Board property
- Definitions of key terms.

In addressing the process for dealing with conflicts regarding hiring, recruitment, and allocation of staff, the procedures address employees' direct involvement in the process. As with the Conflict of Interest Policy, this procedure fails to identify that influencing the hiring of any individual with whom one has a close personal relationship would also be a conflict of interest.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that the Conflict of Interest Operating Procedure specify that influencing the hiring of any individual that is a family member or someone with whom one has a close personal relationship is also a conflict of interest.

7.2 Equity

Equity and Inclusive Education Policy

This policy supports the Board's compliance with *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*, *Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan*, and the provincial anti-racism strategic plan. It sets out the Board's vision and goals for equity in 8 areas of focus identified by *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (2009). However,

it is not aligned with the newer *Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (2017)*, which includes a focus on human resources practices and organizational culture change.

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy be revised so that it is aligned with *Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (2017)*.

Human Rights Policy and Operating Procedure

This policy and procedure were recently reviewed. The revised policy and operating procedure were approved in June 2022.

These documents were reviewed against the Ontario Human Rights Commission's guidance on developing anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies.²⁴

This policy and procedure are meant to keep the workplace free from harassment, in accordance with both the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. The policy:

- States the commitment of the Board to creating learning and working environments that are free from harassment and discrimination
- Identifies the following as violations of the policy: discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, failure to accommodate, reprisal, breach of confidentiality
- Defines discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, complainant, respondent, reprisal, frivolous, vexatious and bad faith complaints, duty to accommodate, and racism, among other terms
- Lists the Code-protected grounds
- Identifies that the policy also covers intersecting grounds and association
- Describes what is not discrimination
- Addresses the need for confidentiality
- Requires that the policy be reviewed and revised every 2 years by the Human Rights Office.

While this is a strong policy and procedure, this review found that it could be strengthened by:

- Including gender-based harassment as one form of sexual harassment²⁵

²⁴ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (n.d.). *A policy primer: Guide to developing human rights policies and procedures*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-primer-guide-developing-human-rights-policies-and-procedures/5-anti-harassment-and-anti-discrimination-policies>

²⁵ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2013). *Policy on preventing sexual and gender-based harassment*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-sexual-and-gender-based-harassment-0>

- Including the working environment in the discussion about poisoned environment, which currently only addresses poisoned learning environment for students
- Stating that protection also extends beyond the human rights protected grounds to include the perception that one of these grounds applies
- Ensuring that those assigned to investigate a human rights complaint have sufficient training and understanding of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to conduct an appropriate investigation
- Specifying the rights of complainants and respondents once a complaint has been made
- Specifying general timelines for completing investigations.

While the policy and operating procedures state that leaders have the responsibility to address issues of harassment and discrimination, it could define condonation, identify it as a violation of the policy, and further clarify that leaders will be held accountable when they knew, or ought to have known, about harassment and discrimination and failed to stop it.

While the policy states that it is subject to review and revision every 2 years by the Human Rights Office, it does not indicate whether and how employee input will be collected to inform the review. As such, the policy could be further strengthened by providing details about the Board's responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the application of the policy, such as by gathering and analyzing feedback from employees, investigators, and managers, as well as by including information collected through exit interviews to inform the monitoring and review of the policy.

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that the Human Rights Policy and Operating Procedure be revised to address the identified issues and to ensure consistency with the requirements of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the guidance provided by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Workplace Harassment Procedure

This procedure is intended to help ensure that PDSB employees are not subjected to workplace harassment or workplace sexual harassment.

The document provides definitions of various terms such as workplace harassment, workplace sexual harassment, complainant, respondent, reprisal, and trivial/frivolous. It provides examples of what is and is not harassment, yet does not provide examples of the various types of workplace sexual harassment. While the procedure states that workplace harassment does not typically include a single incident, it does not specify that, if serious enough, a single incident would constitute harassment.

The document also:

- Identifies the responsibilities of managers and employees
- Specifies that retaliation against someone who has complained or provided information about an incident of workplace harassment is a violation of the policy
- Specifies that complaints must be made within 1 year of the incident, unless there are extenuating circumstances
- Provides for informal resolution and a mediation process
- Specifies the intake process and timelines for beginning an investigation
- Describes the standard of proof
- Describes the investigation process
- Describes consequences for breaching the policy, including remedial and disciplinary action
- Addresses unsubstantiated complaints, misuse of the complaint procedure, and confidentiality
- Requires the annual review of the procedure.

The procedures could be further strengthened by:

- Specifying the rights of the complainant and respondent once a complaint has been made
- Specifying timelines for the completion of an investigation. For example, the Ontario Human Rights Commission states that “In most cases, investigations should start immediately after an investigator is chosen, and finish within a fixed time frame (for example, 90 days).²⁶
- Specifying the process by which the review of the procedure will be conducted and how input from employees, supervisors, unions, investigators, and other stakeholders will be collected
- Identifying the need for supervisors and managers to monitor the workplace following disciplinary action to ensure that discriminatory or harassing incidents do not reoccur and that the working environment is positive and productive, and
- Specifying where, how, and by whom complaints and results from investigations will be retained.

²⁶ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2013). *A policy primer: Guide to developing human rights policies and procedures: 6. Procedures for resolving complaints*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-primer-guide-developing-human-rights-policies-and-procedures/6-procedures-resolving-complaints>

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that the Workplace Harassment Procedure be revised to address the identified issues.

Workplace Violence Operating Procedure

This operating procedure is intended to support the Board to comply with the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* in order to prevent workplace violence. It addresses:

- The assessment of risks of workplace violence toward employees
- Measures and procedures to control identified risks, including the creation of safety plans
- Measures and procedures for employees to summon immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur
- Measures and procedures for employees to report incidents of workplace violence and for those incidents to be investigated.

The procedure includes various definitions, such as critical injury, domestic violence, reprisal, risk assessment, workplace, and workplace violence. It also specifies the responsibilities of the Board, supervisors, and employees. It addresses the need for the Board to address domestic violence that may create a threat to the workplace.

The procedures could be further strengthened by:

- Specifying that the Board is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the application of the policy, such as by collecting and analyzing employee comments, feedback from investigators and supervisors, and information collected through exit interviews to inform the monitoring and review of the policy
- Identifying timelines for beginning and completing an investigation. The Government of Ontario's guidance for employers about their duty to investigate complaints of workplace harassment under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* states that a workplace harassment investigation should be undertaken promptly:

“It would be reasonable to complete the investigation as soon as possible within 90 days or less unless there are compelling reasons why a longer investigation is needed (e.g. there are multiple witnesses, a key witness is unavailable due to illness, etc.).”²⁷

- Identifying the need for supervisors and managers to monitor the workplace following disciplinary action to ensure that discriminatory or harassing incidents

²⁷ Government of Ontario. (2022). *Workplace harassment: Investigation by the employer*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/workplace-harassment-investigation-employer>

do not reoccur and that the working environment is positive and productive, and

- Specifying where, how, and by whom complaints and results from investigations will be retained.

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that the Workplace Violence Operating Procedure be revised to:

- Specify that the Board is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the application of the policy and what data should inform this responsibility
- Identify timelines for beginning and completing an investigation, barring exceptional circumstances
- Identify the need to monitor the workplace following disciplinary action to ensure that discriminatory or harassing incidents do not reoccur and that the working environment is positive and productive, and
- Specifying where, how, and by whom complaints and results from investigations will be retained.

7.3 Accommodation and accessibility

Accommodation of Staff With Disabilities Policy

This policy states the objective of supporting the PDSB's compliance with the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* as they relate to employing individuals with disabilities. It commits the Board to making "every reasonable effort to arrange meaningful and appropriate accommodation for any employees with disabilities."

The policy:

- Specifies the principles by which accommodation will be provided: respect for dignity, individualization, as well as integration and full participation
- Specifies that accommodation must be provided for persons with disabilities, up to the point of undue hardship for the employer, and defines undue hardship
- Provides the definition of disability included in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, and
- States that the Board may accommodate an employee with a disability even in cases that do not fit within the Code's definition of disability.

This policy and the supporting procedure were reviewed against guidance from the Ontario Human Rights Commission on creating an accommodation policy and procedure. This review identified the following issues with this policy:

- The policy does not reference the AODA
- While the policy specifies that accommodations will be based on physical, emotional, or intellectual disabilities, it fails to mention other types of disabilities, such as mental health and learning disabilities, which are also included in the definition of disability
- The policy does not state the process and responsibility for determining undue hardship
- While the policy includes the definition of disability provided by the Code, it does not also include scent sensitivities and addiction as additional examples of disabilities
- The policy does not specify that it applies to prospective employees, volunteers, students, and temporary as well as full-time and part-time employees.

The policy could also be strengthened by providing for the review of the policy's implementation through the collection and analysis of data from those implementing the policy as well as staff served by the policy.

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that the Accommodation of Staff With Disabilities Policy be revised to:

- State the obligation to comply with the AODA
- Ensure that it is clear that accommodation will be provided based on any type of disability
- Specify the process and responsibility for determining undue hardship
- Specify that the policy applies to prospective employees, volunteers, student placements, and temporary as well as full-time and part-time employees
- Specify that the implementation of the policy will be reviewed periodically (e.g., every 3 years) through the collection and analysis of data from those implementing the policy as well as staff served by the policy.

Medical Workplace Accommodation Program Operating Procedure

The PDSB's Medical Workplace Accommodation Program is intended to support injured or ill employees to remain at work or return to work. It aims to reduce the number and duration of an employee's absences through early intervention and support.

The procedure specifies:

- The roles and responsibilities of employees, the Abilities Officer, Employee Relations Officer, Benefits Officer, Payroll Officer, and immediate supervisor

- The process for developing an Individualized Workplace Accommodation or Return to Work Plan.

This procedure fails to:

- Specify that people who return to work after an absence related to a Code ground have the right to return to their original job
- Provide examples of types of accommodation, such as flexible work schedule, modifying job duties, making changes to the building (e.g., installing ramps, hand rails, automatic door openers), modifying workstations, and providing alternative ways of communicating with employees
- Specify the responsibility of unions, federations, and associations to take an active role as partners in the accommodation process, share joint responsibility with the employer to facilitate accommodation, and support accommodation measures regardless of collective agreements, unless doing so would create undue hardship
- Allow for the transfer of medical accommodations to an employee's new role, and
- Specify how the new supervisor should be apprised of the employee's accommodations.

In addition, the Ontario *Human Rights Code* requires that employers exercise good faith in seeking and providing information and that they should collect only when information on limitations and abilities are required for accommodation planning.²⁸

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's guidelines state that the employer can obtain expert opinion, advice, or additional information where needed, but not as a routine matter.²⁹ The operating procedures do not specify the conditions under which medical documentation would be requested to ensure that medical documentation is not sought as a routine matter.

The operating procedure also states that the cost of medical documentation is the responsibility of the employee unless the cost of medical documentation is covered by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. However, the guidance from the Ontario Human Rights Commission states that the employer should bear the cost of any required medical information or documentation (e.g., for doctors' notes, assessments, letters setting out accommodation needs, etc.).

²⁸ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2007, March 28). *Policy and guidelines on discrimination because of family status: VI. The duty to accommodate*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-and-guidelines-discrimination-because-family-status/vi-duty-accommodate>

²⁹ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2016, June 27). *Policy on ableism and discrimination based on disability: 8. Duty to accommodate*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-ableism-and-discrimination-based-disability/8-duty-accommodate>

Rather than generally applying to accommodation, as the title of the operating procedure suggests, these procedures deal with return to work. More general procedures are therefore needed to address the need to provide accommodation for persons with disabilities, consistent with guidelines from the Ontario *Human Rights Code*,³⁰ in order to:

- Address the Board's duty to provide accommodation for disabilities that have not arisen from injury or illness
- Place an equal focus on supporting employees to be effective in their job along with returning to work and minimizing the number and duration of absences
- Ensure that people are protected from discrimination based on their association with someone with a disability
- Indicate that employees are protected if they experience or are threatened with reprisal for requesting or receiving accommodation
- Indicate that employees who feel that accommodation has been unfairly denied or who experience reprisal are able to seek redress through the PDSB's Human Rights Policy or the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal
- Specify how the employee's privacy and confidentiality will be maintained, and
- Specify the responsibilities of the immediate supervisor to:³¹
 - Be alert to the possibility that a person may need accommodation even if they have not made a specific or formal request
 - Accept the person's request for accommodation in good faith, unless there are legitimate reasons for acting otherwise
 - Take an active role in ensuring that alternative approaches and possible accommodation solutions are investigated, and canvass various forms of possible accommodation and alternative solutions
 - Keep a record of the accommodation request and action taken

³⁰ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2013). *A policy primer: Guide to developing human rights policies and procedures: 7. Accommodation policy and procedure*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-primer-guide-developing-human-rights-policies-and-procedures/7-accommodation-policy-and-procedure>

Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2016, June 27). *Policy on ableism and discrimination based on disability*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-ableism-and-discrimination-based-disability>

³¹ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2016, June 27). *Policy on ableism and discrimination based on disability: 8. Duty to accommodate*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-ableism-and-discrimination-based-disability/8-duty-accommodate>

- o Communicate regularly and effectively with the person, providing updates on the status of the accommodation and planned next steps
- o Consult with the person to determine the most appropriate accommodation
- o Implement accommodations in a timely way, to the point of undue hardship
- o Bear the cost of required accommodation.

Recommendation 11: It is recommended that Medical Workplace Accommodation Program Operating Procedures be revised to address the identified issues and ensure compliance with guidance from the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Recommendation 12: It is recommended that an Accommodating Persons With Disabilities Operating Procedures be developed to ensure that accommodation for persons with disabilities is consistent with guidance from the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Accessibility Policy

This policy is designed to support the Board's compliance with the AODA by supporting the ongoing removal of barriers and the continual improvement of accessibility. The policy:

- States that the Board welcomes all members of the school and broader community, including those using assistive devices and service animals
- Commits the Board to providing training to ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of persons with disabilities, and
- Commits the Board to establishing a process for consulting with staff and volunteers who have a role in implementing the policy.

No issues were identified with this policy.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2020–2022)

The Board's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is available on its website and includes the following:

- Definitions of disability and barrier
- The Board's plan to identify, prevent, and remove accessibility barriers
- Examples of barriers and possible solutions
- Board strategies and actions to prevent and remove accessibility barriers that have been identified, and

- Completed and ongoing actions that address barriers that have been identified within the PDSB.

No issues were found with this plan.

Mandatory Accessibility Training

All staff and volunteers must complete this online training module. This training provides:

- An overview of the AODA, including an understanding of the requirements of the Regulations
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support
- Employment standards, transportation standards, design of public spaces standards, and accessibility standards for customer service
- How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider to people with disabilities to access goods or services, and
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services.

No issues were identified with this training.

Due Diligence: Human Resources Legislation and Investigations (Training)

As part of the LEAD (Leadership Exploration and Development) series, this session is intended for all principals and vice principals in elementary and secondary schools. It assists administrators with better understanding their rights and responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* specific to workplace accommodation.

The concept of due diligence is discussed as it applies to the legislation. The training assists administrators with maintaining a safe working and learning environment and understanding the importance of conducting effective workplace investigations. Case studies are discussed as part of the presentation.

Religious Accommodation Operating Procedure

This operating procedure supports the PDSB to meet its legal duty to provide religious accommodation in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

The procedure states that staff absence due to religious observances will be consistent with the respective collective agreements. Staff who are requesting religious leave on days not on the Board list of approved days on the Holy Days and Holidays Calendar are to apply for leave under the Exception to Religious Leave Guidelines through the Human Resources Department and through the Employee and Labour Relations Partners. Three weeks' notice is required to process the request.

A calendar with days of significance is posted on the PDSB intranet. The calendar states that it is not designed to be a complete listing of all secular and creed-based days and that the calendar is not to be used to determine creed-based accommodations.

The Religious Accommodation Operating Procedure does not mention, nor is it inclusive toward, Indigenous spirituality. The Ontario *Human Rights Code* requires that the Board accommodate the spiritual beliefs and practices that are traditional and customary among Indigenous peoples.³² This may mean time off for observances that are not holy days identified by a church or religious denomination, as specified by the guidelines. It also includes the provision of space at work for smudging.

The policy could be strengthened by specifying the roles and responsibilities of the various parties in implementing this policy.

Recommendation 13: It is recommended that the Religious Accommodation Operating Procedure be updated to address the identified issues.

7.4 Health and safety

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

The policy states that the Board will take “every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of workers, students, volunteers, visitors and those performing contracted work” and identifies the measures that will be taken to achieve this objective.

The policy states that the Board will take every reasonable precaution to prevent workplace violence and harassment of any kind through proactive staff training, including anti-racist and anti-oppression approaches (i.e., bias awareness, systemic barriers), and by investigating reported incidents of workplace violence, harassment, and discrimination (i.e., manifestations of anti-racism, including anti-Black racism, Islamophobia) in an objective and timely manner, taking necessary action, and providing appropriate support for all affected individuals.

³² Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2015, September 17). *Policy on preventing discrimination based on creed: 11. Indigenous spiritual practices*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-creed/11-indigenous-spiritual-practices>

The policy identifies:

- Employer responsibilities to provide staff training, including occupational health and safety in performance evaluations, and to annually review the implementation of the policy
- Supervisor responsibilities to ensure compliance with health and safety policies and procedures, including receiving, investigating, and implementing corrective actions
- Worker responsibilities to comply with safe work practices, raise concerns of unsafe work practices and conditions, and complete mandatory training, and
- The duty to establish and maintain a Joint Health and Safety Committee.

However, the policy fails to offer protection from reprisal to employees who raise concerns under this policy. It also does not allow for an annual review of incidents to identify trends and systemic issues that ought to be proactively addressed.

Recommendation 14: It is recommended that the Health and Safety Policy be expanded to:

- Communicate that employees will not be subjected to disciplinary action for submitting a complaint and/or reporting unsafe work under this policy, and that any manager/supervisor and or employee who threatens an employee following a complaint may be subject to discipline. The Ontario Human Rights Commission provides the following wording, which can be used in this case: “Reprisal may be the subject of a complaint under this procedure, and persons engaging in reprisal are subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment.”
- Specify the need for the Board to compile an annual summary of incidents that will be presented to the Director of Education to enable the identification of any trends and systemic issues that may need to be addressed.

Emergency Preparedness Policy

The policy supports the Board’s commitment to responding swiftly and effectively to emergencies to preserve life, protect Board property, and restore operations.

The policy commits the Board to:

- Ensuring that all policies, guidelines, and procedures are consistent with the principles of preserving life, protecting Board property, and restoring operations while protecting the dignity and well-being of individuals
- Providing training to staff and volunteers as appropriate and as needed, and
- Consulting with staff and volunteers who have a role under this policy.

The AODA requires that employers create individualized workplace emergency response plans for employees who need assistance during a workplace emergency, such as assistance with evacuating a building without using elevators, communicating with emergency responders, or moving through crowds in stressful situations.

The Board has a number of procedures to support the implementation of this policy, including Critical Incident Response Procedure; Guidelines for Lockdowns/Hold & Secure and Shelter in Place in PDSB; and Emergency Evacuation Procedures (Levels 1 to 3). While attention is given to students who may need assistance during the evacuation of a building, no consideration is given to employees who may need such assistance.

The Emergency Evacuation Procedure identifies that principals must ensure that procedures are in place for the safe evacuation of “all physically challenged persons.” It also notes that if a decision were made to leave a “physically challenged person” in the classroom or office with another teacher, a colourful jacket or cloth should be hung from the window to indicate to emergency responders that someone is in the room who needs assistance. The procedure speaks only to people with physical disabilities and does not recognize that employees and students may have other types of disabilities that may impact their ability to evacuate during an emergency.

While the Emergency Evacuation Procedure requires the completion of an Emergency Evacuation Plan, it does not identify the need to identify and prepare individualized workplace emergency response plans for employees with disabilities who may need assistance during an evacuation.

Recommendation 15: It is recommended that the Emergency Preparedness Policy and Procedures address the Board’s obligation to support employees with disabilities during an emergency and to create an individualized workplace emergency response plan for those who need assistance during a workplace emergency. The procedures should also recognize that the needs of all persons with disabilities should be considered, not only those with physical disabilities.

7.5 Personnel

Employee Records—Freedom of Information and Access Operating Procedure

This operating procedure follows the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and is designed to communicate the procedures and process for retention, access, and disclosure of employees’ personal information and confidential records. It also details the principles and procedures for the collection, storage, use, and disclosure of employee information.

No issues were identified with this operating procedure.

Use of Information Technology Resources Policy

This policy provides direction regarding access, use, and sharing of the Board’s

information technology resources. The policy covers all users of the Board's information technology resources, including hardware, software, and content, and applies to all information collected and maintained by the Board. The policy states that all users are expected to protect information from unauthorized modification, disclosure, and destruction. Additionally, the use of unauthorized intercepted communications is prohibited.

The policy does not identify responsibility for monitoring systems and data, procedures for reporting and investigating complaints of unauthorized access or abuses, or consequences for misuse.

While this policy states that it is aligned with the Board's Human Rights Policy, it does not include any prohibition of harassing and/or discriminatory posts and the consequences.

Recommendation 16: It is recommended that the policy be revised to:

- Identify responsibilities for regular monitoring of the Board's networks and data use to identify unauthorized access and/or use of its networks and data information
- Communicate the consequences for unauthorized access of the Board's IT networks by employees, and
- Communicate that employees are prohibited from using the Board's technology to intimidate and/or bully employees or to post harassing or discriminatory material, and that individuals found to be in violation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Social Media Policy

This policy recognizes the increased use of social media and the impact it has on shaping public opinion about staff, students, and the Board.

The policy notes that, as employees in the public service, PDSB staff are expected to always exercise good judgment and professionalism while using social media and that the same professional standards that apply to the terms of employment extend to the use of social media. It also recognizes that social media could be used for advocacy and system transformation that advances equity and social justice.

The policy states that staff are not to post images or content that, among other things, perpetuate stereotypes, promote any form of discrimination, or may be offensive, hurtful, or unprofessional.

The policy also addresses professional boundaries with students, copyright and attribution, communication with others, privacy and confidentiality, informed consent, conflict of interest, and reporting violations of this policy. The policy also states that Board employees found to be in breach of the policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

No issues were found with this policy.

Courses, Conferences, Seminars, etc. Policy

This policy communicates the regulations for employees to request and attend external courses, conferences, seminars, or symposiums.

The policy also includes the approval processes for attending courses, conferences, seminars, and so on; the approval process for travel outside of Canada; the requirement for employees to share information from the learning event; and cost recovery guidelines.

The policy states that approval to attend external training events is provided by the applicable Supervisor and that the Board approves “the attendance of selected personnel;” however, the policy does not include the criteria that supervisors should rely on to determine which employees are permitted to attend external job-related learning events in order to ensure that the policy is implemented in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Recommendation 17: It is recommended that procedures be developed to support the implementation of the Courses, Conferences, Seminars, etc. Policy to ensure that employees are given equitable access to these opportunities.

Travel and Expenses Policy

The Travel and Expenses Policy directs employees regarding the reimbursement of expenses when individuals use their personal vehicle or travel to carry out activities on behalf of the Board. The policy communicates the criteria for eligibility and states that reimbursement is based on the guidelines issued by the Canada Revenue Agency.

No issues were identified with this policy.

7.6 Attendance and leaves

Leaves of Absence Policy and Operating Procedure

This policy establishes guiding principles for which leaves of absence are to be considered. The operating procedure details the availability and eligibility for the various types of leave, including:

- Pregnancy, Parental, Adoption Leave
- Family Responsibility Leave
- Family Caregiver Leave
- Child Death Leave, and
- Professional Development Leave.

The procedure outlines the process for employees to request a leave of absence along with procedures for unanticipated emergency situations.

The procedures describe each type of leave, requirements of the *Employment Standards Act*, where employees can find additional information, and any documentation required. A Paid Leaves Chart is also included along with the absence code to use in each case. While an absence code for paid creed observance days is included, a description of this absence is not provided.

The procedure states that approval is given by the principal or supervisor. While unionized employees are able to appeal the denial of a leave through the grievance process, no such process exists for nonunionized employees who feel that they were unfairly denied a leave of absence.

Recommendation 18: It is recommended that the Leaves of Absence Operating Procedure include an appeal process should an employee feel that their request for a leave was unfairly denied and that a description be included for the absence code for paid creed observance days.

Benefits: Vacation Allowances Policy

This policy communicates the availability of vacation for all employees and explains the standards, guidelines, and procedures for paid vacation time.

Vacation carry-over of a maximum of 10 days is permitted. The document states that supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the total accumulated vacation for the year does not exceed the annual entitlement plus any deferment.

No issues were found with this policy.

Benefits: Sick Leave, Administrative and Business Staff Policy

This policy establishes a sick leave plan for administrative and business staff. It allows for 11 days of paid sick leave per year, and states the requirement for a doctor's note for an absence of 5 consecutive days or more. The policy does not state what is to occur should an employee require sick leave in excess of 11 days in a year.

Recommendation 19: It is recommended that the Benefits: Sick Leave, Administrative and Business Staff Policy be updated to specify what is to occur when an employee needs to take sick days in excess of the annual entitlement.

Health Promotion Attendance Support Program Operating Procedure

This operating procedure is designed to support regular and punctual attendance. It states the Board's commitment to working with employees who have encountered attendance difficulties in order to meet the objective of reducing unnecessary absenteeism.

The procedure distinguishes between one absence of 20 days due to surgery and 20 separate incidents of 1 day each and recognizes that medical conditions may impact attendance. It also recognizes that employees may require accommodation owing to an identified illness or disability. Depending on the medical illness/disability,

the employee may be removed from the program and redirected to the Medical Workplace Accommodation Program for ongoing support.

No issues were identified with this operating procedure.

Flexible Office Hours Human Resources Support Services—Administrative and Secretarial Staff Operating Procedure

The stated purpose of this procedure is to outline the process for establishing working hours for administrative and secretarial staff. In this procedure, the Board also recognizes that a flexible work schedule will also help employees to balance home and work responsibilities.

The procedure outlines the process for establishing a Flexible Hours Plan and guidelines for establishing schedules. This procedure does not mention that flexible work hours may be provided as an accommodation based on any human rights protected ground and the considerations when such accommodations are made.

Recommendation 20: It is recommended that the Flexible Office Hours Human Resources Support Services—Administrative and Secretarial Staff Operating Procedure be amended to clearly state the Board’s obligation to comply with the Ontario *Human Rights Code*; the Board’s commitment and duty to provide accommodation, up to the point of undue hardship; and that flexible work hours may be a type of accommodation.

7.7 Recruitment and selection

Hiring Practices Policy

In response to the Ministry review in March 2020, the Board revised its hiring practices policy and adopted an anti-racism, anti-Black racism, and anti-oppression framework to address the issues identified. The policy states that it will create a fair, equitable, anti-racist, anti-oppressive, transparent, and accountable process consistent with Policy/Program Memorandum 165. The goal of the policy is to create a workforce that is reflective of the students and communities the Board serves in order to support the success and well-being of all students.

The policy applies to all PDSB employees and job applicants and is intended to direct all hiring, transfers, promotions, and employee retention processes. The policy:

- Includes definitions of lived experience and merit
- Includes lived experiences and intersectional identities as important to consider when assessing merit
- Provides guiding principles, and
- Lists requirements with respect to the Board’s hiring practices and processes.

While this policy addresses important aspects of the hiring process to increase diversity among Board employees, it could do more to help ensure a bias-free hiring process. The Board could eliminate bias from the hiring process by:

- Addressing the need to ensure that nepotism and favouritism do not impact the hiring process
- Specifying the need to identify and remove barriers in the hiring process that negatively impact outcomes for Indigenous and racialized job applicants
- Identifying the need for those involved in the hiring process to receive training to ensure a bias-free hiring process
- Committing to outreach recruitment to diversify the applicant pool, and
- Recognizing the need to provide accommodation in the hiring process, in compliance with the AODA.

As well, the document states that the PDSB will collect and analyze workforce demographic data to support the implementation and monitoring of this policy. However, there are no procedures that guide how and when this data will be collected and analyzed.

While school boards were expected to develop a hiring policy after the revocation of Regulation 274, this policy could do more to promote fairness, mobility, merit, and quality in the hiring of teachers.

Recommendation 21: It is recommended that the Hiring Practices Policy be revised and that operating procedures be developed to better align the hiring process with PPM 165 and to create a bias-free hiring process by:

- Addressing the need to ensure that nepotism and favouritism do not impact the hiring process
- Specifying the need to identify and remove barriers in the hiring process that negatively impact outcomes for Indigenous and racialized job applicants
- Identifying the need for those involved in the hiring process to receive training to ensure a bias-free hiring process
- Committing to outreach recruitment to diversify the applicant pool, and
- Recognizing the need to provide accommodation in the hiring process, in compliance with the AODA.

Recommendation 22: The Hiring Practices Policy should be updated to ensure alignment with the requirements of the AODA by:

- Including the AODA as part of the legal framework within which all hiring is conducted
- Stating the obligation to notify candidates when inviting them for an interview about the availability of accommodation during the recruitment and selection process
- Stating the requirement that assessment and selection materials be provided in an accessible format upon request, and
- Stating the requirement that the successful candidate be notified of the policies for accommodation of employees with disabilities.

Hiring Guides

The implementation of the Hiring Practices Policy is supported by a number of manuals:

- Academic Staff Hiring Manual: Equitable Recruitment and Employment Practices
- Equitable Recruitment and Employment Practices Hiring Manual for C.U.P.E. Local 1628
- Equitable Recruitment and Employment Practices Hiring Manual for C.U.P.E. Local 1628
- Equitable Recruitment and Employment Practices Hiring Manual/Guidelines for C.U.P.E. Local 2544 Custodial/Maintenance/Food Service Assistants
- Hiring Guidelines for Adult Non-Credit Programs
- Hiring Guidelines for Teaching Assistants/Designated Early Childhood Educators
- Hiring Guidelines for the Learning Technology Support Services
- Hiring Manual for Administrative Staff Group

These manuals contain information specific to the process for each employee group. They contain a lot of good information, including:

- Interview notes are to be maintained for at least 3 years or 18 months in some cases
- A criminal record check must be completed prior to employment
- The Criminal Record Check Policy

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Hiring, Recruitment, and Allocation of Staffing Practices
- Principles of bias-free hiring
- Flowchart of the hiring process
- Frequently asked questions
- Hiring teachers for permanent positions, LTOs, hard-to-fill positions (French, music, tech)
- Conducting reference checks
- Providing feedback to unsuccessful candidates
- Declaration of No Conflict of Interest Form
- Types of accommodation that may be requested
- What to do before the interview (e.g., arrange interview schedules to allow for at least 15 minutes for the candidate to preview the interview questions, allow for at least 10 minutes after the interview to assess a candidate's oral and written language skills), during the interview, and after the interview
- Where to access interview questions
- Checklist for what to include in competition files, and
- Reference questions.

However, the manuals fail to:

- Provide guidance that the need for accommodation in the hiring process should not be considered in the decision-making process
- Address the need to increase the diversity of the Board's workforce and how this is to be considered in the decision-making process
- Provide guidance to ensure that interview questions are not gender or culturally biased
- Provide guidance on the impact of bias on the assessment of job candidates and strategies to minimize the impact of these biases.

While some guides provide helpful pointers on interviewing (e.g., active listening, probing, silence, and cautions regarding interpreting nonverbal behaviours and accents), this information is not included in all manuals.

In addition, there are a number of problematic aspects to these manuals:

- The manuals provide guidance from the Ontario Human Rights Commission regarding the duty to provide accommodation, but fail to address the requirements of the AODA.
- The manuals specify that applicants can be asked, “Do you have any special needs that would require accommodation as outlined in the Ontario *Human Rights Code* in order to do the essential duties of the job?” The asking of this question in the hiring and selection process may violate the Code. The Ontario Human Rights Commission states that employers may ask job-related questions to determine the applicant’s qualifications or ability to perform the essential job duties. However, other than the applicant’s request for accommodation, employers may only discuss on-the-job accommodation after making a conditional offer of employment.³³
- The academic hiring manual is dated September 2019 and includes practices consistent with Regulation 274. Furthermore, it has not yet been updated to comply with the Hiring Practices Policy. While it includes a lot of good information, it could be better structured to appropriately guide principals through the hiring process.
- The ASG manual specifies that candidates’ qualifications will be graded. The example of how to score education is included: if a degree is preferred in the job posting, then a point value of 3 may be assigned to someone with a degree, 2 to someone with a related diploma, and 0.5 to 1 for someone with related courses. Qualifications are typically assessed as part of the prescreening process and not assessed as part of the interview.
- The responses of references are also scored. Typically, references are contacted to confirm the employer’s hiring decision and are not scored. This could undermine a bias-free hiring process because rather than scoring the candidate’s skills and abilities, the reference-checking process could instead be scoring the referee’s articulation of a candidate’s skills and abilities.

In addition, some of the manuals also include the interview questions to be asked. Given that individuals may be interviewed multiple times for the same position in different locations, the PDSB should consider creating a number of questions for each competency for each position. Hiring managers should then be able to select questions from this pool for each hiring process. This would ensure that candidates who have attended multiple interviews have not been able to prepare their responses based on

³³ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2008). 5. Interviewing and making hiring decisions. In *Human Rights at Work 2008* (3rd ed.). <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/iv-human-rights-issues-all-stages-employment/5-interviewing-and-making-hiring-decisions>

their knowledge of the questions, but are instead providing authentic responses.

In addition, these manuals do not provide guidance to hiring managers on some best practices, such as providing the interview questions in writing a few minutes prior to the interview and consensus scoring.

Recommendation 23: It is recommended that the hiring manuals be updated to address the identified issues and to better structure the document to appropriately guide principals and managers through the hiring process.

Recommendation 24: It is recommended that a pool of questions be developed for each competency to ensure that a different set of questions is asked for each competitive process.

University Co-Op Students Leadership Development and School Support Services Operating Procedure

This operating procedure provides guidance on the hiring of co-op students from Ontario universities at the school level. It requires that hiring be conducted in accordance with the Board's hiring manual and that it respect the principles of *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*.

No issues were identified with this operating procedure.

Temporary Appointments to Positions of Greater Responsibility Policy

This policy provides direction regarding employee compensation during a temporary appointment. The policy states that temporary appointments may be made "at the discretion of the appropriate official." The policy also states that appointments longer than a specified period, typically 3 months, are not subject to a competitive process and are not required to comply with the Board's hiring policies and practices.

The absence of a competitive process when filling temporary assignments permits principals and managers to select their favourite employees and/or individuals with whom they have established relationships. In addition, it does not support the advancement and development of Indigenous employees and members of the equity-seeking groups. A number of organizations use an "Expression of Interest" process to ensure that employees know about and are able to express an interest in a temporary opportunity.

Recommendation 25: It is recommended that the Temporary Appointment to Position of Greater Responsibility Policy be revised to require the posting of temporary assignments longer than 3 months and that a competitive process be used to fill positions where there are no restrictions due to the collective agreement.

Requests for References on Staff Human Resources Support Services Operating Procedure

This procedure provides principals and supervisors with direction regarding providing external references for employees.

The document states that the policy has been created in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and requires that employees sign a consent to release form prior to a principal and/or supervisor providing a verbal and/or written reference.

No issues were identified with this procedure.

Board of Trustees Participation on Hiring, Appointment, and Promotion Panels Policy

This policy provides direction on trustees' involvement in hiring and promotion panels. It specifies that PDSB trustees are restricted from participating on hiring, promotion, and appointment panels for any position other than the Director of Education.

No issues were identified with this policy.

Criminal Background Checks Policy

In accordance with the *Education Act*, the PDSB requires anyone seeking employment to provide an appropriate police records check from the police jurisdiction in which they reside. The policy provides direction for a police background check for individuals seeking to be employed by and/or to provide services to the Board.

It outlines the requirements for criminal background checks, including:

- The requirement for a clear Criminal Record Check or, where applicable, International Criminal Background Check and that the check include a Vulnerable Sector Check
- The requirement for an annual Offence Declaration and for employees to disclose all charges, orders, or convictions that have occurred since a clear Criminal Record Check was provided to the Board, and
- The document also states that the Board reserves the right to request an updated Criminal Record Check/Vulnerable Sector Check at any time; however, it does not include guidelines for when an ad hoc background check may be requested or at whose direction.

The policy states that where an employee or potential employee has a criminal record, it will be reviewed with consideration of the following:

- The specific duties and responsibilities of the position in question and the relevance of the criminal charge(s) and convictions to the particular position
- The length of time since the conviction
- Rehabilitative or other efforts undertaken (treatment, counselling, etc.)
- A discharge or statements regarding probation, if appropriate

- Appreciable risk to the safety or security of students, employees, volunteers, or Board property and equipment
- Any involvement of children; sexual activity; violence, and/or acts of dishonesty in the offence
- The employment history (if applicable)
- The individual's attitude toward the offence(s)
- The degree of co-operation with the investigation, and
- If the offence(s) was committed while the person was employed by the Board.

The policy also states that if a potential employee does not provide a criminal record check prior to employment, their start date could be delayed or their offer of employment withdrawn. Current employees may be suspended without pay until the requested document is received and pending the results of an investigation, if any.

The policy does not:

- Address the need for police records checks to be kept confidential and securely maintained
- Identify who would be involved in the assessment should a potential employee have a criminal record
- Indicate whether or not the individual is allowed to provide an explanation of the circumstances should they have a criminal record
- Allow for an appeal process should employment be denied because of a criminal record.

Recommendation 26: It is recommended that the Criminal Background Checks Policy be revised to:

- Communicate how background checks and any related documentation are stored and accessed, including who is responsible for maintaining the records
- Stipulate who is responsible for deciding whether an individual should be hired when a criminal record exists
- Give an individual the opportunity to provide an explanation of the circumstances should they have a criminal record, and
- Provide for an appeal process should employment be denied because of a criminal record.

Performance Management

The following policies and operating procedures were assessed as part of the review of the PDSB's performance review program:

- Teacher Performance Appraisal— Experienced Teachers Operating Procedure
- Teacher Performance Appraisal—New Teacher Induction Program
- Vice Principal Performance Appraisal Operating Procedure
- Principal Performance Appraisal Operating Procedure
- Supervisory Officer Performance Appraisal Policy
- Supervisory Officer Performance Appraisal Operating Procedure
- Evaluation of Occasional Teachers
- Management of Performance—Teaching Assistants Operating Procedure
- Management of Performance—Permanent Administrative Staff Operating Procedure
- Management of Performance—Probationary Administrative Staff Operating Procedure

These documents outline:

- The purpose and frequency of evaluations
- Roles and responsibilities
- The evaluation process, and
- Documentation requirements.

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the AODA require employers to provide accommodations based on disability in all aspects of employment. The AODA directs employers to take an employee's accessibility needs into account during the performance management process.³⁴ However, the operating procedures provide no guidance in this regard.

Recommendation 27: It is recommended that the performance appraisal operating procedures be revised to provide guidance on how an employee's accessibility needs are to be taken into account during the performance management process.

³⁴ Government of Ontario. (2022, May 2). *Accessible workplaces—Talent and performance management*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-workplaces#section-4>

Collective Agreements

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* requires that the employer and the union co-operate in accommodating employees. In particular cases, this may require flexibility on the part of the union, which may include waiving certain provisions, such as a posting requirement or seniority provision, in order to fill the position with someone who requires accommodation. In addition, regardless of the number of bargaining units, organizations are seen as a “single employer” and are therefore required to provide employees with accommodation across unions and bargaining units. Once an employer has concluded that it is not possible to accommodate an employee within their own bargaining unit, the employer must consider accommodations in other bargaining units and, under certain circumstances, contract positions. For example:³⁵

- In *Dominion Color Corp (1999) OLAA #656 (Ellis)*, it was held that the duty to accommodate extends outside the bargaining unit; whether it is an undue hardship on the employer to do so is a question of fact.
- In *Queens Regional Authority (1999) 78 LAC (4th) 269*, it was held that an employer could accommodate a worker permanently outside the bargaining unit.
- In *Hamilton Police Association v. Hamilton Police Services (2004) 76 CLAS 5 (QL)*, it was held that the Employer Police Board was entitled to accommodate disabled police officers in civilian bargaining unit positions.
- In *Kelowna (City) v. CUPE L. 338 (2003) BCCAA #72 (QL) (Lanyon)*, it was held that the duty to accommodate may require an employer to place someone outside of the bargaining unit.

Provision for accommodation based on any human rights protected ground or across unions is not included in each collective agreement, nor is an article included addressing the obligations of the Board to ensure that every member is free from workplace harassment and discrimination. Many of the collective agreements also include gendered language.

Recommendation 28: It is recommended that, when next negotiated, all collective agreements be amended to address the employer’s duty to accommodate, the union’s obligation to participate in the process, and the employer’s commitment to maintaining a discrimination- and harassment-free workplace.

Recommendation 29: It is recommended that all collective agreements, when next negotiated, are updated to include gender-neutral language throughout all sections.

³⁵ Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick. (n.d.). *The scope of the duty to accommodate*. <https://www.ldanb-taanb.ca/duty-to-accommodate-2/the-scope-of-the-duty-to-accommodate/>

7.8 Policy gaps

A number of policy gaps were identified in the PDSB's employment policy framework.

Scent-Free Workplace Policy

Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, employers are legally obligated to accommodate persons with disabilities, where disabilities may include asthma, allergies, and even sensitivity to fragrance.³⁶ In addition, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety encourages employers to be proactive about providing a scent-free workplace.³⁷

The PDSB does include Scent Awareness Guidelines on its website. The guidelines are intended to:

increase awareness within the Board community about the potential impact of fragrance chemicals on the health, well-being, productivity and lifestyle of those affected; ask for the voluntary cooperation towards a scent-reduced environment; and provide the steps for responding to scent-related issues.

However, these guidelines do not frame scent sensitivity within the context of human rights as they fail to state that scent sensitivity may be a disability and that the Board has a duty to accommodate employees with such a disability, short of undue hardship. A Scent-Free Workplace Policy is recommended by various organizations, including the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety³⁸ and the Canadian Human Rights Commission.³⁹ In addition, labour and employment lawyers recommend that employers develop a policy to create scent-free workplaces.⁴⁰

... employers would be well advised to develop a fragrance-free workplace policy, educate employees on the policy and enforce it consistently. When an employee raises concerns of scents in the workplace, employers should address the problem by requesting additional information with respect to the employee's restrictions (including medical documentation) and discussing with the employee what accommodation the employee is requesting.

³⁶ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2016, June 27). *Policy on ableism and discrimination based on disability: 8. Duty to accommodate*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-ableism-and-discrimination-based-disability/8-duty-accommodate>

³⁷ Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. (2019, January 4). *Scent-free policy for the workplace. OSH Answers Fact Sheets*. https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/scent_free.html

³⁸ Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. (2019, January 4). *Scent-free policy for the workplace. OSH Answers Fact Sheets*. https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/scent_free.html

³⁹ Canadian Human Rights Commission. (2019). *Environmental sensitivity and scent-free policies*. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2021/ccdp-chrc/HR4-46-2-2019-eng.pdf

⁴⁰ Crawford Chondon & Partners LLP. (2012). *Do employers have a duty to accommodate employees with scent sensitivity?* <https://www.ccpartners.ca/blog/details/the-employers-edge/2012/09/06/do-employers-have-a-duty-to-accommodate-employees-with-scent-sensitivity->

Recommendation 30: It is recommended that the PDSB develop a Scent-Free Workplace Policy to reflect the organization’s obligation to accommodate an employee with scent sensitivity, short of undue hardship.⁴¹ This policy and supporting procedures should include processes to:

- Educate employees on the need to maintain a scent-free workplace
- Post notices in the workplace when a scent sensitivity has been identified
- Post notices that construction/remodelling, waxing, shampooing, painting, spraying, etc., will be conducted 1 week beforehand so that affected personnel can make arrangements or have their duties modified during that time
- Put the policy statement notice on all appointment cards, stationery, room booking notices, employment postings, etc.
- Specify wording for “Scent Free” signs and where the signs will be posted, and
- Create mechanisms to consistently enforce the policy.

Preferred Names and Pronouns Policy

While the Board has procedures in place to ensure that a student’s preferred name and pronouns are recognized and used, it does not have the same in place for employees.

For many reasons, a person may choose to use a name (sometimes known as a preferred name, chosen name, a nickname, or a name-in-use) that is different from their legal name. There are many reasons why someone may use a preferred name. A preferred name may reflect a person’s gender identity, a nickname they have grown up with, a shortened version of their name, a Canadianized name, or their desire to distinguish themselves from someone with a similar name. In addition, allowing people to identify their gender pronouns is a way of promoting inclusion for transgender and genderqueer people.

The PDSB could support the use of preferred names and pronouns by developing a Preferred Name and Pronoun Policy, and also by encouraging staff to include their pronouns in their email signatures. There may be circumstances (e.g., when conducting a reference check, for payroll, etc.) when a legal name is required. These circumstances should be addressed in the policy and procedures.

Providing education to staff is also important, as it helps to establish norms of respect in the organization and ensures that all staff understand that using preferred names and pronouns signals their willingness to be inclusive toward everyone.

⁴¹ See for example the following policies:

Ottawa Public Health. (2001). *Fragrance free environment—Sample policy*. https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/professionals-and-partners/resources/Documents/Workplace/sp_fragrance_en.pdf

Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. (2011). *Scent free policy*. <https://www.torontocas.ca/scent-free-policy>

Recommendation 31: It is recommended that the PDSB develop a policy and procedures for employees to identify their preferred name, if it differs from their legal name, upon hiring (and potentially even during interviewing), as well as procedures to support the use of their preferred name unless use of their legal name is required.

Recommendation 32: It is recommended that the PDSB educate staff about employees' and students' use of preferred names and pronouns.

Transitioning in the Workplace Policy and Administrative Procedures

The process of a transgender individual publicly changing their gender presentation in society is known as “transitioning.” The transitioning individual usually changes their name, clothing, and appearance to coincide with their gender identity. This process may also encompass physical changes resulting from hormone therapy and gender confirmation surgery.

Because of existing stereotypes both in the workplace and in society in general, many transgender individuals face difficult situations and interactions simultaneously in their personal (e.g., family, finances) and professional lives. This can lead to high stress levels, particularly when individuals are in the initial stages of transitioning. As such, it is important that the individual be supported to work with their manager and Human Resources representative in an open and honest way to allow a smooth transition in the workplace. It is also imperative that the organization have a policy and guidelines to support this transition. This policy should recognize that each individual transitioning is dealing with a set of unique circumstances that will require a customized plan.

Recommendation 33: It is recommended that the PDSB develop a policy and related procedures to support transgender employees who may be transitioning at work.⁴²

Employment Equity Policy

An Employment Equity Policy would commit the Board to using fair, consistent, transparent, and nondiscriminatory hiring practices and to identifying and removing barriers for marginalized and underrepresented groups, including women, Indigenous peoples, members of racialized groups, and persons with disabilities, to ensure full participation at all levels within the organization.

This policy would commit the PDSB to:

- Identifying and removing discriminatory barriers to the hiring, advancement, and inclusion of the equity-seeking groups

⁴² See for example:

City of Toronto. (2021, January 27). *Guidelines for accommodating gender identity and gender expression*. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/city-administration/corporate-policies/people-equity-policies/accommodation/guidelines-for-accommodating-gender-identity-and-gender-expression/>

- Creating working environments that are free from discrimination and harassment
- Identifying barriers to hiring, promotion, and full inclusion by periodically conducting a Workforce Census and ESR
- Developing an Employment Equity Plan to close barriers in representation and remove employment barriers identified through the Workforce Census and ESR
- Implementing measures to remedy past discrimination
- Implementing measures to prevent future barriers, and
- Fostering an inclusive and welcoming work environment.

Recommendation 34: It is recommended that the PDSB develop an Employment Equity Policy and operating procedures to support its implementation.⁴³

Exit Interviews Policy and Administrative Procedures

While the PDSB has an exit interview process in place, it does not have a policy or procedures in place to support exit interviews.

Conducting exit interviews and allowing exiting employees to anonymously share their feedback is a best practice to obtain honest feedback on the organization's management practices, organizational culture, and the experiences of Indigenous employees and employees from the equity-seeking groups. Exit interviews may be performed as one-on-one discussions with Human Resources, through confidential feedback on a written survey, or through a third party. This information should also be analyzed to identify any systemic issues that ought to be addressed.

Recommendation 35: It is recommended that the PDSB embed in policy the need to conduct exit interviews with employees who voluntarily resign from the organization as well as those who transfer between positions within the organization. The exit interviews should include questions about the employee's experiences working with the organization and work team or school. The questions should also allow the PDSB to analyze employees' reasons for leaving by identity group to better understand the experiences of Indigenous employees and those from the equity-seeking groups and how these experiences may have contributed to their departure from the organization or movement within the organization.

⁴³ See for example:

City of Toronto. (2000). *Employment equity policy*. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/city-administration/corporate-policies/people-equity-policies/employment-equity-policy/>

McMaster University. (2017). *Employment equity policy and recruitment statement*. <https://hr.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/01/Employment-Equity-Policy-May-26-2017-1-51.pdf>

Recommendation 36: It is recommended that, on an annual basis, Human Resources summarize information from the exit interviews, by identity group, to present to the Director of Education in order to identify areas of concern and develop plans to address the identified concerns with respect to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Accommodating Medical Marijuana in the Workplace

With the legalization of cannabis, many school boards have created a policy to address the school board's need to accommodate medical marijuana use under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*⁴⁴ while also addressing the employer's obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Operating procedures would outline the employer's responsibility to provide accommodation, to the point of undue hardship, as well as the employee's responsibilities. The policy and procedures should also offer protections to people who have or are perceived to have an addiction to cannabis based on the ground of disability.⁴⁵

Recommendation 37: It is recommended that the Accommodating Medical Marijuana in the Workplace Policy and Operating Procedures be developed to address the legal obligation of the Board to provide accommodation, to the point of undue hardship, and that this protection be extended to employees who have, or are perceived to have, an addiction to cannabis.⁴⁶

Employee Use of Guide Dogs, Service Dogs, and Service Animals Operating Procedures

These operating procedures would specify the process to be followed when an employee applies to have a guide dog or service animal accompany them to work or a work-related event.

It would specify the Board's obligations under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* as well as the AODA, and would state that the review of the request for a guide dog or service animal will be addressed based on a range of information, including any competing human rights.

Recommendation 38: It is recommended that an Employee Use of Guide Dogs, Service Dogs, and Service Animals Operating Procedures be developed to recognize that guide dogs and service animals are a legitimate form of accommodation and that

⁴⁴ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2018). *Policy statement on cannabis and the Human Rights Code*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-statement-cannabis-and-human-rights-code>

⁴⁵ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2018). *Policy statement on cannabis and the Human Rights Code*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-statement-cannabis-and-human-rights-code>

⁴⁶ See for example:

Simcoe County District School Board. (2022). *Accommodating medical marijuana in the workplace*. Administrative Procedures Memorandum 4003. <https://www.scdsb.on.ca/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=916653>

the PDSB will make every effort to accommodate employees who require guide dogs or service animals, to the point of undue hardship.

Additional Recommendations

The policy review also identified that a number of Board policies include gendered language (e.g., “he/she,” “birth mother”).

In addition, some of the policies and procedures provided for this review were quite outdated, with some last revised in the 1990s. The Board should have a regular review schedule for all policies to ensure that they are up to date and in compliance with current legislation. While the Board has recently approved a Policy Development and Review Framework Policy, a schedule that identifies all the revision dates of each policy would ensure that all policies are routinely reviewed and that a number of policies are reviewed each year. This would also ensure that staff are not overwhelmed by the volume of work.

Recommendation 39: It is recommended that the Board use its policy review process as an opportunity to incorporate gender-neutral language in all policies.

Recommendation 40: It is recommended that the Board establish a review schedule to ensure that each human resources policy is reviewed at least once every 3 years and that the review be conducted through an equity lens.

8. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESSES AND PRACTICES

The purpose of the recruitment process is to attract a diverse pool of qualified applicants to fill vacant positions. An organization’s method of recruitment contributes greatly to the composition of its workforce. For example, the diversity among applicants in response to a vacancy advertised in a national newspaper will likely be different from the diversity among applicants in response to a job opening advertised by word of mouth through existing employees.

The hiring and selection process includes activities designed to identify a qualified candidate for appointment to a vacant position. Hiring and selection systems are closely linked to the recruitment system—the recruitment system provides the candidates who go through the hiring and selection process.

The nature of the recruitment and selection process renders it susceptible to systemic barriers and individual biases. Consequently, it is important to use a structured process to minimize the potential for barriers and biases. A structured process helps to ensure that only clearly defined job-related criteria are used to assess candidates at each stage of the process and that steps are taken to mitigate cultural and personal biases. While a structured process does not guarantee the elimination of barriers and biases, it does help reduce their impact. It also helps to reduce the level of subjectivity in the hiring process, which may undermine the Board’s strategic priorities and human rights obligations.

The components of the recruitment, hiring, and selection process reviewed in this section include:

1. Job postings
2. Advertising job openings
3. Accommodation during the hiring and selection process
4. Pre-screening
5. Assessment of candidates
6. Background checks, and
7. Competition files.

8.1 Job postings

The wording of, and information contained in, a job posting has the effect of broadening or limiting the applicant pool. In addition to describing the duties of the position, organizations with equity programs typically include wording that presents the organizations as welcoming to applicants from the equity-seeking groups, which helps to attract job seekers from Indigenous communities and the equity-seeking groups.

In addition, other information in the job ad supports job seekers to fully understand the position, know where to find more information about the job opening, and apply for the position.

Careers Webpage

The PDSB uses its Careers webpage as the primary way of advertising job openings to the public. This review found several positive aspects to the job board that would encourage Indigenous job seekers and those from the equity-seeking groups to apply to a job opening, including:

- Sharing what the Board offers as an employer, including excellent salary and benefits, a wide range of opportunities, and Peel Region as a great community in which to work and live
- Specifying the variety of job categories and types of jobs at the Board
- Listing current job openings.

The job board also provides information on:

- Career categories, including Adult Credit Program Teachers, Continuing Education Positions, Elementary and Secondary Teachers, Principals, and Vice Principals, etc.
- How internationally-trained applicants can have their academic credentials evaluated prior to applying for employment.

The Careers webpage also provides the following information on the Criminal Background Check:

- All new employees, volunteers, service providers, and individuals requiring a placement for professional certification are required to provide a satisfactory Criminal Background Check that includes a Vulnerable Sector Check where they will be in a position of trust or authority over children or vulnerable persons.
- Assignment of duties is conditional upon the receipt and review of an original Vulnerable Sector Check.
- A police record does not necessarily disqualify an applicant. The information will be reviewed and the applicant may be given the opportunity to provide additional information. The final decision will be made by the Executive Officer, Human Resources, Partnerships and Equity in consultation with the Criminal Background Check Management Review Committee.

In addition, the website notes the following:

Please note: In addition to a Vulnerable Sector Check, all new employees aged 18 or older are also required to submit an “External Applicant Disclosure Form” prior to the commencement of employment.

Job postings

The job postings reviewed all use the same template with the following categories: job type, job category, school, start date, end date, salary, summary of responsibility, and qualifications. However, not all information was provided for each job posting reviewed, including salary. In addition, a description of responsibilities was not included for many of the teaching positions.

Job postings also include background information about the PDSB:

The Peel District School Board (PDSB) is a racially, culturally and linguistically diverse board that serves 155,000+ students and approximately 17,000 employees. In PDSB, 87% of students are racialized, non-white, representing 162 different ethnic backgrounds. Students in Peel have 121 different first languages. Student diversity also exists in terms of gender and gender expression, sexuality and in terms of ability and faith. A responsive and empathetic understanding of the lived experiences of the students and communities we serve is vital to those who will take on leadership roles within the PDSB. The workforce consists of teachers, office staff, custodial staff, education assistants and professional staff. The workforce is largely unionized through PDSB’s numerous affiliated bargaining agents.

Each job posting also includes a statement of commitment to equity, anti-oppression, and anti-racism, information about the need for a criminal background check, and information on the recruitment process.

Recommendation 41: It is recommended that each job posting include a description of the role and the qualifications being sought, including those for teaching positions.

Recommendation 42: It is recommended that the salary range be included on each job posting.

Equity and accommodation statement

An equity and accommodation statement is an important component of a job posting. It encourages a diverse applicant pool and also helps the Board meet its obligation under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the AODA to offer and provide accommodation to prospective employees based on any human rights protected ground.

Each PDSB job posting includes the following statement of commitment to equity, anti-oppression, and anti-racism:

The Peel District School Board is committed to equity in employment. We are committed to equitable hiring practices that allow us to hire qualified staff who reflect the full diversity of the Region of Peel. We will provide reasonable accommodation (e.g. an accessible location, rescheduling of interviews that fall on Days of Significance etc.) based on any of the human rights protected grounds, during the hiring process if advised in advance.

We are also committed to inclusion, anti-oppression and anti-racist practices while also supporting the continuous growth and development of an equitable and empowered education system at the PDSB.

While the equity statement is included on job ads, it is not included on the PDSB's Job Board webpage itself.

Recommendation 43: It is recommended that the statement of commitment to equity, anti-oppression, and anti-racism be included on each job posting as well as on the PDSB's Job Board webpage.

Equity-related qualifications

Our review found that some job postings included equity-related qualifications in the qualifications and experience required for a position, such as the following:

- Demonstrated commitment to working in a diverse school community and/or environment
- Demonstrated commitment to equity, inclusion, anti-racism, anti-oppression and working in a diverse school community and/or work environment.

However, these qualifications were not included as a required qualification on all job postings, including those for teachers, educational assistants, and clerical positions.

Recommendation 44: It is recommended that the Board include equity-related competencies specific to each role and that this requirement be communicated in job descriptions, job postings, and the selection process.

8.2 Advertising job openings

The Board uses its website as its primary means of advertising job openings to the public. For professional or specialist positions, broader advertising is conducted, including posting job ads in newspapers, through professional associations, and on other websites such as Indeed and LinkedIn.

Throughout Ontario, school boards are facing the challenge of diversifying their teacher workforce to reflect the diversity of the student population. If school boards are to close the Teacher Diversity Gap,⁴⁷ they need to proactively recruit and hire for diversity.

Outreach recruitment has been a valuable, practical, and successful tool for many employers to reach members of diverse communities and ensure greater diversity within the applicant pool. Not only does outreach recruitment encourage a more diverse applicant pool for the positions currently vacant, but it also signals to those from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities that the organization is welcoming to people like them, which could then increase the likelihood that they may consider applying to job openings in the future. Without the relationship building that is inherent in outreach recruitment, job seekers may hear about specific job openings, but may not apply if they perceive the organization to be a “closed shop” and unwelcoming to people from their community, background, or identity.

In 2021, the PDSB approved a Focused Recruitment of Black and Indigenous Educators Initiative.⁴⁸ To support these efforts, a document was produced to answer questions about the focused recruitment of Black and Indigenous educators.⁴⁹ Information sessions about this initiative were held in September 2019 and April 2021.

While these documents identify the need for focused recruitment and encourage applications from Black and Indigenous teachers, there are no documents that specify whether and how the hiring process will be changed to support Black and Indigenous candidates, such as the use of a more diverse hiring panel, whether

⁴⁷ Turner Consulting Group. (2014, October 30). *Teacher Diversity Gap*. <https://www.turnerconsultinggroup.ca/blog/teacher-diversity-gap>

⁴⁸ Peel District School Board. (2021). *Focused recruitment of Black and Indigenous educators initiative: Strategy* https://www.peelschools.org/documents/16.3_FocusedRecruitmentofBlackandIndigenousEducatorsInitiative-Strategy.pdf/16.3_FocusedRecruitmentofBlackandIndigenousEducatorsInitiative-Strategy.pdf

⁴⁹ Peel District School Board. (2019). *Focused recruitment of Black and Indigenous educators*. <https://www.peelschools.org/documents/e8d46197-16bb-43ef-a543-65d060912799/Focused-Recruitment---of-Black-and-Indigenous-Educators---September2019.pdf>

and how Black and Indigenous applicants will be identified in the hiring process, whether and how Black and Indigenous applicants will be prioritized to receive an interview, and whether and how the identity of Black and Indigenous candidates will be considered in the hiring process. As a result, the initiative merely encourages applications from Black and Indigenous teachers, but does nothing to support the hiring of more Black and Indigenous teachers.

School boards can also do more to help diversify the teacher pipeline by developing curricula and strategies that support elementary and secondary students from all backgrounds to see teaching as a viable profession. School boards also have a role to play in ensuring that universities are admitting and graduating teachers from diverse racial backgrounds.

The ability of employers to influence universities to diversify their student populations is not new. Faced with the lack of diversity among law school graduates, the legal community worked with faculties of law to increase diversity among those entering the profession. In 2010, Canada's legal community released a *Call to Action Canada: Diversity in the Legal Profession* to help foster more diverse Canadian legal environments within the next decade.⁵⁰ Those who signed onto the Call to Action include law firms, corporations, Crown prosecutors, judges, and law schools. These organizations have undertaken a range of initiatives to not only hire lawyers from diverse backgrounds, but also influence the diversity of those entering law schools. In response, law schools have undertaken various efforts to diversify their student populations. For example, the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto has a strategy to diversify its student population that includes:⁵¹

- Creating innovative youth outreach programs to encourage young people from underrepresented communities to consider law school
- Removing the financial obstacles faced by low-income students when they are applying to law school by offering a free LSAT prep program and waiving the law school application fee
- Collecting demographic information about incoming student classes, and
- Offering specialized student support services to Indigenous students.

Recommendation 45: It is recommended that the PDSB document how it will operationalize the commitment to hiring more Black and Indigenous educators, including by specifying what actions are to be taken at each stage of the hiring and selection process.

⁵⁰ Stern, J. (2010, January 11). Driving diversity: A call to action to Canada's legal community. *Canadian Lawyer*. <http://www.canadianlawyermag.com/author/heather-gardiner/driving-diversity-a-call-to-action-to-canadas-legal-community-692/>

⁵¹ University of Toronto Faculty of Law. (n.d.). *Inclusivity and diversity at the Faculty of Law*. <https://www.law.utoronto.ca/about-law-school/inclusivity-and-diversity-faculty-law>

Recommendation 46: It is recommended that the PDSB work with other school boards to use their influence to call on faculties of education to increase the racial diversity of their graduates and to increase the competency of new teachers to be culturally responsive and anti-racist/anti-oppressive.

Recommendation 47: It is recommended that the PDSB promote teaching as a profession to elementary and secondary students from Indigenous communities and the equity-seeking groups to help to diversify the pool of teachers in the coming years.

8.3 Accommodation during the hiring and selection process

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* requires that organizations accommodate both existing and prospective employees based on any human rights protected ground during the hiring and selection process. The AODA also requires that persons with disabilities be offered and receive accommodation in the hiring and selection process. The Employment Standard in the AODA requires that organizations:

- Notify candidates about the availability of accommodation during the recruitment and selection process
- Provide assessment and selection materials in accessible formats, upon request, and
- Notify successful candidates of the policies for accommodation of employees with disabilities.

Some of the competition files reviewed included correspondence with employees to schedule the interview. These emails did not include information about accommodation and did not invite candidates to let their accommodation needs be known.

In addition, some offer letters were also included in the competition files. These offer letters did not inform new employees of the Board's policies for accommodation, nor did they invite candidates to let their accommodation needs be known.

Recommendation 48: It is recommended that the Board's hiring guides include guidance to recruitment partner and hiring managers on asking candidates whether they require accommodation when invited for an interview and when making a job offer.

8.4 Pre-screening

Pre-screening process

Pre-screening includes reviewing applications against the stated requirements on the job posting to identify who will be invited for an interview. Typically, a spreadsheet is used to document that each applicant has been assessed against the criteria and to justify the selection of those invited for an interview.

Pre-screening is conducted in some cases by the recruitment partner and in other cases by the hiring manager. The screening is based on the minimal requirements (education and experience) listed in the job ad. For unionized positions in which hiring opportunities are restricted to internal applicants, there is no flexibility on the pre-screening criteria, as the educational and experiential requirements have been negotiated with the bargaining unit. Teacher positions are based on educational qualifications for each panel, as well as additional qualifications that are needed within the school.

The hiring guides provide little guidance on how the pre-screening of job applicants should be conducted. Some guides include screening criteria guidelines and a spreadsheet.

The use of pre-screening forms supports the consistent assessment of job seekers. However, a completed pre-screening form was not included in each of the competition files reviewed for this ESR.

Additional information could be provided to support hiring managers to consistently and fairly screen job applicants, such as distinguishing between the mention and evidence of qualifications, how to consider preferred qualifications and experience, and how to be objective and fair when evaluating candidates.⁵²

In the Hiring Manual for the Administrative Staff Group, the following guidance is provided:

The shortlisting criteria must be graded. For example, if a degree is preferred in the job posting, a point value of 3 may be assigned to someone with a degree, 2 to someone with a related diploma and .5 to 1 for someone with related courses.

However, giving additional points for education that is above that which is required for the job inflates the qualifications for the job.

Recommendation 49: It is recommended that additional guidance be provided to hiring managers on how to consistently and fairly assess job applicants against the stated job qualifications without inflating the educational requirements for the job.

Equivalencies

The hiring manuals reviewed provide no evidence that the PDSB considers equivalencies in the hiring process, a strategy that would help remove the credential barriers that often impact Indigenous peoples and those from the equity-seeking groups.

Some organizations allow Human Resources staff to work with hiring managers to identify whether equivalencies would be appropriate for a position.⁵³ If a hiring

⁵² See for example: Government of British Columbia. (2022). *Screening guidelines for hiring managers*. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/for-hiring-managers/resources-for-hiring-managers/screening_guidelines_hiring_managers.docx

manager would accept equivalencies, then Human Resources staff will determine the types of equivalencies the manager would accept, where specific education is not required by law. Equivalencies pertaining to both education requirements and work experience would help determine whether the person would be invited for an interview. It would screen in those with education exceeding the minimum education requirements but with fewer years of experience, as well as those with more years of work experience but who may not meet the education requirements to be considered for the position.

Job ads should clearly state that the equivalent combination of education and experience would be considered in order to encourage applications from individuals who have not had the opportunity to obtain the required education or years of experience.⁵⁴

In the consultations, some employees shared concern about the PDSB's inflexibility regarding the years of experience required for a particular role. Requiring a specific number of years of experience is a credential barrier that can unfairly exclude qualified candidates who have the breadth and depth of experience the Board may be looking for. Instead of requiring a specific number of years of experience, the Board could focus on the specific experience needed, not a specific number of years of experience. For example, instead of asking for "3 years of experience as a Child and Youth Worker," the Board can ask for "Experience designing programs to engage children and youth. Experience working with children and youth in a variety of settings and programs." Alternatively, the Board can state whether the position is an entry-level, mid-career, or senior position and provide applicants with a sense of the level of responsibility of the position. If the Board does ask for years of experience, it can use it as a guide rather than a hard cut-off.

Recommendation 50: It is recommended that Human Resources Services develop procedures that support the acceptance of equivalencies and that Human Resources work with each hiring manager to identify equivalencies that ensure that the candidate has the knowledge, skills, and abilities to do the job, unless a specific credential is required by law.

Recommendation 51: It is recommended that where equivalencies will be considered, this should be stated on the job posting.

Recommendation 52: It is recommended that Human Resources Services develop and share a fillable form and require the use of a pre-screening form to support the consistent assessment of applicants in order to determine who is invited for an interview and that this form be retained in the staffing files.

⁵³ Indeed.com. (2021, February 8). *What is a bachelor's degree or equivalent?*
<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/bachelors-degree-or-equivalent>

⁵⁴ See for example:

East Tennessee State University. (n.d.). *Equivalences for education and experiences.*
<https://www.etsu.edu/human-resources/hiring/equivalences.php>

Recommendation 53: It is recommended that the Board offer some flexibility rather than requiring a specific number of years of experience for a given role.

8.5 Assessment of candidates

In a formal assessment process, interview questions are designed to assess each candidate against job duties and qualifications. The general practice is to establish tests and interview questions that reflect the skills and abilities needed for the job; identify a score and weight for each type of assessment; and administer the same tests and ask the same questions of all candidates.

Ensuring consistency in the assessment of candidates helps to ensure that staffing decisions are based on a fair assessment of the candidate's skills and abilities against job-related criteria rather than an interviewer's subjective assessment of the candidate. Studies have shown that the more subjectivity there is in a hiring process, the less likely it is that women are successful in the process.⁵⁵ This finding likely also holds true for Indigenous candidates and those from the other equity-seeking groups.

Other studies have found that bias and error on the part of the interviewer is a key reason why the candidate who is most likely to perform well in the job is not always hired.⁵⁶ Without the standardization of the interview process—supported by adequate training—interviewers may make hiring decisions based on “gut feeling” and intuition, which could have a negative effect on the hiring of Indigenous persons and individuals from the equity-seeking groups.

For decades, research studies in Canada and the United States have been conducted on the impact of gender, race, and ethnicity in various aspects of employment. This research suggests that both conscious and unconscious biases influence interactions with and the assessment of job candidates. One study found that in the hiring process, men are judged based on their potential and women on their past performance.⁵⁷ Some studies found that when there was a hiring decision to be made, men of equal skill and ability were more likely to be hired over their female peers.⁵⁸ There is also evidence that the qualifications and work experience of immigrants are likewise undervalued, and that biases against those with “ethnic-sounding” names negatively affect the ability of job applicants to be considered for positions for which

⁵⁵ Polisar, J., & Milgram, D. (1998, October). Recruiting, integrating and retaining women police officers: Strategies that work. *The Police Chief*, 65(1), 42–52.

⁵⁶ Bohnet, I. (2016, April 18). How to take the bias out of interviews. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2016/04/how-to-take-the-bias-out-of-interviews>

⁵⁷ Jacobs, T. (2019, April 25). Men are judged based on their potential; women are judged based on their past performance. *Pacific Standard*. <https://psmag.com/economics/men-are-judged-based-on-their-potential-women-are-judged-based-on-their-past-performance>

⁵⁸ Gonzalez, M. J., Cortina, C., & Rodriguez-Menes, J. (2019, March). *Are women less likely to get hired?* La Caiza Social Observatory. <https://observatoriosocialacaixa.org/en/-/mujeres-oportunidades-contratadas>

they are fully qualified.⁵⁹

To minimize the effect of bias on candidates from Indigenous and equity-seeking communities, organizations typically strive to ensure diversity on interview panels. Doing so aims to increase the validity of the interview as a primary selection tool and decrease the differences in outcomes between equally qualified candidates from various groups. Having a diverse interview panel also decreases the likelihood of gender or cultural bias in the interview process and, in turn, increases the fairness—and perceptions of fairness—of the process.⁶⁰

In addition, interviewers, no matter how well intentioned, also tend to unconsciously favour those who are more like them, as well as those they know on a personal basis or with whom they have previously worked. A diverse interview team would help to reduce such bias.

8.5.a Interviews

Depending on the position, either Human Resources staff or the school administrator/manager may set up the interview, develop the interview questions, and convene the interview panel. While recruitment officers may sit on some interview panels, they do not sit on all interview panels.

Use of an interview panel

While it is accepted practice to include more than one person on the hiring panel, the hiring manuals do not explicitly state that this is a requirement.

The review of the competition files indicates that interview panels of two or more individuals are consistently used in the hiring process.

Hiring managers are responsible for reviewing the potential for conflict of interest and ensuring that the appropriate form (Declaration of No Conflict of Interest or Conflict of Interest) is completed for each person involved in the hiring process.

Recommendation 54: It is recommended that the hiring guides explicitly require that interviewing be conducted by interview panels of two or more people.

Scoring

The review of the competition files included the interview forms which included with the interview questions, look fors, scoring for each individual question, and total score.

⁵⁹ Cruickshank, A. (2017, December 26). Black job seekers have harder time finding retail and service work than their white counterparts, study suggests. *The Toronto Star*. <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/12/26/black-job-seekers-have-harder-time-finding-retail-and-service-work-than-their-white-counterparts-study-suggests.html>

⁶⁰ Dechief, D. & Oreopoulos, P. (2012, February). Why do some employers prefer to interview Matthew, but not Samir? New evidence from Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Canadian Labour Market and Skills Researcher Network. Working Paper No. 95. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2018047

Some of these forms included introductory remarks to ensure that the interviews were appropriately introduced. However, these introductory remarks were not included in each competition file.

All of the interview forms included scoring for each question, such as:

- 0 – Not evident, to 10 – Extensive; or, Limited – 0 points, to High Degree – 3 points
- 0 – Limited: Applicant does not clearly communicate or provide concrete examples; 1 – Somewhat: Applicant clearly communicates a broad idea but the response lacks specifics; 2 – Considerable: Applicant communicates with clarity and gives some examples (concrete and abstract); 3 – High Degree: Applicant effectively communicates with individuals about his/her passion and dedication using examples that are specific and relevant.

However, scoring a candidate on the lack of depth of their answers could unfairly penalize those who have little experience interviewing and those who have not been coached and supported to understand how to respond to interview questions. The Board could support candidates to better answer interview questions by providing candidates with guidance on the depth of answer being sought and on how to structure their answers. Interviewers should also be provided with information to ensure that they are appropriately probing when they feel a candidate has not fully answered a question.

The assessment scale should be updated to support interviewers to better assess the depth of understanding and knowledge that the candidate has shared. It should also remove the assessment of “passion and dedication,” as these are not objective and quantifiable job qualifications. In addition, enabling interviewers to assess these characteristics could infuse cultural biases into the assessment, as interviewers are prone to using a candidate’s tone of voice, pace of speech, and other nonverbal behaviours— all of which are culturally determined—in this assessment.

Other look fors identified are the candidate’s “awareness of PDSB commitment to equity/inclusion/meeting needs of diverse learner.” However, this awareness does not help to assess the candidate’s skills and abilities for the job. More relevant look fors would relate to the candidate’s commitment to equity, not their understanding of the Board’s commitment.

In a few of the staffing files reviewed, we did not find evidence to suggest that the response to each interview question was scored. As such, it was unclear on what basis the hiring decision was made.

Our review of hiring documents did not find that any guidance is provided to hiring managers on what to consider in the decision-making process to support the Board’s goal of diversifying the workforce.

Recommendation 55: It is recommended that interview panel members be provided with information to share with candidates to help them understand the depth of responses expected by the Board.

Recommendation 56: It is recommended that hiring managers be provided with information about what they should consider in the decision-making process to support the Board’s goal of diversifying the workforce.

8.5.b Interview questions

The competition file review found many examples of good interview questions that included a mix of behavioural questions (e.g., “Tell us about a time when . . . ”), knowledge and skill questions (e.g., “Tell us about your approach to . . . ”), and situational questions (e.g., “What would you do in this situation . . . ”). This review did not find any interview questions that were culturally or gender biased.

Despite these positive aspects, the review did find some interview questions that we feel are problematic:

- Please describe two incidents where you have had difficult experiences supervising employees from diverse backgrounds.
- Can you describe a time when you had to complete multiple projects at once?

These questions are problematic because they do not provide sufficient information to the candidate to help them answer appropriately and completely. Additional information such as the following for the two questions respectively, “Describe the situation and tell us about how you overcame or addressed these difficulties” and “Describe the situation and tell us about strategies you use to manage your time and complete the projects on time.” Without more guidance, only those with a great deal of experience interviewing will be able to appropriately answer these questions.

In a few files, we did find that questions were asked that would not have supported the interview panel to assess the candidate’s skills and abilities for the job. These questions were “Who is the person that made the most impact on your professional life and why?” and “Which supervisory style best suits your character?”

Throughout the review, we found evidence that questions related to equity and diversity were asked in each competition. Some questions are quite good and help assess the candidate’s ability to work with a diverse group of co-workers and students.

However, interviewers routinely asked candidates one question: whether they had worked as part of a team to support the dismantling of disproportionate impact on Black, Indigenous, and marginalized students. This question assumes that all teachers have had this opportunity. A better question would ask the candidate about their understanding of the inequities facing Indigenous, Black, racialized, and other

students and what they have done as classroom teachers and in other roles to address these inequities.

The competition files do not include evidence that candidates are provided with a written copy of the interview questions to refer to during the interview. This is a best practice that supports candidates to understand and remember the question and fully respond to it. Another best practice is providing a copy of the interview questions a few minutes prior to the interview, which further supports candidates to prepare their responses and manage the time allotted for the interview.

Recommendation 57: It is recommended that additional guidance be provided to support interview panels to develop interview questions that support their assessment of a candidate’s skills and abilities for the job.

Recommendation 58: It is recommended that additional guidance be provided to ensure that a candidate’s response to each question is properly scored in order to support the equitable assessment of each candidate.

Recommendation 59: It is recommended that interview questions better assess a candidate’s understanding of equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression and ask about the actions a candidate has taken to support equitable education outcomes for all students. Questions that assume candidates have had the opportunity to participate in work that is principal-led should not be included.

Recommendation 60: It is recommended that hiring guides include the suggestion that hiring panels provide a copy of the interview questions to candidates a few minutes prior to the interview.

8.6 Background checks

Reference checks

The hiring manuals require that reference checks be conducted and retained in the competition files. Two references are to be interviewed for the top candidates, with one of the references required to be from the candidate’s immediate supervisor.

Hiring manuals advise that references be scored and that interviews and references be assigned a weight to assist with making the final decision. Hiring managers can prepare their own set of questions to be asked in the reference check, similar to those developed for the interview. The hiring manuals require that a diversity-related question be included in the reference check process “to ask candidates about their experiences working with individuals from diverse backgrounds to ensure they are able to support and reflect the full diversity of Peel Region.” Hiring managers are referred to their recruitment partner should they require assistance in preparing appropriate reference questions. The manuals state that references cannot be “off the record” and that the hiring manager should only contact references who are named on the Reference Check Consent Form.

The scoring of references is problematic and is not standardized. Rather than being an assessment of the candidate, reference scoring instead appears to be an assessment of the reference's ability to articulate what the candidate brings to the role. A better approach is to use references to confirm a hiring decision. If reference checks are to be factored into the final hiring decision, then references could be asked to rate the candidate in several areas. These scores could then be totalled and included in the candidate's overall score.

Sample reference questions are also provided. The sample reference check questions reviewed include some very good questions designed to assess how a candidate has performed in previous positions as well as the soft skills they bring to the position. However, while the manuals state that a diversity-related question must be included, the sample questions do not include one. In the competition files reviewed, a diversity-related question was not always included in the reference check questions.

Verification of credentials

The hiring guides provide no guidance on verifying credentials other than a candidate's teaching credentials. The verification of credentials appears to be occurring inconsistently, as copies of degrees were found in some competition files reviewed but not all. In addition, this issue was raised in discussions with staff, as some people were required to provide their original credentials.

The hiring manuals do not provide information or guidance on whether, when, how, and by whom educational credentials should be verified. Many universities have moved to online verification of educational credentials owing to the proliferation of degree mills.⁶¹ To ensure consistent practice, the hiring manuals should include instructions on verification of credentials.

The manuals should also provide guidance on what to do should a candidate be unable to provide the information needed. This is especially important for refugees and others who may be unable to supply the documents needed to verify their academic credentials. While many refugees have been successful in obtaining their official documentation from their home institutions, either through their own efforts or through embassies, there are some cases where accommodation may be needed.

In 2007, the Ontario Superior Court ruled that the Ontario College of Teachers had violated the province's *Human Rights Code* by requiring an Iranian refugee to provide original documents to prove her teaching qualifications. The person, who had taught in Iran for 16 years before fleeing to Canada, feared that the Iranian government might harm her relatives in Iran were she to request the documents. The court ruling stated that:

⁶¹ Szeto, E., & Vellani, N. (2017, September 10). 'All of us can be harmed': Investigation reveals hundreds of Canadians have phoney degrees. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/diploma-mills-marketplace-fake-degrees-1.4279513>

It is plain and obvious to me that to insist on original, or government certified documents from her place of origin, is prima facie discriminatory against her, in view of the evidence she has provided. The obligation was upon the [Registration Appeals] Committee to provide individual accommodation, unless it could establish that accommodation was impossible without imposing undue hardship on the College.

Recommendation 61: It is recommended that the sample reference check questions include a question, appropriate for the position, on equity and diversity.

Recommendation 62: It is recommended that the PDSB find an alternative approach to scoring the responses provided by a candidate's references. Acceptable alternatives may include using the reference check to confirm the hiring decision or asking the reference to score a candidate on a number of job-related factors, then using that score as part of the candidate's total score.

Recommendation 63: It is recommended that the hiring manuals specify whether, when, how, and by whom educational credentials are to be verified.

Recommendation 64: It is recommended that the hiring manuals specify that accommodation will be provided for refugees and others who may be unable to supply the documents needed to verify their academic credentials.

8.7 Competition files

A complete competition file allows the organization to document the hiring process and justify the interview panel's hiring decision. This allows for an accurate and thorough debrief of all candidates should it be requested. It also enables the organization to defend its hiring decision should it be challenged through a grievance or human rights complaint.

For interviews conducted centrally, including for permanent teachers and occasional teachers, Human Resources maintains the competition files. For those conducted at the school level (e.g., for long-term occasional teachers), principals are instructed in the Academic Staff Hiring Manual to retain the competition files for 3 years. Despite this requirement for file retention, staff were unable to produce all of the files requested for this report.

In addition, not all the files received for this review were complete. Included in some, but not all, competition files were the following items:

- Competition File Checklist
- Job ad
- Shortlisting Template
- Declaration of No Conflict of Interest Form

- Candidate cover letters and resumes
- Interview questions, candidate responses, and scoring
- Instructions to Teacher Candidates
- Reference Check Consent Form
- Reference check questions and notes

Failure to retain all competition files puts the PDSB at risk should it receive a grievance or human rights complaint and not have the documents to demonstrate that a fair hiring process was followed.

Recommendation 65: It is recommended that Human Resources put procedures in place to ensure the retention of all competition files and that these files be complete.

Recommendation 66: It is recommended that each hiring manual include a checklist to specify which items should be maintained in the competition files.

9. VICE PRINCIPAL AND PRINCIPAL PROMOTION PROCESS

The reviewer's report to the Ministry recommended changes to organizational practices at the PDSB to ensure that school leaders, among others, uphold and advance principles of equity and human rights. In response, the PDSB has redesigned the promotion process to actively seek anti-racist leaders who have demonstrated their commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression and who have upheld and advanced principles of equity and human rights throughout their careers.

In order to ensure that candidates with an orientation toward equity leadership are selected, a revised Equity Leadership Competencies Framework was developed for principals and vice principals. The competencies within the framework consist of leadership practice grounded in anti-racism, anti-oppression, and decolonizing orientations to school leadership. This framework serves as the guiding document to develop the selection criteria and tools to promote upcoming leaders at the PDSB. These school leaders will need to have the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and mindsets to implement system transformation that leads to improved outcomes for historically marginalized students.

The 2021 promotion process was phase 1 in the transformation of the PDSB promotion process for principals and vice principals. This transformation continued into the 2022 school year, with further changes made to the anti-oppression framework.

The development of the revised promotion process was informed by a steering committee of superintendents and Principal and Vice Principal Association representatives, and by input from parents and community partners.

The 2022 processes were designed to unfold as follows:

Job Posting

The promotion process is initiated by the public posting of a job posting and information package.

The package includes the following:

- A letter from the Director of Education
- Background information about the Board and the skills and competencies the Board is seeking
- Statement of a commitment to equity and accommodation
- Information on the focused recruitment of Black, Indigenous, and other racialized leaders. It notes that information on Indigenous and racial identity will be collected through the Apply to Education application form.
- Qualification requirements, including demonstrated evidence of a clear commitment to employment equity, human rights, and dismantling racism

- Steps to take before starting the application package, such as conducting a self-assessment of strengths, compiling an Evidence of Growth portfolio, and engaging in supportive conversations with one’s principal and superintendent
- Equity leadership competencies
- Requirements for references
- Description of the promotion process.

Information Session

Both internal and external candidates are invited to virtual information sessions that provide an overview of the promotion process and requirements. The information session is recorded and posted for future reference.

Promotion Process Preparation Session

A session focused on the *Peel Equity Leadership Competencies* is held.

Supportive Conversation

Applicants are able to engage in a “risk-free conversation about your demonstrated anti-racist leadership.” Internal principal candidates are able to schedule a conversation with their superintendent. Internal vice principal candidates are to schedule a meeting with their principal. External candidates can schedule a supportive conversation with a PDSB superintendent.

Review of Application Submission

The application packages are screened using established criteria and guidelines. Those who receive a passing score are invited to an interview, with an interview team comprised of superintendents and business managers.

Interview

Candidates are provided with three interview questions before the interview begins to give them time to prepare their thoughts. Two scenario questions are provided during the interview.

The interview team consists of two superintendents and an executive officer.

Debrief

Unsuccessful candidates are able to schedule a voluntary feedback session.

Promotion Process Feedback Survey

All candidates are provided with an exist survey to gather their reflection and insight regarding the promotion process. The results are analyzed and used to inform the development of the next vice principal and principal promotion processes.

Placement in Pool

Successful candidates are placed in a promotion pool for a period not to exceed 3 years. Those in the pool are appointed to positions as vacancies become available.

For a number of reasons, Indigenous and racialized candidates can be overrepresented among principals and vice principals who remain in the pool beyond 3 years. These candidates are then required to reapply to the promotion process.

Recommendation 67: It is recommended that candidates be able to rely on the support of a former principal if they have not had time to develop a relationship with their existing principal.

Recommendation 68: To support the success of school administrators from outside the Board, it is recommended that an orientation program be developed to support their understanding of the Board, its organizational processes, and its organizational culture.

Recommendation 69: It is recommended that the Board re-examine its requirement that candidates must reapply after they been the promotion pool beyond 3 years to determine whether it has an impact on Indigenous and racialized candidates and whether there is a bona fide reason for this practice.

10. EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVES

This section summarizes the findings of the online survey, focus groups, and interviews with employees, managers, school administrators, union representatives, and senior leaders. In total, about 1,553 people participated in the consultations for this ESR: 1,286 people completed the online survey; 234 participated in 27 focus groups; and one-on-one interviews were held with 10 senior leaders, 11 union leaders, and 12 Human Resources staff. This represents about 8% of the PDSB's approximately 20,000 employees.

In the following sections, the data collected through the online survey is graphed, with the responses broken down for each group so that we are able to explore the different perceptions and experiences of these groups: Indigenous peoples (26 survey respondents); non-Black racialized people (244); African Canadians (102); persons with disabilities (200); 2SLGBTQ+ employees (72); White women (369); and White men (71).

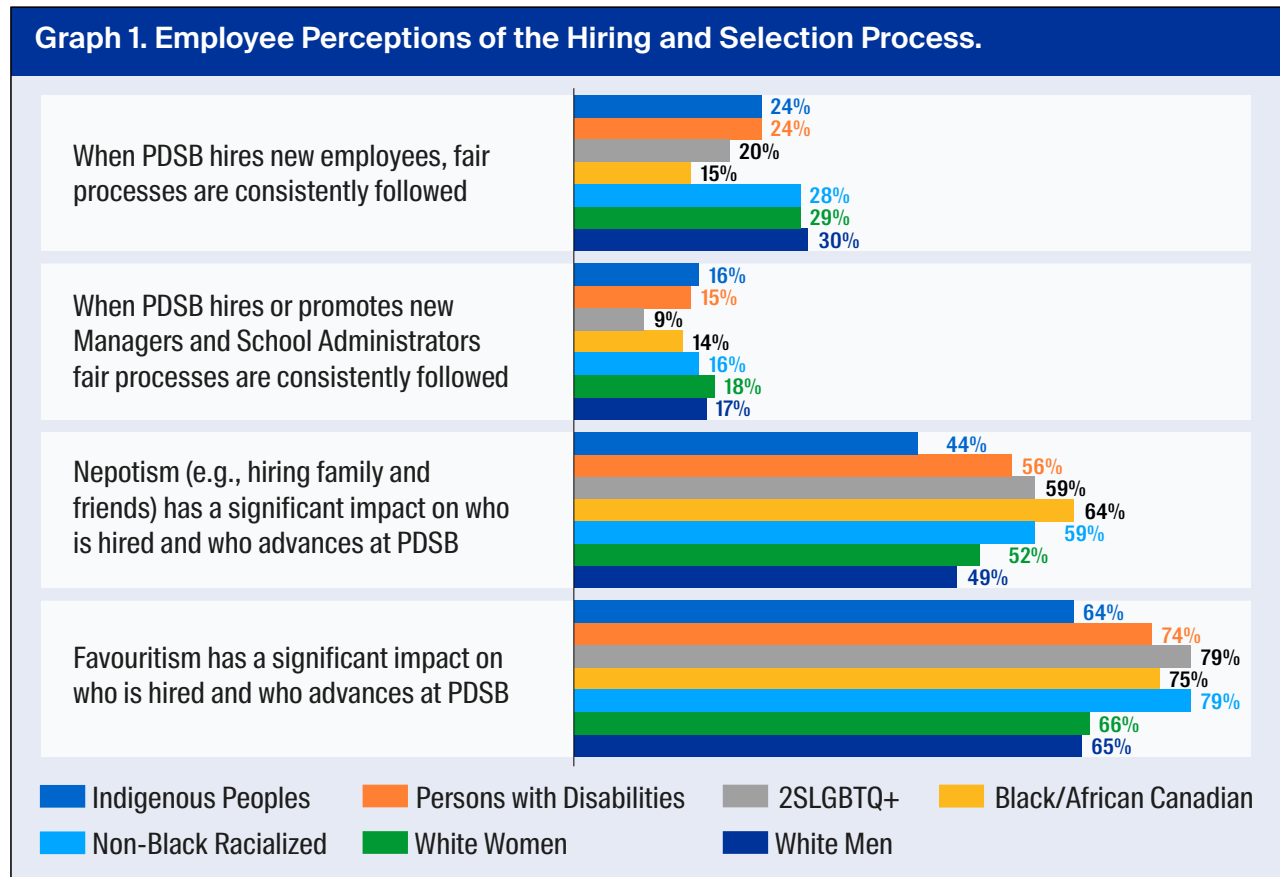
In the online survey, employees were asked about the extent to which they agreed with a number of statements. They were able to identify whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. They were also able to indicate whether they don't know or the question was not applicable. To simplify the graphs and allow for ease of analysis, the graphs compile the proportion of employees who indicated that they agree or strongly agree with the question.

The report then goes on to explore the themes identified through the conversations with employees in the focus groups and interviews as well through the 444 pages of stories, information, and perspectives shared through the online survey.

While these perspectives provide insight into the overall experience of employees, it doesn't fully describe every workplace and work team in the organization. We therefore recognize that through the online survey, many employees reported that they have experienced fair treatment from the organization and the person they report to. In addition, some employees provided no comment because they do not experience any issues in the workplace.

10.1 Perceptions of the hiring and selection process

The online Workplace Equity and Inclusion Survey asked employees about their perceptions of the hiring and selection process at the PDSB.



As Graph 1 shows, a small proportion of each of the seven groups expressed confidence that fair and consistent hiring and advancement practices are followed at the PDSB. As the graph shows, fewer than one-third of the survey respondents in all groups agreed that when the PDSB hires new employees, fair processes are consistently followed. In addition, fewer than 20% of each group agreed that when the PDSB hires or promotes new managers and school administrators, fair processes are consistently followed.

While there are differences between the groups, close to half of each group agreed that nepotism has a significant impact on who is hired and who advances at the PDSB, while over two-thirds believe that favouritism has a significant impact on the same.

Throughout the focus groups and comments in the online survey, employees shared a great deal of skepticism about the hiring process. A common theme expressed by Indigenous and racialized employees is the perception and experience of being unable to secure permanent employment at the PDSB or being unable to advance because of hiring practices that are relationship-based rather than merit-based. As a few commented:

I think that getting promoted is a very politicized process. It's all who you know, not your actual qualifications.

I believe there is strong nepotism within the board with a select group controlling many of the hiring decisions at a senior level; there are too many connections to be coincidental.

It is common knowledge that principals in Peel hire friends of a friend or if another principal asks them to hire someone as a favour between principals. This is systemic and been this way for years. You can't change this.

Because hiring is relationship-based, some also noted that if a principal does not like a teacher, the principal will share their perceptions with other principals, thereby ensuring that the teacher cannot be hired at the PDSB. As one person commented:

Principals who hate staff call other principals and warn them about staff destroying staff in new schools. Everyone is at the mercy of principals for fear they will either ruin them in the school or ruin them out of the school. There are no ways for teachers to tell on principals without marking themselves if they do a formal complaint. It's scary. Principals will also tarnish your reputation to superintendents. Peel principals have so much power in this board. They are the culprits who are shaping racist and discriminatory schools. You have to strip their power.

Some also shared that, historically and presently, there is explicit discrimination, which limits opportunities for racialized teachers and perpetuates the gap in racial diversity between teachers and students at the PDSB:

When I was using my maiden name, it was [a South Asian last name], I found that there was no response to a lot of job applications. After getting married and taking my married name, which is [an Anglo last name], I found that there was a huge difference in the response that I was getting.

Many White staff continue to do the hiring and they continue to demonstrate discriminatory practices to maintain power and control.

In addition, a number of staff shared their misconceptions about workplace equity and lack of understanding about the connection of workplace equity to the success of students. Some employees also expressed their opposition to the Board's focus on hiring Indigenous, Black, and racialized teachers. White employees also shared their perception that they are unable to advance at the PDSB because of the focus on hiring Indigenous and Black people:

We appear to be simply hiring people of colour/racialized people in an attempt to make up for past mistakes, regardless of qualifications or experience. Why does the PDSB have a policy around "You must have a Black guidance counsellor?" in your school. How about placing a person with the experience and qualifications in the role, rather than it just being about skin colour . . .

Too many being promoted have only the most minimum qualifications (check OCT site). It is evident, by the items that appear on applications' requirements lists, that it is practically impossible for White people to apply for most of those positions.

I am disgusted at how overtly racist they have become. In trying to become less racist they have become overtly racist towards all races that are not visible minorities. It has created a significant bias and making it much harder for anyone to get a job. Rather than merit and qualifications, it is now based on skin colour.

The Board's approach to asking people in the interview to speak about their identity was also critiqued by both racialized and White employees as problematic for a number of reasons. These reasons include that the question focuses on identity rather than competency, and that it requires some candidates to share their trauma. There was also concern about whether those on the interview panel had sufficient knowledge to score the responses to this question.

Of concern is that a number of White employees shared that the PDSB's focus on hiring Indigenous and racialized employees means that they will not be able to advance at the Board. As some commented:

I've been told by 2 administrators that I'm "not the right colour" to go through the promotion process (I'm a White female). In 10 years, not one has told me to work on a particular skill or project. I've led more teams, committees, projects etc. than every single administrator I've worked for has when they were teachers!

I have been told I will not be hired as a White woman at Peel.

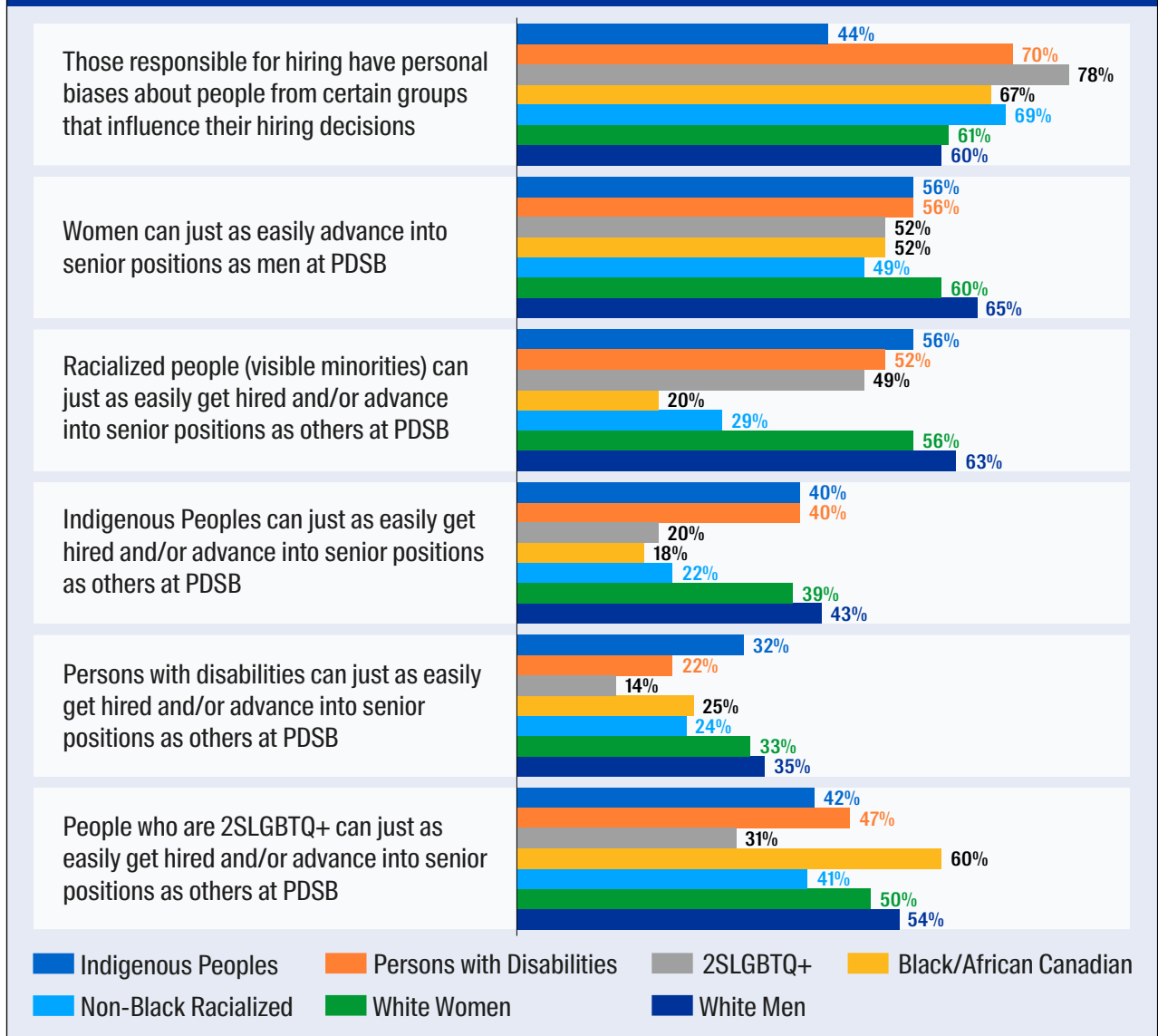
People who are more than qualified who are White are getting the sense they are not being promoted because they are White . . . at least this is something circulating in the board – White fragility? Maybe. Unfair practices? Could be.

Some also shared that the PDSB is placing too much focus on equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression and too little on instruction, operations, and child development.

In addition, survey respondents shared that they have not received the requested and agreed-to accommodation in the hiring and selection process. Some also noted that interviews were scheduled for their sabbath and accommodations were not provided to hold interviews on another day. A number of others shared their feeling that the hiring and promotion processes are not transparent and that little information is provided in order to support them to be successful.

The online survey next asked employees whether they believe that personal biases about people from certain groups influence hiring decisions and the selection process at the Board.

Graph 2. Employee Perceptions of the Impact of Bias in the Hiring and Selection Process.



As Graph 2 shows, more than half of the survey respondents in most groups agreed that those responsible for hiring have personal biases about people from certain groups that influence their hiring decisions.

Survey responses differed on whether job seekers from the various groups are able to be hired and advance as others at PDSB. White men were the most likely of all seven groups to agree that women, racialized people, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities can just as easily get hired and/or advance into senior positions as others at the PDSB.

Throughout the consultation, participants expressed frustration and disappointment that while the population of Peel Region has been incredibly diverse for many years, the PDSB continues not to reflect the diversity of the student population. While many

felt that the diversity among teachers, Board staff, school leadership, and system leaders has increased over the past few years, a large gap in representation persists. The PDSB employees with whom we spoke also shared that the following aspects of the hiring process are problematic and therefore perpetuate the underrepresentation of Indigenous and racialized people.

Manipulation of the hiring process to hire the person they want

A number of employees shared their perceptions of how the hiring process is manipulated to keep certain people out of certain positions and to enable the hiring manager to hire the person they want. The employees shared that this type of hiring is often done by changing the job description to fit the preferred candidate. Furthermore, the person who is hired is often White and has a prior relationship with the school leader.

Sharing interview questions

Some consultation participants shared their opinion that interview questions have been shared with some candidates by those on the hiring panel. From their perspective, it is often White school leaders who share the interview questions to ensure that their preferred candidate is successful. Racialized school leaders who sit on interview panels have noted that some candidates have well-scripted responses to interview questions and tend to mention all of the look fors in their responses, which suggested to them that these candidates knew what the interview questions would be prior to the interview.

Focus on performance in the interview rather than competence for the job

Some employees also shared that the hiring process focuses on assessing whether the candidate uses the right buzz words rather than their competence for the role. They felt that the interview questions along with the interviewers need to more closely focus on the required skills and abilities for the job.

Principal as gatekeeper to advancement

A number of consultation participants identified that principals continue to be a significant barrier to promotion. Again, they feel that this creates a promotion process that is relationship-based, not merit-based, with race playing a significant factor in the process.

Some shared their experiences of watching their White colleagues being supported and mentored to advance, while equally competent racialized teachers are overlooked. Some shared being blocked from advancement by a principal who relied on them and didn't want them to advance. There was also concern that because they have had to advocate for accommodation, were a champion of equity, or made a human rights complaint against their principal, they would not be supported for advancement.

Findings and Recommendations

Employees have shared that they lack confidence in the fairness of the hiring and promotion process. This perception can then create barriers when people who are capable and qualified do not apply to positions because they think that the process is unfair or the outcome predetermined. While we have made recommendations earlier in this report to address the need to strengthen the hiring and promotion policies and process, additional action is needed to help employees understand the need to diversify the workforce and to communicate the changes to these processes in order to increase employee confidence.

Recommendation 70: It is recommended that the PDSB share the results of the Workforce Census to help employees understand the gaps in representation for White and racialized employees and why the Board needs to focus on the hiring of Indigenous and racialized teachers.

Recommendation 71: It is recommended that all those involved in hiring receive mandatory training to help them understand and minimize the impact of unconscious bias in the hiring process and understand how to create bias-free hiring processes.

Recommendation 72: It is recommended that the PDSB communicate changes to the hiring and promotion practices to increase confidence that these processes are fair and will be used to increase the diversity of the PDSB workforce at all levels.

Recommendation 73: It is recommended that, where possible, newly hired Indigenous and racialized teachers be partnered with experienced Indigenous and racialized teachers through the New Teacher Induction Program.

Recommendation 74: It is recommended that all newly hired staff complete a self-identification survey and that the Board report publicly on its efforts to diversify the workforce.

Recommendation 75: It is recommended that processes be put in place to collect race-based data on which teachers and vice principals are supported by each principal to ensure that principals are supporting the development and advancement of employees from diverse backgrounds.

10.2 Accommodation

This section examines aspects of the workplace that make employees feel welcomed and valued and allow them to fully contribute to the organization. These aspects include accommodation, work environment, as well as violence, harassment, and discrimination prevention efforts.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has identified the examination of attitudes and behaviours within an organization as a key component of an ESR. The Commission notes that, without this analysis, significant barriers can be missed by the

organization, particularly when negative attitudes, stereotypes, and corporate culture play an important role in staffing.⁶²

While an unwelcoming work environment negatively affects Indigenous peoples and members of the equity-seeking groups, it can also have implications for other employees and the organization as a whole. Unhealthy workplaces have been linked to low productivity, high absenteeism, high turnover, high legal costs, and many hours of staff time needed to deal with a host of employee issues. Studies have also found that employees who work in workplaces that are not welcoming and inclusive are more likely to leave for other jobs, take extended leaves of absence, and retire early.⁶³ Unhealthy workplaces also negatively affect the mental health of employees,⁶⁴ which has contributed to mental health becoming the leading cause of short- and long-term disability absences.⁶⁵

A work environment that is known to be unwelcoming to employees from Indigenous and equity-seeking communities can also pose challenges to an organization that is trying to recruit from these communities. Being seen as an unwelcoming employer within diverse communities could make it extremely difficult to hire top talent from an increasingly diverse labour market. Alternatively, being seen as an organization that welcomes diversity has become increasingly important as employees from the Baby Boom generation begin to retire in larger numbers and employers compete for recruits from a more diverse population and from younger generations that are much more comfortable with, and welcoming of, diversity.

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* place legal obligations on all organizations to create workplaces that are free from violence, harassment, and discrimination. Furthermore, the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the AODA require organizations to provide accommodation to current and prospective employees, short of undue hardship. While accommodation is to be provided based on any human rights protected ground, it is most frequently requested on the basis

⁶² Canadian Human Rights Commission. (2002). *Employment systems review: Guide to the audit process*. <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/313423/publication.html>

⁶³ See for example:

Summary Report on Engagement Sessions for a Racism-Free Workplace. John Samuels and Associates for Labour Program, Human Resources and Social Development Canada. March 2006. See also *A Business Case for Diversity*. Dr. Jeffrey Gandz. Updated Fall 2001.

Bailey, S. (2014, May 20). *Why diversity can be bad for business (and inclusion is the answer)*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sebastianbailey/2014/05/20/why-we-should-prioritize-the-i-in-d-and-i/#2e8461da600d>

⁶⁴ Mental Health Works. (2016, February 29). *How can the workplace contribute to or create mental health problems?* <https://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/resources/how-can-the-workplace-contribute-to-or-create-mental-health-problems/>

⁶⁵ Chai, C. (2017, May 5). *500,000 Canadians miss work each week due to mental health concerns*. Global News. <https://globalnews.ca/news/3424053/500000-canadians-miss-work-each-week-due-to-mental-health-concerns/>

of disability, religion, family status, sex (related to pregnancy and breastfeeding), age (related to disability), and gender identity.

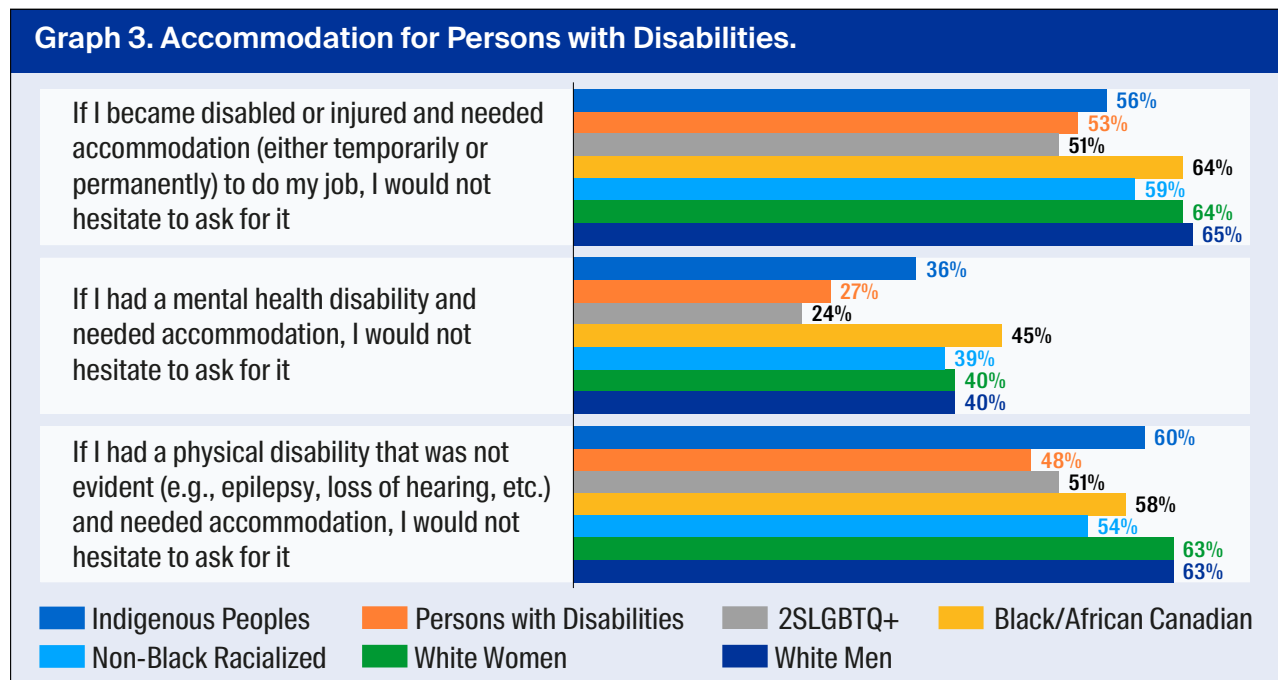
In addition, where organization-wide barriers exist, employers are expected to actively identify and remove them rather than require each affected employee to submit individual requests for accommodation. Where undue hardship prohibits the immediate removal of the barrier, interim or next-best measures should be put in place until more ideal solutions can be implemented or phased in.

10.2.a Accessibility and accommodation for persons with disabilities

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. In addition to complying with the Code, the Board must also comply with the requirements of the AODA to make the organization and its services accessible to students, employees, and members of the community who have a disability. Failure to provide equal access to a facility or equal treatment in employment or customer service could violate the AODA and/or be considered a form of discrimination under the Code.

Accessibility and accommodation are fundamental and integral parts of the right to equal treatment in the workplace. This requirement may mean that certain aspects of the workplace or the duties of a job may have to be changed to accommodate any employee protected by the Code. Providing accommodation to employees creates: a work environment that is flexible in how and when work is completed; a physical environment that allows all individuals to have equal access to the workplace and work tools; and an environment in which all employees are able to fully engage in the work environment.

The Workplace Equity and Inclusion Survey asked employees about accommodations for persons with disabilities. Graph 3 shows employee responses to these questions.



As Graph 3 shows, when asked about accommodation, 2SLGBTQ+ employees and persons with disabilities (the PDSB employees most in need of and most likely to have requested accommodation) were the least positive about accommodation. These employees were the least likely to agree that they would not hesitate to ask for accommodation if they became disabled or injured, had a mental health disability, or had a physical disability that was not evident and needed accommodation. Overall, White men, White women, and African Canadian employees were the most positive in their responses to these questions.

The online survey and focus group feedback indicates that the experiences of those who have requested accommodation have been overwhelmingly negative. Over 300 employees who completed the survey commented about the accommodation process. A small number of these comments were positive, with employees sharing that the person they report to, the Abilities Office, and others have been extremely supportive of their request for accommodation. Some also shared that while they've experienced challenges in recent years, it was easier in the past to receive accommodation. As some employees noted:

My abilities partner was excellent in supporting me.

I had the full support from administration.

The board's abilities department was incredibly supportive of what I needed. My principal was also equally supportive and helpful.

Returning from work after [an illness], my work schedule was adjusted to allowed me to get used to working full days, and continue my physical therapy.

The vast majority of experiences and perspectives shared on the online survey indicate that employees have a difficult time accessing the accommodation they are due under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. These concerns are summarized below and assessed against the guidance provided by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

It is important to note that while the following issues were raised by all employees, racialized employees with disabilities noted that they have faced particular challenges accessing accommodation and that ableism is impacted by the racism they experience, which further marginalizes them in the workplace.

Poor treatment by Human Resources and Abilities Office staff

A number of employees shared that they have experienced poor treatment by staff in the Abilities Office, as well as other Human Resources staff, when they have requested accommodation or during the accommodation process. Some employees described their treatment as humiliating, dehumanizing, awful, threatening, painful, and intimidating. A number shared that their request for accommodation was not believed and that they were talked down to, yelled at, and otherwise treated inappropriately by staff.

The abilities office has made it clear that asking for accommodation is asking for special treatment. When I asked for accommodation for a physical disability, they told me I should not have taken the job knowing that I was not able to perform it. I shared that I took the job because it was my specialty area and could perform with accommodation.

I have been dehumanized by the accommodation process. I fear for my job and my health working for PDSB.

The Abilities Partners thinks everyone is scamming the system . . . they treat you like dogs.

It was humiliating and I was told I should be ashamed and was lying about my current health state when I was pregnant and told to go on medical leave early. They refused to pay me for my LTO work.

Accommodations made without the input of the employee

The principles of accommodation established by the Ontario Human Rights Commission include individualization, which states that each employee's needs are unique and must be considered when an accommodation request is made.⁶⁶ In addition, although it is not the job of the employee requesting accommodation to come up with their own accommodation solution, employees should be involved in the process.

Nevertheless, some employees reported that this principle is not integrated into the Board's accommodation process, and decisions are made about accommodations without employee input. Some shared that the accommodation they received actually made their medical condition even worse.

I asked for accommodation and they sent an email out with accommodations that they chose without speaking with me. Some of them didn't work for me. When I called the Abilities Office, they told me that I couldn't have some of what I asked for because they had to consider the principal and student needs first.

The Abilities Partners talk down to you and there are no discussions about your request. They write out what they will give you as an accommodation and there is no discussion.

Lack of information and clarity about the accommodation process

Survey respondents also shared that the accommodation process is unclear and that the Board does not provide employees with the information needed for them to understand their rights as well as the process for accommodation. As a result, many were unsure about the need to obtain documentation from their doctor and when and why an independent medical assessment would be needed.

⁶⁶ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2004, September 29). *Guidelines on accessible education: Principles of accommodation*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/guidelines-accessible-education/principles-accommodation>

The HR personnel in charge of my accommodation process was very supportive and knowledgeable. However, the process to apply for accommodations was lengthy, difficult, and the accommodations department was very overwhelming, so there were long wait times of not knowing what was happening or what I should be doing. Another time, I was injured and was told by my doctor to get an accommodation. But knowing how difficult it is to get paperwork signed and go through the process, I didn't feel comfortable going through with it to ask for the accommodations, so I didn't apply.

Accommodations process through the Abilities Office was confusing at the time I applied. There was uncertainty about how it was being monitored and how it would affect my career. Felt difficult to determine which details I should/should not provide to my supervisor.

Unequal access to accommodation

Employees shared their concern that they did not have the same access as some of their colleagues did to the accommodations they needed. Some shared that while their accommodation was denied, the same accommodation was approved for someone else. Some racialized employees connected their access to accommodation to the racism they were experiencing. Other employees connected access to accommodation with favouritism and the relationship they had with their manager or school leader.

When principals use their discretionary authority and override accommodations put in by the Abilities office, there should be consequences to those actions. Principals who do that should not continue in that role. Especially when it is a recurring situation.

Accommodations were denied because of a personality conflict.

Accommodation is at the discretion of the principal

A number of employees shared their perspective that whether or not they receive accommodation is at the discretion of the school administrator or manager. This means that despite being approved by the Abilities Office, principals at times have overridden that decision and chosen to deny the accommodation. Employees feel that this often happens if one has a poor relationship with their school administrator. There does not appear to be a process for the Abilities Partner to work with principals to ensure that the needed accommodations are provided. In addition, employees do not have recourse when the needed accommodation is not provided by the person they report to.

A number of employees shared that this was particularly evident during the pandemic, when favoured employees were able to work from home, yet others were not provided with the same accommodation.

Permitting school leaders and managers to deny an employee the needed accommodation after the need has already been determined and approved by the Abilities Office puts the Board at risk of successful human rights complaints. The standard for denying an accommodation is undue hardship, which does not appear to be the case in the situations described to us.

I put in my request but the person in the Abilities Office at the board said at the end of the day it's up to the principal to determine what they can or can't accommodate. This doesn't help if you have a principal who doesn't like you.

I requested accommodations. My union told me it isn't worth it and suggested I wouldn't be hired permanently with an accommodation. I hear from other teachers that it is all up to the principal. If the principal is agreeable than okay but if the principal isn't you are screwed.

I requested accommodation two years ago, it was approved at the Board level, but then my principal at the time denied it. I was told to either go on leave or to revoke my request for accommodation as the principal would not honour what the Board deemed to be legitimate.

The needed accommodations were denied

A number of employees also shared their experience of having their accommodation requests denied. In some cases, they shared that their requests were denied without any discussion. They also noted that they were not given access to the same accommodations that are provided for students. For some employees, the lack of the needed accommodation impacted their ability to continue to work and to do their best work.

Again, this puts the Board at risk of a successful human rights complaint, as the standard for providing accommodations is undue hardship. In addition, the lack of accommodation does not allow employees to fully do their jobs, which also impacts student success.

I was told there are no supports in place for hearing-impaired teachers and that only hearing-impaired students have access to supports.

Accommodations were not given to help me reach my potential even though doctor had clearly stated the specifics.

As someone who is hard of hearing, I requested a move to a room that did not have documented concerns relating to echo and excess sound. Even with medical documentation I was quickly denied with no ability to appeal. I struggled to hear and understand my students for an entire year.

I was told "no," as if it was done for me, it would have to be done for everyone else.

My accommodation was denied and my principal tried to bring me up on disciplinary actions when I tried to advocate for myself.

My request was denied and it created further hardship to me, while both HR and the principal didn't care [about me] and only cared about whatever wouldn't create them hardships. This further put me in a position where I was unable to work due to my illness being compounded by insensitivity and unwillingness to accommodate.

Requests for accommodation ignored or not followed up with

A number of employees shared that they have been trying for years to get accommodation. Some shared that their requests have simply been ignored by the person they report to and/or the Abilities Office.

School and Board did not follow through to provide accommodations needed for physical limitations, even though Doctor's note was submitted along with required forms and preliminary visit from Board personnel was made.

Absolutely horrible! I have 34 written requests that I made to have a meeting about accommodations. Each time I was referred to the [Abilities Office], they refused to meet with me.

Length of time to receive the needed accommodation

Many employees shared their experiences of waiting months and sometimes years to receive accommodation. Some shared that despite submitting numerous requests for accommodation, to their school principal and/or the Abilities Office, it takes an unreasonable amount of time to get the needed accommodation. For some, this wait has meant that their disability or health condition has worsened, sometimes resulting in the need to go on leave. Some staff also shared their perception that the workload of the Abilities Office has increased exponentially during the pandemic, without a corresponding increase in the number of staff, and has been the cause of the long wait times employees have experienced.

I applied for accommodations in October 2021 and it was granted for the last week in April 2022. This was due to surgery this past summer. By the time I received the accommodation it was no longer needed.

The department that supports accommodations is so busy it is difficult to reach anyone. They are not super responsive and lack an understanding of physical accommodations to support staff. I have had to purchase specialized equipment to support my staff and to ensure they had equitable access to resources so they could properly do their job. In some cases, following these requests, it took repeated attempts to hear back from anyone.

I feel that the accommodations process took a toll on my mental health. The physical nature of my job made it difficult to be accommodated and I was told that I could take an unpaid leave if I couldn't do the job.

Lack of accommodation for mental health

A number of employees also shared their experience that accommodation for mental health is not provided by the Board. They shared that there is a significant disconnect between the Board's stated focus on mental health and how their requests for accommodation based on mental health are handled.

Lack of accommodation resulted in a medical leave or delay in return to work

There were also some employees who shared that with accommodation they would have been able to continue working. But because their accommodation request was never responded to or was denied, they were forced to take a medical leave.

My employer told me that as long as I have this disability I am never returning to work, even though I have medical note saying I could return to work. My disability is so much worse because of the actions of my employer and I am never working in another industry because I am now so much worse.

I think it's easier to take a short-term leave at Peel instead of asking for an accommodation. I have seen a record number of people on leave this year and it's not just covid. Abilities has always dissuaded people from asking for accommodations and people are afraid to ask so they just go on leave. I know at least 2 people that were told to go on sick leave by Abilities instead of getting an accommodation. Both staff said Abilities told them to take a leave and come back when you can work. Abilities told them if they wanted an accommodation, they would have to have a review by the board's doctor first. Both those teachers eventually decided to take a leave to avoid the board's doctor.

Inaccessible buildings

Employees also commented on the lack of accessibility of buildings and staff washrooms, as well as difficulties with elevators that are frequently out of service.

We need accessible buildings!! There are inaccessible schools and students and staff don't feel safe.

Make classrooms more accessible for physically challenged teaching staff. Ensure that parking lots and walkways are smooth to avoid tripping hazards or make it easier for those who use canes and wheelchairs.

Managers and school administrators lacking information about their duty to accommodate, short of undue hardship

Some employees also noted that the person they report to do not understand their legal obligation to accommodate employees, nor do they understand the Board's policies respecting accommodation. They don't feel that managers and supervisors understand Board policies regarding accommodation and, as a result, they end up having to educate the person they report about accommodation.

Pressured to return to work early

A number of employees shared that they were pressured to return to work early, against their doctor's medical advice.

When I took a medical leave of absence, I felt the HR department harassed me to go back to work with invasive questions that downplayed the seriousness of my issues.

I was off due to mental health reasons and was harassed via text by staff and admin. I was guilted into returning before I was ready. Abilities Office and everyone at CBO did well and are very good at their jobs. The issues I had were in school.

Undue need for doctor's notes, which are disregarded

Many felt that the documentation requested by the Abilities Office is excessive, requiring them to take time off work to attend an appointment with their doctor. Yet despite the amount of documentation requested and the cost to the employee, employees report that the information provided by their doctor is often disregarded by the Abilities Office or their school leader. Employees shared the impact of having to take multiple days off work in order to get the required information from their primary care physician or from specialists. One person commented that owing to the repeated requests for information from her doctor, her family doctor dropped her from the patient roster.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission provides guidance to ensure that the medical information requested by the employer is not excessive. As the Commission states:⁶⁷

The employer must accept accommodation requests in good faith unless there are legitimate reasons for acting otherwise . . . Employers should limit requests for information to those reasonably related to the nature of limitation or restriction, to respond to accommodation requests . . . The amount of information needed will depend on the circumstances. For example, it may be appropriate to ask for more information on a first absence after a sudden unexpected departure than in the case of an absence related to an existing and known disability where the employer has already received medical information . . . The employer should then accept the information provided and make the accommodation. If the doctor's note is not clear or detailed enough to allow for this, the employer is expected to make further reasonable inquiries . . . It is not normally advisable for an employer to second-guess the validity of an employee's doctor's advice, only on a suspicion that it is not objective because it is based on the employee's own perceptions. Avoid challenging a medical

⁶⁷ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2008). 9. More about disability-related accommodation. In *Human Rights at Work 2008* (3rd ed.). <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/iv-human-rights-issues-all-stages-employment/9-more-about-disability-related-accommodation>

note or requiring a second opinion unless there is evidence that the doctor's recommendations are based on something other than his or her best opinion as to what is needed to make sure the patient recovers.

Employees shared the following regarding additional requests for doctor's notes:

I had a note from the doctor that I required [specific equipment]. I then had to return to the doctor upon PDSB request to fill out and have the doctor sign an additional form for which I had to pay \$25 at the doctor's office. It prolonged the time between getting the form signed and getting the equipment I needed. On top of that, being a teacher made it very hard to find time to get the form signed. I needed to take a day off to do that.

My experience has been mainly positive; however, the Abilities Office requires many details from the doctor in order for it be granted. I have been questioned about my paperwork and I have also been denied something put on my accommodation plan that would benefit me. Approval is difficult to get if it doesn't satisfy your Abilities Partner.

The amount of paper work will take a toll on your mental health and that of your family physician as well. My family doctor once said, she has never seen a workplace that puts one through such torture when they are sick.

Sometimes paperwork submitted by doctors is rejected and it becomes a hassle to arrange to find out what the problem is and get the paperwork redone.

When I asked to use the school elevator to go down the stairs as I needed time to become stronger after surgery I was told I would need a formal accommodation from my surgeon to be allowed to do so. I received a temporary accommodation and after a couple of months (even though it clearly said on my form to be reviewed after 3 months) I received a phone call from Abilities to say it was determined I could not do my job and was being transferred to a job a considerable distance further from my home. I had to involve my union to keep my position.

Board-requested independent medical assessments contradict notes from employees' doctors

In addition to hearing from employees that excessive information was required by their doctor and then often ignored, they also shared that the Board has referred them to one particular doctor for an independent medical assessment. They shared concern about the use of this one doctor, who may not have specialized knowledge about their medical condition, and who at times has overridden the advice of their own doctor or specialist.

The Abilities Office requested an external opinion and did not respond when I informed them that the doctor had not done a complete job. He did not consider

my doctor's report and had different opinions as to which accommodations would be appropriate in my situation. My situation is not evolving or changing, yet there were two different opinions released by the doctor 18 months apart.

For accommodations, Abilities denies your accommodations by using another doctor to do what they call a third-party review . . . They pitch it as a third-party review to scare teachers . . . They use him to skew the report so it does not support your accommodation . . . They weaponize the system to deny the people they don't like.

Employees are required to resubmit medical information for permanent disabilities

A number of employees reported that despite having a permanent disability, they are required to provide documentation each year to continue to receive the needed accommodation.

The process is stressful and challenging. Doctors have to fill out long forms when they would rather use their own format. Accommodations, even when specifically indicated by a doctor that the disability is life long and accommodations will be needed for the rest of the career of an employee, require mandatory yearly paperwork and extra medical appointments to fill out these forms. This really puts a lot more stress on the life of someone who is already having medical issues and needs the accommodation.

Current paperwork requesting accommodations MUST be altered to allow for permanent disabilities to be documented, and chronic disabilities, instead of just new injuries.

It was fine, I just have to reapply ever year which is a hassle, but I get it.

Experience of, and fear of, reprisal

Some employees also shared that they have experienced reprisal because they have requested accommodation. Others shared that they fear reprisal for requesting accommodation. This reprisal includes being shunned and marginalized in the workplace and experiencing negative impact on their future career. A few teachers reported that after requesting accommodation, they were punished by having their teaching assignment changed. Some were required to teach courses they had not taught before or multiple different courses, something they had never encountered prior to making their request for accommodation.

Others shared that they have heard about the process from their colleagues and decided against making their own request for accommodation.

I have been recommended by medical professionals to take a temporary leave from work to seek treatment; however, I have heard that it is a difficult and judgemental experience to request a leave for mental health reasons, which

has deterred me from pursuing this. I do not want to be negatively judged or questioned about the need for treatment for mental health challenges, so I have suffered while trying to push through.

3 years later and I am still waiting for physical accommodations to be made despite being professionally assessed as needing them. I also had my reputation tarnished when board personnel told others that my illness was fake regardless of the surgeons and medical testing that proved otherwise.

Accommodations listed by my physician on forms have been completely disregarded, and even altered by employees in Abilities Office. My repeated, respectful attempts to be an advocate for my health have resulted in an acrimonious, toxic work environment with the principal.

Confidentiality breached

Some employees also shared their experiences of having their confidential medical information shared with others within the Board.

My principal asked me if I had cancer in front of others, point blank like that.

My diagnosis was publicly announced to the school administration, which was to remain private and confidential.

Accommodations across bargaining units

Some employees shared that the Board does not allow employees to be moved to positions outside their bargaining unit as an accommodation. They shared that if someone cannot be accommodated within their bargaining unit, their only option is to go on long-term disability leave.

Accommodation and equipment purchased at one school does not travel with the employee

Employees also shared that when they have a new school leader come to their school or if they move schools or work teams, it puts their accommodation at risk of being cancelled by their new supervisor. In addition, employees shared concern that a device or equipment purchased by one school or department remains in that work area when they move locations. As a result, they must restart the accommodation process when they get a new manager.

Disability arising from the workplace

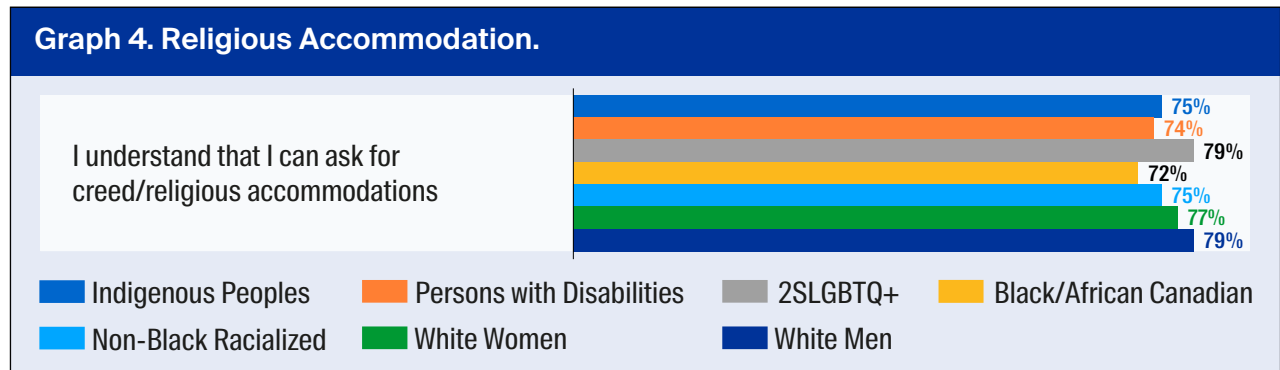
Some employees also noted that the harassment they have experienced in the workplace is the reason for their mental health disability. There were also Education Assistants who shared that the physical demands of their job have often led to injury and at times disability. Yet, despite work being the source of their disability, they felt that they were not believed or were given a difficult time when they requested accommodation.

I have taken a leave for the mental health struggles incurred as a result of the toxic work environment. I have spoken and put in writing to the department head and administrator about the issues occurring and have not received support.

10.2.b Religious accommodation

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* requires the PDSB to accommodate employees based on any human rights protected ground, including religion. Typically, issues related to religious accommodation arise with respect to dress code, time off for religious observance, breaks, prayer space, scheduling of shifts, and scheduling of interviews.

The Workplace Equity and Inclusion Survey asked employees whether they understand that employees may request religious accommodation and whether they think employees would hesitate to ask.



As Graph 4 shows, over 70% of each group replied that they understand that they can ask for religious accommodation.

A good number of survey respondents reported having positive experiences requesting and receiving religious accommodation.

I was allowed to take 3 creed days with pay for religious holidays

I am never denied my creed days when requested.

While some employees reported that they are able to get the needed time off for religious observance, some employees report that they are unable to or that they experience microaggressions from their colleagues when they do take time off for religious observance. While Saturday is a day off and the sabbath for many people, some report being contacted for work-related matters on that day, despite repeatedly telling people that Saturday is their sabbath. There are also those who requested accommodation because the Board had scheduled interviews on Saturdays, but the requested accommodation was not provided.

In addition, some employees shared that Board activities have coincided with their religious holy days and sometimes impact their ability to observe the day. Examples included report cards due on Diwali and PA days scheduled for Rosh Hashanah.

While recent changes have been made to the process for requesting accommodation, employees expressed their concern that these changes have not been effectively communicated. As such, many employees may remain hesitant to request the needed accommodation.

Some employees shared that when they have requested days off for religious observance, their faith has been questioned. This is particularly the case for people who have converted, because of interfaith marriages, or because they may practise more than one religion.

When I asked for religious/creed consideration, even when I was eligible to ask for it, I was questioned on whether or not I was actually practising my faith . . . I take 1 day and I am questioned by both the VP and the Principal if I regularly go to a congregation to practice.

Because of the demographics of the Peel school community, where a significant proportion of staff belong to various faiths, some employees felt that the Board should be better prepared for the number of employees requesting certain holy days off.

Indigenous employees also shared that they lacked the information they needed to know whether they could take time off for their spiritual observances. As some commented:

Well, I do have the opportunity to go to spring ceremonies, but in order for me to do that, I have to take a week off. It is six days, so I don't know if that accommodation is allowed.

If I want to, I can take June 20 first off. It is a big, fat, hairy deal. "Oh, you're Aboriginal, you get to take Aboriginal Day off!" But if I wanted to go to spring or fall ceremonies, but if I did, it's 4 days long. And then there is a traveling day there and traveling day back. A week off easy, so you can't take it as a religious accommodation.

Some employees also shared that there are other forms of religious accommodation to which they do not have access, including prayer space and adjustments to their schedules. Some also reported that they have seen recent positive changes in their workplaces.

Some employees also shared a general lack of regard among staff and school leaders regarding the diverse faiths of students and staff. As some commented:

My current school admin is committed to creating an equitable space but it's not true for every other school. It depends on the admin at each school how open they are. In the past, I asked the previous principal to provide a prayer space in a middle school and he said students make excuses to leave class so he is not going to offer a prayer space. I asked another previous school principal if I could do Ramadan announcement in the morning and he said, "I am Catholic and I don't make a big deal about it at school, so why would you?"

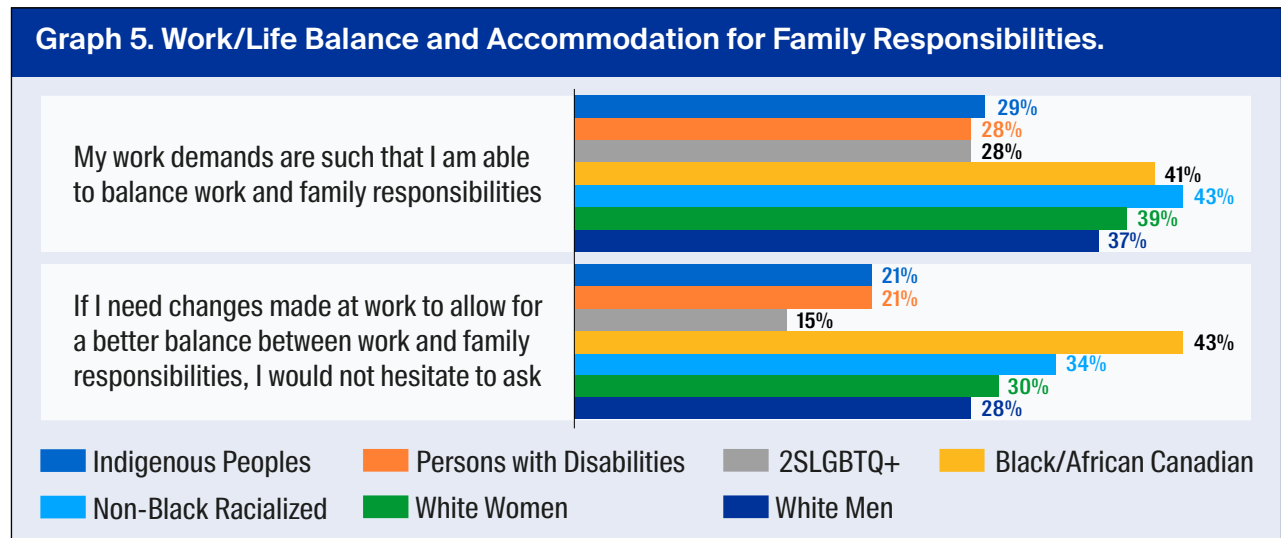
Some consultation participants also shared that there are some employees who do not understand the Board’s legal obligation to provide religious accommodation, nor why some employees are able to get time off to observe their religious holy days. As a result, they are questioned by their colleagues when they take time off for religious observance. Through the online survey, some employees shared their feeling that the focus on non-Christian holy days has been exclusionary and resulted in Christian holy days being overlooked. As one person commented:

Students have been wished Ramadan Kareem and Happy Vaisahki but no mention of Happy Easter before this long weekend. I feel that this tone and culture of exclusion is promoting divisiveness and an “othering” of certain groups within the student and staff population. Again, the decentring of whiteness should not lead to a centring of the “majority group” within a school. A message of equity and inclusion must allow all groups to share the spotlight and to feel valued.

10.2.c Work/life balance and accommodation of family responsibilities

Women continue to have primary responsibilities for child and elder care in Canada. As a result, women continue struggling to balance the demands of their careers with caring for their families. Workplaces that are not supportive of women with family responsibilities can limit the ability of female employees to contribute their best to their work and their ability to advance in the organization.

Employers have a duty to accommodate employees based on family status. Under the Code, family status means the status of being in a parent-child relationship. As such, accommodation of family responsibilities could include accommodating the need to care for children as well as parents.



Graph 5 shows employee responses to questions on the Workplace Equity and Inclusion Survey about work/life balance and accommodation for family responsibilities.

As the graph shows, less than half of each group agreed that they are able to balance work and family responsibilities. Persons with disabilities (28%), 2SLGBTQ+ individuals (28%), and Indigenous peoples (29%) were the least likely to agree that their work demands are such that they are able to balance work and family responsibilities. White men, White women, Black people, and non-Black racialized people were most likely to agree with this statement.

Similarly, fewer than half of survey respondents agreed that they would not hesitate to ask if they need changes made at work to better balance work and family responsibilities. Again, persons with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, and Indigenous peoples were the least like to report that they would ask for this accommodation.

Confusion about the accommodation process

Employees expressed having had mixed experiences with requesting and receiving accommodation. Some reported that they have been able to take time off for family responsibility because it does not require approval. They shared that they have been able to book the time off and enter the appropriate absence code. Other employees reported that there is no standard process or that they did not know about the process for requesting and receiving time off.

Lack of work/life balance for teachers and school leaders

Many employees shared that their ability to balance work and family responsibilities is largely dependent on their roles, with teachers and school leaders experiencing difficulties with work/life balance. The pandemic as well as an increased workload have made it increasingly difficult for employees to find work/life balance, with the workload impacting their mental health. As some employees commented:

I am permanently exhausted/drained mentally and physically. Burnt out.

There is a CONSTANT message of making sure to take care of yourself. YET the board and schools are consistently asking for us to do more and expect us to adapt immediately without help or time. Our admin are asking why we aren't doing "enough" extracurricular. It's because we are burnt out and trying to take care of ourselves. We are being made to feel like we are not fulfilling our duties, which is HORRIBLE.

The Peel board consistently sends emails and promotes "wellness," but also demands a lot from teachers and is constantly adding workload to teachers, especially during the pandemic. If the board really cared about our health and wellness, the pandemic years would not have been met with so much anxiety.

Work/life balance does not exist for teachers according to PDSB. PDSB sends emails out of hours with last-minute directions and expects teachers to work during weekends/holidays to be ready. More and more is being expected of teachers with no time for teachers to learn, to develop. Expectations are too high.

Teachers at the PDSB are overwhelmed and burned out. There is no support from the board. There are constantly new initiatives and tasks that need to be completed. We are working long hours and the board does not seem to care about a work/life balance and how it is impacting the mental health and well being of their staff.

Access to accommodation dependent on who one reports to

Employees also shared that their experiences vary depending on who their manager or school administrator is. As such, receiving accommodation often comes down to their relationship with the principal rather than their need for and right to accommodation.

All power and decision making goes through the principal. This gives them way more power than they should have. For instance, religious holiday and family responsibility days must be approved by the principal when there is no reason for this: it creates an underground economy. "As long as I am on the principal's good side he will look the other way." If I am disliked, I will not get to take a family responsibility day regardless of my reason. Whether I am liked by the principal becomes the deciding factor on if I can celebrate my religious holiday at home as other people from my religion who work at PDSB at different schools can do. There is no uniformity of human rights and it is entirely dependent on the whim of the principal. There are no checks in the system.

I think the PDSB pays lip service to work/life balance. There are administrators who are wonderful about supporting staff needs, others who do so reluctantly because they must, and still others who express distrust of employees and put up obstacles.

2SLGBTQ+ employees

Employees who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ shared that they experience barriers to requesting and receiving accommodation for family care responsibilities. Some shared that there are employees who cannot be open about their identities because of who their school leader is and they may therefore not want to request accommodation. As some commented:

Individuals who are not out cannot request family-related accommodation for a member of their queer family because they are not out.

I have needed family responsibility day for a family event and it could depend on your admin, and I have had a family day for my son, if you are not out to or open with your admin, you would not be comfortable to say it is for your family because you will not go into your family dynamic with them.

When we adopted, we were not eligible for the same time a birth mother would take off if that would happen—I stayed at home and was eligible for a portion of the paternity leave, I had to go back early—I did not have to go though the

physical birthing and I understand, but for other same-sex families, there is always that worry about not being treated the same way.

Findings and Recommendations

Through this survey, hundreds of employees shared their experiences with requesting and receiving accommodation. Their experiences highlight a number of serious concerns, suggesting that a full review is warranted to ensure that the program is adequately staffed and is meeting its duty to accommodate, short of undue hardship, under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. Particularly troubling is that during a global pandemic and in a time of staff shortages, employees' requests are not seen as legitimate; they are treated poorly in the accommodation process; and rather than supporting employees to remain at work, administrators and managers seem to prefer that employees take a leave of absence.

While the experiences of employees are concerning, the attitude toward employees' requests for accommodation is also of concern because. The negative attitude toward providing accommodations creates barriers for and penalizes employees for requesting and receiving accommodation.

The experiences of employees highlight the need for the PDSB to take the following actions:

- Ensure that the message coming from all Human Resources staff is one of support and not one that perpetuates ableist attitudes about persons with disabilities and others who request accommodation
- Ensure the Abilities Office is appropriately staffed, that appropriate timelines for responding to requests are met, and that Abilities Partners are able to follow up with managers and school leaders to ensure that the required, and approved, accommodations are put in place
- Educate employees about their legal right to receive accommodation and the process for doing so, the role of the supervisor and the Abilities Office in the accommodation process, and an employee's options should an accommodation request be denied
- Educate managers and school leaders about the Board's legal obligations to provide accommodation based on any human rights protected ground, short of undue hardship
- Clarify who determines whether an accommodation causes undue hardship and a process for a manager or principal to use should they believe that an employee cannot be accommodated within their work team or school
- Clarify which accommodations are paid for at the school or department level and which are paid for centrally, and ensure that there is a central fund that schools and departments can access

- Expand the list of medical practitioners approved to provide independent medical assessments. Being the sole source for these assessments could put the doctor in a conflict of interest, as there may be perceived pressure to provide the results that support the perspectives of the Board. In addition, it might be more effective to have a range of medical practitioners with different areas of specialities.

Recommendation 76: It is recommended that training be provided to all Human Resources staff to educate them about ableist attitudes, their legal obligations under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to provide accommodation, and how the Board benefits from providing accommodation to employees (i.e., accommodation enables employees to keep working and to do their best work).

Recommendation 77: It is recommended that the Board review the workload and processes of those in the Abilities Office to ensure that they have the capacity to respond to accommodation requests in a timely manner.

Recommendation 78: It is recommended that the Board revise the processes and tools used in the accommodation process to ensure compliance with the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and that accommodation be provided according to the principles of accommodation.

Recommendation 79: It is recommended that the Board establish timelines for responding to accommodation requests and that processes be put in place to track the following information about accommodation requests: nature of the request, when the request was responded to, the amount of information requested by doctors, the number of independent medical examinations conducted, the number of employees on short- and long-term sick leave, when accommodation is provided, and the number and type of accommodations provided. A summary report should be prepared and presented to the Director of Education on a quarterly basis.

Recommendation 80: It is recommended that the Board conduct an annual survey of employees who have requested accommodation and have participated in the Return to Work Program in order to assess their experiences and identify any improvements to the process that may be needed.

Recommendation 81: It is recommended that the Board provide appropriate training and ongoing education for all managers and school leaders about their duty to accommodate employees based on any human rights protected ground, particularly disability, religion, and family responsibilities. This training should also help supervisors understand the range of physical and mental disabilities, both evident and nonevident, for which accommodation may be requested, the types of accommodation that may be provided, and the principles of accommodation. Emphasis should be placed on explaining the Board's legal obligations under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, as well as how accommodation helps get the best from

employees so that accommodation is not seen as special treatment provided to some employees. This training should also address the obligation to keep employee information confidential.

Recommendation 82: It is recommended that employees be provided with information about their right to accommodation, the process for requesting accommodation, the principles of accommodation, the type of information that may be required, the timelines, and FAQs to ensure they have the information to fully understand the process. Emphasis should be placed on explaining the Board's legal obligations under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* as well as how accommodation helps get the best from employees so that accommodation is not seen as special treatment provided to some employees.

Recommendation 83: It is recommended that orientation and onboarding for employees include information on accommodation and the processes for requesting the needed accommodation, as required by the AODA.

Recommendation 84: It is recommended that the Accommodation of Staff With Disabilities Policy and supporting operating procedures and guidance documents address the need for equipment purchased by the school or department for an employee to move with the employee should they switch schools or departments. This policy should also specify how long-term or permanent disabilities are handled so that employees are not required to reapply for accommodations on an annual basis or when they get a new manager. The policy should specify which accommodations will be paid for through a central fund and the process for accessing this fund.

Recommendation 85: It is recommended that a central accommodation fund be developed so that schools and departments are not expected to pay for more costly accommodations on their own, which could impact whether the needed accommodations are provided.

Recommendation 86: It is recommended that the Board negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with each union, federation, and association to support all parties to meet their obligations to accommodate employees across bargaining units.

Recommendation 87: It is recommended that the Board educate all employees about their right to take time off for family responsibility and the process for requesting time off.

Recommendation 88: It is recommended that all managers and school leaders receive education and ongoing communication about the duty to provide religious accommodation, which may include not only time off for religious observance, but also schedule changes, prayer space, scheduling of interviews, and dietary restrictions.

Recommendation 89: It is recommended that the Board track the days of significance for which a significant proportion of staff take time off and ensure that plans are put in place to have these classes covered in their absence.

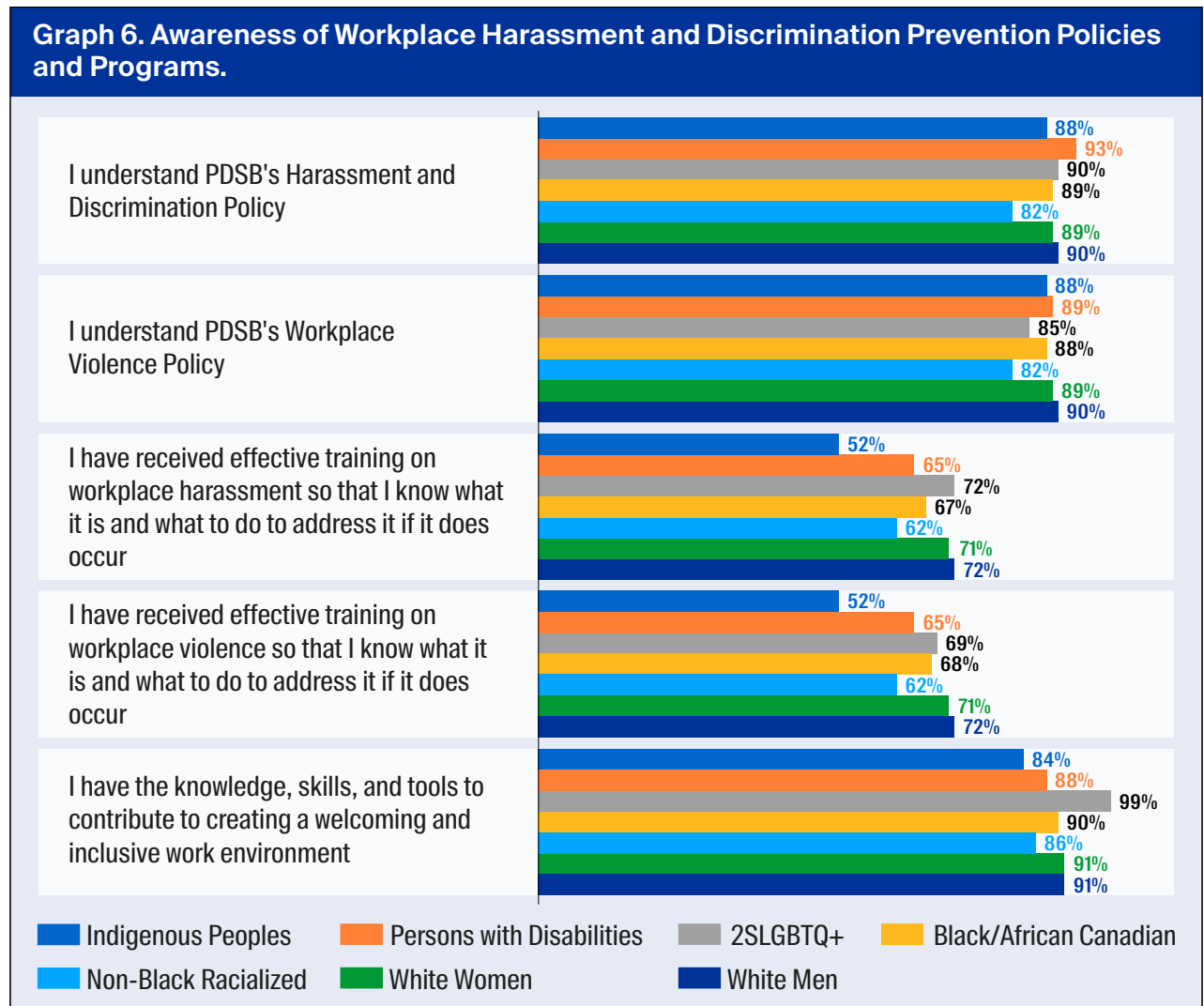
Recommendation 90: It is recommended that the Board continue to educate staff about the legal duty to provide accommodation based on religion and celebrate the rich diversity of all students and staff, including those who practise Christianity and Indigenous spirituality.

Recommendation 91: It is recommended that the PDSB develop operating procedures, including clear instructions on requesting accommodation, for religious, Indigenous, and spiritual observances. These procedures should be consistent with the requirements of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the principles of accommodation.

Recommendation 92: It is recommended that the PDSB survey employees to identify the worksites at which prayer space for staff are needed. Human Resources should then work with managers and school leaders to ensure these spaces are provided.

10.3 Respectful work environment

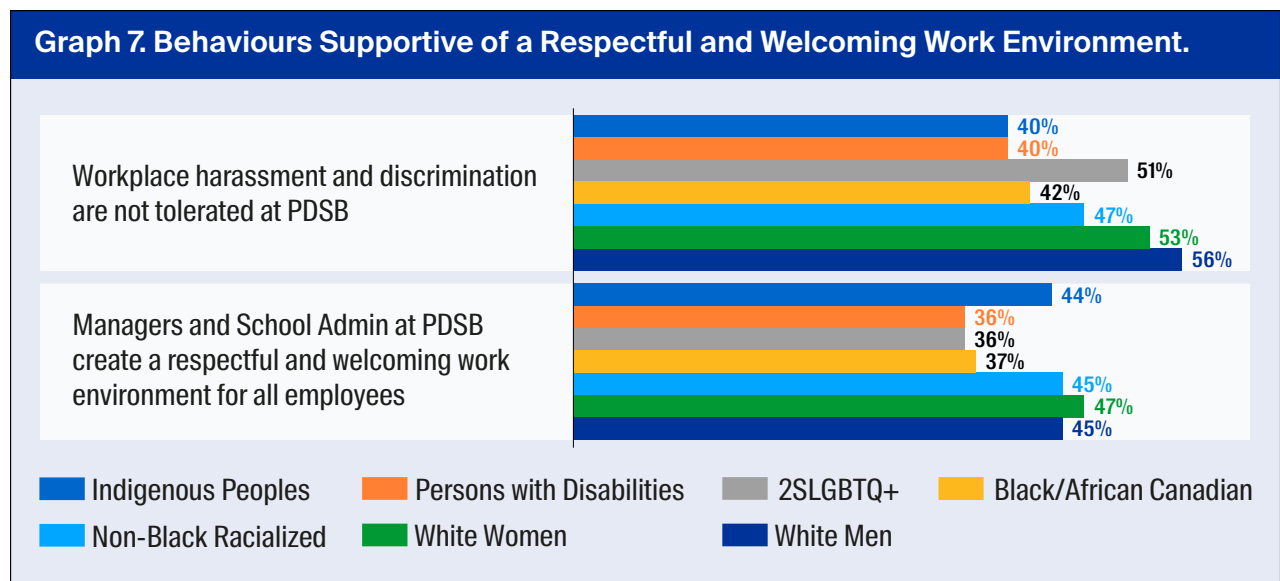
The Workplace Equity and Inclusion Survey asked employees to share their perspectives about and experiences of harassment and discrimination in the workplace.



As Graph 6 shows, employees’ responses to the survey indicate that the PDSB has done a good job of educating employees about its harassment, discrimination, and workplace violence policies. The vast majority of all groups reported that they understand PDSB’s harassment, discrimination and workplace violence policies.

A smaller proportion of all seven groups reported that they have received effective training on workplace harassment and violence so that they know what to do to address it if it does occur. Notable is that only 52% of Indigenous survey respondents agreed that they have received effective training on workplace harassment and violence. Despite lower proportions of employees reporting that they have had effective training, the vast majority of all groups reported that they have the knowledge, skills, and tools to contribute to creating a welcoming and inclusive work environment.

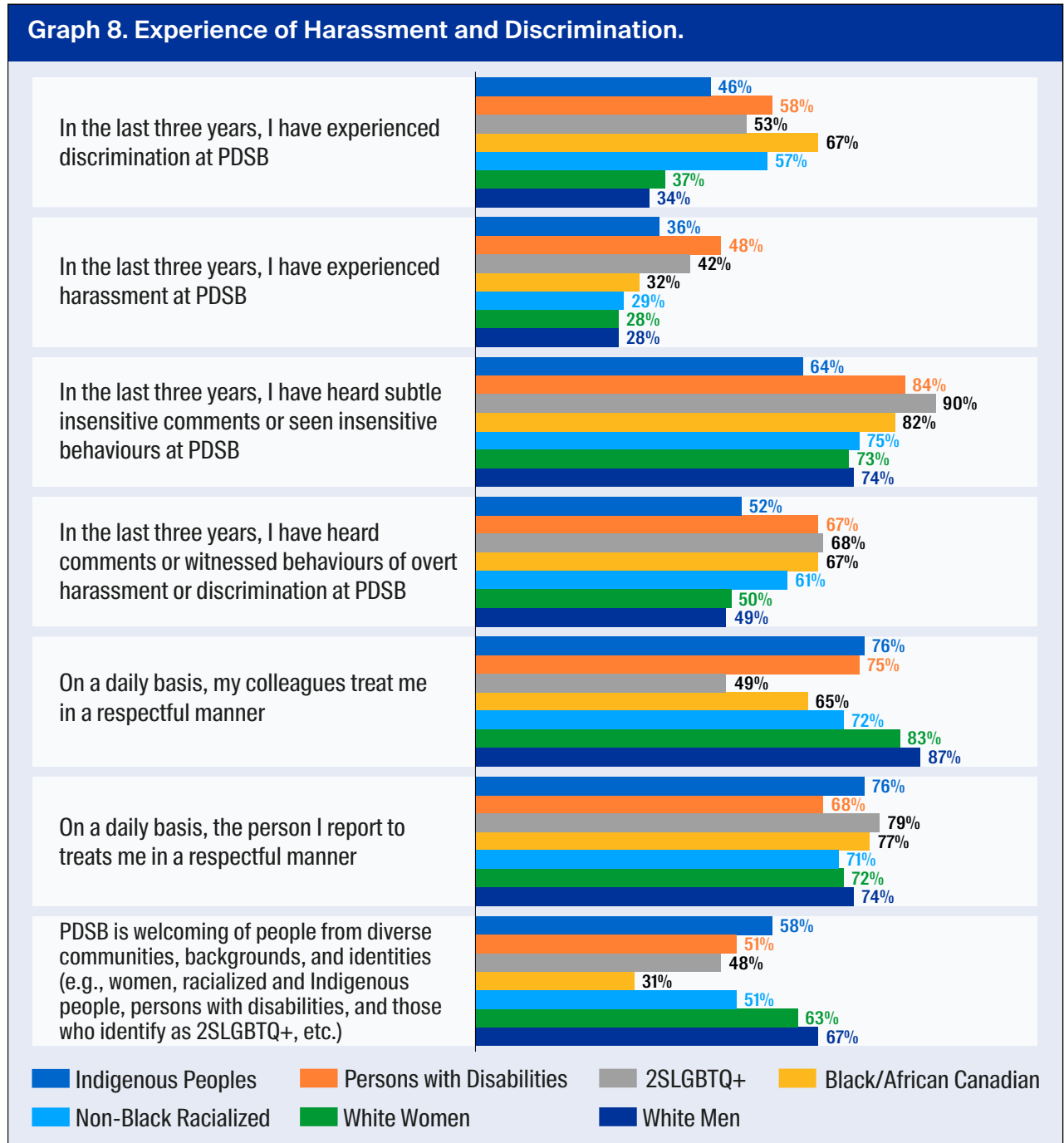
The survey asked PDSB employees about the action they would take should they experience harassment or discrimination.



As Graph 7 shows, slightly more than half of White men (56%), White women (53%), and 2SLGBTQ+ employees (51%) agreed that workplace harassment and discrimination are not tolerated at the PDSB. By contrast, only 40% of persons with disabilities and Indigenous peoples, 42% of Black people, and 47% of racialized people agreed with this statement.

While fewer than half of survey respondents from all groups agreed that managers and school administrators create a respect and welcoming work environment for all employees, persons with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+ employees, and Black employees were the least likely to agree.

Survey respondents were also asked about their experiences of harassment and discrimination.



As Graph 8 shows, 34% of White men and 37% of White women reported that they have experienced discrimination at the PDSB in the past 3 years. By contrast, 46% of Indigenous employees, 53% of 2SLGBTQ+ employees, 58% of persons with disabilities, 57% of non-Black racialized employees, and 67% of Black employees reported experiencing discrimination at the PDSB in the last 3 years.

Smaller proportions of employees reported that they have experienced harassment in the past 3 years. Notable is that 48% of employees with disabilities and 42% of 2SLGBTQ+ employees reported experiencing harassment in the past 3 years.

When asked whether they had heard subtle insensitive comments or seen insensitive behaviours at the PDSB in the past 3 years, the majority of all seven groups agreed to the statement. A smaller proportion also agreed that they had heard comments or witnessed behaviours of overt harassment or discrimination at the PDSB in the past 3 years.

Despite these experiences, close to a half or more of each group felt that, on a daily basis, their colleagues and supervisors treat them in a respectful manner. White men (67%) and women (63%) were more positive about whether the PDSB is welcoming to people from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities. By contrast, only 31% of Black employees agreed with this statement.

When asked to share their experiences with discrimination and harassment at the PDSB, some employees shared that they have had only positive experiences and do not know of any incidents of discrimination and harassment. Their comments highlight that one's experience of harassment and discrimination depends on where one works and the ability of leaders to effectively address issues when they do occur. As they commented:

Discrimination and harassment are not major problems at the PDSB. When they occur, they are addressed appropriately.

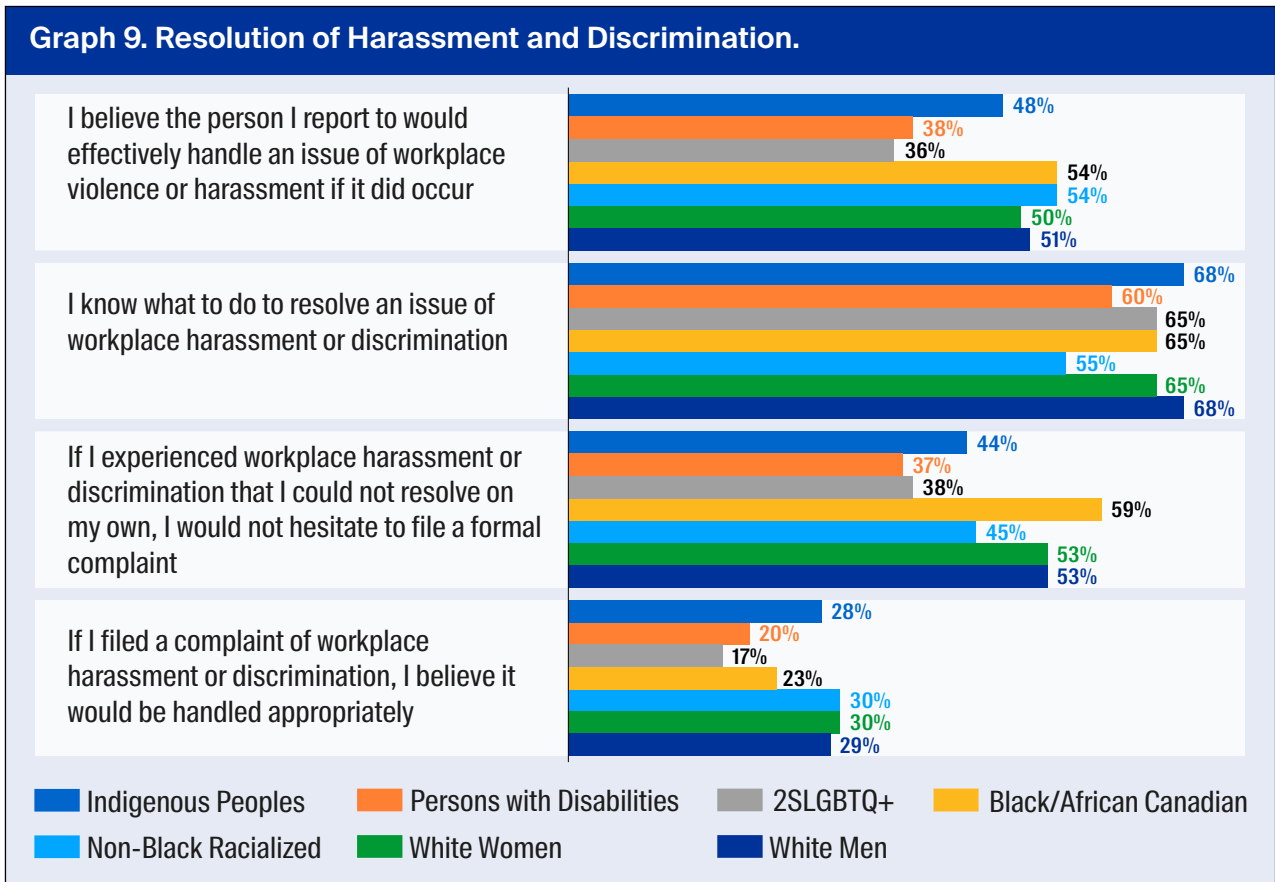
I have not seen or experienced harassment at PDSB.

I have been fortunate to work in inclusive schools.

Employees shared experiences of harassment, based on race and sexual orientation, which comes from various sources, including students, parents, colleagues, and the person they report to. Some reported facing ongoing experiences of harassment by students that are not addressed and are allowed to continue.

A systemic structure for ongoing professional learning around the inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ identities. The vast majority of queer and trans staff are closeted at work... The ERG reported that they experience more homophobia and transphobia at work than in any other area of their lives. Past staff census revealed a strong discomfort to identifying as queer/trans at work, yet again nothing has ever been done to address that

The online survey also asked employees about their perspectives about the resolution of issues of harassment and discrimination.



As Graph 9 shows, employees did not express much confidence that the person they report to would effectively handle an issue of workplace violence or harassment if it did occur. Close to half of the respondents of most groups expressed confidence that the person they report could handle an issue of workplace violence or harassment. Smaller proportions of employees with disabilities and 2SLGBTQ+ employees expressed the same confidence.

Larger proportions of each group indicated that they know what to do to resolve an issue of workplace harassment or discrimination, with smaller proportions reporting that they would not hesitate to file a complaint if they experienced workplace harassment or discrimination that they could not resolve on their own. Only 37% of persons with disabilities and 38% of 2SLGBTQ+ employees reported that they would file a complaint. Fewer than one-third of each group reported that they believed that their complaint of workplace harassment or discrimination would be handled appropriately.

Employees shared a number of concerns about whether and how issues of harassment and discrimination are handled. They also shared their experiences and concerns about reprisal were they to come forward with a complaint.

10.3.1 Harassment and discrimination

Issues ignored or not addressed

A number of employees shared that they have reported an issue of harassment, but that their issue has been ignored or ineffectively handled. Others shared their belief that the behaviour of harassers are not addressed; instead, these individuals are transferred from school to school, where their behaviours are allowed to continue. Some also shared that they would rather move locations than report an issue because they have no confidence that the inappropriate behaviours would be appropriately addressed.

As a permanent teacher, I have tried to bring things forward. I've had the experience of it being brushed off, or told "That's how this person is" or having to be vulnerable in order for my humanity in a certain situation to be recognized, so that something would get addressed.

I have reported 1 or 2 incidents of discrimination and harassment which was dismissed by administrators. So now I do not report. I have no one to report principal actions for fear of reprisal and because there are no real consequences. I would leave the school to get away from the discrimination and harassment.

Lack of understanding and confidence in the investigation process

A number of employees also shared their concern about the investigation process. They shared that there is a lack of information about the process and that the findings of the investigation are not shared with them. While some shared that they have greater confidence in the process now that the Human Rights Office has been established, others reported that not much has changed.

Fear of reprisal

Employees shared that the repercussions of reporting the harassment could be far worse than the harassment they are currently experiencing. Occasional teachers shared their fear that reporting the harassment that they are experiencing might impact their career and work assignments with the PDSB. Some also felt that because of the personal connections some individuals have within the Board, the perpetrators of harassment are not always held accountable for their inappropriate behaviours.

Some employees also shared that they have been threatened and discouraged about making a complaint of harassment.

I have had discrimination and harassment issues recently while working in PDSB and felt it was not handled properly, and I was discouraged from moving forward with reporting it because it would "cause trouble for me" if I did.

When reported I did not receive support and was threatened by other teachers that my life would get worse if I reported them.

Lack of training for administrators

Employees shared their concern that administrators lacked the knowledge needed to appropriately deal with issues when they arose. Some administrators themselves shared their confusion about the process and the lack of training and clarity they have to address issues of harassment.

Lack of union support

While some employees shared that their union was supportive in helping to have the issues addressed, they did not always receive the needed support.

We were told that we should get the union involved, and we went to them asking for their support as well. At this point no-one has come up with anything weeks after this was brought to their attention.

I have gone as far as contacting the head of the union, we were not even getting responses or anything from our rep—the issues are building and building—our rep is not effective in making change or supporting us.

In the online survey and focus groups, Indigenous peoples and members of the equity-seeking groups as well as allies commented on their experiences at the PDSB. Along with the issues shared throughout this report, the following is a summary of some of the key issues identified for each group.

10.3.2 Women

Women shared that while the majority of employees are women, they experience a work environment that is not particularly female-friendly. In particular, they shared having had experiences of sexual harassment, sex discrimination, and lack of support to express breast milk. They also shared that they face barriers to advancement and a lack of accommodation when pregnant.

Sexual harassment and sexual assault

A number of employees spoke about their experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault from male colleagues. A number commented on principals who sexually harass occasional teachers, knowing that the precarious nature of the jobs mean that these employees are less likely to make a complaint. Some note that even when complaints are made, the behaviours continue and the harasser is moved to a new school where the behaviours continue. A few commented that inappropriate pictures are displayed in some workplaces. Others reported that male principals have suggested to them that they perform sexual favours in exchange for the support of the principal in the promotion process. Some described sexual harassment as commonplace at the PDSB, up to and including sexual assault.

I was sexually harassed and the individual's response was..."it's your word against mine." He is in an administrator role now.

If I experience sexual harassment AGAIN as a PDSB employee, I know that involving the police will be necessary to help ensure that Peel truly doesn't tolerate it. (Because they seemed very willing to tolerate it and acted unforgivably slowly the last time.) When it comes to harassment such as comments and unfair treatment from admin and admin's cronies, I really don't even know what can be done there, but it's a serious and seemingly widespread problem within the board.

There are still pictures of women in bikinis up in small out of the way staff office. Men comment on women's appearance and/or relationship status in ways that make us very uncomfortable, etc. This is commonplace.

There are still many comments and actions by male staff that are inappropriate made directly or indirectly towards women. Women don't report it for all the valid reasons victims don't report.

I have been called a "bitch" but when confronting the male staff member, was told it was a friendly joke. I have had men touch my shoulders, head and arm in ways that made me feel uncomfortable and I have seen men use physical contact to empower themselves and be dismissive of their female counterparts. I do not feel anyone is doing anything to address this culture in the PDSB.

Sex discrimination

Women also shared their concern that men are being groomed for leadership roles and are more likely than women to receive the support to advance at the PDSB. They also shared their experiences of differential treatment or hearing inappropriate comments directed at women.

When I was helping a maintenance worker, he refused to take direction from me as I was a female . . . [He] went to the male and took direction from him! Appalling.

As you're getting to the top, there are not that many women. Even White women are not always represented in the department. They tend to be led by a male.

Pregnancy

Women also shared their experiences of discrimination based on pregnancy or their need for accommodation for pregnancy being denied.

Pregnant women who are either excessed or not hired in the first place because of the additional hiring that would have to occur as a result of maternity leave.

I experienced a traumatic event (loss of pregnancy) that affected both my mental and physical health and don't feel as though I was supported by PDSB through the Abilities Office.

When I was pregnant, admin made several comments about how I couldn't do my job and I'm not part of the team because I'm leaving.

Expressing breast milk

Women also shared that they have experienced challenges and a lack of support expressing breast milk when they return from maternity leave. They shared that some colleagues have had to pump in the washroom, which is not sanitary.

I needed a space and time to pump milk for my baby. I emailed the principal before my return to work. They changed my supervision to after school to allow me to pump during my nutrition breaks. I had to find a suitable space, because my classroom was only free for 20 minutes (I need about 30 to pump). It was supposed to be in the librarian's office, but another mother was using it at the time I needed, so I went to one of the practice rooms in the music room. I do not store milk in the staff room, so I put it in the office fridge. I was not allowed a mini-fridge in my room. I had to discuss options with the head custodian that was met with a bit of hostility because I had been intruded upon when I pumped in my class after school. All-in-all, it was tiring.

10.3.3 2SLGBTQ+

2SLGBTQ+ employees shared their experiences of homophobia and transphobia. For some, their school leaders have been supportive and have addressed issues with parents and students when they do occur. Others shared that they have been left to deal with these experiences on their own. They also shared that their experiences of homophobia and transphobia have come not only from colleagues, but also from parents and students.

Unsafe to be out

Some 2SLGBTQ+ employees shared that they are open about their identity and that this privilege is very much dependent on who their school leader is. Occasional teachers shared that they have chosen to and/or been advised by administrators not to be open about their identity until they have secured a permanent position.

Employees shared the importance of administrators to the safety of being 2SLGBTQ+ employees. When 2SLGBTQ+ employees are supported, they can have a great work experience. When they are not supported, they experience continued harassment and are left to deal with it on their own. Some employees also shared that school administrators are unsure of how to deal with homophobia from parents and students. As a result, administrators encourage teachers to remain closeted. To deal with this, some employees shared that they confide in one another regarding which administrators are supportive of 2SLGBTQ+ employees and which are not. They also shared that, in order to avoid unsupportive school leaders, they may declare themselves excess in order to move schools.

In addition, some employees noted that it is particularly challenging for racialized 2SLGBTQ+ employees to be open about their identities at the PDSB.

I might find it easy to be out because of my position and my privilege, most queer folks are not able to come out. Queer Black and Brown folks are not coming out, and don't feel comfortable coming out just generally. I know of people, especially racialized trans folks, who are pushed out of the board so quick because there is just no support.

As a queer woman, there's no way I would feel comfortable. Not that I want to be telling a ton of people. I'm in a relationship with a man right now, and it's a very heterogeneous situation, but I would feel a lot of reluctance around sharing that I identify as queer even if it was relevant, because my workplace does not feel like a safe space for youth to be out and queer.

Representation is so low, I don't tell students or families and I don't come out because lots of parents complain about the gay community. I don't feel safe, the staff knows but not the kids. I don't want to be known as the one gay person in the village.

I'm protecting myself by not being out, and the support would probably be there but it is not worth my mental health. I don't want to be perceived as the gay guy who works with little kids, it could be in my head, but it is better to lay low and do my job. I don't feel unsafe but I don't want to attract attention. At the same time, my safety is more important. As a high school kid I lived through harassment, and I don't want to go through that again.

This is a very religiously diverse community and I was raised in a religious household. I know there are nuances and some religions go further than others—that is fine and we are in Canada and that is a wonderful part of Canada. There are dangerous lessons taught at home, that it's ok to say "fag" or other slang words in a disparaging way and somehow it is supported by religion. No one has training, principals lack training, they don't know how to respond to that. I often have colleagues come to me and ask me how to deal with a student . . . Principals will not stand up to parents and they cave.

Students as the source of homophobia and transphobia

2SLGBTQ+ teachers shared that students are a significant source of the homophobia and transphobia that they are experiencing. Some felt that because these issues are not being addressed in the curriculum and because an inclusive learning environment is not being established, students have been given the message that they can continue to express homophobic and transphobic attitudes. 2SLGBTQ+ teachers also expressed their concerns about the learning environment being experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ students.

Some also shared their lack of knowledge about how to deal with these attitudes when expressed by racialized students.

I might have a Black evangelical Christian child make a transphobic statement or a Muslim student who is homophobic and I don't know how to handle it without being accused of being racist. That is a serious problem. We are willing to sacrifice queer people at the altar of equity. We don't want to be racist or Islamophobic or anti-Christian, and yet we are willing to sacrifice queer people's dignity at that altar. And that is a real issue. We have an administrative issue where they are unable to deal with queer people's identities. When we don't feel respected, we leave the Board.

There was a time when allies did inclusion workshops and presented it to the entire school community. And for a time the language changed and I heard a lot less homophobia. The taunts are back now in full force. It is hard. In the past I would have said things to address the comments. Now, it is too hard, I'm too tired, it is too often.

Guess what? The majority of queer and trans students are not White. They are people of colour. But they are not safe in the Board, and they are not safe in our communities, and they are not safe in their families. Not to say that BIPOC communities are less safe than White communities, with regards to queer and trans things, it is just that we have multiple issues to deal with just being in school. As a Board we are tiptoeing too much around our racialized communities and respect for queer and trans people. This should be a non-negotiable point.

Colleagues as the source of homophobia and transphobia

Employees also identified their colleagues as a source of homophobic and transphobic comments.

Students tell me, "God hates gay people." I hear comments in the hall from teachers such as "gay as hell," "being homo," "that's so gay"—the constantly being hit with messaging that it is not ok to be who you are everywhere. It is hard. It depends where you land and it shouldn't. It should be safe.

Homophobia exists in all spaces in the PDSB but the degree to which I have experienced homophobia from the senior team has been devastating. In the last three years, I have been told that my identity is a "lifestyle" by my superintendent.

In my own school, there was a guidance counsellor who was actively counselling students not to be queer as it will upset their parents. This staff person openly said she disagreed with my "lifestyle." She is now a vice principal.

There is a trans student at my school and while she was transitioning, she asked for staff to use her pronouns. The teachers made fun of the fact that they could not get the pronoun right: "I can't get the pronoun right, it is just so hard," the

teachers commiserating about it and making jokes about it. I heard a guidance counsellor make fun of her and an administrator make fun of her. When they saw that I was in the meeting where they were making jokes about it, the administrator said, "I'm not touching this one." Lots of transphobia in the Board.

Lack of attention and support from the Board

2SLGTQ+ employees shared that the attention given to these issues has eroded over the years and has contributed to an increasingly hostile work environment for them. While many shared their support for addressing racism, they also noted that equity work cannot be a single-issue initiative—it must also address homophobia and transphobia.

It happens all the time. Religion is used to justify treating 2SLGBTQ+ people poorly all the time. Parents removing their child from my class because I am gay has happened several times. We still send home a letter and allow parents to exempt children from learning about these issues in health, which is so wrong!

I do not feel safe to be out at my school as I know that my SO and the senior team at the Board will not support me if I am faced with homophobia in the workplace. This has been widely discussed at ERG meetings but the current administration in charge at the Board has done nothing to ensure or safeguard the safety of its 2SLGBTQ employees.

In my ten years in Peel it was more supportive . . . the messaging has declined over that time. The safety that I felt before has diminished in the last couple of years.

On the Day of Pink, the Board did nothing, but the GSA made posters. Every single poster had to be vetted by the office. We put them up and right after Day of Pink they were all taken down . . . Posters for every other identity got to stay up past their end date except for the Pride stuff.

At my old school, I was not out. I have heard staff say, "When is my parade, when is straight month?" It is harassing and takes a huge toll on you when you are constantly being bombarded with these messages—it takes a toll and becomes heavier and heavier.

Lack of gender-inclusive washrooms

2SLGBTQ+ employees also noted that staff do not have access to gender-inclusive washrooms.

10.3.4 Indigenous employees

Through the online survey and focus groups, Indigenous employees shared a range of experiences, which have been discussed throughout this report. With respect to their Indigenous identity, a few key workplace issues were identified.

Lack of representation and isolation

Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees commented on the low representation of Indigenous staff at the PDSB. For some employees, this means that they are not able to connect with other Indigenous employees to share their experiences and heal.

Unsafe to be openly Indigenous

Some shared that they have chosen not to disclose their identity in order to protect themselves from anti-Indigenous racism. Some also shared that they have been met with hostility after disclosing their Indigenous identity.

Feeling tokenized

Some Indigenous employees shared that the focus on hiring Indigenous and racialized people is discriminatory, creates hostile work environments, and leads to the tokenization of these employees.

Lack of religious accommodation

Some Indigenous employees shared that it is unclear whether they can take time off for their cultural and spiritual observances.

10.3.5 Persons with disabilities

For persons with disabilities, much of the discussion about their experiences at the PDSB centred around access to accommodation. In addition, these employees shared their experiences of encountering ableist attitudes and being treated poorly by colleagues once it became known that they have a disability.

Ableist attitudes

Throughout the consultations, a number of employees shared their perception that within the Human Resources Department there is a general suspicion of those requesting accommodation, particularly if their condition is nonevident or invisible. Employees shared that they need accommodation for a range of physical, cognitive, and mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, brain injury, chronic pain, cancer treatment, concussion, and PTSD. They felt that despite this need and the medical evidence provided, they are perceived to be, and described as, “faking it” or “milking the system,” particularly if their disability is nonevident or invisible. Some shared that this attitude has been openly expressed by Human Resources staff in meetings and creates a negative perception of persons with disabilities. In turn, this negatively impacts how employees with disabilities are treated and how their requests for accommodation are handled.

Some employees shared that they feel that they are accused of faking a disability or health condition in order to receive accommodation. However, to avoid the stress of

requesting accommodation for their disability, these employees instead fake being well.

There's a disconnect at the Board regarding disabilities. You don't say to someone "you don't look like you have a disability," or "You don't look you like need accommodations."

I'm invisible. Completely invisible. [My disability] doesn't count as a viable need for accommodation. It's very exhausting, demoralizing and demeaning.

We're not looked at as needing accommodations unless it's something that is visible and deemed as needing accommodation. We're basically the Forgotten Ones.

Harassment

Some employees shared that once it becomes known that they have a disability, they have experienced harassment from colleagues or the person they report to. Rather than receiving the needed support, these employees shared that they were made fun of. At times, the school leader even tried to push them out of their position.

I have been made fun of, harassed and seen as a burden due to my mental illness.

Co-workers complained about my [disability]. Rather than speaking to me directly, she had the Abilities Office call and ask if I would be willing to move out of my position. Then, during the Abilities meeting, after I refused to be moved, the Principal scoffed at me . . . No one at PDSB was willing to consider any outside supports to provide me with appropriate accommodations.

10.3.6 Black employees

In addition to the experiences mentioned throughout this report, we heard feedback from Black employees about their experiences and perceptions specific to their racial identity. The following themes emerged from this feedback.

Lack of representation and isolation

While many Black employees commented that things have gotten better over the past few years, many also commented on the low representation of Black staff at the PDSB, which contributes to a sense of isolation at the Board.

I was a student in Peel as well as a teacher in Peel. I feel exactly the same way that I felt as a student at Peel. In our school usually there's maybe 3 of us and it's very difficult. It's very lonely. It's difficult to be in spaces where you don't see yourself reflected. People have such a lack of understanding of other people and other cultures. They make an assumption that everyone is like them. For a few years, I was able to work by myself in a department and I found it was much

more peaceful for me. Now that I'm in a different space, it's really difficult to work with people who have no understanding of other people's cultures, way of life or values. I find that very challenging as a Black person. My school is predominantly White teachers. They really do feel that the right way is the White way. If you don't connect to that way, sometimes they're not aware that there is a way beyond how they do and think about things.

As far as I know, I was the first Black teacher at my school. My school has been around since the 1990s . . . We had a Black teaching assistant and a Black custodian, but in terms of teaching staff or otherwise, there was none. Even now we just have a handful. There's such a lack of diversity in the teaching staff. We do need more Black administrators and more Black superintendents in the South just as much as the North.

Racial harassment, including the use of the N-word

Black employees shared that they have experienced racial harassment and racial microaggressions, including the use of the N-word, in their working environment. Some shared that they are able to address the issue themselves or with the help of a school leader. However, others indicated that the harassment they experience might become worse should they confront the harasser. Black men in particular noted that they must be particularly cautious with White female teachers. The history of the racial and gender dynamic between Black men and White women as well as stereotypes about Black men means that they worry about being seen as the aggressor.

I even had one woman say, "You know what, I can say this and it's your word against mine. Let's face the fact they're going to take my word over yours." You have to be so careful because [being a Black man] they look at me and they're going to say, 'He's threatening me.' Or 'I feel intimidated by him.' [There was] one woman, I just looked at her and she started crying. I had to call the Union right away. Nothing came of it, but it's just the fact [it happened].

It's every day. Every day, all the time.

The nature of that harassment since the review has changed a little bit. It's gone underground. People work harder to hide it more than anything else. Having said that, if I were to compare the Peel Board now to what it was five years ago, at least in my experience at different schools, it's definitely become less prevalent, so it's in the right direction.

Lack of inclusion and support

Black employees also shared their experiences dealing with a lack of inclusive work environments, where they are not supported to contribute their best work. Some also shared that despite a focus on hiring more Black staff, they have not been able to bring their unique perspective to their work. Instead, they experience pressure to

conform and to not raise issues of equity and anti-Black racism.

Some Black employees also shared that they aren't supported and mentored in the same way that their White colleagues are. In addition, when Black employees advance into leadership positions, some shared that their success is undermined.

I was hired for a specific reason with my strengths, which are not being utilized. It is very hard working in a Board where the truth of it is, as a VP your job is to do what your principal is telling you to. Right now, I feel in this role, that I am a personal assistant and not a fellow administrator who is or should be treated as an equal, or who is being groomed [for leadership].

It seems like they wanted Black staff, but they don't want to hear our voices. They just want people to represent, but not say anything, so it's who can play the game.

I don't feel part of the team or feel like I belong because of the way people view or talk to me, or how they include me. So, I'm just going to do my job and that's it.

My admin won't come and talk to me unless they have to tell me what to do. I know my job, so I don't necessarily need him to tell me. There are certain things I used to do at my school. I don't do them anymore because he's not comfortable dealing with me.

They want us to share our opinion, but then they don't like it. You will never meet some arbitrary standard of how to object to something. You can never get it right.

What was challenging as a Black woman in leadership was being respected . . . I found that people I worked with who were almost exclusively White challenged me all the time in meetings and questioned my leadership. They would say, "I don't agree" in a really aggressive way. They would either ignore my leadership or second guess my ideas. I found it very challenging. That's the reason I left my last school.

Added labour of being responsible for Black students

A number of Black employees shared that they have been given the added responsibility of addressing issues with Black students. As a result, while they have their own jobs to do, they must also take on this added responsibility. While they are happy to support Black students, they feel that other teachers are absolving themselves of the responsibility of supporting Black students by bringing Black teachers in to do this work. This is particularly challenging for them when they are one of only a few Black teachers in a school.

As a Black teacher, there's a lot of pressure on us because we don't have diversity among staff at the Board. There's a pressure we take on. We become responsible for Black students and Black youth. I'm not saying it as a burden. I've done it for [many] years, but it can become very challenging. There's been

situations where teachers have been asked to take on something they don't want to do or don't have the time or the capacity to do. There's an expectation that because you're Black, you should be taking care of the Black students, such as Black History Month. No one even asked me if I want to do it. Of course I will, but no one ever asks me any questions. It's all just put in my mailbox. As soon as Black History Month rolls around, boom! Anything to do with Blackness goes into my mailbox. Anything with Black students, well put them in my group, talk to me, put him in my class. That's fine, but it's a pressure I don't think some of my other colleagues have to deal with.

A situation occurs with a Black student that I do not teach or sometimes have yet to meet. You have somebody running and asking for your opinion. Why are you coming to me? I don't know that student. Why are you asking rather than getting to know your students and know their experience? I can't speak for every Black person. When a South Asian or White student has a difficult experience, you're not running around the building trying to find out somebody from that culture to ask them their opinion.

It's like a double-edged sword when teachers come and ask you to assist or support them with an issue with a Black student. If it appears that the student may be correct on the issue and you point that out, then there's a flashback towards you. If I approach the situation differently than how that teacher is expecting me to, it has happened where there is friction between them and myself. It may not be verbal or communicated any specific way, but tension is there.

10.3.7 Racialized employees

Racialized teachers from all backgrounds also shared their varied experiences of racism and how their experiences intersect with their other identities.

Lack of representation

Racialized employees shared their concern about the gap in representation among Board staff, particularly classroom teachers, and the diversity of the student population. Many commented that despite the great deal of racial diversity among students in the PDSB classrooms, school leaders and teachers do not reflect this diversity. They shared that this has an impact on students who may not get the support that they need and who aren't able to develop relationships with a caring adult in their school. Some also shared that, in addition to representation, also of concern are the negative attitudes that some teachers bring with them into their classrooms about their students.

My principal has purposely mispronounced a Muslim student's name, with the student correcting her multiple times, and they thought it was funny. They continued

to mock the mispronunciation in a meeting with me, the teacher, afterwards.

I heard a teacher say about a Muslim student that he will become a terrorist because he was arguing that his solution to a math problem is better than hers. I have seen Muslim students treated more harshly in Spec Ed programs if they have behaviours with severe consequences than other students.

Hostile work environment and harassment

Many racialized employees also shared that, on a daily basis, they are required to fulfill their duties in hostile work environments. For many of the employees with whom we spoke, this treatment is routine rather than an occasional occurrence, and it is not addressed by school administrators or those in leadership positions. This hostility manifests as Islamophobia and other forms of racism, by both staff and students who are White and who are racialized.

Competency and credentials questioned

Another common theme that emerged from the feedback shared by racialized teachers is that their White colleagues as well as some parents question their competency and credentials.

I don't know to what degree this is connected to the fact that I teach French as opposed to math or science, because often people will meet me, see me, and assume that I teach math or science, and not French. I've had my competency questioned or doubted on account of what I look like. I've had my opinions dismissed and in terms of what's happening with equity work. I've been in situations where I have found myself feeling I need to get a White person to say what I'm saying, so that it's actually heard.

What I've experienced numerous times in various schools is being simply asked if I'm a teacher or not. The assumption is that as a racialized person I must not be. It's Friday and I'm dressed quite casually, but normally I dress quite professionally. I usually wear a dress or a skirt to work. I get asked that question when I have a White colleague beside me and he's wearing sweatpants. Why is it that because of who I am in the building, I am questioned but they aren't? It is something that is very challenging and frustrating for me.

They also get questioned a lot by parents. I've had quite a few microaggressions throughout my career, where both parents and colleagues will say, "Oh, you speak English very well," and I say, "Yes, because I was born here." There are levels of microaggressions, both externally and internally.

Undermined by colleagues and supervisors

Racialized employees shared that as they take on positions of added responsibility and move into leadership roles, their competency is increasingly questioned and

their authority and success undermined. Some shared that this is particularly the case when they lead work that has a clear focus on equity and anti-racism. Some also shared that other staff have gone to their unions to undermine them as racialized leaders.

We are expected to lead equity work, but are undermined by White staff.

Since being in this role in my school, I've had a lot of resistors and I've had some insubordination.

The challenges that I've had by this staff is they are constantly complaining to the union about what is happening in here, when there has been such supportive work being done. Their complaints and stalling the work means that we've had 2 months of committee meetings. I'm constantly told that I have to recognize the stress that staff are under. I am an administrator that will follow policy procedures to a T. Not only because we are supposed to, but because I'm [racialized]. So when I don't, it's going to blow up in my face 10 times worse. Having to clean up the mess and actually do my job means all these union calls. The vice president and president of the union have been in my building this week. I'm assuming that the summation of that was probably the union must have told them that I'm doing my job. They haven't had a follow-up for me to tell me what I need to do.

The staff really had a hard time accepting us. They were very resistant to the work that we were doing. You cannot imagine what we've been through. To be honest, I don't even know how I'm still standing. It's been probably one of the most difficult things I've ever done. We reached out for support to the SOs and got almost no support. I reached out to the senior leadership team and did not get any support. As a result of advocating for myself and voicing my disheartenment for the fact that I got no support, I have, for lack of a better word, been blacklisted and silenced. I know that if I put my package in to become a principal, it will be blocked. I'm not going to put myself in that situation where I'll be rejected.

One of the challenges I'm finding as a principal is it was perfectly fine to be specialized in all of my other positions, but it's not okay for me to be a principal and racialized because people can't take being told what to do by a racialized person being in charge . . . If you have a White principal then, there's the power structure that's supposed to be there, but the minute you are racialized and you're the principal with decision-making power and you can hold people accountable, there's a new elevated level of implicit racism that I've experienced as a principal. It becomes exacerbated, it becomes exponential in ways I can't even describe. We're talking about how our staff are treating us, but I don't think our senior management understands the challenges, despite the ministry directives, of the unique challenges that racialized administrators face. How can there be support if you don't even understand? There are different expectations

of racialized administrators. There's no support provided for racialized administrators. There's no recognition of the implicit racism that we face as administrators from our staff and from our communities.

What I'm saying is that the change happened when I was working with a White principal who was very seasoned and had a lot of experience. Things moved a lot faster because staff didn't question it. Even the way that she could sometimes just tell staff what to do. That was a power move. I could never dream of doing that at the other school. I couldn't even imagine my principal at the other school doing that. Literally the exact same thing, in the exact same situation, would be grieved.

What bugs me the most is the differentiated expectations. I feel I have different expectations on me because I can see and understand. Yet there's no support provided for the challenges that come with that position engaging in the work, leading the work, or even the implicit racism that becomes more transparent, the more racialized administrators you have on your team. While it's great to have allies on your admin team who are racialized and you can relate to, the level of racism that you experience grows exponentially based on the number of racialized administrators because people can't manage their biases appropriately and professionally anymore.

Seen as a “diversity hire”

Related to their experience of having their competence questioned is the assumption that racialized staff have only been hired because of the Board's focus on workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion and that this somehow means that the racialized employees are not qualified for their positions.

We're always starting at a baseline of proving that we are competent, that we are worthy of our position and that we got our position based on our actual skills and not because we were a diversity hire.

I literally had White colleagues say that, “You know it's the colour of your skin why you got through. You know you are exactly what they're looking for right now.” I remember hearing it the first time and thinking, “Well, that was a very weird conversation.” Then a completely different colleague said it again . . . So, if a White person gets through, it's on merit, it's on experience, it's on their ability to do the job. If I got through, it's because I'm brown and they were looking for brown people or Black people, or any racialized minority.

Additional expectations outside of their role

Similar to the experiences that Black teachers shared, racialized teachers also shared that they deal with the additional responsibility of providing input on issues related to students from similar identities. They shared that many teachers lack the cultural

competency to work in schools with students from diverse backgrounds and that they, as racialized teachers, are expected to provide the expertise needed to bridge this gap.

I get called into meetings to provide my input on something that's not even my role. Nobody understands what's happening because they didn't hire the right people. It's very frustrating because you don't get compensated for it. You don't get acknowledgment. You don't get appreciated. It's very demoralizing and it's really not motivating.

Lack of inclusion and support

Racialized employees also shared that they are not welcomed into inclusive work environments and are not provided with the support they need to be successful in their roles. They shared the perception that White colleagues have the networks and informal supports to fill in the gaps in the formal supports provided by the Board. This leaves racialized employees at risk of poor work performance because they aren't provided with the information, tools, and resources needed to be successful in their role.

You have to learn on the job. Rather than a support system training you in the different programs that are being used, you have to figure it out yourself. While they do have lunch and learn training for teachers, sometimes it doesn't give you the hands-on experience that you need . . . Some people don't have the same challenges because they have their own group support on a personal level. If you don't have that support group on a personal level, you will find yourself lost in the system as a new hire.

I have been made to feel like an outsider many times, in different buildings. I have experienced policing of my behavior, or my whereabouts. If class is going to start in 10 minutes, people question me.

The office staff isn't a welcoming environment. There's a lot of fear among the teaching staff to go into the office to ask for anything. Our administration directs us to work with our office managers or our staff in the office and that is often difficult, or people find it scary.

I don't think people understand the complexity of how long it takes for people to actually build relationships as a racialized person. We have to overcome all the racism before you're in a position to actually do something.

From day one, the dynamics on my team has felt like an apartheid. This is the first time my team has experienced Black and racialized bodies on the team. Thus, I feel this is the root cause of the present dynamics. My department has done quite a number of anti-Black racism trainings but I feel my senior colleagues who are all White are yet to accept the presence of my racialized colleagues and I on the team. It appears they are having a challenging time adjusting to this change, and are utilizing their White power to make decisions on

the team that is harming to my racialized colleagues and me. Their decisions are also harming to Black and racialized students.

Resistance to equity

Compounding the negative experiences of racialized employees is what they describe as a resistance to equity. If they are working to champion or advance equity, they shared that they are particularly at risk of feeling isolated and being undermined in the workplace. Some noted that some racialized staff and members of other marginalized groups are also resistant to the Board's equity work, which can further marginalize the racialized employees who are advocating for change and working to advance equity.

PDSB is pitting race against race. They are not creating a cohesive culture but are pigeonholing staff into their own categories. Instead of an inclusive group of employees, we need to identify and place ourselves in specific categories, making us unique (separate) from others who are different. PDSB is using racism to fight racism. This is no different than putting out fires with gasoline. It will not generate empathy toward others, but resentment. This will backfire. Conversations are everywhere calling Whites and those from Europe colonizers. This is racist. But the board is OK with it, using the same terminology. Why don't we discuss what is happening in Africa, with Blacks suppressing other Blacks. With Muslim dictators killing those not Muslim.

One school I was at, the majority of the teaching staff is White. When we are trying to dismantle, rebuild, and trying to decolonize those practices there's pushback because it's taking them out of their comfort and privilege. I appreciate that you ask for clarity because it isn't always the White staff. It is also racialized staff who don't want to stand out from the crowd and take on that moral model minority role where they don't want to rock the boat, because then they'll have the stigma and the disdain from their other nonracialized colleagues.

It's the constant microaggressions. The eye-rolling or silence during staff meetings when discussions about Black people come up. The way they speak about students from certain backgrounds or changes in certain policies that would help support Black students. It's exhausting and borderline violent to exist in this White space.

Discrimination based on accents

Racialized employees who were born outside of Canada also highlighted that their experiences are further compounded by perceptions about their accents. They shared that because they speak with non-Canadian accents, they are seen as less competent as others and are not given the opportunities they might otherwise have.

Regarding the harsh treatment of racialized teachers, especially if they don't speak without any accent, the assumption is that they're not as competent or

as capable as someone like myself. I've had to help defend colleagues against students, admin and parents so it's across the Board.

When I started, if I see somebody in my community who's a parent or a colleague, I am talking in my language. I've heard people say, "Please speak English." So that was the beginning of my experience here.

Discrimination happens on so many levels. Time after time, people are referring to my accent assuming that I'm not qualified to teach because of it, and not even realizing that English is the third language that I converse in.

Internationally trained teachers

Racialized teachers also shared that internationally trained teachers also experience barriers to hiring. In addition, when hired, they experience backlash from their White colleagues.

I have literally heard people say, "I am trained in Canada and I'm living in Canada. I can't get a teaching job. People like you are coming from other countries and getting the job." That was said to my face. These are some of the challenges and barriers I face and meeting employers who have that mindset. They are not going to give you the opportunity as an internationally trained teacher to get into the system.

Most of my education was completed abroad. When I came here I was already a teacher. Getting into the Board as a teacher was really hard. There was no way I could navigate it on my own, applying to Ontario College of Teachers for my certification, going for a job interview. All these things were really challenging for me at that time.

I feel disappointment because when I started the job, I thought, I'm working in an education department. I'm sorry to say there is no acknowledgment of education. I have done my master's. When I came to Canada, I came with master's and Bachelor of Education. I didn't stop there. I got my diploma in early childhood education and I got a degree from [a Canadian university] in early childhood education, but I am working as an ECE and that's it. I have been teaching throughout my life. I cannot get anything according to my experience or my education.

I have all the qualifications, but these qualification are not from Canada. That is my biggest barrier. I went to the Ontario College of Teachers, but the problem is, my primary education is not in English, so they think I don't have that education even though I have been working [for over 10 years] at PDSB.

Findings and Recommendations

The employee feedback in this section points to the need for the PDSB to continue training all employees on human rights in the workplace. This training is needed for employees to

ensure that they understand their obligations to foster welcoming work environments and that their behaviours may constitute harassment under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. In addition, those in leadership positions need to understand their legal obligations to address harassment when it occurs, foster positive working relationships, and support managers and school administrators to address issues when they arise.

In addition, the Board needs to develop an Employment Equity Program that addresses the particular issues faced by all groups, while also increasing their confidence in the complaint process to address issues when they do occur.

In addition, failure to accommodate employees with disabilities and employees who need to express breast milk should be addressed within the Board's human rights framework. Managers and school leaders ought to understand that they have legal obligations to address these issues and that these accommodations are not optional or special treatment granted to employees. This problem could be addressed through training, but also by providing managers and school leaders with the appropriate tools and resources to understand and address these issues when they arise.

Recommendation 93: It is recommended that all people leaders receive in-person mandatory human rights training on an annual basis to ensure that they are able to lead and foster a work environment that values and is inclusive toward Indigenous peoples and members of the equity-seeking groups. This training should help managers develop the competence and confidence to identify and address inappropriate behaviours when they do occur. This training should also remind people leaders of their legal obligations to foster a respectful work environment, to lead by example, to act to stop harassment and discrimination when they witness or hear about these behaviours, and to provide accommodation based on any human rights protected ground.

Recommendation 94: It is recommended that all employees receive annual training on racism and other forms of oppression, the Board's legal obligations to create harassment- and discrimination-free workplaces, and managers' obligations to act when they know about or ought to be aware of racism in the workplace.

Recommendation 95: It is recommended that, in addition to training, the Board use visual displays of positive spaces to support the creation of inclusive, anti-racist, and safe workplaces that allow 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, and racialized employees to bring their full selves to work.

Recommendation 96: It is recommended that the Board continue to support the Employee Resource Groups to create safe and inclusive spaces for Indigenous employees and those from the equity-seeking groups for networking and mutual support. Furthermore, the Board should use the Employee Resource Groups as a valuable resource to continue its work to identify and remove barriers to employment equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Recommendation 97: It is recommended that the Board clearly communicate to all members of the school community that its stance on human rights includes human rights for all, including 2SLGBTQ+ employees and students.

Recommendation 98: It is recommended that the Board work with nonprofit and public sector partners to create a public education campaign that highlights human rights for all, including members of the community who identify as 2SLGBTQ+.

10.4 Attitudes and corporate culture

Individual attitudes and corporate culture have an impact on the job performance, skill development, well-being, and retention of Indigenous employees and employees from the equity-seeking groups. While some behaviours may not be deemed harassment or discrimination as defined by the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, they can nonetheless have a significant impact on the work environment. For example, negative attitudes toward equity and diversity, even when expressed out of ignorance, can affect the work environment and whether Indigenous employees and employees from the equity-seeking groups feel welcomed and included in the workplace.

Understanding individual attitudes and the corporate culture also helps to assess an organization's readiness for change and identifies the strategies that will be needed to effect and sustain change. Many workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts have been derailed because they fail to consider the organization's readiness for change, undertake too rapid a pace of change, and undertake initiatives without first ensuring the needed understanding and buy-in from people leaders and employees. Implementing equity, diversity, and inclusion programs without creating this foundation of understanding can create fear and resentment and lead to backlash.

While an unwelcoming work environment negatively affects Indigenous peoples and members of the equity-seeking groups, it can also have negative implications for other employees and the organization as a whole. Unhealthy workplaces have been linked to low productivity, high absenteeism, high turnover, high legal costs, and many hours of staff time needed to deal with a host of employee issues. Studies have also found that employees who work in environments that are not welcoming and inclusive are more likely to leave for other jobs, take extended leaves of absence, and retire early.⁶⁸ Unhealthy workplaces also negatively affect the mental health of employees,⁶⁹ with mental health now being the leading cause of short- and long-term disability absences.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ See John Samuels & Associates. (2006, March). *Summary report on engagement sessions for a racism-free workplace*. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada; Gandz, J. (2005). *A business case for diversity*. Canadian Department of Labour.

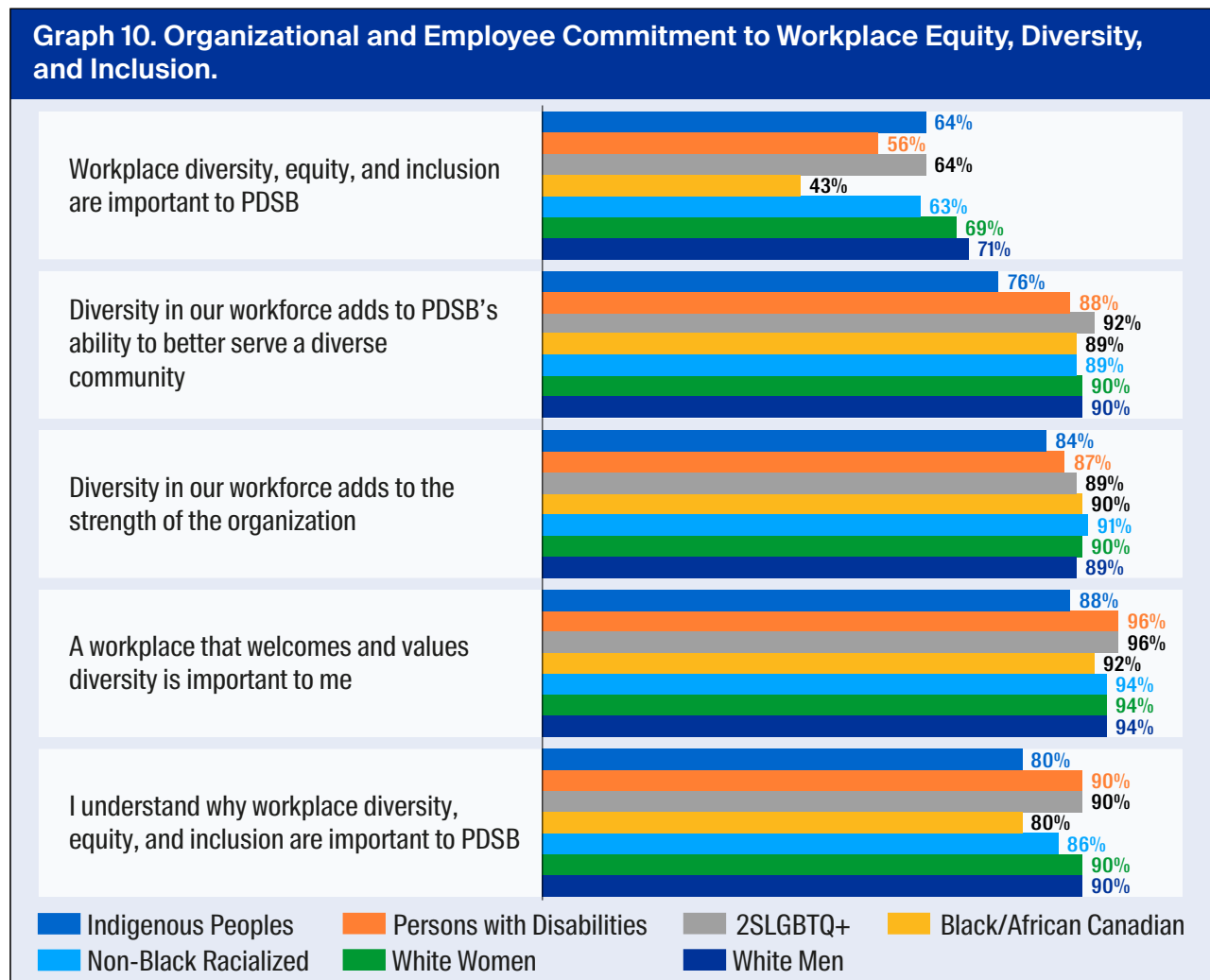
⁶⁹ Mental Health Works. (2016, February 29). *How can the workplace contribute to or create mental health problems?* <https://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/resources/how-can-the-workplace-contribute-to-or-create-mental-health-problems/>

⁷⁰ Chai, C. (2017, May 5). *500,000 Canadians miss work each week due to mental health concerns*. Global News. <https://globalnews.ca/news/3424053/500000-canadians-miss-work-each-week-due-to-mental-health-concerns/>

Employee perspectives and experiences act as a window into whether employment systems are fair—and are perceived to be fair—and help to identify how organizational practices, along with supervisor and management behaviours, might differ from organizational policies and the stated commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Employees also provide critical insight into an organization’s culture and work environment, including uncovering resistance to equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

In addition, an organization’s approach to workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion can help increase employees’ understanding of inequities and improve the success of programs designed to address the historical disadvantages faced by Indigenous peoples and members of the equity-seeking groups. Poorly articulated and implemented programs can undermine these groups by fuelling resistance to employment equity programs and breeding resentment toward the groups that experience inequities in the workplace.

The Workplace Equity and Inclusion Survey asked respondents about their own commitment as well as their perception of the Board’s commitment to workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion.



As Graph 10 shows, White men (71%) and White women (69%) were the most likely to agree that workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion are important to the PDSB. Slightly fewer 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, and non-Black racialized employees agreed with this statement (64%, 64%, and 63%, respectively). Fewer persons with disabilities (56%) and Black employees (43%) agreed that workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion are important to the PDSB.

The vast majority of all groups agreed that diversity in the workplace adds to the PDSB's ability to better serve a diverse community and that diversity in the workforce adds to the strength of the organization. The vast majority of all groups also agreed that a workplace that welcomes and values diversity is important to them and that they understand why workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion are important at the PDSB.

In the focus groups and online survey, the consultants explored the perceptions of employees toward workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion as well as the unique experiences of Indigenous employees and employees from each equity-seeking group. These perspectives and experiences are explored in this section.

In the focus groups, employees were asked about the positive and challenging aspects of working at the PDSB. These general questions were asked at the beginning of the focus groups to allow the consultants to better understand the experiences of Indigenous peoples and members of the equity-seeking groups within the larger organizational context.

10.4.1 Benefits of working at the PDSB

Employees shared that they feel a deep commitment to their work and to either directly or indirectly educating the students in Peel Region. They shared a number of other positive aspects of working at the PDSB.

Working with students, particularly the diverse students and families in the Peel community

A number of employees shared the gratification they get from working with students and supporting their growth and development. They enjoy working within Peel's diverse communities, and those employees who live in Peel Region value that they are able to contribute to the communities in which they live.

It's the students. They hold a place in my heart, especially where I work. Reminds me of myself when I was growing up. People don't have much hope in you, but as you get older and you see the growth, you have hope.

I like working in a diverse community. I live in Peel so I like working within my own neighborhood community.

I obviously like teaching and working with children specifically and making a difference and having an impact in their lives.

It does offer you an opportunity to work with communities that have racialized communities or particularly Black communities that have traditionally been under-served, students at risk for socioeconomic issues. If you really want to do some good work, you can find a school where your services can be best utilized, and the diversity of schools that Peel offers is by far the best thing about it.

Commitment and vision of colleagues and the school leaders

Many employees also identified their colleagues and school leaders as an advantage of working at the PDSB. They praised their innovation and commitment to Peel students. Those with a commitment to equity also shared that finding a community of colleagues and a school leader who are also engaged and committed to equity is a critical support to those engaged in this work.

You find those core teams. It's like you have a community of practice that you've created for yourself, we're able to work together to venture our collective work, but also lean on each other across departments to overcome some of the resistance that we face.

I really love the feeling that no matter where I've been, there's always a really strong sense of community at the schools that I've had the chance to work at.

Focus on equity

A number of employees in the focus groups and through the online survey shared that they value, support, and are encouraged by the PDSB's focus on equity.

I'm encouraged by the work that is happening now. It feels like lower anxiety lately. Teaching through an anti-oppression lens is now supported more than ever.

The ministry review has propelled movement towards acceptance and equity.

After the ministry review there has been an intentional effort to better the things that are happening in the school with regard to suspensions and the discipline that's being handed out to our students. I do like that there's some intentionality happening even though the pace is slow.

Growth and learning

Employees also valued the ability to grow and learn at the PDSB. They shared that because of the Board's size, there are opportunities for growth and advancement in the form of professional learning opportunities, working at different schools, and working in various roles.

I like the extent to which the I'm able to collaborate across the department and functional areas to shape my job and projects in a way that is informed by those in the field and not so much held within the direction of centralized teams.

I enjoy professional development opportunities like workshops and training

programs to make sure every employee is exposed to any additional areas introduced into the Board.

10.4.2 Challenges of working at the PDSB

Those who participated in the focus groups were also asked about the challenging aspects of working at the PDSB. They identified a number of challenges of working at the Board.

COVID-related staff shortages and volume of work

The pandemic has taken a significant toll on employees. They shared the challenges of keeping up with the volume of work while facing staff shortages. Some also shared that despite managing both a stressful workload and the impact of COVID on their own families, they don't feel that their efforts are appreciated by the Board.

You don't get a chance to just breathe. It's just work, work, work. Give us time to do what it is we're really supposed to be doing, which is teaching students. We're spending way too much time being asked to do administrative stuff.

I do feel like I'm drowning. To be honest with you, I dread coming into work. I love the students. I love the staff, but I hate coming into work. Every day I wonder, "Did I make the right decision to go to admin?"

The past 2 years have been really different and very hard because of the pandemic. I can definitely tell you that prior to the pandemic, the school environments were a lot better than they are right now. We used to have very consistent supply teachers. Now it's a revolving door. Everyone's exhausted.

Changing priorities

Employees also shared that there are constantly changing priorities at the PDSB. Coupled with what they experience as insufficient and ineffective communication, these changing priorities leave them confused and frustrated.

I've been at the Board for many years and there always seems to be some new initiative. We spend all this time working on it and then it goes by the wayside because someone gets promoted. Then there's a new one. It's just too much.

We're shifting constantly. Sometimes shifting back to where we had originally been a year or 2 ago. Not really communicating with why the shift is happening or what is happening. The communication is just not there.

The current workload. With the addition of the directives, we're not at the stage where they're infused into our everyday practice. Lack of resource allocation, specifically for the expectations around the ministry directives, means that we have our regular day-to-day jobs and then the work of the 27 directives. It gets really challenging because there aren't enough hours in the day. We're not

resourced effectively to do both to the best of our abilities. We're making it work with the most bare bones of resources possible.

Current climate and organizational culture

Employees also expressed that they felt discouraged because of the focus on what is not going well at the PDSB. Some also shared that the Ministry review and the focus on anti-racism has left many staff afraid that they will say the wrong thing. Many described morale as being low, with employees feeling that the lack of a change management strategy has contributed to the current climate throughout the Board.

The school culture and climate right now are a very delicate, eggshell-walking balance of people who are not wanting to share anything or say anything for fear of being called a racist or being taken to task for any of the things, which is a tragedy.

It's our reputation currently as a Board. Unfortunately, it just seems like a dumpster fire right now. It's not going well and there's all these changes. Change is hard and when you know there's been so much change at the top, it trickles down in different ways.

Staff morale overall is very low regardless of the employee group. The challenges of that and regulating emotions within that environment, not my own, but helping others as well. So that's a big piece and a challenge for sure.

There needs to be change management process at various levels that triggers and stems down all the way to the school to the students. I'm not sure I'm feeling that there's a system in place to manage the immense change that they're going through. So you end up with this result of chaos. Change is necessary, but it also needs to be organized. It needs to be procedural. It needs to be managed in a way so that you're still able to function because we're not shut down. The kids aren't sitting at home while we change. We still have to function on an everyday basis. We still have to serve. We're still obligated to fill our professional responsibilities, and so you can't disrupt at every level and not have some form of change management process. It might be there, but I'm not feeling it in my position.

Turnover

Further impacting employee morale is what many described as high turnover among senior leaders in the organization. These people have worked many years with the Board and have a great deal of historical knowledge. They shared their belief that the loss of these individuals has destabilized the Board and that there is no clear plan for addressing the many issues the organization faces. Some shared their concern that various people at the Board have simply disappeared from their jobs with no communication about their departure. Others shared that individuals have chosen

to leave the PDSB because of the focus on equity. This turnover has forced already overworked staff to take on additional responsibilities, contributing further to their burnout and low morale.

A lot of our departments, because of the shift towards equity and anti-oppression and anti-racism, people are leaving the board. So we have departments that are close to 50% of their capacity. We have more work, less staff, so that does create a work burden that's hard to overcome.

There's burnout and you are either tired of having to deal with resistance or you're just resistant and looking for opportunities elsewhere. There's been a lot of turnover. Even in our department, I have the most tenure [at about 1 year]. Teams are decimating and it's like that across many of the central teams.

Processes are owned by people and there's no record. Depending on who you have as your leaders, your solutions or your directions are also diversified. As the principal, I've had 3 different superintendents in the last 3 years, and different approaches, different solutions, and different answers to the same problems. It is sometimes very problematic because it becomes hard to predict and understand how you're going to make your decisions at the school level and where the board supports or what the Board stance is on certain issues.

The exclusionary part of that and the mishandling of things like the random firing and displacement of administrators without telling anybody anything. My daughter's principal in her high school, I don't even know where the woman is. We got an email after the fact saying, "This is the new principal." We have no understanding of what has happened. It is not a sole event in the Board. This has been happening on a mass scale.

10.4.3 Approach to workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion

No equity, diversity, and inclusion infrastructure and lack of maturity of the equity, diversity, and inclusion program

Despite having a Manager of Workplace Equity for the past 10 years, the PDSB does not have the employment equity infrastructure and maturity that one would expect. Specifically, the consultants did not find evidence of a strong policy framework, an Employment Equity Strategy, equity embedded within human resources practices, a solid understanding of workplace equity among employees, and so on. While *The Journey Ahead Research Report* was released in 2013, and was intended to be the starting point for the Board's workplace equity journey, it appears that the Board's focus was on implementing the actions from the report rather than changing the organization's hiring and promotion policies and practices. While some changes have been made to the Board's hiring practices, Human Resources staff shared with us that they have not yet been given the training and support that they want and need to be able to embed equity into their work.

The result is that a decade after The Journey Ahead report, the PDSB remains at the beginning stages of a workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion program that is characterized by a reactive rather than proactive approach and a sole focus on diversity, with little attention being paid to equity and inclusion.

Lack of focus on all equity-seeking groups

Because the Board does not have a more mature workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion program, its present focus is responding to the Ministry Directives. As such, the Board's focus is on Black students and staff. These actions have left other equity-seeking groups concerned as they continue to experience harassment and discrimination, which are not being addressed.

The work is necessary. We need to make sure that we are including Black voices and Black excellence, but what seems to have happened as a by-product is that all other groups have become non-issues. So Indigenous people are only now coming back onto the radar. LGBTQ stuff is only now coming back onto the radar. There was 18 months where everything was being promoted, was focused solely on Black excellence, which of course is necessary, but should not have been the sole thing that was being promoted super heavily. The feedback we got from the children who were not Black is, "What about Muslims? What about LGBTQ? What about Indigenous people?"

There is so much ignored antisemitism (especially in the past 2 years) it's unbelievable. Islamophobia is completely ignored by the Board. And our Sikh community is crying out for service and support. And the Board does nothing. All minority groups are being ignored so that the Board can look tough on anti-Black racism at the expense of everyone else.

Punitive approach to training

A number of employees from all backgrounds shared that the training that has been provided has created more division among employees. Rather than supporting them to develop their understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion and the need for this work, they shared that they were "blamed and shamed" and are now afraid to enter into conversations about this work.

Instead of encouraging our White brothers and sisters to have open discussions in safe spaces about what behaviors they might be enacting that are racist, they're told to stop speaking. They were told to just listen. It's made it more challenging to have discussion that is fulsome and educational, because now we're in a spot where people are afraid to say anything.

White people feeling that they experience discrimination owing to PDSB's equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts

Throughout the consultations, we also heard that the training and communication

about the Board's equity, diversity, and inclusion work has had the effect of leaving White staff feeling that they are now the group being marginalized at the PDSB. We heard from White staff—those who are committed to equity and wanting to participate in this important work—that their contributions are not valued. We heard from staff who need to increase their understanding that the Board's approach has made them feel like they are the problem. We also heard from employees that the Board's approach has only served to deepen some employees' resistance to this work.

We are not saying that all employees would be automatically supportive of a more thoughtful and strategic approach to workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion. But such an approach would help employees develop their competence and courage to engage in this work without fuelling the lack of understanding about workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion and the divisions we have come across through this ESR.

Being discriminated against because I am White and "privileged" is not okay. You cannot assume my status based on my skin colour.

Yet, as a White female guidance counselor my performance has been attacked because I am White, and the message is that I can't possibly do my job because I am White.

The messaging from the Board seems to be, "If you are White, we don't want you working here anymore." As a White person, it's pretty demoralizing to find out that no matter what you do, you aren't valued as an employee any longer.

Discussions of white supremacy taken as personal attacks and harassing

In addition, it does not appear that the concept of white supremacy as a system and structure is well understood by PDSB employees. Many employees shared a lack of understanding of the concept and expressed their perception that discussions about white supremacy are personal attacks on White people. Some also shared that talking about racism, colonization, and related topics is a form of racism.

In addition, there were employees who expressed considerable resistance to equity, diversity, and inclusion work—employees who, regardless of PDSB's approach, would likely not change their perspectives. For them discussing issues of white supremacy and racism is seen as racism.

I am receiving unwelcome comments from those who are pressing the issue that all Whites are colonizers. I have an ethnic background from a country that has not colonized anyone. My father immigrated here. I don't appreciate being lumped into the colonizing efforts of the UK, France or Spain. There are many nations worldwide that colonized others, in Africa, Asia also. Let's move on forward respecting all and not being forced to pay for errors made by those who lived 100 years ago.

I have been told that being White means that I have things I have not, and that I

oppress people and the like. The amount of racism in those types of statements never ends and it is not acceptable. But the Peel Board does not recognize racism against White people because, according to their Marxist CRT, that is not possible. But that is just word salad and, of course, it does.

Peel has a 'human rights' policy that strategically excludes complaints about harassment stemming from their current anti-racism strategy. This strategy often employs terms like 'whiteness' and 'white supremacy', interpreted in a way that implicates White people because of their skin colour. Even when racist acts are committed by one BIPOC person against another, it's determined that 'whiteness' is the underlying reason. Who thinks the use of this term will do anything but alienate those who want to help?

We are constantly having "white supremacy," "whiteness," and "white fragility" thrown in our face. Being White in this Board has become a net negative because of the gross acceptance of these terms by senior administration. It's subtle CRT, and it has NO BUSINESS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION. I am told that I need to accept these terms and their implications as canon when they are outright racist. My "whiteness" deserves to be explored and celebrated just as much as any other race, not shamed and labeled as problematic. When everything is white supremacy, nothing is white supremacy. Consider that.

Findings and Recommendations

As is evident from the feedback provided by employees, the PDSB needs to establish an Employment Equity Program that is supported by a comprehensive strategy. This program also needs to be supported by the appropriate infrastructure, clearly articulated to staff, and Human Resources policies, practices, and staff. This program also needs to carefully consider its training to ensure that it is developing the competence and confidence of employees to create welcoming and respectful workplaces rather than creating further divisions in the workplace.

Given the concerns raised throughout this report, the PDSB also needs to regularly engage employees to ensure their understanding and to address their needs and challenges. As teachers and other staff continue to bear the brunt of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to understand how they can be better supported. The past few years have also seen an increase in retirements not because of the pandemic alone but also because of changes to pension entitlements for school administrators. This is impacting school boards across the province and will lead to teacher shortages and increased competition for teachers and school leaders. This problem requires a Human Resources Department that is much more strategic, has a better understanding of employee experiences, and has a pulse on employee morale.

As the pandemic continues, there is increased attention being paid to human resources and the role of human resources departments within organizations. The

pandemic has brought to the fore the need to be more supportive of employee mental and physical health and the need to be flexible in when and how work is completed. This will require a change in the culture of the Human Resources Department, which many have described as dehumanizing and unsupportive, rather than supportive, contributing to the worsening of their mental and physical health. Many shared that the Board's approach to human resources management has had a negative impact throughout the organization: people are becoming sick and needing to take time off, people are not receiving the needed accommodation and are instead taking medical leave to preserve their mental and physical health, morale is worsening, trust is eroding between colleagues, and loyalty to the organization is dwindling. These findings suggest that the Board needs to revisit its vision for human resources management if it is to meet these significant ongoing and upcoming human resources challenges.

Recommendation 99: It is recommended that the PDSB use the findings from this report and the Workforce Census to develop an Employment Equity Strategy to diversify the workforce, embed equity throughout its human resources policies and practices, foster more welcoming and inclusive work environments, and ensure accommodation and accessibility in compliance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Recommendation 100: It is recommended that the PDSB develop a multifaceted communications/learning strategy that is updated on an ongoing basis (and that may include newsletters, lunch and learns, book clubs, podcasts, and other informal methods of promoting knowledge, resources, tools, and practices, etc.) with the goal of:

- Increasing employee understanding of workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Developing the competence and confidence of employees, particularly those in leadership positions, to support the implementation of the Employment Equity Strategy
- Defining key terms and concepts, and
- Developing and communicating a business case for workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion that links the organization's equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts to student success.

Recommendation 101: It is recommended that the Board share this report and the resulting Employment Equity Strategy with employees and members of the school community and that it provide regular updates on implementation to better support employee understanding of the need and rationale for the Board's workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

Recommendation 102: It is recommended that updates on the implementation of the Employment Equity Strategy be regularly communicated to everyone in the school community.

Recommendation 103: It is recommended that issues of equity and human rights be embedded into all other training provided to employees and leaders so that they can see its connection to all the work they do.

Recommendation 104: It is recommended that the job description of the Manager of Workplace Equity be reviewed to ensure that the person hired has the appropriate skills and abilities to develop and guide the implementation of the Employment Equity Strategy.

Recommendation 105: It is recommended that the Workplace Equity Unit be moved outside of the Human Resources Department so that staff can provide guidance to and oversight of the Board's human resources practices, free from constraint and reprisal.

Recommendation 106: It is recommended that the PDSB revisit its approach to human resources management to create a department that centres employee voice and experiences, and competitively positions the PDSB to better attract and retain the right employees.

Recommendation 107: It is recommended that the PDSB regularly conduct an employee engagement survey, with shorter and more frequent pulse surveys, to better understand the experiences and perceptions of employees so that the Board can better address issues and concerns.

Recommendation 108: It is recommended that the Board conduct another Workforce Census and Employment Systems Review in 5 years to assess progress and develop a new Employment Equity Plan.

Appendix A: Policies and Documents Reviewed

Policies and Procedures

Accessibility Policy

Accommodation of Staff with Disabilities Policy

Anti-Racism Policy

Benefits: Death of Staff Policy

Benefits: Retirement Policy

Benefits: Vacation Allowances Policy

Board of Trustees Participation on Hiring, Appointment, and Promotion Panels Policy

Code of Conduct Policy

Conflict of Interest Policy and Operating Procedure

Courses, Conferences, Seminars, etc. Policy

Criminal Background Checks Policy

Emergency Preparedness Policy

Employee Records—Freedom of Information and Access Operating Procedure

Equitable and Inclusive Education Policy

Flexible Office Hours Human Resources Support Services—Administrative and Secretarial Staff Operating Procedure

Health Promotion Attendance Support Program Operating Procedure

Hiring Practices Policy

Human Rights Policy and Operating Procedure

Leaves of Absence Policy and Operating Procedure

Medical Workplace Accommodation Program Operating Procedure

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Religious Accommodation Operating Procedure

Requests for References on Staff Human Resources Support Services Operating Procedure

Sick Leave, Administrative and Business Staff Policy

Social Media Policy

Supervisory Officer Performance Appraisal Policy

Temporary Appointment to Position of Greater Responsibility

Travel and Expenses Policy

University Co-Op Students Leadership Development and School Support Services

Operating Procedure
Use of Information Technology Resources Policy
Whistleblower Policy
Workplace Harassment Procedure
Workplace Violence Operating Procedure

Related Documents

Collective Agreements
Due Diligence: Human Resources Legislation and Investigations (Training)
Hiring Guides
Evaluation of Occasional Teachers
Management of Performance—Permanent Administrative Staff Operating Procedure
Management of Performance—Probationary Administrative Staff Operating Procedure
Management of Performance—Teaching Assistants Operating Procedure
Mandatory Accessibility Training
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2020–2022)
Principal Performance Appraisal Operating Procedure
Supervisory Officer Performance Appraisal Operating Procedure
Supervisory Officer Performance Appraisal Policy
Teacher Performance Appraisal—Experienced Teachers Operating Procedure
Teacher Performance Appraisal—New Teacher Induction Program
Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal Operating Procedure

COUNT ME IN 2021-22



PDSB WORKFORCE CENSUS FINAL REPORT

August 26, 2022

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WHY conduct a workforce census?



INTRODUCTION

A workforce census is a count of employees in an organization, used to understand the diversity of the workforce. The information collected through this *Count Me In* Workforce Census is critical to the Peel District School Board's (PDSB) efforts to promote diversity and inclusion for all staff in the organization, and ultimately, to better serve an increasingly diverse student population.

Census data from Statistics Canada highlights the dramatic demographic changes within the province due to Canada's reliance on immigration for population growth. The Board serves a population that is increasingly diverse not only in terms of race, ethnicity, and language, but also age, disability, gender, and sexual orientation.

The Board will be more effective and responsive to the needs of staff and students when we understand the diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Additionally, this census will also help to fulfill Directive 24 (Employment System Reviews) and Directive 26 (Fairness in Equity and Employment Strategy) issued by the Ministry of Education following the Ministry Review.

The collection of disaggregated race- and identity-based data is also both urgent and necessary to dismantle anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism and all forms of discrimination and racism, as well as broader issues of systemic discrimination within the PDSB as reported in the Ministry Review.

The Workforce Census will support the Board's goals to:

- Assess if the diversity of the workforce is representative of the diversity of the communities served and the student population
- Inform initiatives to remove barriers to employment and advancement within the organization
- Inform an intentional and targeted recruitment and promotion strategy to ensure the workforce better represents the student population and the labour market in the Greater Toronto Area
- Create programs, priorities and resources to help foster an even more inclusive, respectful and supportive environment for all employees.

In order to help meet these goals, this report summarizes the data collected through the Workforce Census. In addition, in order to guide the PDSB along its equity journey, this report also includes an analysis of this data to explore issues of equity and identify any possible barriers to hiring and advancement. Recommendations are also made to address the issues identified and remove any possible barriers.



HOW was it created?

METHODOLOGY

The PDSB embarked on a process to conduct its second Workforce Census which was planned to occur from January 26 to February 18, 2022. Given an initial low response rate, the closing date for the census was extended to the end of March.

In accordance with guidelines from the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Workforce Census was voluntary and confidential. In order to address privacy concerns, the census was also anonymous and not connected to an employee's name or ID number.

Turner Consulting Group was contracted to administer the survey and manage all aspects of data collection and analysis. This meant that no board employee had access to individual responses submitted on paper or online. Only summary reports were provided to any PDSB staff.

The Workforce Census included questions in two broad categories of questions: (1) organizational demographics: questions related to the employee's position within the PDSB (e.g., employment status, length of employment), and (2) workforce demographics: questions related to the characteristics of an individual (e.g., gender identity, religion). The census was comprised of 12 questions, and took less than 10 minutes to complete.

Staff had the option of completing the Workforce Census either online, through Survey Monkey™, or on paper. A website was set up to allow staff to learn more about the census. During the census period, emails were sent to all 25,516 PDSB staff with the survey link and additional information about the survey. Paper versions of the survey were available for download from the website and were made available to staff teams who did not have daily access to a computer. Completed paper surveys could be mailed through the Board courier to the Research and Accountability Department. These were then couriered, unopened, to the consultant for data entry.



WHO completed the census?

RESPONSE RATE

Of PDSB's 25,516 employees, a total of 17,022 responded to the survey, with 15,942 agreeing to participate and 1,080 indicating that they did not wish to participate.

If they did participate in the census, respondents had the option of choosing not to respond to any question by selecting "Prefer not to answer". In addition, they were able to discontinue participating in the census at any time.

The Workforce Census achieved a response rate of 62% overall, with a 32% response rate for casual, temporary, and occasional staff, and a 70% response rate for permanent staff.

Given the low rate of response for casual, temporary, and occasional staff, this report focuses on analyzing the data for permanent full and part-time employees (N=11,325).

In this report, the number of employees who answered each question is presented in each table or graph. The tables also include information about which employees chose not to respond to the question by selecting "Prefer not to answer".

In the following sections, the data is presented in the order in which each question appeared in the *Count Me In!* 2021-22 Workforce Census. A summary of the data for each of the 12 questions from the Workforce Census are included, followed by a number of supplemental analyses of the data. For questions where more than one response has been selected (i.e., select all that apply), the percentage of respondents are reported. For all tables and graphs, sums may not equal 100% due to rounding and because in some cases, employees are able to select more than one answer.



WHY

did employees choose not to complete the census?



1,080 employees indicated that they did not wish to participate in the census. Of these employees, 250 took the time to share their reasons for not participating in the Workforce Census. An analysis of their responses shows the following themes:

- Do not support the purpose of the census and/or don't feel the information is relevant or connected to student success (50 employees)
- Are too busy to complete the census (23)
- Don't feel comfortable sharing this information (15)
- Don't feel that their information will be kept anonymous (14)

The remaining 148 individuals gave a range of responses, including a general lack of interest in completing the census, that they were on leave, or that they were occasional staff.

Cleaning the data

Preparation and analysis of the data occurred in three stages: data vetting, data entry, and data analysis.

Data vetting and recoding are important steps to ensure the data collected through the census is able to be analyzed. Data vetting involved reviewing answers to the census questions and ensuring that the information provided was sufficiently accurate. For example, if someone wrote in a response to a question that fit into one of the pre-established answer options, it was recoded into the correct category. For example, if they wrote in “Catholic” in response to the question about faith or religion, it was categorized as Christian. In addition, responses such as “human” to the question about race were recoded to “I prefer not to answer”.

In addition, some employees noted in the survey that they intended to sabotage the survey by completing it multiple times. Where it could be identified that employees did complete the survey multiple times, these responses were deleted.

Because employees could choose not to answer any question or could exit the census at any time, the number of employees that responded to each question varies. As such, the percentages are calculated based on the total number of employees who responded to the particular question.



Response Rate by Occupational Group

Of the 16,137 permanent employees at PDSB, 11,325 participated in the census, representing a 70% response rate for permanent staff. The response rate varied by occupational group, from a high of 100% for Professional Student Services Personnel, OPSEU Local 283, and Senior Administrators, to a low of 41% for CUPE Local 2544.

Employee Group	Total Permanent Employees	Workforce Census Respondents	
		#	Response Rate %
OSSTF – Professional Student Services Personnel	207	207	100%
OPSEU Local 283 (e.g., adult English as a Second Language/Literacy & Basic Skills instructor)	36	36	100%
Senior Administrator (e.g., director, superintendent, controller)	33	33	100%
ASG – Administrative Staff Group	265	263	99%
OPSEU Local 292 (e.g., Learning Technology Support Services, media staff)	123	115	93%
Ontario Principals' Council	511	417	82%
ETFO – Peel Elementary Teachers' Local	7,008	5,283	75%
CUPE Local 1628 (e.g., secretarial/clerical staff, library technician)	899	664	74%
OSSTF – Teachers Bargaining Unit	2,797	1,936	69%
OPSEU 2100 – formerly Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel (e.g., Designated Early Childhood Educator, Teaching Assistant, Behaviour Teaching Assistant)	2,897	1,556	54%
CUPE Local 2544 (e.g., custodian, maintenance worker, food services staff, Learning Technology Support Services)	1,353	551	41%
Other	8	--	--
Unknown	--	45	--
Prefer not to answer	--	147	--
Total Responses	16,137	11,325	70%

WHAT we found ...



ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Question 1: Please select the federation, union, or association which reflects your primary job responsibility in the Peel District School Board.

Employee Group	Total Permanent Employees	% of all respondents
ASG – Administrative Staff Group	263	2.3%
CUPE Local 1628 (e.g., secretarial/clerical staff, library technician)	664	5.9%
CUPE Local 2544 (e.g., custodian, maintenance worker, food services staff, Learning Technology Support Services)	551	4.9%
OPSEU 2100 – formerly Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel (e.g., Designated Early Childhood Educator, Teaching Assistant, Behaviour Teaching Assistant)	1,556	13.7%
ETFO – Peel Elementary Teachers’ Local	5,283	46.6%
OPSEU Local 283 (e.g., adult English as a Second Language/Literacy & Basic Skills instructor)	36	0.3%
OPSEU Local 292 (e.g., Learning Technology Support Services, media staff)	115	1.0%
OSSTF – Teachers Bargaining Unit	1,936	17.1%
OSSTF – Professional Student Services Personnel	207	1.8%
Ontario Principals’ Council	417	3.7%
Senior Administrator (e.g., director, superintendent, controller)	33	0.3%
Unknown	45	0.6%
Prefer not to answer	147	1.8%
Total Responses	11,325	100%



47% of respondents are elementary teachers

17% of respondents are secondary teachers

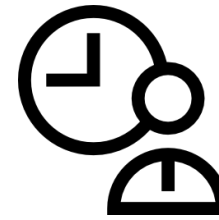
Question 1a: Do you have a French Immersion teaching assignment? (For teachers only)

French Immersion (Permanent Employees)	#	%
Yes	568	7.8%
No	6,626	91.6%
Prefer not to answer	42	0.6%
Total Responses	7,236	100.0%

Question 1b: Please indicate your specific principal role. (For principals only)

Principal Role (Permanent Employees)	#	%
Coordinating principal	12	2.9%
Elementary principal	178	42.5%
Elementary vice-principal	122	29.2%
Secondary principal	35	8.4%
Secondary vice-principal	64	15.3%
Not indicated above	1	0.2%
Prefer not to answer	7	1.7%
Total Responses	419	100%

Question 2: What is your primary employment status with the Peel District School Board?

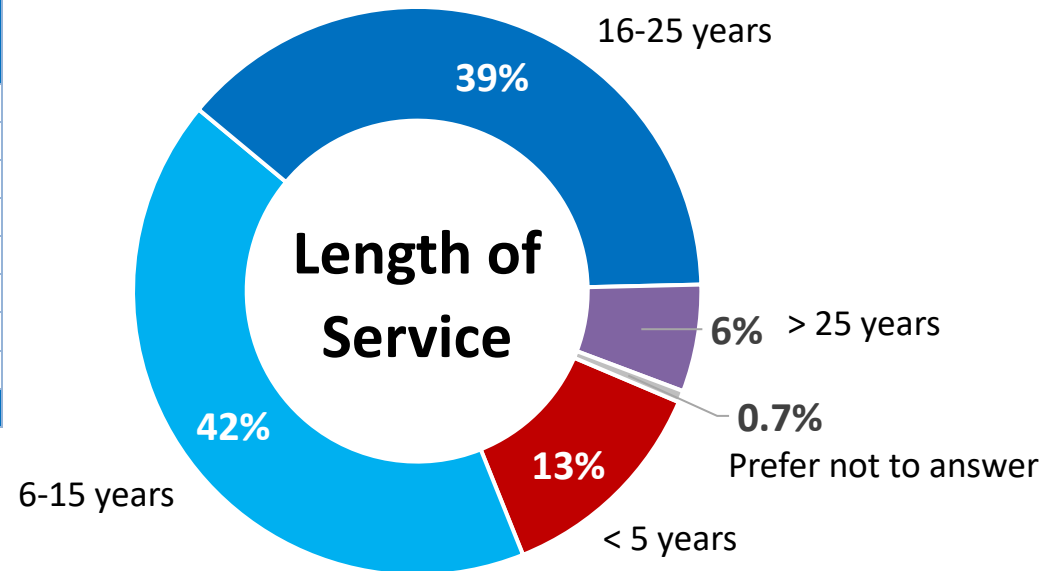


Employment Status (All Employees)	#	%
Permanent or probationary full-time employee	10,852	75.2%
Permanent or probationary part-time employee	473	3.3%
Casual, occasional, temporary, or contract employee	2,884	20.0%
Unknown	6	0.04%
Prefer not to answer	211	1.5%
Total Responses	14,426	100.0%

75% of respondents are permanent full-time employees

Question 3: How long have you been employed with the Peel District School Board?

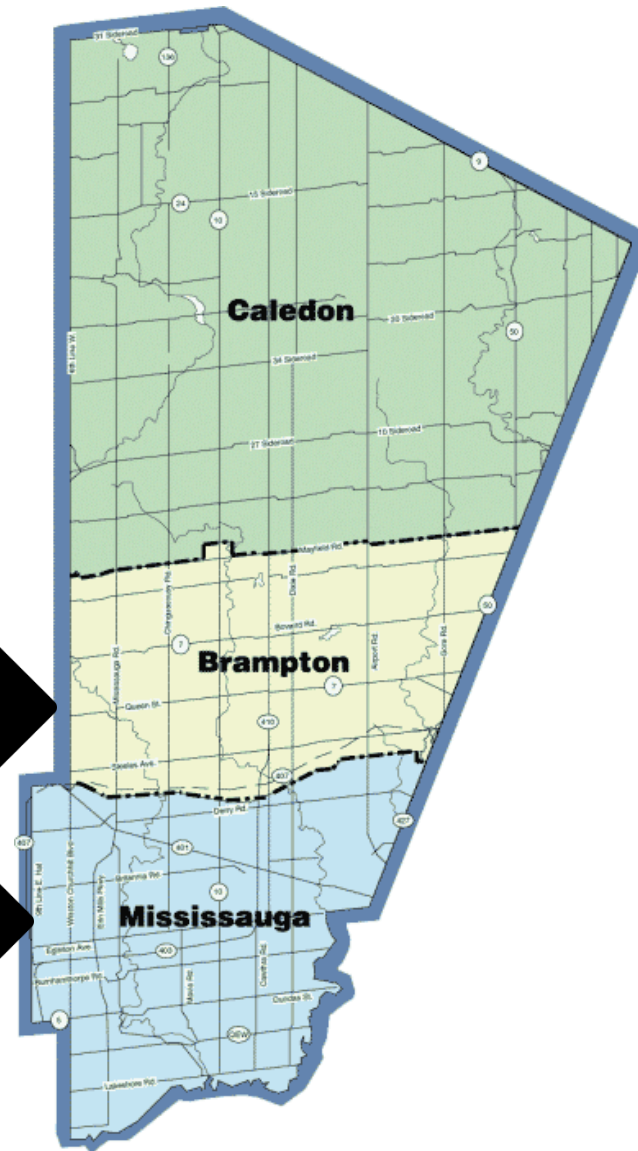
Length of Employment (Permanent Employees)	#	%
Less than 1 year	183	1.6%
1 - 5 years	1,237	10.9%
6 - 10 years	2,047	18.1%
11 - 15 years	2,722	24.0%
16 - 20 years	2,739	24.2%
21 - 25 years	1,632	14.4%
More than 25 years	690	6.1%
Prefer not to answer	75	0.7%
Total Responses	11,325	100%



Question 4: Where is the primary municipality in which you work?

Municipality (Permanent Employees)	#	%
Mississauga	5,126	45.3%
Brampton	5,281	46.6%
Caledon	573	5.1%
Itinerant locations	179	1.6%
Prefer not to answer	166	1.5%
Total Responses	11,325	100%

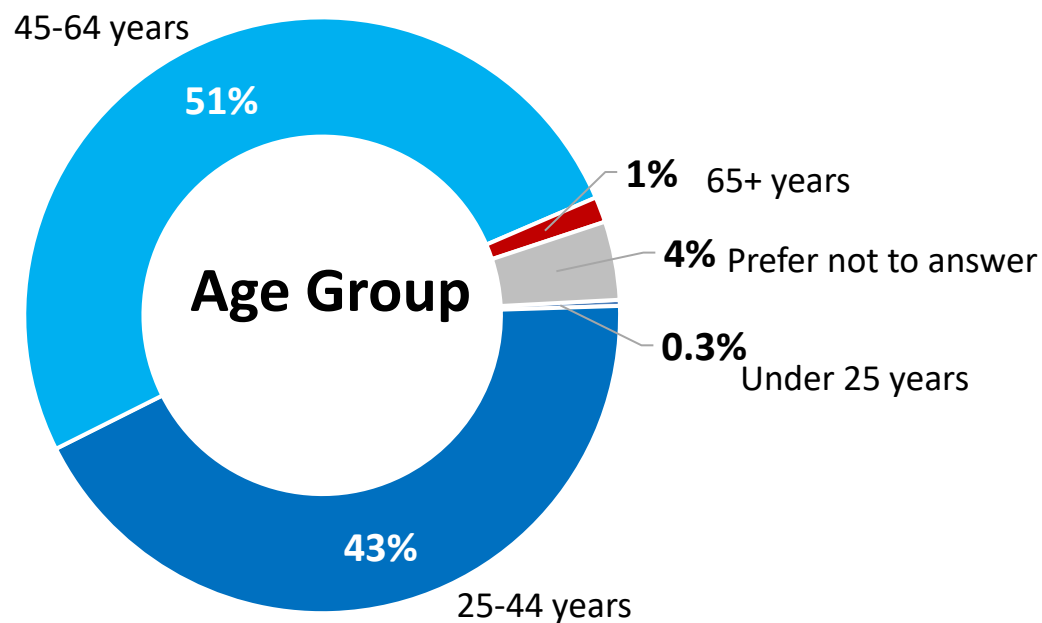
92%
of respondents work in
either Brampton or
Mississauga

WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

Question 6: To which age group do you belong?

Age Group (Permanent Employees)	#	%
Under 25 years	37	0.3%
25-34 years	1,151	10.2%
35-44 years	3,702	32.9%
45-54 years	3,966	35.2%
55-64 years	1,767	15.7%
65 years or older	156	1.4%
Prefer not to answer	479	4.3%
Total Responses	11,258	100%



Question 7a: Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability?

Person with a Disability (Permanent Employees)	#	%
Yes	869	7.8%
No	9,701	86.8%
Prefer not to answer	610	5.5%
Total Responses	11,180	100.0%

Question 7b: What is the nature of your condition or disability? (Select all that apply)

Disability Reported (Permanent Employees)	#	%
Physical disability or health condition	399	45.9%
Mental health disability	380	43.7%
Learning disability	246	28.3%
Any other disability affecting your ability to work, such as epilepsy, amputation, etc.	45	5.2%
Prefer not to answer	89	10.2%
Total with a Disability	869	100%

* Percentages do not total 100% because employees could select more than one type of disability.

8% of respondents consider themselves a person with a disability.

The largest proportion of employees with disabilities had a physical disability or health condition (46%), followed by mental health disability (44%).

Question 8: Which of the following best describes your racial background. (Select all that apply)

Racial Identity (Permanent Employees)	#	%
Black/African	1,042	9.3%
East Asian	679	6.1%
North American Indigenous	166	1.5%
Latin American	211	1.9%
Middle Eastern	259	2.3%
South Asian	1,985	17.8%
Southeast Asian	272	2.4%
Other racialized	11	0.1%
Mixed Race not specified	26	0.2%
White only	5,849	52.3%
White with a racialized identity	66	0.6%
Not specified	45	0.4%
Prefer not to answer	1,110	9.9%
Total Responses	11,181	100%

* Percentages do not total 100% because employees could select more than one racial identity.

Question 9: Do you self-identify as First Nations (Status or non-Status), Métis, and/or Inuit in North America?

First Nations, Métis, Inuit	#	%
Yes	166	1.5%
First Nations	70	0.6%
Métis	76	0.7%
Inuit	10	0.1%
Prefer not to answer	23	0.2%
No	10,475	93.7%
Prefer not to answer	540	4.8%
Total Responses	11,181	100.0%

* Percentages do not total 100% because employees could select more than one Indigenous identity.

1.5%

of respondents self-identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit in North America

36%

of respondents self-identify as racialized

52%

of respondents self-identify as White

Question 10: Indicate any religion or spirituality with which you identify. (Select all that apply)

Religion / Faith (Permanent Employees)	#	%
Christianity	5,117	45.8%
Non-Christian Religions	2,209	19.8%
Bahá'í	11	0.1%
Buddhism	186	1.7%
Hinduism	686	6.1%
Indigenous spirituality	46	0.4%
Islam	551	4.9%
Jainism	11	0.1%
Judaism	137	1.2%
Sikhism	640	5.7%
Wicca	62	0.6%
Zoroastrianism	26	0.2%
Other	13	0.1%
Not Religious	2,469	22.1%
Agnosticism	311	2.8%
Atheism	388	3.5%
Spiritual but not religious	272	2.4%
No religious affiliation	1,498	13.4%
Prefer not to answer	1,390	12.4%
Total Responses	11,180	100%

* Percentages do not total 100% because employees could select more than one religion or faith.



Non-Christian Religions



No Religion or Faith, Agnostic, Atheist, Spiritual but Not Religious



Christian

Question 11: Which of the following describes your gender identity. (Select all that apply)

Gender Identity (Permanent Employees)	#	%
Woman	8,457	76.5%
Man	1,953	17.7%
Genderfluid	26	0.2%
Gender non-conforming	27	0.2%
Non-binary	32	0.3%
Questioning	20	0.2%
Transgender	15	0.1%
Two-Spirit	18	0.2%
Prefer not to answer	557	5.0%
Total Responses	11,054	100%

* Percentages do not total 100% because employees could select more than one gender identity.



77%

of respondents self-identify as female

18%

of respondents self-identify as male

6%

of respondents identify as 2SLGBTQ+ (i.e., Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning)

Question 12: Which of the following describes your sexual orientation? (Select all that apply)

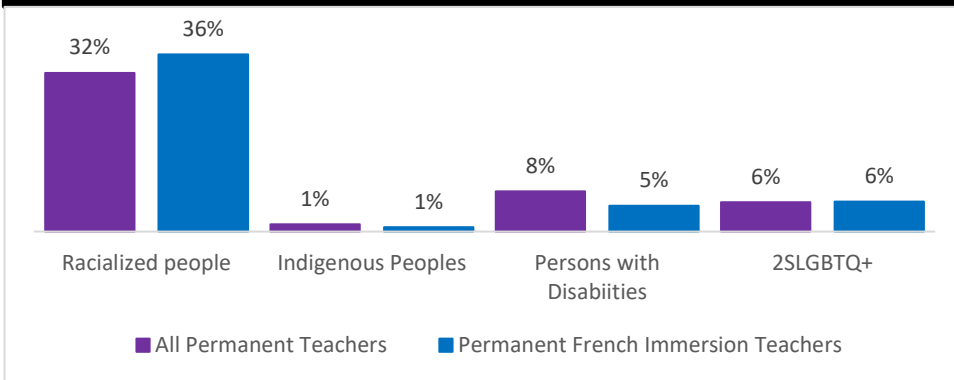
Sexual Orientation (Permanent Employees)	#	%
Bisexual	297	2.7%
Gay	105	1.0%
Heterosexual/straight	8,617	78.0%
Lesbian	73	0.7%
Pansexual	66	0.6%
Queer	78	0.7%
Questioning	47	0.4%
Two-Spirit	17	0.2%
Other	11	0.1%
Unknown	81	0.7%
Prefer not to answer	1,746	15.8%
Total Responses	11,050	100%

* Percentages do not total 100% because employees could select more than one sexual orientation.

ANALYSIS

Representation in Academic Positions

French Immersion Teachers v. All Teachers (Permanent Employees)



Analysis of the data was conducted to identify any barriers to hiring and advancement for the various groups of employees.

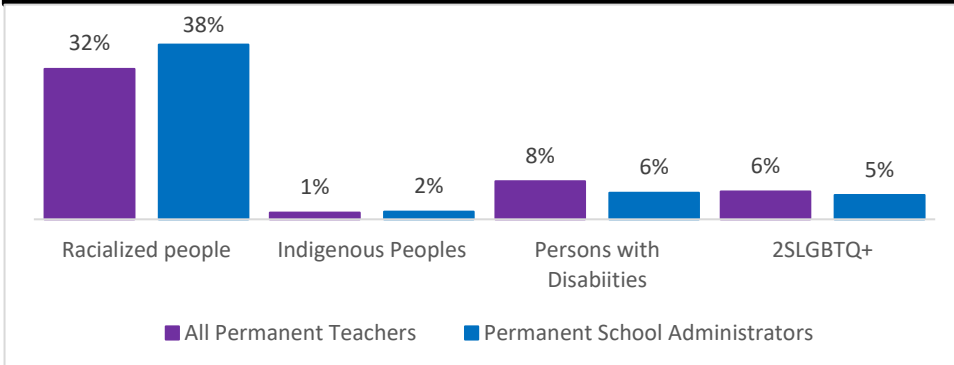
French Immersion Teachers

The first graph compares representation among French Immersion and all teachers.

Compared to all teachers, racialized people, Indigenous Peoples, and 2SLGBTQ+ employees are well represented among French Immersion teachers.

Teachers with disabilities are slightly underrepresented among French Immersion teachers, compared to their representation among all teachers.

School Administrators v. All Teachers (Permanent Employees)



School Administrators

This graph compares the representation of the various groups among school administrators and all teachers.

Compared to all teachers, racialized people, Indigenous Peoples, and 2SLGBTQ+ employees are well represented among school administrators.

Persons with disabilities are slightly underrepresented among school administrators than among permanent teachers.

Diversity of Peel Staff and PDSB Students

The graph below compares the racial diversity of PDSB staff, with the racial diversity of PDSB students collected through the [Student Census](#) conducted in 2018.

As the data shows, the proportion of Indigenous and 2SLGBTQ+ employees at PDSB generally represents the representation of these groups among students.

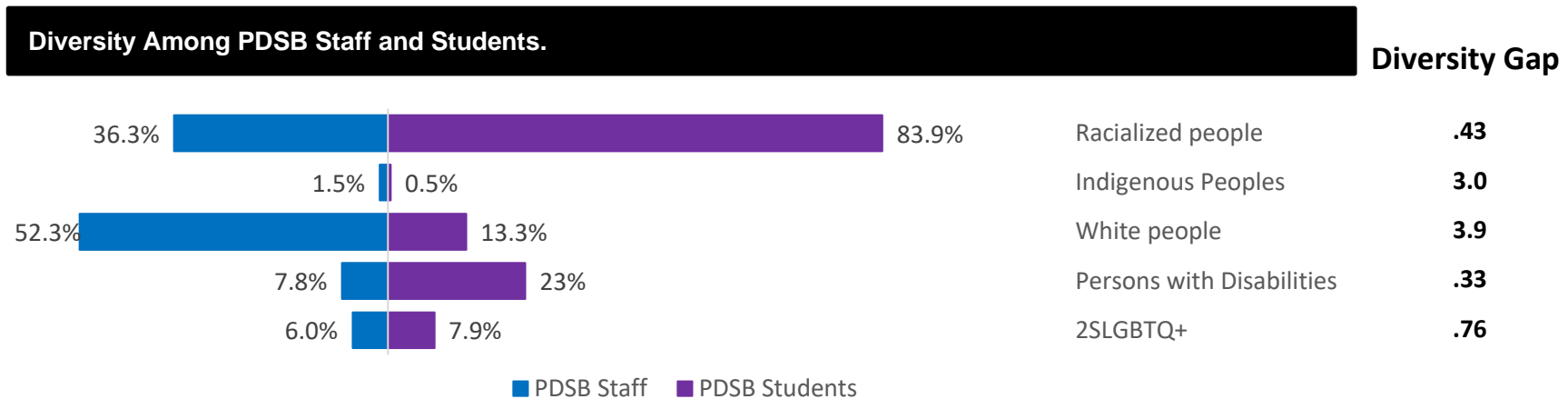
However, there exists a large gap between the representation of racialized employees and racialized students. While 36% of survey respondents indicated that they are racialized, 84% of students identified as racialized.

The reverse is true for White employees; while 52% of staff identified as White, only 13% of PDSB students identified as White.

In addition, while 23% of students live with a disability, only 7.8% of PDSB do.¹

The Diversity Gap compares the percentage of staff to the proportion of PDSB students who identified as racialized. A value of 1.0 indicates that there is no gap and that the diversity among the workforce reflects the diversity among the student population. The smaller the number, the more significant the gap.² Where the value is over 1.0, the group is overrepresented among staff compared with their representation in the student population.

As is shown in the graph below, significant gaps in representation exists for racialized employees and persons with disabilities.



¹ Note that the proportion of employees with disabilities is not comparable to the proportion of students with disabilities because the questions differed for both surveys. The proportion of students who identified as having a disability may be overrepresented. Please see the Student Census report for further information.

² Turner Consulting Group. (2014). *Teacher Diversity Gap*. <https://www.turnerconsultinggroup.ca/blog/teacher-diversity-gap>

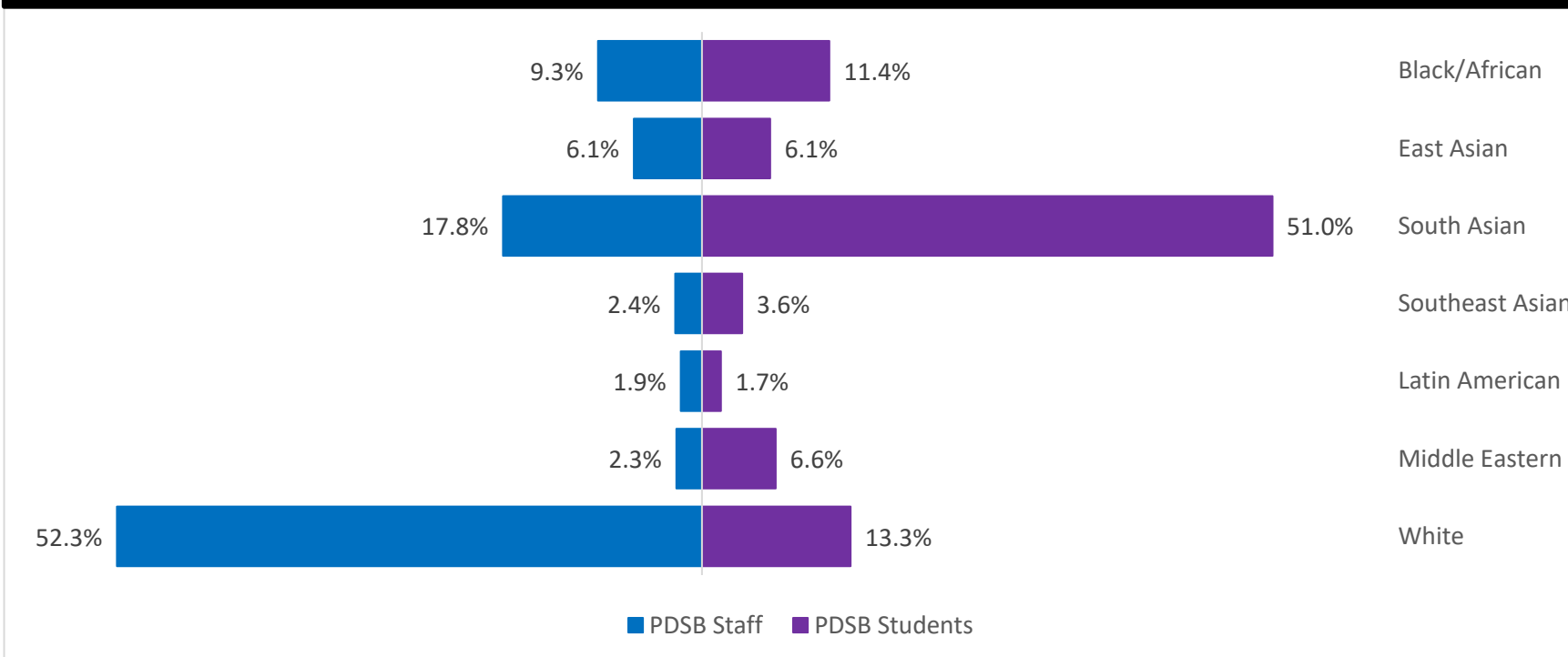
This graph disaggregates the data for racialized employees, and compares the representation among PDSB staff and students.

As the data shows, there are some significant differences between the representation of some racial groups among PDSB staff compared with the student population.

Most notable is that while 51% of students identify as South Asian, only 18% of staff identify as South Asian.

By contrast, only 13% of students identify as White, yet 52% of PDSB staff identify as White.

Racial Diversity Among PDSB Staff and Students.



First Nations, Métis, and Inuit and Racialized Employees by Employee Group

Employee Group (Permanent Employees)	#	First Nations, Métis, and Inuit and Racial Sub-groups							
		% First Nations, Métis, & Inuit	% Black/ African	% East Asian	% South Asian	% Southeast Asian	% Latin American	% Middle Eastern	% White
ASG – Administrative Staff Group	263	1.1%	14.1%	3.8%	20.9%	0.8%	2.3%	3.0%	48.7%
CUPE Local 1628	664	0.3%	5.0%	5.3%	20.2%	2.9%	1.1%	1.8%	54.5%
CUPE Local 2544	551	0.7%	7.8%	15.4%	7.1%	13.6%	8.0%	0.5%	50.8%
OPSEU 2100	1,556	1.3%	16.0%	5.1%	20.7%	2.4%	2.6%	2.8%	43.4%
ETFO	5,283	1.4%	6.7%	5.4%	17.7%	1.4%	1.3%	2.2%	56.3%
OPSEU 283	36	0%	17.5%	5.3%	31.6%	5.3%	0%	5.3%	29.8%
OPSEU 292	115	0.9%	14.8%	7.0%	23.5%	2.6%	2.6%	4.3%	40.0%
OSSTF TBU	1,936	1.5%	9.8%	7.0%	15.9%	2.5%	1.6%	2.6%	50.5%
OSSTF – PSSP	207	0.5%	10.8%	4.2%	10.4%	2.4%	1.9%	5.2%	54.2%
OPC	417	1.9%	16.3%	4.1%	18.0%	0.7%	1.7%	1.2%	52.0%
Senior Administrator	33	2.9%	20.6%	2.9%	20.6%	0%	0%	0%	38.2%
Unknown	45	0%	13.8%	0%	44.8%	0%	3.4%	3.4%	44.8%
Prefer not to answer	147	0.7%	5.4%	7.5%	24.5%	0.7%	0.7%	2.0%	4.1%
TOTAL	11,325	1.5%	9.3%	6.1%	17.8%	2.4%	1.9%	2.3%	52.3%

* Percentages do not total 100% because employees could select more than one racial group.

See page 10 for a description of employee groups.

This table compares the representation of racialized employees across all PDSB occupational groups, compared to their overall representation among permanent employees. As it shows, the representation of each group varies by employee group. For example, while South Asians comprise 18% of all PDSB employees, they comprise only 7% of employees in CUPE Local 2544 and 32% of those in OPSEU 283.

Women and Men by Employee Group

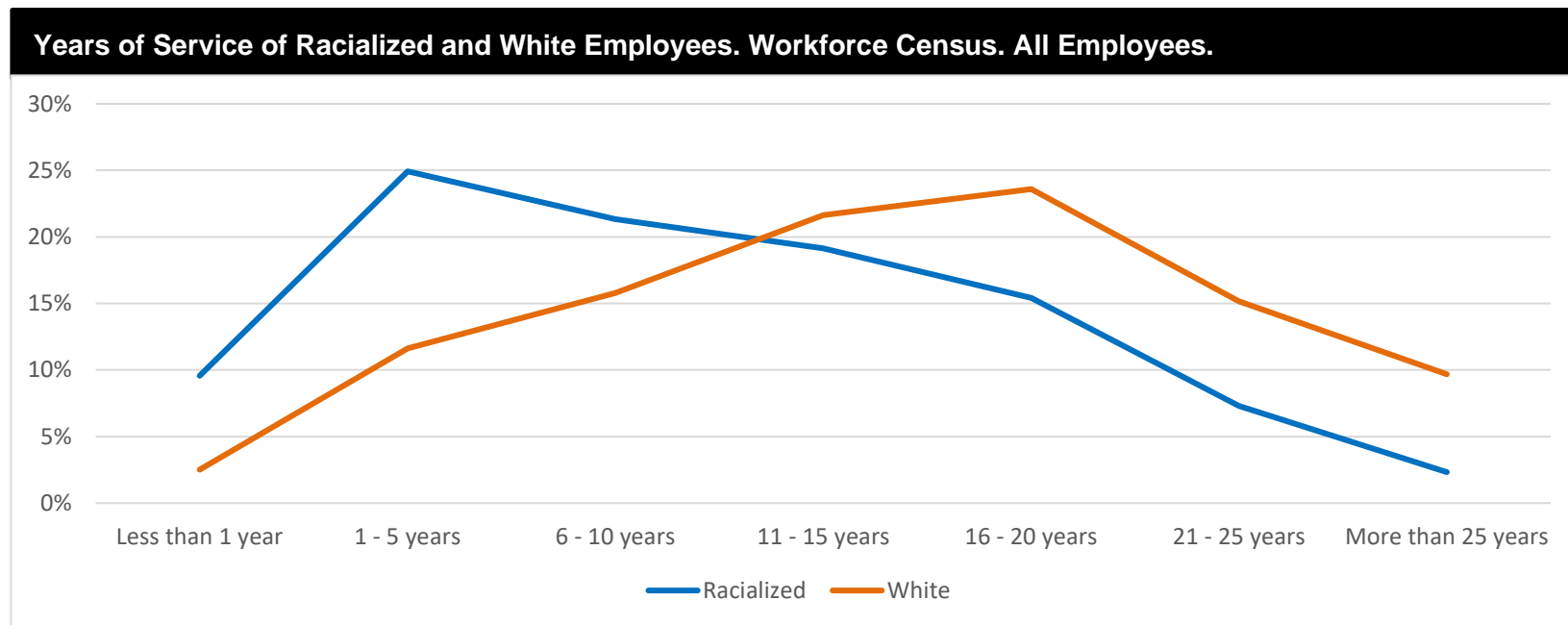
Union Group	Total Count (Permanent Employees)	% Men	% Women
ASG – Administrative Staff Group	263	32%	62%
CUPE Local 1628	664	2%	92%
CUPE Local 2544	551	47%	45%
OPSEU 2100	1,556	5%	90%
ETFO	5,283	13%	79%
OPSEU 283	36	14%	86%
OPSEU 292	115	55%	38%
OSSTF TBU	1,936	30%	59%
OSSTF – PSSP	207	12%	80%
OPC	417	27%	67%
Senior Administrator	33	27%	64%
Unknown	45	0%	43%
Prefer not to answer	147	14%	46%
TOTAL	11,253	18%	76%

* The percentages of men and women do not equal the Total Count as employees who identified as gender diverse or preferred not to answer this question are not included in this table. See page 10 for a description of employee groups.

This table compares the representation of women and men in various occupational groups at PDSB. As the table shows, women comprise the majority of employees in each occupational group other than OPSEU 292 and CUPE Local 2544. In addition, women represent 74% of all teachers (79% of elementary teachers and 59% of secondary teachers). Compared with their representation among permanent teachers, women are slightly underrepresented among both school administrators (67%) and senior administrators (64%).

Years of Service of Racialized and White Employees

The changing demographics of a workforce and the effectiveness of an organization's workplace equity efforts are made evident by analyzing the racial diversity of the workforce by years of service.



As this graph shows, larger proportions of racialized employees have been hired in the past 10 years. In fact, 56% of all racialized employees who responded to the census have been working with PDSB for under 10 years, compared with 30% of White employees. By contrast 44% of racialized employees have been employed by the Board for 11 or more years, compared with 70% of White employees. This suggests that PDSB has been doing a better job of hiring racialized employees in the past 10 years.

KEY FINDINGS

Based on the results from the Peel District School Board's *Count Me in Peel! 2021-22 Workforce Census*, the key findings are highlighted below. This information will help to inform future system planning, so that the needs of the Peel board's workforce and student population can be better served in the future.

Response rate

- The Workforce Census achieved a 70% response rate for permanent employees. While good overall, the information shared by employees about why they chose not to participate suggests that there are employees who do not support the Board's efforts to achieve workplace equity and in fact chose to undermine this work by completing the census multiple times. Some also shared that they don't see a connection between workplace diversity and the success of students. This suggests that more work needs to be done to educate employees about equity, diversity, and inclusion and communicate a rationale for engaging in this work, including not only the Ministry Directions, but obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code. In addition, the benefit for students in seeing a diverse workforce should also be emphasized.
- The low response rate for temporary and occasional staff means that this data does not give us an accurate picture of the composition of these groups. Oftentimes, members of the equity-seeking groups are disproportionately represented in positions with less job security.

Persons with disabilities

- 8% of respondents consider themselves a person with a condition or disability. The largest proportion of people with disabilities had a physical disability or health condition (46%), followed by mental health disability (44%).
- Given that 4% of survey respondents indicated that they have a physical disability, and 3% a mental health disability, which may or may not be evident, PDSB ought to continue to provide managers and administrators with access to training to ensure that they are appropriately accommodating these employees.
- This also suggests that the Board needs to continue to implement and build upon its mental health strategy to reduce stigma around mental health, increase supports to employees, and equip managers to support employees.
- There is also a large gap between the representation of persons with disabilities among PDSB staff (8%) and students (23%). Closing this gap would be important to enable students of all backgrounds to see the possibilities for people with disabilities.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

- While no gap exists in the representation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit employees with their representation among PDSB students, increasing the representation of Indigenous teachers should continue to be a priority given its impact on the success of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

Racialized employees

- A large gap exists in the representation of the PDSB staff and students. While 84% of students identify as racialized, only 36% of staff identify as racialized. Closing this gap should be a priority given its impact on student success.
- There are many reasons to close the Diversity Gap and a great deal of evidence that shows that all students benefit from having racialized teachers. Further, exposure to racialized teachers and administrators prepares all students to work in a diverse province and a global environment.
- There is also an urgency to acting on this as Statistics Canada data shows that Peel Region's racialized population is growing at a faster rate than the total provincial population. As such, this gap in representation could continue to grow if a deliberate focus is not placed on diversifying the teacher workforce.

Employees from non-Christian religions

- While 46% of survey respondents indicated that they identify with Christianity, 20% identify with non-Christian religions, and 22% are not affiliated with any religion.
- The diversity of religions in the workplace raises the need to ensure that managers and school administrators are aware of their legal duty to provide religious accommodation to employees. It is also critical that employees are not experiencing harassment or discrimination based on their faith.

2SLGBTQ+

- 6% of respondents identify as 2SLGBTQ+ (i.e., Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning).
- It is important that PDSB ensure a safe space for not only its students, but also staff. Positive space campaigns throughout the entire system, not only student-centered campaigns and not only in the schools but throughout all PDSB workplaces, would help raise awareness and visibility of 2SLGBTQ+ employees. This may include delivering training and making resources available to assist school administrators and managers with creating safe and welcoming environments for 2SLGBTQ+ employees. This would also include encouraging employees to add their pronouns to their email signatures and to their Microsoft Teams profiles.

³ See for example:

Cherng, H. S., & Halpin, P. F. (2016). The importance of minority teachers: Student perceptions of minority versus White teachers. *Educational Researcher*, 45(7), 407-420.

Gershenson, S., Hart, C. M. D., Lindsay, C. A., & Papegeorge, N. W. (2017, March). The long-run impact of same-race teachers. IZA Institute of Labor Economics.

Stuart Wells, A., Fox, L., & Cordova-Cobo, D. (2016, February 9). How racially diverse schools and classrooms can benefit all students. The Century Foundation. <https://tcf.org/content/report/how-racially-diverse-schools-and-classrooms-can-benefit-all-students/>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that PDSB communicate with employees with the goal of increasing employee understanding of workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion, the issues facing the equity-seeking groups, and the need for the Board's workplace equity efforts.

Recommendation 2: Given the low response rate for occasional and long-term occasional teachers, it is recommended that the PDSB work with the respective unions to survey this employee group in order to assess the diversity within this group.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended that the PDSB survey new employees at the point of hire to assess progress made to diversify the workforce.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the PDSB ensure that policies and protocols are in place to appropriately accommodate employees based on disability, which may mean accommodating employees across bargaining units and reviewing existing collective agreement language to address this point.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that the PDSB continue to provide school administrators and managers with access to professional learning and guidance to ensure that they are appropriately accommodating employees with disabilities.

Recommendation 6: Given that 4% of survey respondents reported that they have a mental health disability, it is recommended that PDSB continue to educate employees on mental health, with a focus on reducing stigma around mental health, increasing supports to employees, and equipping managers to support and accommodate employees.

Recommendation 7: Given the diversity of religions in the workplace, it is recommended that the PDSB ensure that school administrators and managers are aware of their legal duty to provide religious accommodation to employees and what that means (e.g., time off for religious observance, accommodation of dietary restrictions, shift scheduling, and scheduling of meetings).

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that the PDSB review the availability of gender-neutral washrooms within its facilities and increase their number to ensure that employees at all work locations can access them.

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that the PDSB undertake a positive space campaign that includes delivering training and making resources available to assist managers, supervisors, and employees with creating safe and welcoming environments for 2SLGBTQ+ employees.

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that the PDSB undertake efforts to close the gaps in representation for the equity-seeking groups by conducting outreach recruitment and removing barriers in the hiring process.

Appendix 3

PDSB

Assessment of the Implementation of *The Journey Ahead Report*



May 2023

Assessment of the Implementation of *The Journey Ahead*

In 2013, Turner Consulting Group was contracted to conduct a review of PDSB's hiring and promotion processes. The review, summarized in *The Journey Ahead* report, resulted in 33 Findings (or recommendations), which provided guidance to the Board to begin its workplace equity journey. A Workplace Equity Manager was hired to oversee the implementation of the recommendations and to guide the Board's workplace equity efforts. The Board has recently hired the fourth person to occupy that role.

In 2020, the Minister of Education released the reviewer's report on the Peel District School Board (PDSB, the Board). This report documented observations and made recommendations with respect to systemic racism in the areas of human resources practices, board leadership, and governance. Based on the report and recommendations, the Minister of Education issued 27 binding directives to the Board. These directives included the following:

The Board shall retain an independent expert to conduct a comprehensive employment systems review (ESR), including a review of the implementation of the recommendations of the 2013 Turner Consulting Group Research Report on "Hiring and Promotion at the Peel District School Board."

In 2021, Turner Consulting Group was contracted by the PDSB to conduct the ESR and to review the implementation of the recommendations from *The Journey Ahead* report. This report documents the assessment of the implementation of the 33 recommendations.

Findings

The chart which follows documents our assessment of the evidence of implementation of each of the 33 recommendations. This review found:

- 12 recommendations have been fully implemented
- 14 recommendations have not been fully implemented
- 5 recommendations have not been implemented, and
- 2 recommendations are no longer relevant given the significant changes at PDSB since 2013.

From the review conducted for the ESR, we found that despite having a Manager of Workplace Equity for the past 10 years, the Board has not developed the employment equity infrastructure or established a mature employment equity program that one would expect. Specifically, the consultants did not find evidence of a strong policy framework, an Employment Equity Strategy, equitable human resources practices, or a solid understanding of workplace equity among employees. In addition, while some changes have been made to the Board’s hiring practices, Human Resources staff shared with us that they have not been given the training and support that they want and need to be able to embed equity into their work.

In addition, it appears that the implementation of the recommendations from *The Journey Ahead* report was seen as the end of the Board’s equity journey, rather than the beginning, with some describing the approach to implementation of the report’s findings as a “checkbox exercise” rather than an opportunity to strengthen the Board’s human resource policies and practices, move toward merit-based rather than relationship-based hiring, and diversify the workforce to reflect the community served.

The result is that a decade after *The Journey Ahead*, the PDSB remains at the beginning stages of its workplace equity journey that is characterized by a reactive rather than proactive approach. While there is some focus on diversity, less attention is paid to creating equitable policies and practices and fostering inclusive work environments.

Because the Board does not have a more mature workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion program, its present focus is on implementing the Ministry Directives, which focused on addressing racism, specifically anti-Black racism. This has left members of other equity-seeking groups concerned because they continue to experience harassment and discrimination that they feel is not being addressed. The approach that has been taken has also generated and deepened resistance to this work rather than create an understanding and commitment to employment equity.

The following lists each recommendation from *The Journey Ahead*, the evidence of its implementation, and our assessment of implementation which are categorized in the following ways:

Implemented

This recommendation is fully recommended.

Not fully implemented

There is evidence that efforts were made to implement this recommendation, but these efforts have not continued and/or the intended outcomes of the recommendations have not been fully realized.

Not implement

There is no evidence that this recommendation was implemented.

FINDING	EVIDENCE	ASSESSMENT
Academic and Business Hiring		
<p>Finding 1/8: Tools, training and resources should be developed or revised to ensure that those responsible for hiring have the supports needed to conduct bias-free hiring.</p>	<p>Some information on bias-free hiring has been included in the hiring guides. However, more work can be done to support bias-free hiring.</p> <p>The hiring guides have not been recently updated and shared with managers and school administrators. As such, they are currently without guidance on hiring, and specifically bias-free hiring.</p>	<p>Not fully implemented</p>
<p>Finding 2/9: Support applicants to tailor their cover letter and resume and prepare for the interview by including sufficient information about the nature of the job, the work environment (e.g., school or department), and the qualifications needed to be effective in the position.</p>	<p>A description of responsibilities is not included in the job ads for many teaching positions.</p>	<p>Not fully implemented</p>
<p>Finding 3/10: Revise and include the equity and accommodation statement not just on the website, but on each job posting.</p>	<p>The following equity and accommodation statement is included on the PDSB Careers webpage and on each job posting:</p> <p>The Peel District School Board is committed to equity in employment. We are committed to equitable hiring practices that allow us to hire qualified staff who reflect the full diversity of the Region of Peel. We will make any reasonable accommodation, based on any of the human rights protected grounds, to support candidates to participate in the hiring process.</p> <p>When contacted, candidates will be provided with an overview of the various elements of the selection process, such as tests and skill demonstrations. We will provide employment accommodation (i.e. an</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

PDSB ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOURNEY AHEAD REPORT

FINDING	EVIDENCE	ASSESSMENT
	<p>accessible location, rescheduling of interviews that fall on holy days) if we are advised of an applicant's needs in advance of any part of the selection process.</p>	
<p>Finding 4/11: Offer and provide accommodation based on any of the human rights protected grounds. Those involved in the hiring process also need to understand and be supported in meeting their duty to accommodate current and prospective employees.</p>	<p>Job postings state that the Board will provide accommodation based on any of the human rights protected grounds.</p> <p>However, emails sent to candidates do not invite candidates to let their accommodation needs be known.</p> <p>In addition, the offer letters reviewed do not inform new employees of the Board's policies for accommodation, nor do they invite candidates to let their accommodation needs be known.</p>	<p>Not implemented</p>
<p>Finding 5/12: Communicate changes made to the hiring process to all staff to strengthen staff confidence in a fair and bias-free process.</p>	<p><i>The Journey Ahead</i> report was shared with staff along with the Action Plan to implement the recommendations. There does not appear to be ongoing communication to employees to increase staff confidence in the hiring process.</p> <p>The results of the ESR show that confidence in the fairness of the hiring process remains low.</p>	<p>Not implemented</p>
<p>Finding 6/13: Fully document non-discriminatory reasons for hiring or not hiring each candidate. This includes developing formal procedures on the retention of competition files.</p>	<p>Principals and managers are instructed in the hiring manuals to retain competition files for 3 years. Despite this requirement for file retention, staff were unable to produce all of the files requested for the ESR. This suggests that competition files are not being retained in accordance with the hiring manual.</p>	<p>Not fully implemented</p>

FINDING	EVIDENCE	ASSESSMENT
	<p>In addition, the files reviewed for the ESR indicates that not all documents relevant to the hiring process are being retained.</p>	
<p>Finding 7: Review the [English] language assessment process to ensure it is valid, reliable and equitable.</p>	<p>PDSB has discontinued the English-language assessment for all teaching positions.</p> <p>The French-language assessment continues due to legislated language requirements.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>Finding 14: In some occupational groups, hiring managers and Principals with less hiring experience are responsible for hiring staff into entry level positions. Because these are the key entry points to these occupations and to the PDSB, Human Resources should be responsible for these hires in order to ensure bias-free hiring and increase the diversity within these occupations.</p>	<p>Hiring of Occasional Teachers is centralized.</p> <p>For some other positions, managers and Principals continue to hire into positions which are key entry points into the Board.</p>	<p>Not fully implemented</p>
<p>Finding 15/17: For competitions open to the public, outreach recruitment should be conducted in order to attract a diverse pool of qualified applicants.</p>	<p>PDSB has identified community groups they send information to when mass hiring occurs.</p> <p>However, it has not developed a comprehensive outreach recruitment plan in order to attract a diverse pool of qualified applicants for all job openings.</p>	<p>Not fully implemented</p>
<p>VP/P Promotion Process</p>		
<p>Finding 16: Given the significant role that Principals and Superintendents play in developing teachers and Vice Principals and preparing them for advancement, the Peel District School Board should do more to require and support them to develop</p>	<p>The requirement to support emerging leaders from underrepresented communities and backgrounds is a defined area of competency for school leaders outlined on the Peel Equity Leadership Framework.</p> <p>Superintendents have explicitly directed school administrators to actively diversify their leadership</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

FINDING	EVIDENCE	ASSESSMENT
<p>emerging leaders from diverse communities, backgrounds and identities, and support their participation in the promotion process.</p>	<p>teams, ensuring that staff from historically marginalized groups are represented in key roles of teacher leadership when staffing or composing school-based teams for school equity improvement planning (SIEP), restorative justice, NTIP mentoring, etc.</p> <p>The Peel Equity Leadership Framework is intended to broaden the scope through which leadership experiences can be demonstrated.</p> <p>Candidates to the promotion process may highlight leadership work in the community to demonstrate readiness for the role. School based leadership experience is not privileged in the evaluation.</p>	
<p>Finding 18: Ensure a more equitable promotion process by allowing those wishing to participate in the promotion process to seek the support of and use as a reference either their current or former Principal and Superintendent.</p>	<p>Candidates do not require the support of their supervisor to participate in the promotion process.</p> <p>The process requires that candidates include their current principal or supervisor as a reference, in addition to 2 other referees of their choice.</p> <p>Candidates are made aware that a mentorship contact in the leadership department may be assigned to facilitate supportive dialogue with the candidate if their site supervisor is unable or unwilling.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>Finding 19: Provide clarity about the role of the Readiness Essay in the promotion process.</p>	<p>The Readiness Essay has been removed from the VP/P promotion process.</p>	<p>This recommendation is no longer relevant</p>

FINDING	EVIDENCE	ASSESSMENT
Finding 20: Disconnect the Leadership Dinner from the promotion process.	The Leadership Dinner has been discontinued.	Implemented
Finding 21: Strengthen the promotion interviews to ensure the fair assessment of each candidate that reflect the skills and abilities needed to be effective in the new position.	<p>Interview questions are generated collaboratively and approved by the Director’s Office. Questions are designed to access the candidate’s knowledge and understanding of important operational processes while demonstrating clear awareness of the various equity dimension inherent to all school leadership work.</p> <p>A new interview format was piloted in the Fall of 2022 which saw previously unsuccessful candidates invited back to an interview which featured an alternative assessment structure. Candidates prepared a presentation for the interview panel around a chosen provocation, intended to highlight their leadership capacity in a more authentic manner. The department remains firmly committed to innovating the process to ensure a fair assessment.</p>	Implemented
Finding 22: Introduce a scoring process to ensure that promotion decisions are based on a fair assessment of each candidate against job-related criteria.	<p>Established scoring tools utilize the “look fors” from the Peel Equity Leadership Competencies framework as clear criteria for written applications.</p> <p>Interview responses are evaluated using defined criteria, also based on the candidate’s knowledge and application of equity competencies specific to the question or case study posed.</p>	Implemented
Finding 23: Ensure that everyone involved in promotional interviews receive training in bias-free hiring and the <i>Human Rights Code</i> as it applies to hiring and selection.	Interview teams receive comprehensive training in bias-free hiring practices, offered yearly at the start of the promotion process.	Implemented

FINDING	EVIDENCE	ASSESSMENT
	<p>The consultancy services of specialists in the field of Human Rights & Equity have been engaged to lead this training.</p>	
<p>Finding 24: Ensure the existing practice of ensuring diversity among interview teams continues on beyond current staff by ensuring they are part of the written promotion procedures.</p>	<p>Interview panels are intentionally constructed to ensure diverse representation. Each panel of 3 includes, at minimum, one member who identifies as Black, Indigenous, or racialized.</p> <p>Despite the continued practice of ensuring visible diversity among interview teams, the written promotion procedures do not ensure that this practice is formalized.</p>	<p>Not fully implemented</p>
<p>Finding 25: Ensure that candidates are aware of their rights and that those administering the process are aware of their responsibilities regarding accommodation.</p>	<p>The process for requesting accommodation is made explicit during the candidate information session.</p> <p>Candidates receive written communication advising them of their right to Code-based accommodation in the employment and interview process (i.e., accessible location or assistive tools / resources, rescheduling of interviews that fall on holy days).</p> <p>The department works collaboratively with partners in both the Human Rights and the Abilities department to ensure that appropriate accommodation measures are in place and adhered to during the process.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>Finding 26: Ensure complete competition files that document non-discriminatory reasons for promoting or not promoting each candidate.</p>	<p>Competition files include a completed scoring form from each member of the evaluation panel, along with a moderated score and candidate feedback based clearly on the stated criteria.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

FINDING	EVIDENCE	ASSESSMENT
	To be successful in the process, candidates must score 70% or greater on their interview; final decision regarding promotion to the Principal or Vice Principal pool is approved by the Director’s Office.	
<p>Finding 27: Communicate changes made to the promotion process to all staff to strengthen their confidence in a fair and bias-free process.</p>	<p>The changes to the promotion process are included in the Promotion Package for Internal and External Candidates.</p> <p>Despite the changes made to the promotion process and the communication of these changes, throughout the ESR, staff continued to express a lack of confidence in the promotion process. They continue to express the perception that promotion at the board is relationship-based rather than merit-based. As a result, the Board should continue to communicate changes made to strengthen the promotion process.</p>	<p>Not fully implemented</p>
<p>Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p>		
<p>Finding 28: The Peel DSB should collect and analyze data in order to assess how well the designated groups are represented within its workforce and more thoroughly assess barriers to employment and advancement within the organization.</p>	<p>The first Staff Census was conducted in 2018, the second in 2022.</p> <p>PDSB needs to ensure that the analysis of the Staff Census data goes beyond simply representation. Staff Census data should be used to identify and address barriers to employment and advancement within the organization.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>Finding 29: Devote appropriate financial and human resources to PDSB’s workplace equity and diversity efforts, including a Workplace Equity Officer.</p>	<p>Since <i>The Journey Ahead</i> report was finalized, the Board created the position of Workplace Equity Manager. It has recently hired the fourth person in</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

PDSB ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOURNEY AHEAD REPORT

FINDING	EVIDENCE	ASSESSMENT
	this role and currently have two additional staff that report to this position.	
<p>Finding 30: Identify a senior leader as champion of PDSB’s diversity and inclusion efforts.</p>	<p>The attention paid to equity has changed at PDSB since <i>The Journey Ahead</i> report was written. Equity is now incorporated into the portfolios of a number of superintendents and Associate Directors.</p> <p>The Board has also created the position of Superintendent of Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations.</p>	<p>This recommendation is no longer relevant.</p>
<p>Finding 31: Support PDSB staff to understand the need and rationale for its diversity and inclusion efforts.</p>	<p>PDSB has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led two centralized full-day, board-wide trainings on equity and on addressing anti-Black racism. It has also held sessions on School Improvement and Equity Planning • Held mandatory training on Addressing Systemic Discrimination in Student Discipline for administrators • Schools have been directed to use PD time on equity related instruction and assessment <p>This professional learning has been student focused rather than staff focused. Many PDSB staff continue to express a lack of understanding of the need for workplace equity efforts and the benefits of a diverse workforce on student success and well-being.</p>	<p style="background-color: #e67e22; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Not fully implemented</p>
<p>Finding 32: The PDSB can do more to help employees understand and support the PDSB’s objectives of ensuring a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment</p>	<p>PDSB staff continue to express a lack of understanding of the need for workplace equity efforts.</p>	<p style="background-color: #e67e22; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Not fully implemented</p>

FINDING	EVIDENCE	ASSESSMENT
<p>by linking equity, diversity and inclusion to the PDSB’s ability to support inclusive learning environments and support the learning of all students. The PDSB also needs to develop and communicate a framework for equity and diversity, including terms and concepts, to establish a common language and understanding across the organization, which also addresses the myths and misconceptions held by employees.</p>	<p>Continued training is needed to support all staff to understand their roles and responsibilities in fostering an inclusive work environment and the benefits of a diverse workforce to student success and well-being.</p> <p>The Board also needs to create an Employment Equity Strategy and framework, define terms and concepts, and create a common language and understanding of employment equity. It also needs to address the myths and misconceptions held by employees about employment equity.</p>	
<p>Finding 33: The leaders within the organization need to be provided with further knowledge, training and tools to be able to lead change, implement the organization’s diversity efforts, and ensure inclusive workplaces for all employees. As such, the PDSB should provide training on diversity and inclusion, and make this training mandatory for all Principals, Vice Principals and Managers and senior leaders.</p>	<p>Throughout the consultations for the ESR, employees shared that training has been conducted for PDSB managers, school leaders, and system leaders, on a range of equity-related issues, particularly as it relates to students. They also receive annual human rights training.</p> <p>Through the ESR employees report that managers, school leaders, and system leaders need to do more to address issues of harassment and discrimination, and foster inclusive workplaces for all employees.</p> <p>Ongoing professional learning is needed for managers, school leaders, and system leaders to support them to diversify the workforce and foster inclusive work environments. In addition, these leaders could benefit from better understanding the impact a diverse workforce has on student success and well-being.</p>	<p style="background-color: #f4a460; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Not fully implemented</p>

**2021-2022 Integrity Commissioners' Annual Report
to the Peel District School Board**

Prepared by: Parker Sim LLP, PDSB Integrity Commissioners

**67 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M5E 1J8**

Report Submitted: June 14, 2023





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parker Sim LLP was appointed as Integrity Commissioner (“IC”) for the Peel District School Board (“PDSB”) in January 2021 as part of the PDSB’s compliance with the Ministry of Education’s (the “Ministry”) Directives issued in response to the Review of the Peel District School Board by Ena Chadha, Suzanne Herbert, and Shawn Richard in February 2020 (the “Review”). The Review identified serious concerns with the PDSB’s board leadership, various governance issues, human resources practices, and systemic discrimination.

During the first two years of our five-year appointment, the IC has focused on supporting the work being done by and for Trustees. We have delivered education and assisted the General Counsel and Governance Office at the PDSB in developing new policies to achieve a proper governance structure that reflects, among other things, good governance standards and the PDSB’s commitment to equity, human rights, and specifically addressing systemic anti-Black racism.


Until early 2023, the PDSB was subject to supervision by the Ministry. One of the consequences of Ministerial supervision, and specifically Directive 3, was the suspension of the complaint protocol under the Trustee Code of Conduct “[u]ntil the Minister is satisfied that the Board is able to work together and with the Director of Education and Associate Directors to provide good governance [...]”. This limited the IC’s function by temporarily suspending our ability to inquire into and investigate allegations of violations of the Trustee Code of Conduct.

The IC is providing this written report with respect to its activities for the 2021 and 2022 calendar years, while the Board remained under supervision. Following the 2022 election, during which six new Trustees were elected, the Ministry decided to lift supervision of the PDSB in early 2023. Activities of the IC since supervision was lifted will be addressed in the 2023 annual report.

We look forward to continuing to support the Trustees in governing in the best interests of the PDSB’s students and their families and to engaging more directly with the Trustees now that supervision is lifted. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the IC where we can be of assistance.

BACKGROUND

In March 2020, following a Review of the PDSB pursuant to section 230 of the *Education Act* in response to a request for assistance and intervention by the former Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Ministry issued 27 directives under section 230.3 of the *Education Act*, with over 54 action items aimed at establishing strong accountability measures and responsibilities, restoring good governance, and modeling equity-focused leadership at all levels of the PDSB, with a specific focus on addressing anti-Black racism and other inequities throughout the PDSB which had been highlighted in the Review.



Directives 1-8 and 13 addressed governance issues, with Directive 4 requiring the PDSB to “retain an additional Integrity Commissioner with demonstrated experience and expertise in the application of human rights principles and the application of the Ontario Human Rights Code to be responsible for code of conduct complaints which involve human rights issues.”

Directive 3 required the PDSB to “suspend all complaints, whether formal or informal, pertaining to the Code of Conduct for Member of the Peel District School Board, including any and all open investigations and any and all reports that are yet to be considered by the members of the Board in a public meeting.” That suspension was to be in place “[u]ntil the Minister is satisfied that the Board is able to work together and with the Director of Education and Associate Directors to provide good governance...”.

Parker Sim LLP and specifically the undersigned partners, Cenobar Parker and Morgan Sim, were selected following a competitive process through which the firm demonstrated “its considerable expertise in investigation and resolution of conflict issues in a broad range of settings” and stood out for the “profundity of its understanding of the impact of systemic racism on organizations and the individuals who work in them and, in this case, the families and communities that PDSB serves.”

The partners at Parker Sim LLP have collectively more than two decades of experience in human rights, administrative law, and civil litigation. Though our practice encompasses all areas of workplace law and professional regulation, including Code of Conduct issues, we are best known for our deep expertise and experience in human rights law. Parker Sim LLP is regularly retained as third-party independent investigators by employers and other organizations, including political parties and other Integrity Commissioners, to investigate sensitive and highly impactful alleged violations of anti-discrimination and harassment policies, codes of conduct, the *Human Rights Code*, and other relevant legislation.

As IC, Parker Sim LLP is responsible for:

- (a) providing timely advice to Trustees about their obligations under the Board Member Code of Conduct and the application of the Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol;
- (b) providing general information to Trustees about their duties and obligations under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act but not providing legal advice;
- (c) reviewing and making inquiries related to Complaints of alleged breaches by Trustees of the Board Member Code of Conduct in accordance with the Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Protocol;
- (d) providing educational programs to Trustees on issues of ethics and integrity;

- (e) issuing interpretation bulletins, including examples of activities that contravene the Board Member Code of Conduct and activities that are permissible and do not contravene the Code of Conduct;
- (f) all documents generated in the course of an investigation or inquiry, informal resolution of Complaints or the giving of advice to Trustees, including without limitation, notes, recordings of interviews, draft reports or opinions, etc. are the property of the Integrity Commissioner and not the Board and will not be produced unless required by law, statute or court/tribunal order and, on completion of their term, will transfer any open files related to ongoing matters to the incoming Integrity Commissioner;
- (g) ensuring the secure collection, use, disclosure; retention; and destruction of records containing personal or confidential information in their custody or control as required by all applicable privacy laws, including the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection Act* as if they were an institution within the meaning of that *Act*; and
- (h) providing such other duties respecting ethical and conduct matters as assigned by the Board.

(See section 7.06 of Appendix 2 of the Trustee Code of Conduct approved October 19, 2022.)


Broadly speaking, the IC role can be divided into three categories:

1. Advisory;
2. Investigative; and
3. Educational.

2021-2022 IC WORK FOCUSED ON CAPACITY BUILDING

Given the PDSB's supervision throughout 2021-2022, Trustees were precluded from governing the PDSB autonomously. A Board Supervisor, Bruce Rodrigues was appointed and oversaw, with Trustee input, the school board governance and decision-making which would normally be carried out by publicly elected school board trustees. As a result, in the first couple of years, Parker Sim LLP primarily focused on supporting the PDSB in its development of good governance and equity-focused leadership practices. For example, we carefully considered and provided feedback on the revised Trustee Code of Conduct and related Complaint Protocol, focusing on the Trustees' required commitments to good governance practices, equity, and anti-oppression. We also provided feedback on the draft Trustee Expense Policy.

We similarly worked to develop and deliver robust trainings on the Trustees' statutory roles and responsibilities, including – but not limited to – their responsibilities under the *Education Act*, *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, *Human Rights Code*, *Occupational Health & Safety Act*, and *Accessibility for Ontarians with*



Disabilities Act. Training was successfully delivered on February 4, 2022 and again, following the 2022 election, on December 19, 2022.

We have further had the pleasure of providing confidential oral and written advice to individual Trustees regarding their obligations under the Trustee Code of Conduct and look forward to continuing to support Trustees in their role following the lifting of supervision in 2023.

From the time of our appointment to the lifting of the PDSB's supervision by the Ministry in early 2023, Directive 3 remained in effect. Directive 3, as outlined above, effectively suspended the complaint protocol and the IC's authority to review and make inquiries related to complaints of alleged breaches by Trustees of the Board Member Code of Conduct.

From February 2021 to the end of 2022, the IC, directly or indirectly was made aware of three complaints concerning allegations of misconduct against Trustees. In response to all of these complaints, the complainants were provided with a response confirming the following:

- Parker Sim LLP has been appointed as the Integrity Commissioner for the PDSB and that Cenobar Parker and Morgan Sim are the appropriate persons who would normally receive and review complaints related to alleged breaches of the Trustees' Code of Conduct.
- Pursuant to the Ministry of Education's Directives to the Peel District School Board, and in particular Directive 3, the Board had suspended "all complaints, whether formal or informal, pertaining to the Code of Conduct for Members of Peel District School Board [...]."
- To the date of the complaint, Directive 3 had not yet been lifted and, therefore, the complaints process in respect of the Trustee Code of Conduct remained suspended.
- Despite the ongoing suspension of the complaints process, complainants were invited to provide the IC with the particulars of their complaint in writing and informed that, once Directive 3 is lifted by the Ministry, all of the complaints received during this period of suspension would be reviewed and complainants would then have the opportunity to withdraw or proceed with the complaint in accordance with the applicable procedure.

All complaints received during the period of suspension have been reviewed. The IC will consider requests made in writing to proceed with a complaint delivered between June 2020 and January 2023. All requests to proceed with a previously delivered complaint must be received on or before September 1, 2023.

CONCLUSION

The IC is committed to supporting the Trustees of the PDSB in fulfilling their responsibilities to the Board's students and their families. Trustees are appropriately held to high standards of conduct and, as IC, we are here to support Trustee learning, provide advice on the Trustee Code of Conduct, and, where necessary, investigate and assist in the resolution of Trustee Code of Conduct complaints.

The PDSB has been on a journey of transformational change that we are honoured to be a part of. Great progress has been made, and we look forward to supporting the Trustees to provide equity-focused leadership, maintain a respectful and inclusive learning and working environment, and ensure that the dysfunction of the past does not impact the Board's bright future.

Yours truly,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is cursive and appears to read 'Cenobar Parker'. The second signature is also cursive and appears to read 'Morgan Sim'. A long horizontal line extends from the end of the second signature to the right.

Cenobar Parker & Morgan Sim

Parker Sim LLP

15.4

Board Meeting, June 14, 2023

Board and Committee Meeting Schedule: 2023-2024

Strategic Alignment:

The Education Act, 1997

PDSB Procedure By-law

PDSB Committee Terms of Reference

Report Type:

Recommendation

<p><i>Prepared by:</i> Sabrina Valleau, Governance Coordinator Kathryn Lockyer, General Counsel and Governance Officer</p> <p><i>Submitted by:</i> Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education</p>

Overview

Recommendation:

That in accordance with the *Education Act, 1997*, Peel District School Board (PDSB) Procedure By-law and Committee Terms of Reference/Governance Directives, the 2023-2024 Board and Committee Meeting Schedule attached as Appendix 1, be approved.

Highlights:

- Board and Committee meetings are scheduled in accordance with the Education Act, 1997, application Regulations, PDSB Procedure By-law and PDSB Committee Terms of Reference;
- Days of Significance inform available meeting dates and times.

Background:

The Board and Committee meeting schedules were prepared in accordance with the *Education Act, 1997*, the Peel District School Board (PDSB) Procedure By-law and the Committee Terms of Reference/Governance Directives, recognizing the importance of honouring the Board's commitment to the diversity of the PDSB community.

The 2023-2024 Days of Significance Calendar was referenced in all meeting scheduling. The calendar view of the meeting schedule, attached as Appendix 2, was reviewed by the Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement and Community Relations department to ensure alignment.

The Board Discipline Committee meetings will be scheduled once per week to ensure that appropriate due process is available to all students. Meetings will be cancelled if not required.

A list of the meeting dates organized by meeting type is attached as Appendix 1. A calendar view organized by month is attached as Appendix 2. A one-page Meetings-at-a-Glance calendar for the entire school year is attached as Appendix 3.

Impact Analysis

Equity & Human Rights Review:

- The schedules of 2023-2024 meetings were prepared recognizing the importance of honouring our commitment to the diversity of the PDSB community;
- The 2023-2024 Days of Significance Calendar was referenced in all meeting scheduling;
- The calendar view of the meeting schedule, attached as Appendix 2, was reviewed by the Equity, Indigenous Education, School Engagement & Community Relations department to ensure alignment.

Board or Ministry Policy Alignment:

- *The Education Act, 1997*
- Ontario Regulations 374/10, 361/10, 472/07, 612/00, 464/97
- PDSB Procedure By-law
- Committee Terms of Reference

Community Impact:

- Timely notice of meeting schedules.

Next Steps

Action Required:

All open session meeting schedules will be posted on the Peel District School Board website, as well as internal staff calendars on the intranet.

Communications:

All open session meeting agendas will be posted on the Peel District School Board website in accordance with the notice period specified in the PDSB Procedure By-law.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Meeting Schedule Lists

Appendix 2 – Meeting Schedule - Calendar View

Appendix 3 – Meetings-at-a-Glance 2023-2024

Board Meeting Schedule: 2023-2024 School Year

All Regular Board (BOARD) Meetings (Open Session) will begin at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays unless indicated otherwise.

2023

August 23, 2023
September 27, 2023
October 25, 2023
November 22, 2023 – Organizational Meeting
November 29, 2023
December 13, 2023

2024

January 31, 2024
February 28, 2024
March 27, 2024
April 17, 2024
May 22, 2024
June 26, 2024

Trustee Learning Sessions: 2023-2024 School Year

All Trustee Learning Session (TLS) closed meeting workshops will begin at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays unless otherwise noted.

2023

September 20
October 18
November 15

2024

January 16 (Tuesday)
February 21
May 15

Audit Committee Meeting Schedule: 2023-2024 **School Year**

All Audit Committee (AC) Meetings (Open Session) will begin at 3 p.m. on Thursdays unless indicated otherwise.

2023

September 14

November 15 (Wednesday)

2024

April 4

June 6

Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee Meeting Schedule: 2023-2024 School Year

All Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee (CES) Meetings will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesdays unless indicated otherwise.

2023

October 3
December 5

2024

February 13
May 14

Discipline Committee Meeting Schedule: 2023-2024 **School Year**

All Discipline Committee (DC) Meetings are held in Closed Session and will be scheduled once per week on Mondays at 3 p.m. to ensure that appropriate due process is available to all students. Meetings will be cancelled if not required.

2023

September 5 (Tuesday)
September 11
September 20 (Wednesday)
September 26 (Tuesday)
October 2
October 10 (Tuesday)
October 16
October 24 (Tuesday)
October 30
November 6
November 20
November 28 (Tuesday)
December 4
December 11

2024 (Continued)

June 3
June 10
June 17
June 24

2024

January 8
January 15
January 22
January 29
February 5
February 12
February 20 (Tuesday)
February 26
March 4
March 18
March 27 (Wednesday)
April 2 (Tuesday)
April 8
April 15
May 2 (Thursday)
May 7 (Tuesday)
May 13
May 21 (Tuesday)
May 27

* Due to legislated requirements, Discipline Committee meetings may be scheduled on red-dot days if absolutely necessary during the week of April 22, 2024.

Governance and Policy Committee Meeting Schedule: 2023-2024 School Year

All Governance and Policy Committee (GPC) Meetings will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays unless indicated otherwise.

2023

September 13

November 8

2024

January 24

March 6

May 8

June 19

Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee **Meeting Schedule: 2023-2024 School Year**

All Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee (PPFB) Meetings (Open Session) will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays unless indicated otherwise.

2023

September 7 (Thursday)

October 4

November 2 (Thursday)

December 6

2024

January 10

February 7

March 7 (Thursday)

April 3

May 9 (Thursday)

June 5

Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Schedule: **2023-2024 School Year**

All Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Meetings will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Thursdays unless indicated otherwise.

2023

September 12 (Tuesday)

October 19

November 23

December 7

2024

January 18

February 22

March 28

April 11

May 16

June 13

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting **Schedule: 2023-2024 School Year**

All Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays unless indicated otherwise.

2023

September 26

October 24

November 28

December 12

2024

January 30

February 27

March 18 (Monday)

April 18 (Thursday)

May 28

June 18

August 2023						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Civic Holiday (Canadian)	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 Navroze Eve (New Year) (SC)(Zoroastrianism)	16 Navroze (New Year) (SC) (Zoroastrianism)◦●	17	18	19
20 Khordad Sal Eve (SC) (Zoroastrianism)	21 Khordad Sal (SC) (Zoroastrianism)◦●	22	23 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting	24	25	26
27	28 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	29	30	31		

September 2023						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 Labour Day (Canada)	5 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	6 Sri Krishna Janmaashtami (Hinduism) ●	7 5:30 Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee	8	9
10	11 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	12 5:30 p.m. Parent Involvement Committee	13 5:30 p.m. Governance and Policy Committee	14 3:00 p.m. Audit Committee	15 Rosh Hashanah (Judaism)	16 Rosh Hashanah (Judaism) ○ ●
17 Rosh Hashanah (Judaism) ○ ●	18 Ganesh/Vinayak Chauth ●	19 Samvatsar/Paryushan Parva Ends/Daslakshan Parva Begins (Jainism) ●	20 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee 7:00 p.m. Trustee Learning Session - Closed	21	22 Harvestide/Fall Equinox Eve (Wicca)	23 Harvestide/Fall Equinox (Wicca) ○ ●
24 Yom Kippur (Judaism)	25 Yom Kippur (Judaism) ○ ●	26 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee 7:00 p.m. Special Education Advisory Committee	27 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting	28 Kshamavani/ Daslakshan Parva ends (Jainism) ●	29	30

October 2023						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	3 5:30 Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee	4 5:30 Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee	5	6	7 Simchat Torah ●
8	9 Thanksgiving (Canada)	10 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	11	12	13	14
15	16 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	17	18 7:00 p.m. Trustee Learning Session - Closed	19 5:30 p.m. Parent Involvement Committee	20	21
22	23 Vijaya Dashmi/Dassehra (Hinduism) ●	24 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee 7:00 p.m. Special Education Advisory Committee	25 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting	26	27	28
29	30 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	31 Halloween/Samhain Eve (Wicca)				

November 2023						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Halloween/Samhain (Wicca) ○ ●	2 5:30 Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee	3	4
5	6 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	7	8 5:30 p.m. Governance and Policy Committee	9	10	11 Remembrance Day (Canada)
12 Diwali (Hinduism) ●	13 Bandi Chhor Divas (Sikhism) ● New Year (Hinduism) ● Diwali/Lord Mahavir (Jainism) ●	14 New Year/Enlightenment day of Gautamswami (Jainism) ●	15 3:00 p.m. Audit Committee 7:00 p.m. Trustee Learning Session - Closed	16	17	18
19	20 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	21	22 7:00 p.m. Organizational Board Meeting	23 5:30 p.m. Parent Involvement Committee	24	25
26	27 Birth of Guru Nanak (R) (Sikhism) ●	28 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee 7:00 p.m. Special Education Advisory Committee	29 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting	30		

December 2023						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	5 5:30 Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee	6 5:30 Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee	7 5:30 p.m. Parent Involvement Committee	8	9
10	11 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	12 7:00 p.m. Special Education Advisory Committee	13 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Yule/Winter Solstice Eve (Wicca)	21 Yule/Winter Solstice Eve (Wicca) ●	22	23
24 Christmas Eve (Christianity)	25 Christmas (Christianity) ● W I N T	26	27 E R B	28 R E A	29 K	30
31						

January 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Year's Day ● W I	2 N T	3 E R B	4 R E	5 Birth of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikhism) ● A K	6
7 Christmas (J) (Christianity) ●	8 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	9	10 5:30 Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee	11	12	13
14 New Year's Day (J) (Christianity) ●	15 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	16 7:00 p.m. Trustee Learning Session - Closed	17 Birth of Guru Gobind Singh (R) (Sikhism) ●	18 5:30 p.m. Parent Involvement Committee	19	20
21	22 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	23	24 5:30 p.m. Governance and Policy Committee	25 OPSBA Public Education Symposium TBD	26 OPSBA Public Education Symposium TBD	27 OPSBA Public Education Symposium TBD
28	29 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	30 7:00 p.m. Special Education Advisory Committee	31 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting			

February 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	6	7 5:30 Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee	8	9	10 Lunar New Year/Maiotrey Bodhisattva's Birthday (Buddhism) ●
11	12 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	13 5:30 Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee	14	15 Sakyamuni Buddha's Nirvana Day (Buddhist) ●	16	17
18	19 Family Day (Canada)	20 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	21 7:00 p.m. Trustee Learning Session - Closed	22 5:30 p.m. Parent Involvement Committee	23	24
25	26 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	27 7:00 p.m. Special Education Advisory Committee	28 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting	29		

March 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	5	6 5:30 p.m. Governance and Policy Committee	7 5:30 Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee	8 Mahashivrati ●	9
10	S P R I N G			B R E A K		16
17	18 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee 7:00 p.m. Special Education Advisory Committee	19 Naw Ruz (New Year) (Bahá'í)	20 Navroze (New Year) Zoroastrianism Naw Ruz (New Year) (Bahá'í) ○ ●	21 Navroze (New Year) Zoroastrianism ○ ●	22	23
24	25 Khordad Sal (FC) (Zoroastrianism)	26 Khordad Sal (FC) (Zoroastrianism) ○ ●	27 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting	28 5:30 p.m. Parent Involvement Committee	29 Good Friday (Christianity) ●	30
31 Easter Sunday (Christianity)						

April 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Easter Monday (Christianity) ●	2 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	3 5:30 Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee	4 3:00 p.m. Audit Committee	5	6 Theravada New Year (Judaism) ●
7	8 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	9 New Year (Hinduism) ● Eid-ul-Fitr Eve (Islam) ●	10 Eid-ul-Fitr (Islam) ●	11 5:30 p.m. Parent Involvement Committee	12 Jalsa Salana (Islam) ●	13 Jalsa Salana (Islam) ● Vaisakhi (Sikhism) ●
14 Jalsa Salana (Islam) ●	15 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	16 Shri Ramnavami (Hinduism) ●	17 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting	18 7:00 p.m. Special Education Advisory Committee	19 First Day of Ridvan Eve (Bahá'i)	20 First Day of Ridvan (Bahá'i) ○ ●
21 Mahavir Janmakalyanak Birthday (Jainism) ●	22 Pesach Eve (Passover) (Judaism) ○ ●	23 Pesach (Passover) (Judaism) ●	24 Pesach (Passover) (Judaism) ●	25 Pesach (Passover) (Judaism) ●	26 Pesach (Passover) (Judaism) ●	27 Pesach (Passover) (Judaism) ●; Ninth Day of Ridvan Eve (Bahá'i) ○
28 Pesach (Passover) (Judaism) ●; Ninth Day of Ridvan (Bahá'i) ○	29 Pesach (Passover) (Judaism) ●	30 Twelfth Day of Ridvan Eve (Bahá'i)				

May 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Twelfth Day of Ridvan (Bahá'í) ○ ●	2 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	3 Good Friday (J) (Christianity) ●	4
5 Easter (J) (Christianity)	6 Easter Monday (J) (Christianity) ●	7 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	8 5:30 p.m. Governance and Policy Committee	9 5:30 Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee	10	11
12	13 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	14 5:30 Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee	15 7:00 p.m. Trustee Learning Session - Closed	16 5:30 p.m. Parent Involvement Committee	17	18
19	20 Victoria Day (Canada)	21 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	22 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting	23 Wesak/Buddha Day (Buddhism) ●	24	25
26	27 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	28 7:00 p.m. Special Education Advisory Committee	29	30	31	

June 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	4	5 5:30 Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee	6 3:00 p.m. Audit Committee	7	8
9	10 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	11 Shavuot (Judaism)	12 Shavuot (Judaism) ○●	13 5:30 p.m. Parent Involvement Committee	14	15
16 Eid-ul-Adha●	17 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	18 7:00 p.m. Special Education Advisory Committee	19 5:30 p.m. Governance and Policy Committee	20 Litha/Summer Solstice Eve (Wicca)	21 Litha/Summer Solstice (Wicca) ○● National Indigenous Peoples Day (Indigenous Worldview)●	22
23	24 3:00 p.m. Discipline Committee	25	26 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting	27	28	29
30						

2023-2024 Board and Committee Meeting Schedule



AUGUST				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23 BOARD	24	25
28 DC	29	30	31	

SEPTEMBER				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
				1
4	5 DC	6	7 PPFB	8
11 DC	12 PIC	13 GPC	14 AC	15
18	19	20 DC TLS	21	22
25	26 DC SEAC	27 BOARD	28	29

OCTOBER				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
2 DC	3 CES	4 PPFB	5	6
9	10 DC	11	12	13
16 DC	17	18 TLS	19 PIC	20
23	24 DC SEAC	25 BOARD	26	27
30 DC	31			

NOVEMBER				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1	2 PPFB	3
6 DC	7	8 GPC	9	10
13	14	15 AC TLS	16	17
20 DC	21	22	23 PIC	24
27	28 DC SEAC	29 BOARD	30	

DECEMBER				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
				1
4 DC	5 CES	6 PPFB	7 PIC	8
11 DC	12 SEAC	13 BOARD	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29
	WINTER BREAK			

JANUARY				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	2	3	4	5
	WINTER BREAK			
8 DC	9	10 PPFB	11	12
15 DC	16 TLS	17	18 PIC	19
22 DC	23	24 GPC	25	26
29 DC	30 SEAC	31 BOARD		

FEBRUARY				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
			1	2
5 DC	6	7 PPFB	8	9
12 DC	13 CES	14	15	16
19	20 DC	21 TLS	22 PIC	23
26 DC	27 SEAC	28 BOARD	29	

MARCH				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
				1
4 DC	5	6 GPC	7 PPFB	8
11	12	13	14	15
SPRING BREAK				
18 DC SEAC	19	20	21	22
25	26	27 DC BOARD	28 PIC	29

APRIL				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	2 DC	3 PPFB	4 AC	5
8 DC	9	10	11 PIC	12
15 DC	16	17	18 SEAC	19
22	23	24 BOARD	25	26
29	30			

MAY				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1	2 DC	3
6	7 DC	8 GPC	9 PPFB	10
13 DC	14 CES	15 TLS	16 PIC	17
20	21 DC	22 BOARD	23	24
27 DC	28 SEAC	29	30	31

JUNE				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
3 DC	4	5 PPFB	6 AC	7
10 DC	11	12	13 PIC	14
17 DC	18 SEAC	19 GPC	20	21
24 DC	25	26 BOARD	27	28

JULY				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

- BOARD - Meeting of the Board
- AC - Audit Committee
- BDC - Budget Development Committee
- CES - Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee
- DC - Discipline Committee
- GPC - Governance and Policy Committee
- PIC - Parent Involvement Committee
- PPFB - Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee

- SEAC - Special Education Advisory Committee
- STRAT - Trustee Strategic Planning
- TLS - Trustee Learning Session

- Cancelled Strikethrough denotes Cancelled meetings
- Yellow highlight denotes new meetings added
- Light blue shading denotes paid staff holidays
- Light green shading denotes student breaks

15.5

Board Meeting, Wednesday, June 14, 2023

Establishment of a Board and Committee Agenda Review Committee

Strategic Alignment:
The Education Act

Report Type:
Recommendation

<p><i>Prepared by:</i> Sabrina Valteau, Governance Coordinator Kathryn Lockyer, General Counsel and Governance Officer</p> <p><i>Submitted by:</i> Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education</p>

Overview

Recommendation:

To establish a Board and Committee Agenda Review Committee;
And further, to approve the Terms of Reference attached as Appendix 1.

Highlights:

- Establish a Board and Committee Agenda Review Committed to provide:
 - recommendations for Committee membership;
 - recommendations for agenda development;
 - recommendations for Board and Committee meeting schedules;
 - recommendations for correspondence received by the Board

Background:

Prior to Ministry supervision, the Chair of the Board met with the Director of Education to work together on Board Meeting agendas. The Legal and Governance Services department was formed in 2021. During supervision the agenda development was a collaborative effort between the Supervisor, the Director of Education, and the Governance Officer and now it is a collaborative effort between the Chair of the Board, the Director of Education and the Governance Officer. To ensure the input of the Chairs of the Board and Committees are included in the development of agendas, the establishment of a Board and Committee Agenda Review Committee and Terms of Reference is recommended.

Next Steps

Action Required:

To update the Procedure By-law, Governance Directives and/or Terms of Reference to include a Board and Committee Agenda Review Committee.

To establish a meeting schedule for the 2023-2024 school term.

Communications:

To publish the updated Governance Directive and/or Terms of Reference to the intranet and external web pages, as well as the Trustee Portal.

To communicate the meeting schedule and forward meeting invitations beginning in the Fall of 2023.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Board and Committee Agenda Review Committee Terms of Reference

THE PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Board and Committee Agenda Review Committee

Committee Classification:	Board Sub-Committee
Composition:	Board Chair and Vice-Chair, Curriculum, Equity and Student Well-Being Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, Governance and Policy Chair and Vice-Chair, Physical Planning, Finance and Building Committee Chair and Vice-Chair
Term:	Term to correspond with Term of position
Administrative Support:	Director of Education General Counsel and Governance Officer Legal and Governance Services Staff
Approval date:	
Resources:	<i>Education Act</i> Board Policy 51 – Human Rights Peel District School Board Procedure By-law

Terms of Reference

The Peel District School Board Procedure By-Law outlines the membership composition, operating rules and parliamentary procedure for the Board and Committee Agenda Review Committee.

If this Terms of Reference is found to be inconsistent with or contradict any legislation or regulation, the legislation or regulation will prevail.

Committee Mandate

- to recommend Board Committee and Statutory Committee memberships and Trustee memberships on Ad Hoc Trustee Committees and/or Advisory Committees for approval at the Board's annual Organizational Meeting;
- to recommend to the Board the process for filling any trustee vacancies which may occur on Board Committee and Statutory Committee memberships and Trustee memberships on Ad Hoc Trustee Committees and/or Advisory Committees in accordance with applicable legislation;

- to monitor and revise, with the Director of Education, the General Counsel & Governance Officer and Legal and Governance Services staff, the scheduling of Board and Committee meetings;
- to oversee the development of Board, Special Board, Organizational Meeting and Board Committee agendas, working with the Director of Education, General Counsel & Governance Officer and Legal and Governance Services staff;
- to schedule Trustee, Board or Committee matters of an emergency nature for discussion/deliberation or information;
- working with the Director of Education, General Counsel & Governance Officer and Legal and Governance Services staff to consider and schedule delegation requests in accordance with the Procedure By-law and/or Public Participation and Delegations Governance Directive;
- to receive and schedule for the Board's consideration any trustee request to be absent for more than three regular Board Meetings, in accordance with the requirements in the *Education Act* and/or Board Policy;
- to consider and recommend to the board the process that will be used for Trustee Determination and Distribution and related reports, in accordance with existing legislation;
- working with the Director of Education, General Counsel & Governance Officer and Legal and Governance Services staff to receive and action formal correspondence addressed to the Board of Trustees from other school boards, the Ministry of Education, official government representatives, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association or other recognized educational associations;
- working with the Director of Education, General Counsel & Governance Officer and Legal and Governance Services staff, to oversee the scheduling and delivery of Trustee Information Sessions and other professional learning opportunities for the Board of Trustees and Student Trustees;
- to receive, discuss and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the Board regarding OPSBA reports and position papers;
- to ensure the Committee's deliberations are undertaken with the intent to achieve the goals of equity, decolonization, inclusion, anti-racism, anti-oppression and accessibility and in compliance with its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code and related policies;
- to ensure that the Committee's work supports the goals in the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan and the Board's Mission, Vision and Values;
- to ensure that the Committee's work is supported by relevant Board policy, where applicable;
- to ensure that the Committee's work is conducted in an open and transparent manner (within the confidentiality provisions of the *Education Act*).

15.6

Board Meeting, June 14, 2023

Recommended Candidate for Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Vacant Member Seat

Strategic Alignment:
Ministry Directive #14

Report Type:
Recommendation

<i>Prepared by:</i>	Jennifer Newby, Superintendent Special Education, Social Emotional Learning & Well-Being Paul da Silva, Associate Director, School Improvement & Equity, Special Education, Social Emotional Learning & Well-Being
<i>Submitted by:</i>	Rashmi Swarup, Director of Education

Overview

Recommendation:

That ***Abilities to Work*** be appointed by the Board of Trustees to fill the member organization vacancy on the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

Highlights:

- SEAC is a statutory committee of the Board, providing advice about special education programs and services available to PDSB students.
- In the spring of 2022, one of the 12 committee member seats became vacant and a call out for a new member organization was issued in February of 2023.
- That vacant position was presented to trustees at the April Board meeting and filled. Simultaneously, another position became vacant and in consultation with Peel Governance Office, it was determined that the next new member organization could come from the same call out.
- ***Abilities to Work*** is the recommended candidate for inclusion on the Peel District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee as a qualified member.
- ***Abilities to Work*** supports youth (15 years and above) and adults with disabilities to navigate the job market and find work or engage in entrepreneurship and experience success in opening and running their own business.

Background:

SEAC is a statutory committee of the Board, providing advice about special education programs and services available to PDSB students. It provides an opportunity to engage with the community organizations that work in collaboration with the Board, bringing forward an essential perspective on a variety of matters pertaining to the delivery of Special Education Services. SEAC representative organizations may also serve as a voice for parents, providing an additional route for communication and collaboration within the PDSB education community.

The committee includes up to 12 members from qualified organizations or associations. In the spring of 2022, one of the 12 committee member seats became vacant and a call out for a new member organization was issued in February of 2023.

The call out was shared on the Board website and social media sites and was active for 4 weeks.

Evidence

Findings/Key Considerations:

Submissions were evaluated based on the requirements communicated in the call out including:

- A non-profit organization
- Operating throughout Ontario
- Furthering the interests and well-being of one or more groups of exceptional children or adults
- Not representing professional educators

Submissions were also evaluated based on alignment with strategic priorities within the Board and within the Special Education and Social Emotional Learning department.

Peel District School Board is committed to maintaining and enhancing community partnerships that support all students. The Special Education department has over the years employed a transitions facilitator to support students in all major educational transitions, particularly entry to board and post 21 years transitions to the world of work. Transitions facilitators face increasing caseloads and would benefit from an organization such as **Abilities to Work** who can partner and provide additional recommendations and resources to ensure the greatest possible access to meaningful employment for persons with disabilities.

Impact Analysis

Equity and Human Rights

As stated in Policy 51 - Human Rights “PDSB is committed to providing an inclusive learning and working environment that is free from discrimination contrary to the Ontario Human Rights Code (the “Code”) through appropriate responses to discrimination and proactive steps to actively encourage and foster a culture of respect, dignity, and inherent worth for all people and communities and PDSB and around the world.”

Inclusion of **Abilities to Work** on Peel SEAC is a proactive step towards fostering a culture of respect and dignity for students with disabilities within the education system.

Abilities to Work is based in Mississauga and has close connections with local employers as well as local government, community organizations, healthcare providers and other employment services. They, like the Board, are committed to implementing accommodations to minimize barriers related to disabilities.

Board or Ministry Policy Alignment

This recommendation aligns with the following Ministry and Board Policies:
Ontario Education Act Regulation 464/97 Special Education Advisory Committee
Policy 54: Equity and Inclusive Education

Resource/Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

Legal Implications/ Risk Assessment

There are no legal implications or risks associated with this recommendation.

Community Impact:

Post pandemic the community of parents of children with disabilities has continued to raise concerns about the transition to the world of work given the change in structure in educational settings for two years. It is essential that planning for transitions to the world of work begin as early as possible so that parents are aware of various pathway options, grants and other funding sources as well as building networks in advance of the transition from a Peel Secondary School. Given the mandate of **Abilities to Work**, they can provide SEAC and the Special Education department with some added tools for assisting students in getting to the next growth experience that will contribute to their career journey.

Next Steps

Action Required:

Should the recommended candidate be confirmed, they will be contacted via phone, email, or paper correspondence and invited to attend upcoming SEAC meetings as a qualified member.

Communications:

There will be communication with the SEAC chair and existing committee members to inform them of the new organization. The new organization will also be listed in the updated SEAC brochure to be distributed to the system and added to all SEAC related correspondence.

References:

Ministry of Education Review of the Peel District School Board

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Special Education Advisory Association List

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY ASSOCIATION LIST
2022-2026**

Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter

Autism Ontario Peel Chapter

Brampton Caledon Community Living

Down Syndrome Association of Peel

Easter Seals Ontario

FASworld Canada – Peel Chapter

Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada

Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region

OPVIC – Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Ch Children

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children
