
STRATEGIC PLAN TO DISMANTLE ANTI-BLACK RACISM

2021-2023

**“...let us love, not in word or speech, but
in truth and action.”**

1 John 3:18

Believe

Excel

Respect

Thrive

Trust

STRATEGIC PLAN TO DISMANTLE ANTI-BLACK RACISM



Dismantling Anti-Black racism and improving outcomes for Black students, staff and community members

*"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."
Amos 5:24*

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The Strategic Plan to Dismantle Anti-Black Racism (SPDABR) is a reflection of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) Catholic Board Improvement Learning Cycle (CBILC), Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), and Ministry of Education directives. The SPDABR seeks to nurture an understanding of hope, to value and affirm the lived experiences of Black students, families, and communities, and to reject the sin of racism. As educators we are entrusted to care for the students that enter our educational spaces. It is our responsibility and moral obligation to create and sustain affirming spaces that ensure success for all students. Pastoral Care in Catholic schools calls all staff members to create an environment of responsive Pastoral Care for Black students and their families. All staff members must work together to create and promote a school environment that reflects the reality of the Church as a community that nurtures human dignity and is dedicated to both spiritual and human development for all. DPCDSB employees must be united in a mission of compassion, solidarity, and love for one another and to commemorate the values of racial and social justice and harmony encompassed by the mission of Christ and envisioned by our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

DPCDSB recognizes the existence of anti-Black racism within educational institutions and is committed to addressing and eliminating it. The creation of a SPDABR is a response to the evidence of incidents of anti-Black racism present within our educational spaces. This plan will lead and support DPCDSB in working collectively to address anti-Black racism and fulfill our vocational call as Catholics to condemn the sin of racism by: honouring the human dignity of every student; ensuring that all are welcomed, included, and valued; and above all by improving educational outcomes for Black students. As this plan is dynamic and responsive, it will be subject to ongoing revision to hold all stakeholders within DPCDSB accountable. This commitment to accountability will ensure that all voices continue to be reflected in this document.

As a system, DPCDSB knows that equity and inclusion are valuable contributors to overall student success and, as a faith-filled community, we are committed to ensuring that all students are engaged and included in every aspect of school life. DPCDSB seeks to uphold the human dignity of all, as we are all created in the image and likeness of God. In a June 5th, 2020, statement, Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto, emphasized the reality of racism in our society. His Eminence stated that "Racism knows no boundaries and it remains a present-day challenge that must not be ignored."

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Mission: Disciples of Christ, nurturing mind, body, and soul to the fullness of life.

Vision: Changing the world through Catholic education.

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In an effort to address and eliminate anti-Black racism within educational structures, this strategic plan will support the achievement and well-being of Black students. According to the Anti-Racism Directorate of the Ontario Ministry of Education, “an anti-racism approach acknowledges that systemic racism exists and actively confronts the unequal power dynamic between groups and the structures that sustain it.” The SPDABR will provide opportunities and guidance for members of the DPCDSB community to collectively come together to address racism in all its forms. This strategic plan seeks to value and affirm the needs, lived experiences, voices, and concerns of Black students, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff members, and community organizations regarding anti-Black racism.

DPCDSB will uphold the commitments and implementation of the actions stated in this plan so that all Black students who enter our educational spaces can encounter an education free from oppression and discrimination and that enables them to thrive and excel.

“The fight against racism requires a personal change of heart. What is needed is a genuine interior conversion – the long road of conversion that will compel personal change and systemic social reform.”

Archbishop Michael Miller, Archbishop of Vancouver, 2020

Creation and development of the SPDABR

The writing team that developed the SPDABR strived to incorporate an intersectional approach in its practices. This process included a diversity of people, voices, and ideas, with representation from relevant sectors. The development of this plan was a coordinated effort of varying stakeholders and members of the Black Community Advisory Council (BCAC) and wider community inclusive of Parents/Guardians/Caregivers, students, educators, members within the department of Equitable and Inclusive Education, and input from Dr. Carl James.

The implementation of the action items outlined within the SPDABR serves to benefit the success of not only Black students, but all students. There must be a whole community approach to ensuring and achieving success. Educating white students about race and racism is just as important as it is for Black students. All educators, students, and parents/guardians/caregivers within DPCDSB need to be informed of this plan and, as such, the plan and its action items must be disseminated system wide.

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Important Concepts

Having a foundational understanding of racism and its nuances is integral in dismantling oppression in all its forms. Below are definitions of important concepts to set context and to support an understanding of racism and how it operates within educational systems.

Race:

Race is a term used to classify people into groups based principally on physical traits (phenotypes) such as skin colour. Racial categories are not based on science or biology but on differences that society has created (i.e., “socially constructed”), with significant consequences for people’s lives. Racial categories may vary over time and place, and can overlap with ethnic, cultural, or religious groupings (Anti-Racism Directorate, 2017).

Racism:

Racism includes ideas or practices that establish, maintain, or perpetuate the racial superiority or dominance of one group over another (Anti-Racism Directorate, 2017).

Anti-Black Racism

Anti-Black racism is the ideology and beliefs upon which attitudes, biases, and prejudices are based and which result in stereotyping and discrimination that are directed at people of African descent. It is rooted in Black people’s unique history and experiences of enslavement and colonization. Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions through their policies, rules, and practices. Such deep entrenchment often makes anti-Black racism appear normal or invisible to members of the white society – especially white people (City of Toronto, n.d.).

Systemic Racism:

Systemic racism keeps in place the social construction of racialized groups, their location on the hierarchical structure, their differentiated life conditions due to inequitable opportunities, and the norms, values, expectations, and ethics (i.e., the culture of whiteness) on which the society is structured. Systemic racism consists of three interrelated levels of racism: societal, institutional, and individual. All three levels of racism operate in interlocking, reciprocal, and relational ways; hence the operation or the consequence of one cannot be fully understood without attention to the others (James, 2010).

Important Concepts (Continued)

Societal Racism:

Societal racism is largely related to the laws, legislations, and policies of the State, which in turn structure the norms, morals, customs, and traditions (i.e., the all-pervasive culture) which produce, regulate, and normalize hierarchies, privileges, and marginalization of members of society based on race – hence, the racialization or oppression of racialized people (James, 2010).

Institutional Racism:

Institutional racism is usually consistent with the culture of society. Institutions or agencies enact policies, regulations, and rules that shape their cultures, and which produce differential practices and treatments of individuals (i.e., discrimination) based on race – resulting in the disadvantages experienced by racialized people (James, 2010).

Individual Racism:

Individual racism encompasses the ideology, ideas, perceptions, and attitudes that individuals have of others based on race, and which lead to racialization, marginalization, and discriminatory practices or behaviours toward racialized people. Note that discrimination is the action resulting from racism. This level of racism is in relation to and is sustained by the institutional and societal racism into which individuals are socialized. (James, 2010).

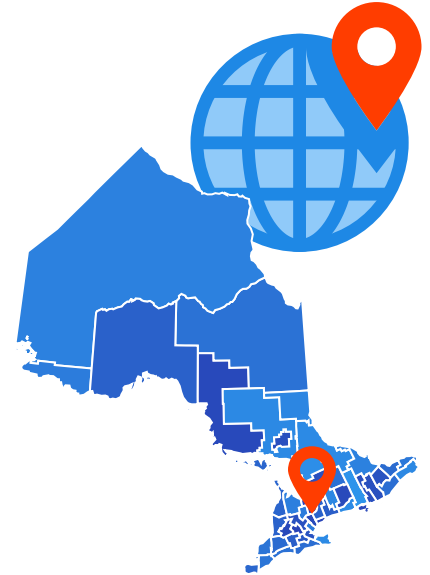
“We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.”

Pope Francis, 2020

Important Concepts (Continued)

Black Communities:

According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), when referring to people who are African descended, we use the terms “Black,” “African Canadian”, and “people of African descent.” As outlined in The Ontario College of Teachers’ Professional Advisory on Anti-Black Racism: “Black people and communities are not a monolithic group and come from diverse cultures, nationalities and have varying religions and customs”...[The term] Black will be used to describe racialized people who self-identify as Black and/or are of African descent” (Ontario College of Teachers, n.d.).



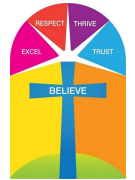
Intersectionality:

A term coined and developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality acknowledges:

“...the ways in which people’s lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group, for example, by creating additional barriers or opportunities. In the context of race...this means recognizing the ways in which people’s experiences of racism or privilege, including within any one racialized group, may differ and vary depending on the individual’s or group’s additional overlapping (or “intersecting”) social identities, like religion, ethnic origin, gender, age, disabilities or citizenship and immigration status” (Ontario Government, n.d.-a.).

In addition to the examples of intersecting social identities above, intersectionality also includes Indigenous identification, experiences with colonialism, socio-economic status, or sexual orientation. An intersectional analysis enables better understanding of the impacts of any one particular systemic barrier by considering how that barrier may be interacting with other related factors.

Key Components of the DPCDSB SPDABR



Areas of Focus

1. Creation of the Strategic Plan to Dismantle Anti-Black Racism
2. Accountability and Monitoring of the Strategic Plan to Dismantle Anti-Black Racism
3. Dedicated Staffing Plan to Dismantle Anti-Black Racism
4. Black Community Advisory Council
5. Centring and Enabling Black Student Voice
6. Mandatory Anti-Racism Professional Development with a focus on Addressing Anti-Black Racism in Education
7. Review of Curriculum Resources and Pedagogical Approaches
8. Review of Human Resource Practices
9. Review of School Resource Officer Program

1. Creation of the Strategic Plan to Dismantle Anti-Black Racism

1.1 Review of research and data regarding anti-Black racism in education and specifically within the DPCDSB community.

- Continue to review potential gaps and areas for anti-racism support.
 - Conduct an analysis of existing DPCDSB data sets that include disaggregated, race-based data. Data include both qualitative and quantitative information that identify gaps and areas of need.
 - Continue to expand on review of climate surveys, distance-learning surveys, and employee wellness surveys to determine and address achievement and opportunity gaps.
 - Continue and expand research by staff from the Equity, Policy, Strategy, Research Department to conduct focus groups with Black students, Black parents and guardians, and Black employees. Focus groups will seek to centre and capture the experiences of Black communities in DPCDSB. To remain flexible and responsive to needs, key informant interviews and/or surveys may be included where necessary.
 - Continue to collect and analyze identity-based data gathered via the DPCDSB Student Census and DPCDSB Staff Census.
 - Continue to collect and review data regarding suspensions, graduation and dropout rates, and enrollment in courses by stream or program level, with the implementation of a plan to address inequities identified.
 - Continue to review disciplinary actions regarding Black students.
 - Develop and communicate clear direction regarding the process to report anti-Black racism incidents and/or experiences.
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1.2 Creation, review, and implementation of the Strategic Plan to dismantle anti-Black racism.

- Conduct an interdepartmental review and develop a strategy to address achievement and opportunity gaps identified through the data collection.
- Continue to develop a DPCDSB strategic plan to address the disproportionality and disparities experienced by Black students. The plan will focus on dismantling Anti-Black Racism and include clear indicators that support the DPCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) 2019-2023 and the annual operational plan, the Catholic Board Improvement Learning Cycle (CBILC).
- Continue development and review of the Strategic Plan to Dismantle Anti-Black Racism (SPDABR) with Executive Council and the Black Advisory Council.
- Communicate system-wide the SPDABR when consultation is completed.

2. Accountability and Monitoring of the Strategic Plan to Dismantle Anti-Black Racism

2.1 Commitment by DPCDSB system and school leadership to dismantle anti-Black racism.

- Continue to inform senior leadership on all racial inequities and acts of anti-Black racism within DPCDSB, and use the information to guide and create practices and policies that will focus on the dismantling of anti-Black racism within their roles and specific areas.
 - Require system and school leadership to embed anti-racism and anti-oppression practices into the Catholic Board Improvement Learning Cycle (CBILC), Catholic School Improvement Learning Cycles (CSILCs), policies, procedures, and other system plans and strategies.
 - Ensure system and school leadership promote the SPDABR and use the plan to inform staffing compositions in departments, schools, and communities in which they lead. This work will include transparency into how to implement this plan at a department and school level.
 - Support system and school leadership to address barriers to collecting and sharing information regarding oppression and incidents of anti-Black racism with school and system staff.
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2.2 Establishment and communication of measurable key performance indicators that will indicate SPDABR progress.

- Implement the DPCDSB SPDABR, including a review of key performance indicators that will support the CBILC goals related to dismantling anti-Black racism in DPCDSB:
 - Elimination of disparity and disproportionality, where experienced, by Black students in terms of achievement, well-being, sense of belonging, programming, credit accumulation, and discipline.
 - Increased positive outcomes for Black students in terms of achievement, well-being, sense of belonging, programming, credit accumulation, and discipline.
 - Increased proportion of DPCDSB staff completing mandatory professional learning to dismantle anti-Black racism, impacts of colonialism, and other oppressions.
 - Increased representation of Black excellence in curriculum resources and supports.
 - Implement the DPCDSB SPDABR, including a review of key performance indicators that will support the CBILC goals related to dismantling anti-Black racism in DPCDSB:
 - Ensure administrators deliver clear and transparent communication to appropriate school councils, community groups and stakeholders regarding DPCDSB's SPDABR and measurable outcomes.
 - Undertake ongoing data collection (e.g., including identity-based data in DPCDSB surveys), and review and revise the SPDABR as needed.
 - Report publicly, at the end of the 3-year period, on activities implemented and outcomes for Black students.
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2.3 Development of school-level action plans to support SPDABR progress.

- Develop school-level actions that address racism and specifically anti-Black racism with an intersectional approach. Individual schools will be encouraged to examine results from the DPCDSB Student Census and other DPCDSB student surveys, and to collect other qualitative information from parents/guardians and students on a regular basis. Schools and families of schools will also assess effectiveness of strategies implemented to address racism and specifically anti-Black racism.
- Require action plans at the school level to address disparities. Schools will develop these action plans with the input of the Black community, from inception through implementation and evaluation, and make them publicly available.
- Superintendents will support principals in the creation/review of action plans to ensure that they respond to the SPDABR and census data results.

2.4 Establishment of an accountability framework governing internal and public reporting of SPDABR progress.

- Develop and communicate accountability reporting timelines that include, at minimum, bi-annual public reporting of progress.

2.5 Review and revision of protocols to address incidents of anti-Black racism to ensure that DPCDSB learning and working environments are free from anti-Black racism.

- Ensure that all DPCDSB staff (1) understand what anti-Black racism looks like and that incidents of anti-Black racism violate the Ontario Human Rights Code, the OHSA and DPCDSB's Catholic Code of Conduct, and (2) are required to take appropriate action.
 - Ensure that parents and guardians, students, and staff have accessible and transparent methods to report and address incidents of anti-Black racism.
 - Establish clear guidelines and protocols of how to respond to incidents of anti-Black racism.
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3. Dedicated Staffing Plan to Dismantle Anti-Black Racism

3.1 Creation of a dedicated, staffed team that will work to dismantle anti-Black racism within DPCDSB.

- Continue to establish a dedicated team to provide elementary, secondary, and system supports. This team includes but is not limited to the following personnel:
 - (1) Superintendent – Equity, Policy, Strategy, Research;
 - (1) Principal of Equitable and Inclusive Education;
 - (1) Coordinator of Equity with a focus on Anti-Racism Education;
 - (1) Consultant of Equity with a focus on Anti-Racism Education;
 - (3) Graduation Coach for Black Students;
 - (1) Researcher with a focus on identity-based data collection and experience in anti-racism research.
- Dedicate a budget and required resources for success to support the work of this anti-racism team.
- Continue to inform system of specific staffing roles and programming that provide direct supports to Black students (e.g., Graduation Coach for Black students)



4. Black Community Advisory Council

4.1 On-going support of the Black Community Advisory Council consisting of staff, parents and guardians, community members, and students who will work with system leaders to provide input and consultation to dismantle anti-Black racism.

- Ensure the Black Community Advisory Council has opportunities and space to uplift the voice of Black parents and guardians, Black students, and the Black community about issues of concern to them. The Black Community Advisory Council consists of:
 - community representatives from various organizations and agencies;
 - student representatives from the secondary panel;
 - parents/guardians with students registered at DPCDSB schools;
 - teachers and administrators in the secondary and elementary panels;
 - appropriate central office staff.
- Ensure the Black Community Advisory Council is supported to do the following:
 - participate in the creation and review of the SPDABR;
 - make recommendations to DPCDSB and provide strategies to address and eliminate anti-Black racism;
 - identify and examine potential gaps experienced by Black students;
 - review initiatives that support anti-racism within the system;
 - create strategies and advise system direction that will support the success of Black students and staff;
 - advocate for resources and initiatives to combat anti-Black racism;
 - provide consultation for decision making;
 - liaise and connect with other school and system based advisory councils.

5. Centring and Enabling Black Student Voice

5.1 Establishment of opportunities for Black students to contribute and provide feedback about their learning regarding all aspects of school life.

- Create safe and affirming spaces at the system and school level where Black students can thrive and share their lived experiences, contribute insights, and propose solutions to influence the establishment of tangible actions to dismantle anti-Black racism.
- Ensure students and families are aware of and have access to mental health and well-being supports specific to the Black community.
- Provide opportunities to gather input from Black students regarding culturally relevant curriculum, programming supports, and a variety of school initiatives that centre the joy, resiliency, empowerment, and successes of Black communities over the narrative of oppression.

5.2 Refinement and promotion of policies and procedures in place for reporting incidents of anti-Black racism.

- Revise, update, and communicate annually the protocols for students to report incidents of anti-Black racism.

"Black students are as capable, as competent, as creative, and as determined as all other students. The ways that Black students are constantly misjudged and mistreated by teachers and guidance counsellors is an injustice to our community. As educators who seek to enrich an increasingly diverse nation, it is your duty and responsibility to encourage, motivate, challenge and strengthen Black students like all others. When you begin to see Black students as part of your community, only then will you effectively fulfill your job as an educator."

Black Student

James and Turner (2017). *Towards Race Equity in Education: The Schooling of Black Students in the Greater Toronto Area.*

6. Mandatory Anti-Racism Professional Development with a Focus on Dismantling Anti-Black Racism in Education

6.1 Development and implementation of mandatory anti-racism professional development for Trustees, senior management, and administrators.

- Continue to provide ongoing professional development sessions for all Trustees, senior leadership, and school administrators. Mandatory learning opportunities will include a collaborative approach with the anti-racism team, organizations, and experts in the field of anti-racism education. Topics will include, but are not limited to, anti-racism, Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy, Catholic Social Teachings, anti-oppression, anti-colonialism, and critical race theory, each with a specific focus on anti-Black racism.
- Build capacity with system leaders on how to effectively engage staff in the rationale and purpose of the SPDABR to enact critical transformation in schools.
- Require leadership to promote, uphold, support, and build capacity surrounding professional development opportunities that address anti-Black racism for their staffing compositions in departments, schools, and communities in which they lead.

6.2 Development and implementation of mandatory anti-racism professional development for teachers and support staff.

- Continue to provide mandatory ongoing professional development sessions for all teachers and support staff within DPCDSB. This required learning opportunity will include a collaborative approach with the anti-racism team, organizations, and experts in the field of anti-racism education. Topics will include, but are not limited to, anti-racism, Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy, Catholic Social Teachings, anti-oppression, anti-colonialism, and critical race theory, each with a specific focus on anti-Black racism.
 - Provide coaches and leads of extra curricular activities professional development opportunities on addressing anti-Black racism and dismantling stereotypes that limit student participation and access to sports teams and clubs.
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6.3 Implementation, on an on-going basis, of a departmental review of professional development and supports.

- Continue to provide up to date professional learning and supports to ensure specific needs and to address anti-Black racism experiences.

6.4 Planning and implementation, in each Family of Schools, of specific programming to support concerns addressed in focus groups, surveys, and/or forums.

- Use the DPCDSB Student Census and DPCDSB Staff Census datasets in individual schools and families of schools to support and curate specific programming to address needs.

7. Review of Curriculum Resources and Pedagogical Approaches

7.1 Review of curriculum resource materials and pedagogical approaches that are relevant and responsive, in both secondary and elementary grades, to identify and address racist or systemic practices and/or resources that may exist within programming.

- Continue to focus on the inclusion of content designed to allow Black students to see affirming and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogical depictions of themselves reflected in curriculum. There shall also be a commitment to undertaking an annual review of curriculum, assessment, resources, and programs.
 - Focus on determining potential gaps and/or barriers surrounding racism and, specifically, anti-Black racism that may be present in program areas.
 - Implement anti-racist pedagogical supports and practices to address the existence of anti-Black racism and white supremacy within the delivery of the curriculum.
 - Operationalize practices to center Black voices from Black educators, support staff, administrators, and system leaders in the creation, development, and implementation of curriculum supports.
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7.2 Sharing and promotion of the use of specific strategies for supporting anti-racism practices and Black student success.

- Determine areas of focus and address and support these areas for anti-racist practices.

8. Review of Human Resources Practices

8.1 Implementation of a system-wide review of Human Resources' practices for hiring, retention, and promotion that addresses racism, anti-Black racism, and other forms of systemic barriers.

- Examine specifically, among other activities of the system review, the supports in place for Black staff who are seeking leadership roles.
- Provide, inform, and support Black staff in accessing responsive and on-going mentoring opportunities.
- Support mentoring opportunities for Black staff seeking leadership roles in DPCDSB.
- Commit to expansion of staff roles providing direct support to Black students (e.g., Graduation Coach for Black students).

8.2 Explicit incorporation of equity and anti-racism competencies in job descriptions and hiring and promotion criteria.

- Prioritize anti-racism practices and competencies in job descriptions, hiring and promotion criteria, and performance appraisals for all educators, school administrators, and school and system staff.
 - Ensure that, in the hiring process, candidates are specifically asked to demonstrate the following:
 - address issues of education equity, racism, and oppression;
 - demonstrate their commitment to education equity;
 - articulate plans to address the identified issues in their new role.
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8.3 Collection of identity-based data of teaching and administrative staff.

- Continue to support practices that normalize and maximize the collection of identity-based data from DPCDSB staff.
- Use results of identity-based data collection from staff to address potential gaps in representation and barriers to hiring, and to inform hiring practices.

9. Review of School Resource Officer Program

9.1 Active participation by DPCDSB staff and trustees in the Peel Regional Police School Resource Officer (SRO) Program Review.

- Ensure that DPCDSB representative(s) address(es) DPCDSB concerns related to racism and anti-Black racism within the program.
- Ensure DPCDSB representative(s) commit(s) to sharing, when the SRO Program Review is completed, details of this review with the Black Community Advisory Council. Future decisions surrounding the SRO Program will include consultation with multiple stakeholders within DPCDSB, including the Black Community Advisory Council.

"There must be a conscious and intentional effort to dismantle anti-Black racism to shift ideology and practice"

**Building Black Voices: A Guide to Creating a Black Voices
Lab for Secondary Schools**

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