

DATE: September 22, 2020

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Trisha Estabrooks

SUBJECT: Motion re: Edmonton Public Schools Model for the Collection of Race-Based Data

RESOURCE STAFF: Karen Mills

REFERENCE: [Trustees' Handbook – Section 5.2.2 – Notices of Motion](#)

ISSUE

The collection of race-based data is a practice that can help address racism and racial discrimination. Notice of motion was served during the September 8, 2020, Board meeting and was served by Board Chair Estabrooks on behalf of the entire Board of Trustees. On June 4, 2020, the Board of Trustees [released a statement](#) acknowledging that racism and discrimination exist in our Division and that we have work to do to address this. This motion is one way to show our commitment to this statement.

BACKGROUND

Research shows that Black, Indigenous and people of colour experience and are harmed by systemic racism. ([Rhonda C. George, Reana Maier & Karen Robson \(2020\) Ignoring race: a comparative analysis of education policy in British Columbia and Ontario, Race Ethnicity and Education](#)) We know that systemic and overt racism exist within education systems. If we are serious about addressing the problem of systemic racism and its effects within Edmonton Public Schools and on our students then we must first collect data that shows the race of the students we serve and the outcomes that these students experience. Currently, the lack of race-based data is making it difficult to measure educational inequalities and to identify inequities that exist because of racism and discrimination.

Researchers, those advocating for better outcomes for Black, Indigenous and racialized students and anti-poverty advocates have been calling for the collection of race-based data in schools for many years.

“To begin to address racism and undertake effective anti-racist work, we must understand all of the ways in which racism is expressed within our systems. Race-based data collection is therefore the necessary first step in doing anti-racism work and building anti-racist policies. We congratulate the EPSB for taking this critical first step.” - Erick Ambtman, Executive Director, EndPoverty Edmonton

If approved, Edmonton Public Schools could be the first school jurisdiction in Alberta to collect race-based data. Ideally, however, race-based data would be collected by school jurisdictions across Alberta to inform practice and policy decisions at the provincial level. [The practice has been in place in Ontario for many years](#) beginning in 2006, after two years of consultation, when the Toronto District School Board began collecting race-based data.

“In November of 2006, after two years of consultation, planning and preparation, the TDSB implemented its first Student Census for all students in Grades 7-12. In the following school year, the

first Parent Census was conducted for the Kindergarten - Grade 6 population in all TDSB elementary schools. Both of these first system-wide surveys achieved very high return rates: 84% for the 2006 Student Census, and 68% for the 2008 Parent Census. Both yielded important demographic data about the population served by the school board as well as valuable information about the needs and opportunity gaps of the students in relation to their experiences in and outside of school. The results and findings of this first Student and Parent Census have been leveraged both within and outside the school board for improvement planning, programming, policy making, resource allocation, as well as solicitation of funding and resources for high needs school communities.”

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/research/docs/reports/2011-12CensusTechRpt.pdf>

The collection of race-based data requires thoughtful and meaningful conversations with communities in Edmonton impacted by racism. The intention in collecting this data is to provide a measure of accountability, and if the work is to be meaningful, it must be done in collaboration with community, in order to respect any concerns about student and family privacy and the use of the data.

If the Board, working with our administration, is committed to change and to finding ways to address the gaps that exist in education for racialized communities then we must begin the process of measuring where the gaps are. We expect that meaningful use of data will lead to policy and planning change which will lead to greater equity within our school division for racialized students.

RELATED FACTS

- Race-based data collection is one step towards addressing systemic racism and racism in our schools.
- The lack of race-based data is making it difficult to measure educational inequalities and to identify inequities that exist because of racism and discrimination.
- Data can improve policy and planning and lead to greater equity for students.
- This work will take time and requires meaningful consultation with community and those impacted by racism.

RECOMMENDATION

Given that collecting race based data is one necessary step in working to dismantle systemic racism and racial discrimination, the Edmonton Public School Board formally requests that Administration develop a model for the collection of race-based data in our Division, in consultation with communities in Edmonton impacted by racism.

OPTIONS

1. Approve the recommendations.
2. Provide feedback and request changes to the recommendation for approval.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

The Board of Trustees recognizes that the development of a model to collect race-based data is complex and requires consideration of many factors. We recognize that this process will take time and want to ensure that Administration take the time that is required to develop a model that respects the wishes of community members impacted by racism and also ensures the right data is being collected. The process to collect data must also protect personal privacy.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of this recommendation, Administration will take the time necessary to develop a comprehensive model, working with communities affected by racism, for the collection of race-based data and bring it back to the Board for approval.

The Board Chair will also send a letter to the Minister of Education asking for the implementation of the collection of race-based data by schools provincially.

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