

2021–22

Anti-racism and Equity Action Plan

November 5, 2021



EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Message from the Superintendent

Edmonton Public Schools is the largest school division within Treaty 6 Territory and the traditional Métis homeland of region 4. We honour and thank the diverse Indigenous Peoples for taking care of the land we call home. It is with gratitude and respect that we live in amiskwaciwâskahikan (Cree name for Edmonton), a historical meeting place and travelling route for the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene and Nakota Sioux.

Through the Division's cornerstone values of equity, collaboration, integrity and accountability, we have the responsibility to work together to hear, understand and make decisions that consider the voices of all peoples. This includes learning about our past and our history.

We have a responsibility to work together to support all students in their endeavour to live a life of dignity and fulfillment. Respectful interactions are at the core of who we are and our work to support the success of all people in our community for generations to come. Edmonton Public Schools is committed to working intentionally towards anti-racism and equity through continuous action, learning and improvement.

Education serves as the cornerstone of society and Edmonton Public Schools strives to be an organization where every staff member and student feels that they belong, are included and can succeed. Continued injustice towards Black, Indigenous and People of Colour and our growing awareness of tragedies in our colonial history have helped us further understand how racism continues to affect our city, province and country. We know that racism still exists in our school division and broader community.

With this acknowledgement comes a sense of urgency and a firm commitment to action. Our work in support of anti-racism and equity is both necessary and complex. We commit to carrying it out in a meaningful way as we listen and walk alongside students, staff, families and community partners.



Darrel Robertson
Superintendent of Schools
Edmonton Public Schools



Vision

Success, one student at a time

Mission

We inspire student success through high quality learning opportunities, supported by meaningfully engaged students, families, staff and community.

Values

Accountability, collaboration, equity and integrity

Priorities 2018–22

- 1** Foster growth and success for every student by supporting their journey from early learning through high school completion and beyond.
- 2** Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments.
- 3** Enhance public education through communication, engagement and partnerships.

Background

Foundational to our commitment to anti-racism and equity is Board Policy [HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity](#). The policy is focused on student success, sets high-level direction and affirms our responsibilities and commitments. HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity was approved by the Board of Trustees on June 22, 2021.

As a Division, we took key steps in the 2020–21 school year to work towards the development of an action plan. In September 2020, the Board of Trustees passed a motion requesting that the “Administration develop a model for the collection of race-based data in our Division, in consultation with communities in Edmonton impacted by racism.” The motion was put into action through the establishment of an Equity Advisory Committee, whose purpose was to provide initial advice and recommendations to the Superintendent around the complexities related to

the collection of this data. The advisory committee—made up of staff, students, Trustees, parents and community members—met three times and provided a recommendation report to the Superintendent in the spring. This report was centered around the collection of data but also included other recommendations to support anti-racism and equity for the Superintendent’s consideration.

This Anti-racism and Equity Action Plan has been developed to support implementation of the Board policy, further the work to inform the collection of extended student demographic data and take transformational steps towards anti-racism and equity across Edmonton Public Schools. The action plan outlines three areas of work being prioritized by the Division for the 2021–22 school year.



Listening and learning to help us know where to start

The Division is invested in actions that will result in positive change for students, staff and families and serve as the catalyst for meaningful, long-term systemic change.

Through the Board of Trustees' work on the development of HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity, recommendations from the Equity Advisory Committee, and learning from the lived experiences shared through a series of listening circles, certain themes and areas of importance emerged as critical to the work of anti-racism.



The voices of students, staff, families and community have been critical in helping us understand what is important and where to start. Based on this feedback, three key areas have been prioritized for this first year of a multi-year journey:

- **Support for schools and enhancing school capacity**
- **A focus on Human Resource practices and the engagement of all staff**
- **The development of a model to support the collection of extended student demographic data**

Note on language

In this plan, you will see references to “extended demographic data.” When this work started last year, the language “race-based data” was used. As the work has grown, so has our understanding of it. Through feedback and conversation, we’ve come to realize that the term “raced-based data” is too limiting. It has become clear that we need to examine more than race-based data to better understand the issues our students face; we need to look at extended demographic data. “Extended demographic data” is the language that will be used going forward.

Support for schools and enhancing school capacity

Our students and school communities are increasingly diverse.

What happens in school, our community and the world around us impacts our students, classrooms and school environments. Schools need support as they work with students to help them understand and navigate complex racial injustices, including situations taking place today and throughout our shared colonial history.

Teaching and learning will reflect anti-racism and equity as teachers and school staff inform their practice through the lens of professional learning and their own personal growth.

Actions to support schools and enhance capacity

- Develop and provide professional learning that promotes:
 - Staff growth, understanding and empathy related to intercultural competencies and anti-racism.
 - Staff capacity related to the diverse histories, identities, and lived experiences of the students, staff and families within the broader community.
 - Teaching and learning through a diversity lens.
 - Integrative anti-racism pedagogies and practices.
- Establish a central Anti-racism and Equity response team to proactively support schools around their anti-racism and equity efforts and to work with school and central leaders during complex or challenging race-related situations or events.
- Facilitate the Division's development and implementation of a multi-faith calendar, including supporting materials for schools that address significant dates, celebrations and events on the calendar.
- Lead the development of resources that support Division leaders when working with their staff towards anti-racism, inclusion and equity.
- Support teaching and learning through a perspective of diversity by:
 - Reviewing and updating Division-developed teaching and learning resources to ensure they support and reflect the diversity of Division classrooms.
 - Enhancing staff capacity to review, identify and use resources and materials that are culturally responsive.
- Assist schools in making positive connections with community members that support the provision of culturally meaningful learning and enrichment opportunities.

A focus on Human Resource practices and the engagement of all staff

Edmonton Public Schools employs a workforce of over 10,000 employees across several staff groups.

It is critical that our students and families see themselves across all areas of our staff. To help us achieve representation, we will examine our human resources practices and policies to ensure they support the hiring, maintaining and development of a workforce that represents the diversity of the students and families in our schools.

We must engage with staff and ensure we are all walking the journey towards anti-racism and equity together. The Division's success is both a collective and individual responsibility for all members of the organization.

Actions to support a focus on Human Resource practices and the engagement of all staff

- Review hiring practices through the lens of anti-racism and equity, with an initial focus on teacher staffing and the identification of recommendations for improvement.
 - This will include the opportunity to work closely with post-secondary institutions and examine teacher qualifications from other areas of the world.
- Review human resource-related administrative regulations and practices through the lens of anti-racism and equity. This work will:
 - Inform recommendations that support change and address barriers or gaps in current practices.
 - Support achieving representation across staffing groups and roles within the organization.
- Review leadership development processes with an objective of increasing the diversity of staff who seek out and successfully obtain positions of leadership in the Division.
- Review program curriculum in the areas of leadership development and new teacher induction to ensure participants are engaged through a lens and perspective that reflects and models anti-racism and equity.
- Develop a preliminary recommendation relating to applicant and employee demographic data collection, based on learnings from the subcommittee supporting the collection of extended student demographic data.

The development of a model to support the collection of extended student demographic data

The Equity Advisory Committee described this work as follows: “The collection of race-based data is a call to action, to challenge the Division with questions of how the data will inform change in classroom practice and systemic change at the school level and in central departments.”

The thoughtful and intentional collecting of additional student demographic data will enable the Division to:

- Gain a deeper understanding of students who attend our schools.
- Be strategic and responsive to the needs of specific groups of students and unique community groups in our city.
- Monitor for improvement and progress.
- Be transparent with our stakeholders about our results, progress and areas of growth.

The processes used to collect, analyze, report on and manage student data will be respectful, will reflect our legal obligations around information management and will only be used to impact positive outcomes for students. The Division will continue to engage with families and members of the community to help inform this work.

Actions to support the development of a model to support the collection of extended student demographic data

- Determine what data we are talking about:
 - Define what “student demographic data” means for the Division’s context and purpose.
 - Examine potential data sets.
 - Explore how best to collect the data.
 - Consider when and how often data should be collected.
 - Look at the collection of this data with respect to privacy legislation.
 - Consider who will be able to access the data.
- Design a system that will support working with the data once it is collected, with consideration to:
 - Ongoing maintenance and storage.
 - Interpreting the data and exploring how the data connects with other data sets.
 - Displaying the data.
 - Reporting.
- Inform our work by learning from others who have already initiated this work, including other school divisions in Canada.
- Develop a plan that demonstrates how the data will be used to inform the Division’s commitment for change.
 - We commit to share this plan with families, community, staff and students.

How the Division is resourcing and organizing to support the work

The Division has planned and organized to make sure we have resources in place to support this anti-racism and equity work.

We have established several committees and subcommittees that are made up of community members, Division leaders and educators who are tasked with keeping progress on track in each of the priority areas.

An Anti-racism and Equity Steering Committee

The Superintendent has established an internal steering committee to provide leadership and support towards achieving the priorities set out in the Division's Anti-racism and Equity Action Plan.

- The work of the steering committee is informed by a terms of reference.
- Membership on the steering committee was established to reflect leadership experience, diversity and expertise across the organization.
- Membership is intended to be fluid and responsive and will be examined regularly, considering the work required to support the Division's ongoing progress.

Anti-racism and Equity Steering Subcommittees

Three subcommittees have been established to support progress in the priority areas.

- These subcommittees bring together staff from across the organization with the experience and expertise necessary to achieve the intended outcomes of each priority area.
- The subcommittees are chaired by members of the steering committee.
- The work of the subcommittees will be supported and monitored through the development of a project plan.



Equity Advisory Committee

The voice and perspectives of community members, particularly those with lived experience, is critical to this work. Included in the Equity Advisory Committee's report to the Superintendent was the recommendation to establish a new Equity Advisory Committee to support the Division's continuing efforts towards anti-racism and equity.

- The work to establish this committee was undertaken in the summer of 2021 to support membership recruitment for November.
- Membership on the Equity Advisory Committee will be supported by application and will reflect the diversity of the Edmonton community and the voice of families and members of the community.
- The Equity Advisory Committee will provide advice and perspective to the Superintendent through the Division's Anti-racism and Equity Steering Committee.
- The purpose and function of the Equity Advisory Committee will be defined by a terms of reference.

Anti-racism and Equity Principal Committee

This committee will work directly with members of the steering committee to support the advancement of the Anti-racism and Equity Action Plan.

- Membership on the committee reflects principals of Pre-K to Grade 12 programming with a range of diverse perspectives.
 - Committee members will have the opportunity to engage and communicate with their principal colleagues.



Foundational ways of working

How we do this work is critical to our progress and, ultimately, the success of all students. The Division will support the work of the Anti-racism and Equity Action Plan through:

- **Engagement:** Hearing the voices of staff, students, families and community is essential to this work. Beyond the support and advice of the Equity Advisory Committee, the Division will continue to engage in meaningful ways with stakeholders to ensure that diverse lived experiences and perspectives inform the work.
 - This work will occur in collaboration with community partners to help support safe spaces for all voices.
- **Communication:** Ongoing communication with students, staff, families and the community will be critical throughout this work. This communication will:
 - Help keep stakeholders informed of the Division's progress in support of anti-racism and equity actions.
 - Support transparency.
 - Demonstrate the Division's ongoing commitment towards anti-racism and equity
- **Project planning and oversight:** Each priority area will be supported by a project plan. These plans will serve as working documents that provide a detailed overview of work in support of the priority area. These details will include:
 - Key outcomes.
 - Actions required to achieve outcomes.
 - Timelines.
 - Metrics and timelines for monitoring progress.
 - Engagement and communication.
- **Governance through Board Policies and Administrative Regulations:** Board Policy [HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity](#) serves as the foundation to support anti-racism and equity across the Division. It is also one of a group of Board policies, administrative regulations and legislation that work together to set direction for the well-being and success of students and staff. The HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity Board Policy was also the catalyst for the review of existing Board policies and administrative regulations to ensure any direction or expectations reflect the vision and intent set out by the new policy. To support this, the following work will be ongoing:
 - The Board of Trustees' Policy Review Committee will continue to update Board policies through the lens of anti-racism and equity.
 - Administration will conduct an environmental scan of existing administrative regulations to identify where revision or updating is required.
 - A plan will be developed to support the completion of this revision work.



How the Division is resourcing and organizing to support the work

- **Learning from others:** Anti-racism and Equity Initiatives and Research: The Division will look at current work, research and initiatives in the areas of anti-racism and equity to help inform the Division's next steps, including:
 - A review of literature in the area of anti-racism and equity in the education system.
 - Learning from other Kindergarten to Grade 12 school divisions' work to support the collection of extended student demographics.
 - A review of research in support of anti-racism, inclusion and equity in the broader society.
- **Working with community members:** Edmonton Public Schools knows that the goal of success for every student and achieving meaningful system-wide change towards anti-racism and equity cannot happen without the support, ongoing encouragement and collaborative efforts of community partners.





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