

DATE: January 12, 2021

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Update on the Model for the Collection of Race-based Data

ORIGINATOR: Karen Mills, Director Board and Superintendent Relations

RESOURCE

STAFF: Nancy Petersen

REFERENCE: [September 22, 2020, public Board meeting](#)

ISSUE

Administration is providing an update on the Division's progress toward creating a model to collect race-based data.

BACKGROUND

The following motion was passed unanimously at the September 22, 2020, public Board meeting:

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.

Trustee Dunn requested that updates be provided to the Trustees and the general public on an ongoing basis. Superintendent Robertson advised that he would keep the Board apprised about the project, and would provide the first formal update to Trustees in December 2020.

CURRENT SITUATION

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. To that end, and in keeping with the Division's Cornerstone Values of accountability, collaboration and integrity, Superintendent Robertson asked that an Equity Advisory Committee, comprising staff, student, parent, Trustee and community representatives, be formed.

A [call](#) for community applications went out on November 3 via the Division's social media channels, website, and a news release. The application deadline was November 12, 2020. A total of 141 applications were submitted: 80 parent, 38 community and 23 staff.

Applications were reviewed using a two-step process. The first review eliminated any incomplete applications and generated a short list of the applications best aligned to the purpose of the committee.

The second step of the process saw a panel review the remaining applications. Panel members independently reviewed the applications and categorized them based on best fit to the work of the committee. The panel members then came together to compare and discuss their assessment of the applications. They worked to come to consensus on a list of recommended applicants. For this second step, all applications were neutralized and were anonymous to the panel members.

Through a peer election process, the Student Senate identified two members to serve on the committee as student representatives.

The Board of Trustees also identified two members to participate in this work through an expression of interest and consensus process.

The committee, which does not have decision-making authority, will provide initial advice and recommendations to the Superintendent. The committee's first focus will be to provide recommendations to the Superintendent by the spring of 2021 on how the Division can set up a model to collect race-based data and next steps in this work. Committee members will look at questions such as:

- What does the Division need to consider when developing a model to gather race-based data?
- What's the purpose for collecting race-based data?
- How should the Division use race-based data?
- What details should be collected?

The first meeting of the Equity Advisory Committee was December 1, 2020. They will meet again on January 19 and March 2, 2021.

Applicants who are not selected to be part of this committee and other interested individuals will still have opportunities to join in important conversations about anti-racism. Our Division will seek meaningful feedback from the community in many ways, as part of ongoing work to advance equity across our organization.

Edmonton Public Schools is the first school jurisdiction in Alberta developing a process 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 a provincial level. To that end, the Board wrote to the Minister of Education asking that she mandate the collection of race-based data in school divisions across the province.

KEY POINTS

- An 18-member Equity Advisory Committee, comprising student, staff parent, Trustee and community representatives, has been formed to provide advice to the Superintendent.
- The committee's first focus will be to provide recommendations to the Superintendent by the spring of 2021 on how the Division can set up a model to collect race-based data and next steps in this work.
- The Board has requested that the Minister of Education mandate the collection of race-based data in school divisions across the province.

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