

RACIAL EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Recommendations

Prepared for:

Mark Pearmain, Superintendent

Surrey School District #36

June 15, 2022

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge that Surrey schools, where we work, play, and learn, are on the shared, unceded traditional territory of the Katzie, Semiahmoo, Kwantlen, and other Coast Salish Peoples.

Racial Equity Advisory Committee Members

Jatinder Bir - STA Representative

Thais Pimentel Cabral - STA Representative

Lyn Daniels - Director of Instruction, Aboriginal Learning

Neder Dhillon - Assistant Superintendent

Krystal Dumai-Ziprick - Parent Representative

David Kenworthy - Katzie First Nation

Iram Khan - SPVPA Representative

Jacque King - STA Representative

Sol Lee - SPVPA Representative

Debra Merrier - CUPE728 Representative

Ravina Morgan - Parent Representative

Edward Parsotam - CUPE 728 Representative

Mark Pearmain - Superintendent

Bal Ranu - SPVPA Representative

Shelley Saje Ricci - CUPE728 Representative

Amrit Sanghe - STA Representative

Bernardo Ruiz – Facilitator

Parveen Mann - Facilitator

June 15, 2022

Mark Pearmain
Superintendent of Schools
School District No. 036 (Surrey)
14033 92nd Ave
Surrey, BC V3V 0B7

Dear Mr. Pearmain,

We, the Racial Equity Advisory Committee, would like to thank you, Dr. Tinney and the Surrey School Board Trustees for the honour and privilege of making recommendations to advance racial equity and social justice in Surrey schools.

Racial equity ensures that all students and staff have an environment that recognizes and honours the dignity, humanity, and potential of everyone. Furthermore, racial equity is essential for every student to be able to learn, achieve success, collaborate and create with others, and become contributing members working to the moral health of society.

We were inspired by the commitment and passion expressed by students, teachers, parents and community members in the environmental assessment report. We too, are firmly committed to this work, and believe that racial equity and social justice is achievable and must be prioritized in Surrey schools.

Therefore, we submit this open and honest report with the understanding that we are at the beginning of meaningful change. We urge the Surrey school district to continue their obligation to racial equity and social justice and to increase transparency and accountability around organizational priorities and practices. We offer our continued partnership and commitment to this work. Our students, parents, teachers and community depend on this assurance.

We thank you again for this opportunity and we look forward to continuing this work.

Sincerely,

Racial Equity Advisory Committee Members

This document has been developed by the Racial Equity Advisory Committee at the request of the longstanding Surrey school superintendent, Dr. Jordan Tinney. Upon Dr. Tinney's retirement in the spring of 2022, his replacement Mr. Mark Pearmain renewed Surrey School Board's commitment to racial equity and social justice in Surrey schools. Mr. Pearmain requested that the Racial Equity Advisory Committee provide recommendations based on the September 2021 Racial Equity Environmental Assessment.

This request resulted from direction provided by the Surrey Board of Education to the Superintendent.

Board of Education Direction to Superintendent

The Board of Education direct the Superintendent to develop an implementation plan to promote racial equity across the Surrey School District based on the recommendations of the September 2021 Racial Equity Environmental Assessment; and

That

the Board of Education direct the Superintendent to establish a policy on racial equity and social justice; and

That

the Board of Education direct the Superintendent to report out on plans to build capacity district-wide for promoting racial equity in all Surrey schools including considering the recommendation to establish a department or structure that develops culturally responsive and inclusive leadership.

Recommendations on Policy

As requested by the Superintendent, the Racial Equity Advisory Committee is making the recommendations below for an anti-racism policy that supports racial equity.

Preliminary Commentary

We believe a policy that condemns racism in all forms is a necessary prerequisite to eradicating racism in Surrey schools.

This policy must acknowledge the historic and institutional racism within SD36. The policy must address the systemic and insidious nature of racism and reaffirm a commitment to deconstruct biased systems and replace them with more equitable structures, policies, and practices.

The policy must set accountability and measures to ensure social change is being made on racial equity matters.

Restorative justice must be a central tenet of this policy as we are seeking real change which must provide participants with an opportunity for restitution and amends.

Finally, the policy must provide a compelling vision of the future and one that is inclusive.

Recommendations

1. The SD36 develop a racial equity policy that is developed by the policy committee in collaboration with the racial equity advisory committee and the department of racial equity
2. Elements of racial equity policy:
 - 2.1 Clear commitment on behalf of SD36 including:
 - 2.1.1 a purpose statement declaring a firm commitment to anti-racism and establishing an environment free from racism for all SD36 students, staff, and families
 - 2.1.2 a commitment to decolonization throughout the Surrey schools and in all of its services
 - 2.1.3 an acknowledgment of historic and institutional racism in SD36

- 2.1.4 a commitment to ensuring academic excellence, culturally responsive curriculum, and racial equity supports that meet the needs of IBPOC students
 - 2.1.5 a commitment to review all SD36 policies through a lens of Truth and Reconciliation and to ensure consistency with the principles of the racial equity policy
 - 2.1.6 a statement that racial equity is a responsibility of the school-based administrator, and that every SD36 employee must act in accordance with the racial equity policy and its intent
- 2.2 Establishes a philosophy and approach to racial equity that:
- 2.2.1 ensures that education is a critical element of racial equity by mandating annual anti-racism in-service for all SD36 employees
 - 2.2.2 mandates a dispute resolution process that embeds restorative justice
- 2.3 Establishes the scope and responsibilities of different departments as it relates to eliminating racism in Surrey schools including:
- 2.3.1 defining the role, function, responsibilities and interdependencies of the racial equity advisory committee, site-based committees, and the racial equity department
 - 2.3.2 establishing an obligation to work with key stakeholders and community organizations
- 2.4 Provides policy guidelines to ensure financial support for racial equity in Surrey schools including:
- 2.4.1 a requirement to conduct an annual review and produce a report that analyses the racial equity needs of different schools
 - 2.4.2 allocation of financial resources and staffing required to meet the mandate of this policy
 - 2.4.3 a requirement to conduct a review, produce a report, and develop a plan to reallocate resources that prioritizes mental health services including more counselors, Aboriginal Youth Care Workers, Child and Youth Care Workers. This includes providing resources for classroom teachers as a means to reduce or eliminate the presence of police in schools.

- 2.5 Supports the recruitment, mentorship, retention, and succession planning of qualified IBPOC representatives in positions, including leadership positions, by:
- 2.5.1 establishing targets designed to advance the recruitment, mentorship, retention, succession and promotion of IBPOC leaders into management positions
 - 2.5.2 ensuring the hiring committees for senior management positions have a minimum of two IBPOC representatives
 - 2.5.3 requiring that the SD36 Board work with the STA to ensure qualified Indigenous educators are given priority to teach courses pertaining to Indigenous culture, language and history
 - 2.5.4 requiring that the SD36 Board work with the STA to ensure qualified Black educators are given priority to teach courses pertaining to Black culture and history
 - 2.5.5 working with CUPE and the STA to develop policies and practices that promote the retention and recruitment of Indigenous and Black employees and leaders across SD36
- 2.6 Ensures that affirmative action policies for Indigenous and Black employees and leaders, consider the following:
- anti-racism lens
 - cultural competencies
 - cultural knowledge
 - community involvement and relationships
- 2.7 Ensures that all hiring bodies have comprehensive anti-racism training with a focus on implicit bias and white supremacy culture
- 2.8 Authorizes a subcommittee of the racial equity advisory committee to develop a plan to decolonize all school names and mascots with the land-based Nations by 2030
- 2.9 Removes policy #9510 that requires schools recite the Canadian anthem weekly
- 2.10 Requires that the Board lobby the Ministry of Education to amend the School Act so that the national anthem is no longer played at assemblies
- 2.11 Adopts a sanctuary school policy to protect students with precarious immigration status

2.12 Requires that police programs be eliminated in Surrey schools

Recommendations on Structure or Department

As requested by the Superintendent, the Racial Equity Advisory Committee is making the recommendations below for a department or structure that support racial equity in Surrey schools.

Preliminary Commentary

We believe a central feature of SD36's antiracism structural reform should include a centralized department of racial equity supported by site-based anti-racism committees.

This centralized department should provide the overall, comprehensive, and integrated racial equity strategy, including anti-racism leadership and professional development throughout SD36. A key function of this committee is to establish meaningful relationships with parents and develop partnership with government and community organizations.

We also believe that to ensure the most culturally responsive and least harmful response to anti-racism, appropriate responsibilities need to be vested with site-based racial equity subcommittees.

Finally, we believe that the racial equity department must seek the advice, support, and guidance of the racial equity advisory committee due to their unique expertise and stakeholder composition.

Recommendations

1. Racial Equity Department
 - 1.1 SD36 will establish a racial equity department that is responsible for developing, implementing, and assessing a comprehensive and integrated racial equity strategy for SD36.
 - 1.2 The racial equity department will be led by a director of instruction for racial equity. In hiring the director of racial equity, the racial equity advisory committee will be consulted.
 - 1.3 The responsibilities of the racial equity department include:
 - 1.3.1 providing leadership, guidance, and support that ensures that racial equity remains a priority across all levels and areas across the district
 - 1.3.2 supporting the work of site-based committees, including the following areas:

- curriculum resources
- instructional strategies
- pedagogy (anti-racist, critical, culturally relevant, culturally responsive, land-based)
- restorative justice practices
- mediation

1.3.3 collecting, tracking, analyzing, and sharing data from sites-based committees and different departments to identify gaps in racial equity and to recommend and provide support to advance racial equity in those areas

1.3.4 collaborating with other departments, site-based committees and community organizations to proactively create safe, inclusive, racially equitable environments that provide comprehensive, interrelated structural supports for IBPOC youth, such as family support and counseling services (ex. career education to develop job shadowing/ non-menial work experience for at-risk IBPOC youth; work in collaboration with the Welcome Center to provide support to families who experiencing challenges and barriers that inhibit racial equity and inclusivity in education)

1.4 The racial equity department will have ten (10) racial equity advisors. Where the racial equity advisor positions are held by teachers, the title will be changed to “racial equity teachers”. These advisors/teachers will be IBPOC members who are qualified in racial equity policy and practices and who are comprised of a representative sample from the various employee groups.

1.4.1 Equity and inclusion advisors/teachers will be responsible for:

- providing support to schools on racial equity matters, issues, and concerns
- promoting racial equity policy and practices, including utilizing the resources developed by the Council of Equity and Inclusion Leaders
- leading restorative justice initiatives across the district
- identifying areas in need of improvement and provide support
- providing professional development, training, and in-service
- working in collaboration with the anti-racism mediation service
- developing and maintain a professional resource website

1.4.2 the racial equity advisors/teachers will be provided a wellness program that supports their holistic (emotional) well-being due to the challenges and emotional toll of this work

2. Site-Based Committees

- 2.1 SD36 will establish a site-based racial equity committees (similar to health and safety committees) at each worksite, as defined by the racial equity advisory committees
- 2.2 Site-based racial equity committees will work in collaboration with the director of instruction for racial equity
- 2.3 Site-based racial equity committees will be comprised of two representatives from:
 - students
 - parents
 - CUPE
 - STA
 - P/VP

Where possible, committee membership should be awarded to IBPOC.

- 2.4 Site-based racial equity committees will be responsible for:
 - 2.4.1 making recommendations to promote racial equity, which may include local initiatives such as restorative justice learnings, land-based learning, targeted anti-racism education, in-service, and referral to mediation and external community organizations
 - 2.4.2 reviewing incidents of racism to develop action plans to prevent further incidents, including recommendations to school-based rules of conduct, practices and programs, and/or district policies and programs
 - 2.4.3 disseminating information on programs, supports, initiatives, and measures that support racial equity within school-based sites
 - 2.4.4 being an alternative resource for site-based staff, students and parents to raise issues of racism, cultural safety, and discrimination
- 2.5 Site-based committee members will be provided comprehensive in-services to address issues within their scope
- 2.6 Site-based committees will be provided an annual budget to arrange in-service and operationalize action plans that are developed in response to discrimination, including and not limited, to release time for STA/CUPE, honorariums for Indigenous leaders

2.7 Site-based committee members will be released with pay to participate in site-based committee meetings

2.8 Other Considerations:

2.8.1 Site-based committees may commence as a pilot program for the 2022-2023 school year. Each school zone should have one secondary and elementary school in the pilot. The director of instruction for racial equity and the racial equity advisory committee will jointly monitor, review, and assess the pilot program

2.8.2 Site-based committees will work within the parameters of the legislation frameworks

3. Racial Equity Advisory Committee

3.1 SD36 will reconstitute the racial equity advisory committee to support the work of these recommendations and to work with the director of instruction for racial equity to ensure, support, build, and sustain racial equity

3.2 The racial equity advisory committee is established in recognition of the experience, expertise, and perspectives of the committee members and their unique leadership role in engaging stakeholders and in influencing the future direction of racial equity within Surrey schools.

3.3 The racial equity advisory committee is comprised of the BIPOC stakeholder representatives from the following groups:

- 2 Members of district staff
- 2 representatives from CUPE Local 728
- 2 representatives from the Surrey Teachers' Association
- 2 representatives from Surrey Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association
- 2 parent representatives
- 2 student representatives
- Superintendent (ex-officio member)

Member representatives from Jan 2022 – June 2022 will be given the first opportunity to continue on this committee.

3.4 The mandate of the racial equity advisory committee is to:

- provide experiences, expertise, and perspectives that adds depth and ensures representation of authentic BIPOC voices to the work

- monitor and support site-based committees
- build awareness of racial equity issues and sharing information across the school district and community
- ensure the inclusion of voices that are not represented by site-based committees
- facilitate communication between community members and serve as a liaison between program staff, local partners, and community members;
- facilitate mechanisms for engagement and information exchange;
- seek alignment and synergy with the mission of this committee and the work of committee members' respective organizations and associations

4. Anti-Racism Mediation Services

4.1 SD36 will expand the existing mediation services to include mediation services related to racism and racial discrimination with the following modifications:

- matters related to racism will be mediated by a cohort of IBPOC mediators specifically trained in anti-racism and restorative justice
- mediators will work within the parameters of the anti-racism policy and will apply restorative justice approach
- the mediation process may include recommending anti-racism education and/or training
- the racial equity advisory committee shall review IBPOC candidates for mediators for racial equity matters

5. Codifying Site-Based Committees

5.1 SD36 enter into negotiations with STA and CUPE to codify site-based committees into the respective collective agreements

Recommendations on Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Leadership

As requested by the Superintendent, the Racial Equity Advisory Committee is making the recommendations below for culturally responsive and inclusive leadership that supports racial equity in Surrey schools.

Preliminary Commentary

We believe education is at the heart of change.

Therefore, every teacher must be trained, supported, and equipped to ensure they can provide a racial equity environment for students, parents, and their colleagues.

We believe that racial equity education and training will build the capacity of educators and staff in order to honour, value and dignify the humanity and founts of knowledge from each and every child and adult in our educational system, especially IBPOC students and staff who have been marginalized.

We believe IBPOC leadership should be central and active in bridging all communities and we desire visible and authentic IBPOC representation in a leadership capacity in these efforts.

Recommendations

1. Racial Equity Strategic Plan for the District
 - 1.1 SD36 will develop a racial equity plan that is comprehensive, cohesive and integrated with the other recommendations in this report and the activities of the school district
 - 1.2 The plan will include racial equity in-service
2. Council of Equity and Inclusion Leaders
 - 2.1 SD36 will establish a Council of Equity and Inclusion Leaders (the “Council”) to be a permanent body that develops racial equity training, professional development, and in-service for all SD36 staff.
 - 2.2 The Council will be comprised of district IBPOC employees and representatives from school staff, families, students and community members, who have

facilitation training, racial literacy knowledge, and relevant lived experiences that supports racial equity.

2.3 The responsibilities of the Council include:

2.3.1 develop and deliver professional development plans and training to advance racial equity throughout all levels of the school district, in collaboration and partnership with racial equity advisors/teachers. Plans and training:

- will be culturally responsive and will strength family and community engagement
- will be regularly updated to reflect current racial equity theory and practice, including regular comparisons with training done in other districts
- will include resources from partnerships with local Indigenous nations and organizations doing anti-oppression, anti-racism and cultural safety work to enhance the content of the racial equity training
- will address issues identified by an annual anonymous staff survey that solicits input and feedback on methods of advancing racial equity
- some or parts of this work may be delegated to external professional experienced in racial equity

2.3.2 assess the training and making amendments to ensure the training is achieving the stated goals

2.3.3 prioritize training through a needs assessment

2.3.4 develop school-specific annual racial equity plans to establish goals to meet the unique and specific needs of IBPOC student population

3. Racial Equity Training will:

3.1 be required for all SD36 staff and will be compensated

3.2 balance theory, racial literacy, anti-racism pedagogy, and experiential learning

3.3 include experiential and relational elements including:

- experiential face to face authentic learning with listening, sharing circles and scenario-based activities as well as being founded in effective learning principles
- be complemented by attending and supporting rallies, community and land-based nation events (ex. create a calendar and share information about dates, times and reasons for important cultural and social justice events)
- lessons, guides, videos appropriate for school community projects on social justice issues (Red Dress Projects, Black History in curriculum, Anti-Asian sentiment, etc.)
- increased Indigenous family and community engagement at all levels of the district with principles of reciprocity, and shall include Elders in teaching Indigenous histories through storytelling
- practical activities and sharing
- IBPOC parents, family members and community leaders as paid speakers to trainings and events

3.4 The theory and concepts elements will be critical (holistic and comprehensive) in order to foster introspection, reflection and action and will be updated and reviewed by the Council of Equity and Inclusion Leaders. Training should include:

- adaptive leadership professional development
- information on the difference between equality and equity
- untold, hidden and real history of Canada (e.g.: history of genocide, enslavement, removal of Indigenous rights, title, culture and language – moving toward recognition, respect, relationships and reconciliation)
- ongoing legacy and impact of colonialism
- the controversial history of diversity and multiculturalism in Canada
- equity and inclusion reflections should include notions of privilege, power, personal and professional positionality, status quo, unconscious bias and microaggressions
- information on structural/systemic racism vs. individual racism (different levels of oppression)
- education and reflection on how to implement restorative justice and transformative justice practices.
- reflection on the impact of the racism and oppression of low expectations on students' achievement.
- the concepts will include:
 - oppression
 - microaggressions
 - discrimination
 - prejudice
 - privilege
 - white supremacy
 - allyship

- accomplice – co-conspirator
- internalized oppression
- intersectionality
- stereotype/bias
- code-switching
- reconciliation
- decolonization
- cultural safety / cultural advocacy

4. Training will support and align with:

- Surrey School District would be aligned with the BC legislation and Ministry Guides
- Anti-Racism Teacher/Teaching Guide from the Ministry of Education & Child Care
- Anti-Racism Guide from the BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC)
- British Columbia Anti-Racism Act