

We Rise Together Advisory Council April 12, 2018 – Meeting Minutes

1. INTRODUCTIONS

- Attendance was taken

2. COMMUNITY MATTERS

- Terms of reference suggest there should be 12 organizations but there are not 12 organizations in the room. Why not?
 - Some organizations should have been here but they sent their regrets that they could not attend. Perhaps they could send a replacement representative if original representative cannot attend.
 - Counted # of groups
 - Attendance to be taken at all meetings
 - Will circulate list of affiliated organizations

3. PARENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

- Moved to later on in the meeting

4. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

- Absent

5. THE JOURNEY AHEAD – FARRELL HALL, MANAGER OF WORKPLACE EQUITY

- Farrell explained the purpose of the Journey Ahead Action Plan
- Question about Peel's hiring processes. Internal equity audit of Human Resources policies and processes. 33 findings and 90 action items resulted in a report to ensure bias-free hiring and promotions.
- Mandatory 2-part training on bias-free hiring for everyone who hires, which runs every 6 months
- Milestones:
 - Mentoring program (personal testimony from Melissa Wilson, Coordinator of Anti-Black Racism, about the effectiveness of the program),
 - Workforce census,
 - Creation of Workplace Equity Manager position,
 - Audit of randomly selected job competition files (in progress),
 - Student census (about to begin)
- 15 action items came out of the census to explore if there were barriers to inclusion. Why do we do it that way? Why do we do it in that place?

- 257 schools, 36 secondary schools, 1 Black male principal
 - When comparing the racial demographics of Peel staff to Stats Canada census, there are drastic differences
 - How to change this? Need Black males in positions of authority. Collaborative approach census tells us where we are. Under Ontario Human Rights Code, Peel board hiring managers can't discriminate but it can have targeted programs that attract people from specific communities, such as:
 - encouraging Black students to have careers in education
 - targeting job postings in specific communities
 - inviting targeted groups to interviews
 - Unions. What about the role of unions in this?
 - Equity-related committees with cross-representation on them, including union representatives
 - Faculties of education across the province.
 - Who are they admitting and attracting to apply?
 - Classroom.
 - What about looking at the graduation rate of young Black men?
 - Multi-pronged approach to solve this problem.
 - The Leadership Development department tracks movement of each cohort to evaluate effectiveness of mentoring program.
 - How many secondary Black female principals? Only 1. This is insufficient.
 - Within the frameworks that hiring managers are offered, are points scored for equity and representation? Not metrically.
 - One possible strategy: tracking the diversity dimensions of applicants on applications. What did the unsuccessful candidates look like? Anecdotal evidence suggests that Blacks are disproportionately turned down for jobs.
 - Ontario Human Rights Code – Peel Board must comply with, different from Canadian Human Rights Act
 - How many Black teachers have been hired since 2013? 7% overall, including non-teachers. 67% of full-time staff participated in census (2016).
 - Interview questions for teacher jobs should be standardized so that principals can't change postings just to meet their friend's needs. Job postings must match objective criteria of the job. There are 75 people in the Human Resources department, and they have standardized interview questions from which principals can select.
 - Request for data on teachers and their positions.
 - In addition to training, policies need to be implemented.
 - Consequence for non-compliance is missing from this. What happens to those who do not follow the requirements?

6. WE RISE TOGETHER YEAR ONE PILOT SCHOOLS – MELISSA WILSON, COORDINATOR OF ANTI-BLACK RACISM

- Outlined the We Rise team
- 6 days of professional learning for educators at 13 PDSB schools
- Schools were chosen through consultation with PDSB research team, PDSB senior team, and Dr. Carl James
- Asked administrators informally to not bring all of their Black teachers to the program
- Journals were completed by staff who attended the session. They were asked to share their reflections to track what their responses were to the training. The feedback from the Research department's reports:
 - In order to get buy in, additional support is required.
 - Teachers are saying that they are committed and interested in teaching about racism, but are concerned about what their colleagues will say about this.
 - They don't know how to teach their colleagues, and are concerned that their colleagues will not buy into it.
 - During the first two sessions, there was ambivalence. Four sessions later, administrators said that they want to carry the work forward in their own schools, to know how to do it, and they want to do the work justice. Initially, they had not heard of anti-Black racism. Now, there are White administrators who understand the issues but have concerns that since they are not experts, they will not do as good a job as possible.
 - There is hunger amongst the White administrators to bring the information back to their home schools and to work in school teams within their local team context.
- Focus groups
 - Will begin in May to gather the student voices.
 - Will identify if students are noticing any changes in the schools in their interactions with educators
 - There are leadership opportunities that being provided to our students.
 - It is necessary to reach out to parents to gather their voices and monitor whether they see changes in how schools interact with Black students.
- Timeline
 - This is year one and change takes time. Our measurement is open and we are not expecting to see major changes at the end of this year, but we will continue to monitor impact as this plan unfolds.
 - Year one: learning
 - Year two: implementation (which will include students)
- Why did the pilot project require only 2 teachers per school?
 - That is what we were able to fund.
 - Some teams have brought out more than 2 teachers. One team, for example, brought 8 teachers.

- Each year, more and more schools will be invited into the program. Want to expand the program for next year. The 13 pilot schools should not be construed as the entirety of the program; rather, it is just the beginning.
- Just pilot program, didn't know if it would work.
- Once we understand how the work is working or failing, then they can invite more schools and more people.
- The pilot needed to manage a small group to understand what works effectively.
- The funding is not an issue.
- Training
 - In the consultations, it was expressed that training should be mandatory, but with only 2 teachers, the impact is limited.
 - If White teachers are concerned about going back to their White colleagues to tell them about what they are learning, what does this say? That we have a problem of White supremacy.
 - There is nothing new about anti-Black racism. Training is the first foray into this. We started, tried something, and learned that we need to do something different than just training.
 - Schools were chosen deliberately (Dr. Carl James).
 - Doesn't recommend rushing into the training and thinks it is better to be informed by the data so that it can guide us.
 - Use the information from the data to determine what to do next. Use a guided approach that will let us make informed decisions.
 - There is urgency to address the issues in front of us. We should want to have informed ideas so that when we look back at data next year, it will inform what we do going forward.
 - The purpose of this committee is to provide honest and critical feedback to this dynamic process.
 - Is leery of having all of the schools participating at this point.
 - There is a tremendous amount of research that shows that mandatory training leads to backlash, and people entrench further in their original positions. Building up the groundswell from those who are demonstrating interest and increasing their capacity to become influence is a more effective method.
 - Superintendent of Education Patrika Daws superintendency is made up of a family of schools (Lincoln and Castlebrook), of which Lincoln is at the bottom or top of social risk index. Momentum has been generated and there is a mirroring of the work that has been happening in the 13 pilot schools. This will provide a greater opportunity for people to come into the program. Because we are dealing with unions and children, we have to respect the boundaries of teachers' liberties and their latitude to make professional decisions. Administration has the constraint of what teachers can and cannot be compelled to do. Administrators must work within the system to bring out change. What is informing the decision? There is a

need to have these people buy in so that there is genuine interest, which will ultimately create the best possible outcome.

- Everybody in the system has to have the anti-Black racism training
- The teachers with whom Melissa Wilson is working reflect that they don't have the appropriate vocabulary. The training is providing them with this vocabulary so that they can better articulate challenges, issues, and situations.
- Training will not fix the system but it is an entry point for them to understand anti-Black racism.
- Once we get the data, it will be shared with the respective schools, which will create a program in response to the data. Rather than centralized, the solutions will be specific to the schools.
- Change is taking too long. Some of the schools that have the most aggressive form of anti-Black racism were excluded from the list. Kids in crisis and self-harming over anti-Black racism.
- Rather than running a pilot program, what action is being taken?
- How about getting schools to put in writing an Memorandum Of Understanding to express their interest to get on board and to increase the numbers of teachers that go into the program?
- This project was started with no change management quotient involved. We all work in situations where change is forced upon us. Disconnect between the rhetoric that administrators are hungry for change and what is actually happening in our schools. Why do you need more data? Parents in the community don't believe a thing that is going on here. In the pilot schools, no one knows what is going on beyond the two teachers and administrators. Teachers feel threatened and they don't feel they can do the work effectively.
- It is April of Year One. We have not finished the 6 sessions, so we are still in the early days of this process. Don't be in a rush to make a bad decision. Want to ensure that what we are doing is informed.
- The work is being expanded, and there is consideration to increasing the number of teachers per pilot school from 2 to 10% of the teachers in the pilot schools. We Rise 13 does not represent the entirety of what the Board is doing with respect to the We Rise initiative.

7. SUB-GROUPS

- Create the space for this kind of conversation that is open and transparent. Invite Melissa to next meeting to finish her presentation. There is an urgency to address the issues as quickly as possible. Same sex legislation came down quickly despite protest. Why is anti-Black racism not moved along as quickly? This is a process that we build on, and we don't want it to fail because we didn't create the proper foundation.

- Director of Education Peter Joshua – doesn't want this to be about funding concerns.

8. NEXT STEPS