

Anti-Black Racism Strategic Plan

Progress Report - 2024

Background

This report outlines the progress made towards implementing the recommendations by the Halton Catholic District School Board in the year 2024, since the public release of the Anti-Black Racism Strategic Plan Report prepared by Koskie Minsky, LLP in December 2023. The purpose of the three-year anti-Black racism strategy is to dismantle anti-Black racism and achieve systems equity for Black students and staff.

There are 17 recommendations in the Anti-Black Racism Strategic Plan proposed to be implemented over multiple years. The recommendations pertain to policy changes, data collection, hiring, retention and promotion practices, curriculum, progressive discipline, capacity building, student and staff support and community outreach. Most of the recommendations contain numerous action items within the overarching theme of each specific recommendation. The recommendations align with and augment the ongoing work of HCDSB to advance system equity.

This report contains highlights of system level initiatives undertaken in alignment with the recommendations of the Strategic Plan over the course of 2024 (please see legend for a description of the stage of completion of the recommendations). Schools have undertaken numerous initiatives to center the wellbeing of Black students through specific goals in their Student Achievement Plan.

HCDSB's implementation strategy has been informed by a variety of factors including timelines outlined in the Strategic Plan, our staffing and financial resources, opportunities to build synergies across departments in HCDSB and community partnerships.

We recognize that the work of dismantling anti-Black racism in HCDSB is inherently tied to our new Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2024-2028, it is urgent and requires significantly more energy and resources to intentionally center Black student and staff wellbeing. There is much work ahead that needs to be done in collaboration with the Steering Committee to build trust and authentic relationships with Black students, staff and the community.

We also recognize that the work of advancing systems equity while dismantling all forms of oppression, including anti-Black racism is the work of doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God. This work is integral to our commitment to students, families and staff, and reflective of our Mission, Vision and Values at Halton Catholic District School Board.

Legend:

-  Indicates the action item is completed
-  Indicates the action item is initiated but it is not completed
-  Indicates the action item is implemented on an ongoing basis

Policies & Programs



- ✓ The following policies have been amended to explicitly acknowledge the barriers to learning and success experienced by Black students, and that anti-Black racism exists within the HCDSB:
 - Policy II-45 Equity and Inclusive Education and Procedure VI-54
 - Policy II-39 Progressive Discipline and Safety in schools and Procedure VI-44
- ✓ Equity and Inclusive Education Policy II-45 was amended to clarify the reporting mechanism for staff and volunteers.
- ✓ Administrative Procedure VI-04 Complaints Resolution Process - Workplace Discrimination/Harassment/Violence been amended to include an appeals process.
- ⊙ The process to develop a comprehensive Human Rights Procedure to address all complaints of human rights violations and systemic discrimination has been initiated.

Recruitment, Hiring & Retention



- ↻ Principles of equity and inclusion have been incorporated into the recruitment process. Leaders involved in the hiring process for leadership and Non Union staff have been trained on anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-Black racism, as well as bias-free hiring.
- ↻ Voluntary self-identification applicant information is collected to analyze and identify barriers in staff recruitment, hiring and promotion.
- ↻ Data concerning recruitment, hiring and promotion of Black staff and administrators is shared with the senior leadership, including the Director of Education.
- ↻ The board wide Black Staff Advisory Committee has been active since 2022.
- ↻ Internal positions are widely shared through the HCDSB website and intranet.
- ↻ Exit interviews are conducted with all staff, including Black identifying staff and reports on any issues of discrimination or anti-Black racism are addressed.

Accountability & Transparency



- ✓ The report on Disproportionality of Suspension Data was published in 2024.
- ⊙ A working group to address disproportionality in suspension data has been formed to identify the root causes and develop an action plan to prevent overrepresentation of Black and other equity-deserving students in progressive discipline.
- ↻ Data regarding incidents anti-Black racism involving or impacting students is collected and published annually.
- ✓ The Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee is established and meetings begin in January 2025.

Inclusive Curriculum & School Climate



- ✔ School-facing recommendations of the Anti-Black Racism Strategic Plan are incorporated in the schools' Student Achievement Planning.
- ✔ Racial Literacy - Addressing Anti-Black Racism Series By Dr. Nicole West-Burns was offered to all administrators, curriculum consultants and department heads.
- ✔ The theme for Board wide Black History Month 2025 is Black Futures, a celebration of joy, opportunity, excellence and dreams; relevant learning materials and speakers lists have been shared with all schools.
- ↻ The first annual Black Excellence Student Symposium was held in February 2024, and this year's symposium will focus on Empowering Futures. The symposium is open to Black identifying secondary students.
- ✔ The Black Excellence Parent Symposium will be held in February 2025 with the focus on Legacy Building.
- ✔ In collaboration with Roots Community Services, the Ujima Circle of Care program for grade 7 and 8 Black identifying students was piloted in Milton in Spring 2024, it was expanded to Burlington in fall 2024 and will be offered in Oakville in winter 2025.
- ↻ The Board wide Black Student Union - Black Empowered United Students (BEUS) has been active since 2023-2024 school year.
- ↻ Black History 365 Committee - Consists of a collaborative community of educators, administrators and board staff, committed to incorporating Black history and Black identity affirming content and representation into curriculum 365 days of the year since 2023.
- ✔ 27 sessions were led by Curriculum Services that addressed anti- Black racism in curriculum and Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy to center Black representation in the 2023-24 school year.
- ↻ Modules in the Equity and Inclusion Education part 1 & 2 series focus on dismantling anti-Black racism. The sessions are offered 2-3 times a year.

Capacity Building



- ✔ New partnerships with Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton (CCA) has been forged to offer cultural mentorship to Black identifying students.
- ✔ The partnerships with Roots Community Services and Halton Black Voices have been expanded.
- ✔ Mandatory training by the Office of Human Rights and Equity on "Foundations of Centering Black Experiences in Education" is expected to be delivered to all employee groups and trustees by the end of 2024-2025 school year.
- ✔ A segment of the February, 2025 PA Day is dedicated to Black mental health.
- ↻ Participants' satisfaction is surveyed after trainings that are offered by the Office of Human Rights and Equity and the results are used to inform future professional development planning.