

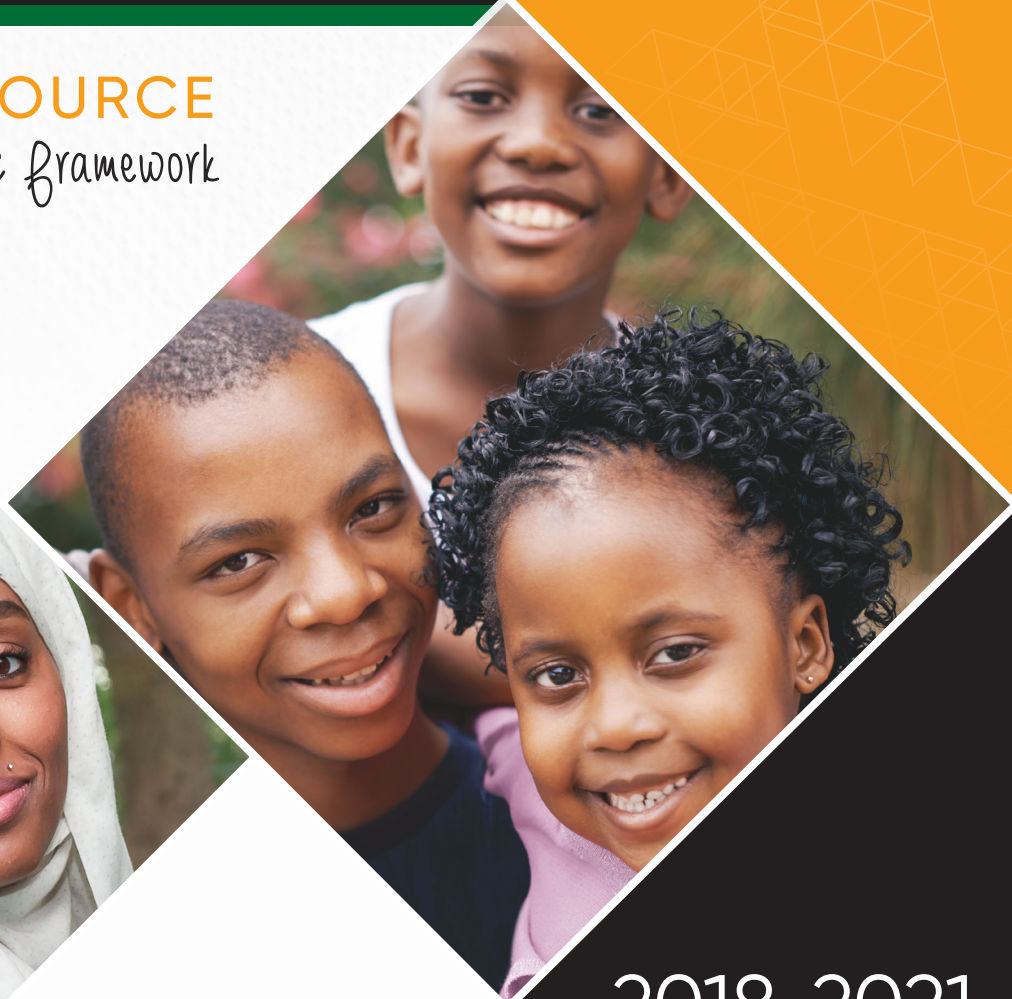


DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

COMPENDIUM OF ACTION

for **BLACK* STUDENT
SUCCESS**

COMPANION RESOURCE
Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework



2018-2021

The voices OF THE DDSB



Change narratives about them.

What can Educators do to support the success of Black students?

An education on the challenges Blacks may face in society due to negative perceptions and greater empathy may be required. Understand that Blacks are no less intelligent than other children but do face overt obstacles that are challenging to quantify or qualify.

Push academics more and sports less, as the means to an end.

Hire more people of colour to teach, especially in our schools where people of colour attend.



More training in understanding who people of colour are.



The teaching staff should reflect the student body, as there is no one around to support us.

As a young Black person, what do you see as the biggest opportunities and challenges for Black people your age in Durham, in terms of growing up and preparing to be a part of today's society?

It appears there is less focus on academics than there is on athletic scholarships.

We need more Black role models.



STUDENT VOICES

What should educators know about the experiences of Black students?

Racism still goes on in the school, even though it is not reported all the time.

Black historical figures should be represented in history classes. We shouldn't just have to take Black studies to learn about them.

History shouldn't just be about slavery.

Don't single out Black students when discussing racism.

That it is hard sometimes to feel welcome when we are being treated differently.

Include opportunities for Black students encouraging diversity in all aspects of the school.

We are not aggressive.

Black culture is very different from White culture.



More Black history throughout schooling for every student. By teaching students at an earlier age about Black history and different cultures, the stigmas and stereotypes can be crushed from an earlier age. To be ignorant is not to have knowledge and by giving the students the knowledge it allows for a safer environment for Black students in schools.

How can educators ensure you have a sense of belonging at the school?

What actions can be taken to support Black students in Secondary school?

Ensure that Black students can succeed academically, especially those with economic disparities.



Introduce non-Black identifying students to Black issues in terms of society, economics & politics in Canada. Also help them realize how privilege is a factor in ignorance and the delay in advancement & recognition of the Black community.

We need to add Black history to the history curriculum.

Educate teachers on how to deal with different Black experience because they seem nervous to speak about them publicly.

More Black events not just Black History Month.

“
TO ME, OUR COMMON DENOMINATOR [AS EDUCATORS] SHOULD ALWAYS BE **A PURPOSEFUL PURSUIT IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE HUMAN CONDITION.** BE VIGILANT ABOUT THOSE THINGS WE KNOW ARE IMPORTANT BY VIRTUE OF OUR KNOWLEDGE AND POSITION. WE COME TOGETHER BECAUSE WE WANT TO EXPAND OUR KNOWLEDGE OF ANTI-BLACK RACISM TO FORTIFY OUR OWN SELF AND OUR COLLEAGUES... IN CULTIVATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS. THIS IS AN AREA IN WHICH WE CANNOT AFFORD TO FALL BEHIND.
”

Honourable Jean Augustine (October 2017)

“
RACISM IS A BARRIER THAT BLOCKS THE ABILITY OF BLACK STUDENTS FROM FOCUSING ON ACADEMICS.
”

Towards Race Equity in Education (April 2017)

“
THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN THE GTA HAS MADE **SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GROWTH AND SUCCESS OF THE COUNTRY AND THE REGION,** BUT IT HAS EXPERIENCED ECONOMIC, EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DISPARITIES THAT CONTINUE TO THIS DAY, MUCH OF WHICH ARE ROOTED IN ANTI-BLACK RACISM.
”

From the Black Experience Project in the GTA, p. 7 (July 2017)

*For the purposes of this resource *Black refers to individuals of African heritage who may also self-identify as Black, African or Caribbean. In addition, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) defines Black as: "A social construct referring to people who have dark skin colour and/or other related racialized characteristics. The term has become less of an indicator of skin colour and more of racialized characteristics. Diverse societies apply different criteria to determine who is Black." OHRC, as quoted in the Black Experience Project 2017.*



CHAIR OF THE BOARD AND DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Education is dynamic. We continually evolve and improve our practices to support, recognize, value and respond to the social and cultural realities of our students and families.

The demographic landscape of Durham Region has changed and is continuing to change. The families and students that we serve represent a rich diversity of lived experiences and cultural realities that reflect the Durham District School Board.

The Black community in Durham is truly reflective of the African Caribbean diaspora. The data tells us that the percentage representation of the Black community in Ajax and Pickering rivals that of Toronto and is growing steadily in Whitby and North Oshawa.

Our research also tells us that Black students experience barriers to learning and success and that this has a negative impact on their school lives. To help us understand the realities of the Black communities' experiences with the school system, the DDSB worked with Justice Donald McLeod to engage in Community Voice forums. Through these forums and the recommendations that have come forward, we have worked to put structures in place to remove barriers for Black students and their families, enabling them to realize their potential.

The Compendium of Action for Black Student Success signals our commitment to supporting the success of all Black students.

Our journey to evolving, expanding and improving equity, diversity and inclusive practices, policies, programming and outcomes is a specific focus of the DDSB.

Michael Barrett

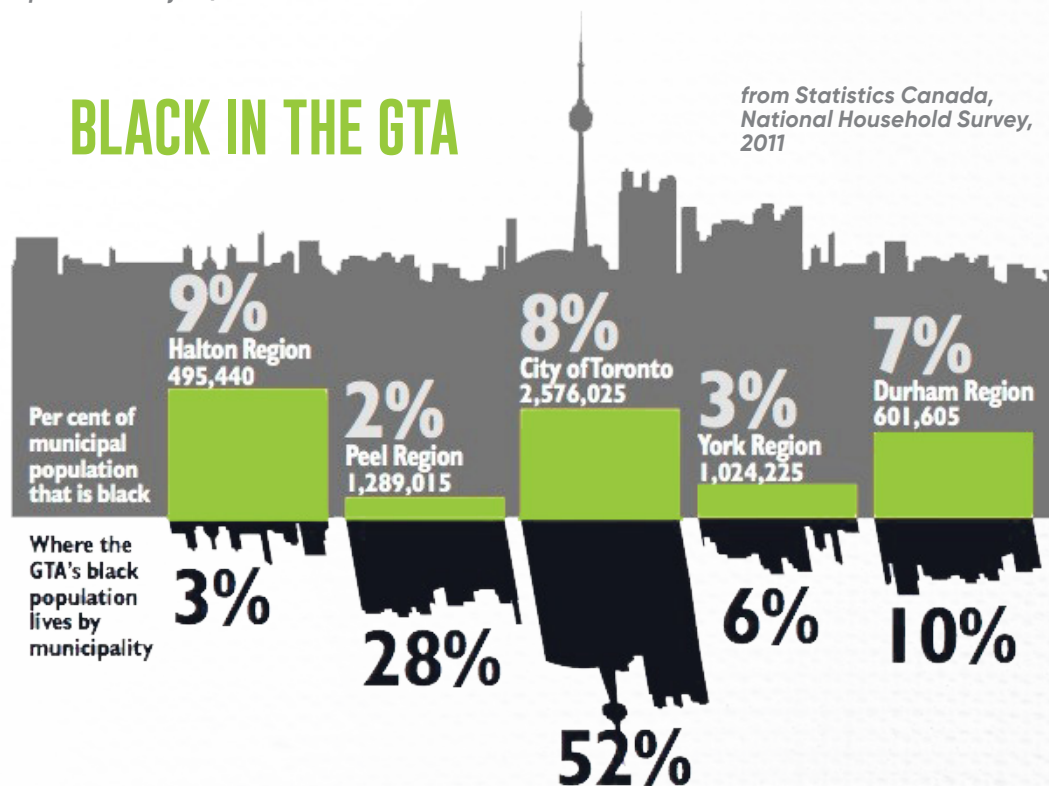
Chair of the Board

Lisa Millar

Director of Education



THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN ONTARIO has roots that go back more than 250 years and includes both freed and enslaved Africans who chose, or were chosen for, a life in Canada. From those beginnings to the present day, the African Caribbean population has grown and been enriched by waves of immigrants from the varied diaspora. African Caribbean people currently represent multiple identities: religious, ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic. Many have experienced some form of economic, educational, social, and political disparities rooted in Anti-Black Racism, a reality that continues into present day. *(Black Experience Project)*

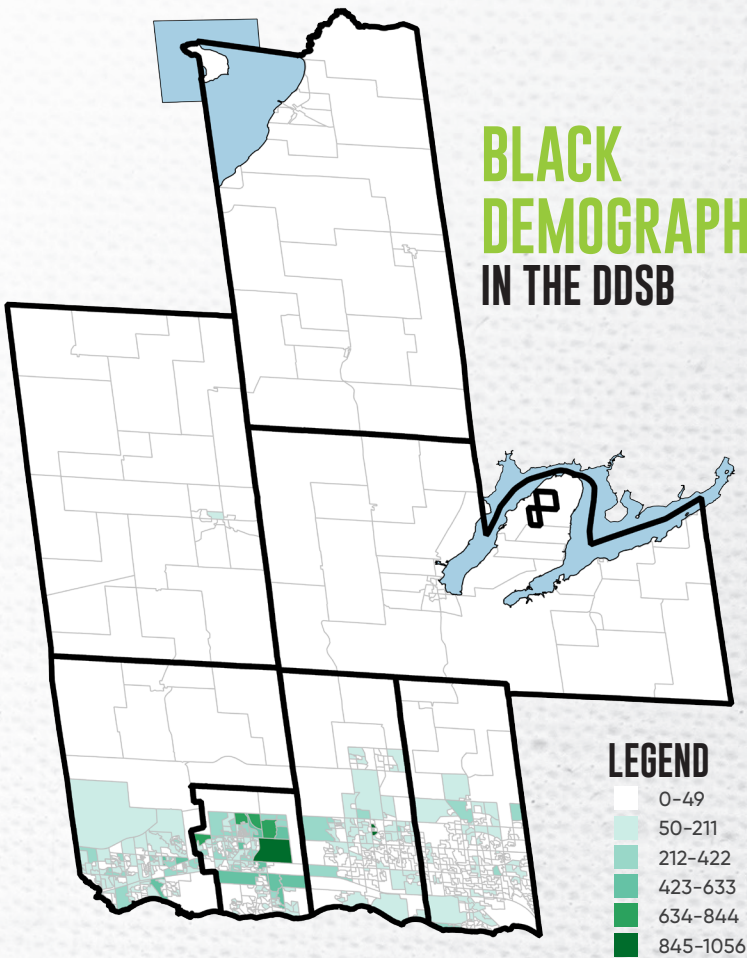


Why a Compendium of Action for **BLACK STUDENT SUCCESS?**

The Ontario Education system has been aware of, and is concerned about, the achievement, outcomes and experiences of Black students since the Provincial Advisory Committee on Race and Ethnocultural Relations was formed in 1987. Since then, a number of reports, both provincial and municipal, have pointed to the same issues and concerns in schooling for Black students: streaming, high drop-out rates, a lack of Black educators, Eurocentric curriculum and Anti-Black Racism. *(Towards a New Beginning, 1992; The Roots of Youth, 1987)*

While our commitment to equity and diversity comprehensively addresses the perspectives and lived experiences of our schools, communities and staff, we recognize that some members of our community have historically and currently experienced systemic and personal barriers to a positive schooling experience. Further, and more significantly, for some communities these barriers and challenges have compromised learning, well-being and achievement outcomes.

BLACK DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE DDSB



The map describes the number of people living within the boundaries of the Durham District School Board who identify as Black. The color used in the map describes how many people live in each community (called dissemination areas by Statistics Canada) with dark green representing the communities with the largest number of people and white representing communities with the smallest number of people. The information for this map was obtained from Environics Canada DemoStats 2017.

COMMUNITY VOICE FORUMS

Recent data gathered through the Community Voice Forums led by Justice McLeod (2016) echoes the results of similar reports from Peel Region and the Toronto District School Board (*Fighting an Uphill Battle, Report on the Consultation into the Well Being of Black Youth in Peel Region and Towards Race Equity in Education, The Schooling of Black Students in the Greater Toronto Area*). The reality is that Black students feel disengaged and disconnected in our schools because of a lack of recognition of systemic racism which they continue to experience. In addition, parents and families of Black students voice frustration that their children continue to experience low teacher expectations and low academic performance, high rates of suspension and discrimination in pathways planning (*100 Strong Report, May 2016*). These barriers to the education of Black students lead to fewer students pursuing post-Secondary studies and fewer choices for their success.

The purpose of the Compendium of Action for Black Student Success is to use the recommendations from the Community Voice Forums, as well as the collected data and suggested recommendations from Toward Race Equity in Education Report (*April 2017*) to be specific and intentional in a plan for the success of Black/African Caribbean students in the DDSB. In alignment with the Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework, the Compendium of Action for Black Student Success lays out a specific plan to remove barriers, reduce frustration for families and ultimately improve the success of Black/African Caribbean students in our system.

The stigma and stereotypes Black Ontarians and communities face have impacted public policies, decision-making and services. As a result, Anti-Black Racism is felt in nearly every measure of opportunity, security and fairness in our society.

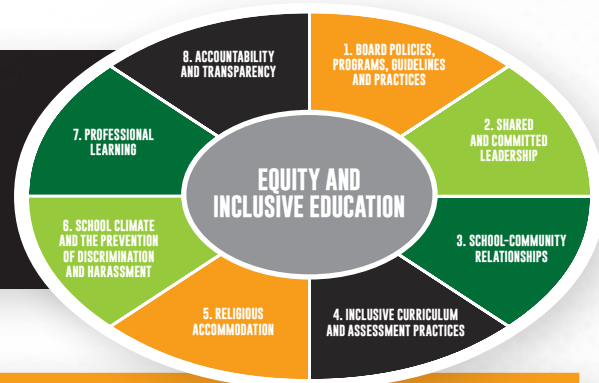
When compared to White children, Black children are more likely to be in foster care or enrolled in lower academic streams.

When compared to White men, Black men are more likely to interact with the justice system.

When compared to White women, Black women are more likely to be unemployed, despite having higher levels of education: 8.8 per cent of Black women with university degrees are unemployed, compared to 5.7 per cent of white women with high school diplomas. (*Anti-Black Racism Strategy, Government of Ontario, 2017*)

Students and families from the African Caribbean diaspora represent a growing part of the population of Durham region and their contributions to our communities strengthen the diversity of our schools. Yet, the DDSB understands that Black students may have a lived experience of systemic racism here which has far-reaching effects on their achievement and well-being.

SO, WHAT ARE WE DOING TO make it happen? 2018-2021



1 BOARD POLICIES, PROGRAMS, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES

ACTIONS

- Revise Safe School policies to recognize Anti-Black Racism as a critical focus.
- Include a component of Equity Reflection as part of the Teacher's Annual Learning Plan.
- Intentional hiring of Black educators.
- District Review by a trained equity team, with an equity focus

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

- More alternative programs around progressive discipline made available in all schools for marginalized students.
- Enhanced mandatory equity training for teachers and administrators.
- Promotion of Black educators to leadership positions.
- Increased employment of Black educators.
- Teachers' professional learning goals aligned with school improvement plans.
- Increased evidence of equitable outcomes in schools.

2 SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

ACTIONS

- Superintendents assigned specifically to Equity portfolio.
- Focused training for Equity/Diversity Leads to work as a team to embed Anti-Black Racism initiatives.
- Collaborate with school leaders to foster an ongoing collaborative relationship with school leaders/teacher federations to develop, deliver and support innovative practices that promote success for Black students.
- Partner with Durham Black Educators Network (DBEN) to establish a Black Advisory Committee to hear questions, concerns and suggestions from the Black community and report back to relevant DDSB Departments. Superintendent responsible for Equity to meet with DBEN Executive to set parameters of engagement, meeting dates, protocols and follow-up procedures.
- Draw upon the Indigenous and Racialized Leadership programs to grow the leadership of Black staff towards formal leadership roles.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

- Superintendents report back to board and school communities on impact of Equity sessions.
- Equity capacity building for culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy that is school-based and school-led.
- Equity Continuum will be used to map out implementation of Anti-Black initiatives and integrate next steps into the schools' improvement plan.
- Improved school success among Black student cohorts, demonstrated thorough qualitative and quantitative data sources.*
- Parents will engage with DDSB; their voices will be heard and concerns will be validated. Parents are supported and informed and thus better able to navigate the system to ensure their child's overall achievement.

* Provincial demographic data collection strategy is anticipated at the time of this initiative.

3 SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

ACTIONS

- Develop programs (in-school, after-school, community based) in partnership with community agencies like YAACE, Tech Spark and Minds on Math Charity, in specific educational processes and subjects to increase academic performance and engage Black students.
- Continued mentorship with graduates of 100 Strong throughout the school year.
- Create partnerships with families/community members to not only lay out Educational pathways using "Choosing my Success" to support Grade 8-9 Transitions, but also deal with the difficulties in navigating the current educational system.
- Increased communication of programs, initiatives and results via technology to allow easy access for DDSB parents and communities.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

- Improved student achievement and engagement demonstrated by improved attendance, increased enrollment in academic pathways and post-Secondary applications.
- Outreach program sessions for Black parents through DDSB Pro-Grant initiatives and work of the Equity Ad-Hoc Committee.
- Improved community connections for Black youth and families.
- Enhanced participation of Black students in leadership, mentorship and self-advocacy skills.
- Increased family participation in school initiatives.

4 INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

ACTIONS

- Educators will use the Equity and Well-Being Continuum to ensure that Black students are represented in resources, posters, bulletin boards and display cases in schools.
- Requirement that each School Diversity Team with administrators, complete an Equity Audit of curriculum and available resources.
- Ensure that Afrocentric responsive curriculum is embedded in classroom practice (move beyond Black History Month activities) and involves work that is assessed.
- Support for Black Studies Courses at Secondary schools and professional learning for teachers who are interested in providing the course at their schools.
- Develop an experiential exchange of best practices in Afrocentric pedagogy to enhance teachers' understanding of Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) Initiative which include classroom and school visits during the school day.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

- Schools will be required to post their Plan for Equity and Well-Being on the school website and update it on an annual basis.
- All Elementary schools will implement the Afrocentric Curriculum Support Document.
- School Diversity teams will set goals and make necessary changes, monitored by a Superintendent.
- Training and audit to track the uptake and implementation of Black Studies Courses at Secondary schools.
- Schools will utilize resources to reflect a variety of Black student experiences.
- Multiple assessments in a variety of subject areas will reflect an Afrocentric responsive curriculum.
- Increased awareness, professional learning and capacity building for all teachers.

5 RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

ACTIONS

- DDSB schools will provide a space for prayer/reflection upon request to accommodate prayer needs, time and space.
- DDSB schools will continue to build connections to community faith leaders.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

- Students and families feel welcomed and are able to practice their faith appropriately.
- Faith-based calendar.
- Enhanced collaboration with Faith groups for World Religion Day.

6 SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

ACTIONS

- All school staff and administrators are engaged in on-going training in culturally responsive approaches to progressive discipline, re-engagement, Bias-Free Discipline and Restorative Practices.
- New administrators will participate in Bias-Free Progressive Discipline training as a component of their on-boarding.
- School Climate surveys which include self-identification and questions around harassment and Anti-Black Racism.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

- Increased confidence and cooperation while working with community advocates.
- Disaggregation of data for setting school improvement goals.

7 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

ACTIONS

- Mandatory Equity Training for Kindergarten, Guidance, SERT and Intermediate teachers, focusing specifically on Anti-Black Racism and Unconscious Bias by 2019.
- Mandate ongoing professional Anti-Black Racism training that is relevant and culturally responsive for DDSB employees, community partners and volunteers.
- Provide senior staff, administrators and trustees training on Anti-Black Racism with specific strategies to implement at the school level.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

- Improved well-being and achievement for Black students.
- DDSB staff will engage in annual personal and professional reflections that assist with identifying personal privileges, biases and beliefs that impact the equitable outcome for Black students.
- Metrics gleaned from professional development sessions, both at board and school level, will show increased participation, engagement and understanding of Anti-Black racism and needs of our Black students.
- Superintendents review strategies for professional learning on Anti-Black Racism used in families of schools.

8 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

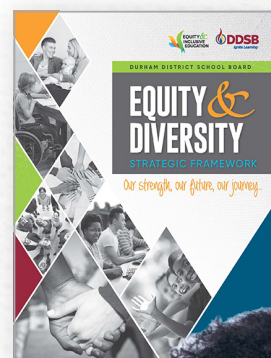
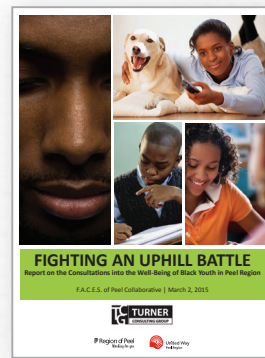
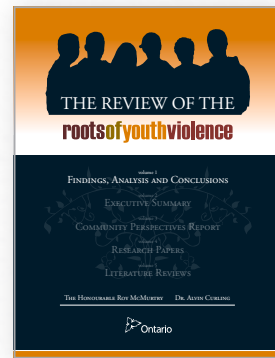
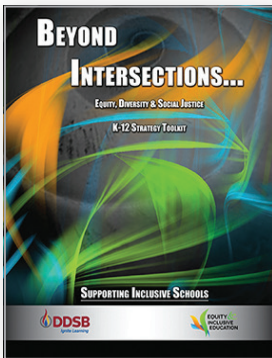
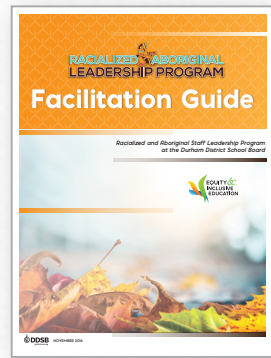
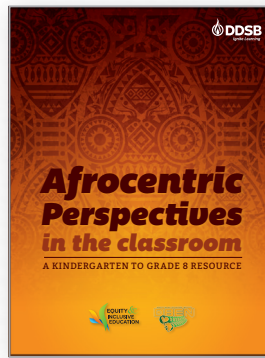
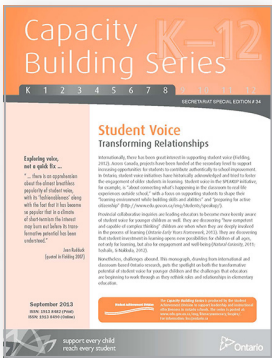
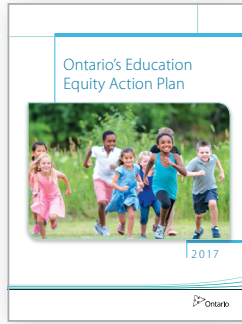
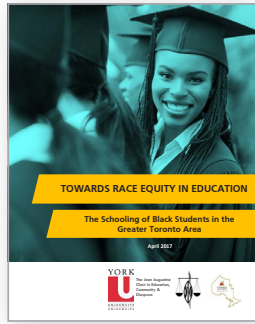
ACTIONS

- Utilizing Faces on the Data, schools will assess prevalence of racialized students in-risk, to ensure all students have access to, and see themselves represented in, the curriculum.
- Gather qualitative data from Black focus groups and interviews with those who self-identify as Black (students, parents, educators and advocates) to inform practice and planning for Black student success.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

- By ensuring all students see themselves in the curriculum and are given strategies to access said curriculum, Black student achievement in identified areas will increase.
- Data collected will identify areas of need and lead to development of resources and interventions for transformative work and/or exposing and transforming systemic structures.

RESOURCES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:



“

IT IS NOT YOUR DUTY TO BE AVERAGE. IT IS YOUR DUTY TO SET A HIGHER EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW. I DID. YOU CAN. YOU WILL.

Lincoln Alexander, 24th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

”

“

IT IS WELL DOCUMENTED THAT BLACK INDIVIDUALS, COMPARED WITH THE NON-BLACK POPULATION, EARN LOWER INCOME, HAVE HIGHER RATES OF UNEMPLOYMENT, EXPERIENCE HIGHER RATES OF INCARCERATION, SUFFER POORER HEALTH OUTCOMES, AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE.

Black Experience Project (2017); Census Canada (2011)

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STATEMENT ABOUT Community Partners

The DDSB prides itself on our many community partnerships with the African Caribbean Diaspora. The DDSB promotes community engagement, working together to ensure equitable outcomes and opportunities for all students and families. Together, “We are DDSB.”



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