

Director's Leadership Report
Regular Board Meeting
November 10, 2021

Good evening, Trustees. There are many amazing practices happening in our schools every day and tonight I would like to highlight a few student focused initiatives and priorities.

We know that when students feel that they belong, it makes a tremendous difference in their well-being, learning, engagement and, ultimately, their success.

Tonight I would also like to congratulate Student Trustee Shafqat who is taking a focus on Indigenous Education & Truth and Reconciliation beyond the walls of TDSB as you heard this evening. I want to congratulate you on your continued advocacy and leadership. It is a compelling example of student leadership.

While there are promising practices aligned with Truth and Reconciliation and commitments to equity underway, this past month, there have been far too many disrespectful and highly offensive acts, such as those at QVPS and Parkdale CI which brought pain and harm and served as a disheartening reminder of how much racism and oppression we have yet to defeat in the TDSB. Staff, working with caregivers, students, and community members have developed a plan to intervene effectively and sensitively in these schools. We will be monitoring its effectiveness and making changes where necessary.

I am proud of the students who came forward immediately and reported the incidents. It takes courage to take action. However, it is our responsibility as adults/educators to identify, intervene and stop anti-Black racism and all forms of racism and hate when it occurs in our schools. As professional educators, we have a moral, professional and legal obligation to do so.

Years ago, we explained to students the harm of being bystanders to student bullying. This past week I heard from students in different schools who are telling us - rightfully so - that we can't be bystanders to any other form of racism, discrimination or hate. I have also been encouraged by the many staff who affirmed their commitment to working diligently to eliminate oppression and discrimination and the ignorance and malice that underpin

them. Teachers shared examples of effective anti-oppressive teaching practices. I'd love to be invited into classrooms to learn from and be inspired by the work you are doing with students.

Next week, we recognize Transgender Awareness Week and help raise the visibility of transgender people by sharing stories, and experiences. And as we approach the Transgender Day of Remembrance, and we honour those who have lost their lives and/or faced anti-transgender violence this year, my goal is that we all reflect on what we can do to ensure student safety, understanding and a recognition of the human rights we're each entitled, to every day, both in an outside of our schools.

We are looking forward to receiving applications for the Director's **Gender Sexuality Alliance** -- or GSA -- Awards, which were paused for the past two years due to the pandemic. This award recognizes the creative work of GSAs to support each other and their school community.

Individually, these activities are valuable, but the real power is in the collective and ongoing focus on fulfilling the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action and achieving equity in our classrooms. Regrettably, these practices are not yet occurring every day in each of our classrooms.

While we work to ensure that happens, let's also remember the staff and students who are using their stories and their knowledge to create safe, more just and welcoming spaces and to promote high achievement for all students. They can be one of the guides in our ongoing transformation.

This concludes my report for this evening.

