

**Director's Leadership Report**  
**Regular Board Meeting**  
**October 20, 2021**

Good evening Trustees.

My Director's Report this evening will acknowledge some of the significant events over the past month and launch an exciting new student initiative.

It is fitting that we are here tonight -- during Local Government Week -- to make decisions, guide policy and allocate resources that impact TDSB's students and school communities.

Many initiatives the TDSB engages in have come through our community to our Board of Trustees. In your position, you often serve as the voice of our parents, guardians, caregivers and students and your outreach, support and advocacy throughout the pandemic has been invaluable.

Thank you for your continued leadership and for your continued efforts to advocate for the collective interests of the students we serve. I am proud of the work that takes place in the Boardroom and the families and students who have benefited from decisions made here.

Tomorrow, we also recognize **Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day**. As a former elementary teacher, I know how important a strong foundation in the early years is and the invaluable role our staff play in supporting students' early engagement in learning and literacy. Thank you for your continued innovation, attention and creativity to help start our youngest learners on their best path forward.

As addressed earlier in Board celebrations, TDSB recognized the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The learning shared by students was reflected in staff and student learning about the legacy of residential schools while recognizing the history of Indigenous Peoples did not begin

with residential schools. As staff, we will commit to ensuring that this learning will continue throughout the year.

In early October we also recognized **World Teachers' Day and National Custodial Workers' Day**. We value and appreciate the significant role of everyone in our school communities and are grateful for their collaboration, support and commitment to our students, staff and families.

This weekend, hundreds of parents and caregivers also participated in the annual **Parents and Caregivers as Partners Conference**. Thank you to the volunteers and event organizers for putting on this virtual event. It is a weekend full of inspiration and learning and I have no doubt that many of our participants left with new strategies, ideas and connections that will benefit their child. Partnering with parents is key. I cannot express enough how important I believe – and know – the critical role parents and families play as we work together to serve their children.

During the pandemic especially, we relied on our parents and caregivers in new and unexpected ways and it is critical that we continue to provide support and guidance as they help navigate their child's needs and learning.

Lastly, I am excited and proud to share a new initiative with you tonight. One that I truly believe will have a positive and lasting impact on our students and our system.

Tonight, we are launching the **Student Equity Collective**, an initiative centred and led by students to address the various ways in which racism, discrimination, and hate manifests itself in our school communities.

Staff hear directly from students, descriptions of their daily experiences of the microaggressions, slurs, hate, stereotyping and the erasure or absence of their identities in the curriculum. Sometimes, they illustrate the lack of agency they have as students to transform their learning environments to

be more responsive to what they need to feel respected, valued and understood.

Although significant changes have been made to address racism and hate in our system through the development of new policies and procedures and professional learning, there is more to do to eradicate anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Asian racism, ableism, anti-Black racism, antisemitism, anti-South Asian racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, transphobia, and other forms of discrimination.

Our students are brilliant and think differently about important issues in their lives than many of us. I know that from meeting and speaking with our Student Trustees. That is one of the reasons that I am inviting students into the new Student Equity Collective to inform our senior leaders and myself on our strategy moving forward.

We are not only offering them a seat at the table, we are inviting them to design the table, drive the conversation, and bring ideas, solutions and recommendations forward that address what they as a collective want to be addressed, not necessarily what we think should be addressed.

This is a different way to engage in student leadership. The **Student Trustees**, staff and I are inviting all students from Grade 7 to 11 from all corners of the TDSB and who hold diverse identities who have a passion for creating understanding and eradicating discrimination to apply to be one of the **25 members of the Student Equity Collective**. This is an exciting opportunity for students who have not previously held leadership positions, have been marginalized by the system and/or might not have felt heard, to consider applying by submitting a two minute video.

We will be reaching out to students directly and will ensure that families, and school staff are informed to encourage their participation. More details and the application process will be online next week.

Our students are leaders and change-makers and our responsibility as leaders is to give them the space and the opportunities to do just that: lead and make change.

The Student Trustees, staff and I cannot wait to collaborate with the Student Equity Collective.